

Speaker: *Katrine Bindesbøl Holm Johansen*

Presentation title: Debunking a Danish value narrative – a strategy to prevent sexual violence?

The past decades Denmark has continued to have national prevalence studies that shows sexual violence to be both a significant and a gendered problem. Yet, this has until recently not taken much space as a gender equality issue neither in politics nor in public discussions. Even during the first wave of the MeToo-movement in 2017 skepticism and new concepts such as “violation-readiness” seemed to take up more space in the public debate compared to the problem itself. However, with a new consent-based rape law from January 2021 and a significant shift in reporting and public support to the second wave of the MeToo-movement during the 2020 fall, it seems that the Danish value narrative is under scrutiny. So, where does this leave us in terms of primary prevention of sexual violence? In this presentation I want to discuss the discrepancy between a Danish value narrative of gender equality, trust and sexual liberal-mindedness and young people’s actual gendered experiences related to the sexual domain by drawing on findings from my PhD research on sexual violence among young people in Denmark. Based on fieldwork from 2015 to 2016, where I did participant observations, focus group interviews and individual interviews with all together more than 80 young people, I have explored what may condition Danish young people’s perceptions and experiences with different forms of sexual violence. Hence, what may be conducive for the persistence of a significant gendered problem. In the presentation I want to unfold two key findings. Firstly, how gendered values, perceptions and norms related to (hetero)sexuality may be conducive to young people’s unwanted sexual experiences. Secondly, how the mechanisms that may enable sexual violence also depends on our emotional reason and our needs and vulnerabilities as sentient social beings. Based on these two findings, I want to discuss where this may leave us in terms of strategies for primary prevention of sexual violence.

* I defended my PhD dissertation *Gender, power and sexual Violence – An anthropological exploration of young people’s perceptions and unwanted sexual experiences* April 24, 2019 at The National Institute for Public Health, University of Southern Denmark.