



## **Public Lecture Series Fall 2017**

### **Transnationalities in Migration and Mobility Research**

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**Thursday, 12 October 2017**

**The Persistence of Ethnic and Racial Discrimination: Evidence  
from Europe and the US**

**Dr. Arnfinn Midtbøen, Institute for Social Research Oslo**

**Discussant: Dr. Rosita Fibbi, Swiss Forum for Migration and  
Population Studies (SFM), University of Neuchâtel**

18:15 – 19:45 h

University of Neuchâtel, Rue Abram-Louis-Breguet 2, Room R.113.

#### **Abstract**

Labor market discrimination against racial and ethnic minority groups is present in most countries around the world. Yet, little is established about change over time in the level of discrimination, or how discrimination rates vary across countries and the influence of national conditions on discrimination rates. The first part of the talk addresses this gap by building on cross-national meta-analyses of field experiments. Field experiments of hiring discrimination are experimental studies in which fictionalized candidates from different race or ethnic group apply for jobs. I focus, first, on trends in hiring discrimination over time by presenting results from a meta-analysis of every available field experiment

of hiring discrimination against African Americans or Latinos in the US (n = 28). Together, these studies represent 55,842 applications submitted for 26,326 positions. I focus on trends since 1989 (n = 24 studies), when field experiments became more common and improved methodologically. Second, I show evidence of substantial variation in hiring discrimination across countries, focusing on nine countries with extensive numbers of field experiments: Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the US. The analysis is based on 81 field experiments containing 136 estimates of hiring discrimination against racial or ethnic minority groups. In the second part of the talk I discuss potential theoretical implications of the findings presented, distinguishing between historical, situational, and institutional theories of discrimination. Historical theories view discrimination in the present as a direct result of historical legacies of racial or ethnic oppression in the past. Situational theories emphasize immediate effects of the social context that can produce discrimination between historically established racial and ethnic groups. Institutional theories emphasize the role of institutional practices and legal rules regarding race, ethnicity, and employment. In conclusion, I discuss potential ways forward in studies of racial and ethnic discrimination in Europe and the US.

### Curriculum Vitae

Dr. Arnfinn H. Midtbøen is Senior Research Fellow at The Institute for Social Research in Oslo, Norway. He earned his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Oslo in 2013. Midtbøen works on a broad set of research issues related to immigration and integration, such as ethnic discrimination, second generation incorporation, citizenship, and immigrant employment niches. Currently, he is head of two large-scale research projects: on pathways to integration among descendants of immigrants in Norway, and on boundaries of free speech in the Norwegian public sphere. Midtbøen is member of the IMISCOE network's Board of Directors, and is co-chair (with Rosita Fibbi and Patrick Simon) of the IMISCOE research cluster Discrimination in Cross-National Perspective.

### Selected Publications

- Midtbøen, A. H., Steen-Johnsen, K., and Thorbjørnsrud, K. (2017). *Boundary Struggles: Contestations of Free Speech in the Norwegian Public Sphere*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk, 2017.
- Midtbøen, A. H. (2016). "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries in the Public Sphere: The Case of Norway." *Ethnicities*, 1–19. doi:10.1177/1468796816684149
- Midtbøen, A. H. (2016). "Discrimination of the Second Generation: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Norway." *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 17(1), 253–272. doi:10.1007/s12134-014-0406-9
- Midtbøen, A. H. (2015). "The Context of Employment Discrimination: Interpreting the Findings of a Field Experiment." *The British Journal of Sociology*, 66(1), 193–214. doi:10.1111/1468-4446.12098
- Midtbøen, A. H. (2015). "Citizenship, Integration and the Quest for Social Cohesion: Nationality Reform in the Scandinavian Countries." *Comparative Migration Studies*, 3(3). doi:10.1007/s40878-015-0002-y
- Midtbøen, A. H. (2015). "Ethnic Penalties in Western Labour Markets: Contributions, Explanations, Critiques." *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 5(4). doi:10.1515/njmr-2015-0022
- Midtbøen, A. H. (2014). "The Invisible Second Generation? Statistical Discrimination and Immigrant Stereotypes in Employment Processes in Norway." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40(10), 1657–1675. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2013.847784
- Midtbøen, A. H., & Rogstad, J. (2012). "Discrimination: Methodological Controversies and Sociological Perspectives on Future Research." *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 2(3), 203–212. doi:10.2478/v10202-011-0046-5
- Quillian, L., Hexel, O., Pager, D., & Midtbøen, A. H. (2017). "Meta-Analysis of Field Experiments Shows No Change in Racial Discrimination in Hiring over Time." *Proceedings of the National Academy of the Sciences in the United States*. doi:10.1073/pnas.1706255114