

Tuesday 17 Sept, 4pm lecture

**Suite 201 Grey House, Erwin Mill Complex,
2020 West Main St.**

**Host: Terrie Moffitt and Leah Richmond-
Rakerd**

**Signe Hald Andersen: Adverse childhood
experiences affect adult outcomes in Danish
admin datasets (N=600,000), but age at
exposure matters.**



Short bio: Signe Hald Andersen (Ph.D. in Sociology) is Research Leader and Deputy Chief at the **Rockwool Foundation Research Unit in Copenhagen, Denmark**. Her research interests include disconnected youth, children placed in foster care, criminology and adverse childhood experiences, which she studies using administrative data and statistical methods for causal inference. Her current work focuses on if and why age at exposure to adverse experiences in childhood matters for later outcomes, and on underlying drivers of social inequality. Signe Hald Andersen has published her work in journals such as *Criminology*, *Journal of Marriage and Family* and *Social Forces*.

Title: Adverse childhood experiences affect outcomes in early adulthood, but age at exposure matters. Abstract: This study tests whether age at exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACE) affects later outcomes. Only little research has addressed this question, despite both the recent debate on sensitive periods in brain formation and theories in social psychology that predict age-graded effects of ACE. **Using Danish administrative data (birth cohorts 1987-1995, N=605,344)** and sibling fixed effects models, the current study contributes by estimating the correlation between exposure to ACEs at specific points in childhood and later outcomes such as adolescent anti-social behavior, drug use and mental health problems. The administrative data are well-suited for this study because they enable the construction of ACE indicators and outcome measures that are free from participants' recollection bias and similar sources of bias. Results show clear patterns of age-graded correlations between ACE exposure and subsequent outcomes, where exposure in both early and late childhood matters more than exposure in middle childhood. A strong correlation between exposure in early and late childhood explains a non-trivial part of the association between early exposure and later outcomes, suggesting that exposure in late childhood may matter more than exposure in early childhood, possible because of the closer proximity in time between later exposure and the outcomes in focus. The presented findings may help us to understand at what age policy interventions against ACEs have the greatest impact on individuals and families, and thus when interventions have the highest aggregate payoff.