

12th Annual IMISCOE Conference
Geneva, Switzerland
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(Extremely late) Call for Papers for the Workshop:

Public opinion and (media) representations of “the other”.

Organizers: Anders Hellström (MIM, Malmö University); anders.hellstrom@mah.se and Ov Cristian Norocel (CEREN, University of Helsinki; cristian.norocel@helsinki.fi). We are very glad to announce that Gregg Bucken-Knapp will act as discussant again.

There are terrorist attacks against e.g. cartoonists in Paris, mass demonstrations against Islam in several German cities and almost a re-election in Sweden due to the behavior of the anti-immigration party, the Sweden Democrats (SD), something which was abandoned in the last minute. “The other” is in our face. And the population is divided.

While ethnic and demographic diversification are welcomed by some, there is a growing concern about the effects of immigration on the economy and on welfare, beside a preoccupation that relates to what is seen as the cultural impact of migration on national identity. These positions often translate into a demand for political response and action targeting asylum-seeker and refugees and in general the number of migrants entering the country.

Within this context, popular xenophobic sentiments show different and more dangerous faces. In this workshop we will further develop on the crucial dynamic of representations of “the other” in relation to the natives - in the media, the public sphere and/or the field of party politics – and public attitudes of “the other” in a similar set of spheres.

Different kind of outbursts against people of non-native background (or members of minority groups) are part of the everyday experiences of many minorities in Europe today, e.g. Jews, Muslims and Roma; these groups are subject to various forms of discrimination, exclusionary practices, deprivation and unfair treatment as a result. It is by appealing to anti-immigrant attitudes and to general concerns about immigration among the population that anti-immigration parties across Europe endeavor to mobilize those voters who are more ‘receptive’ to these issues.

But increasingly harsh immigration restrictions, regulations and exclusionary practices are not only advocated by extreme and populist radical right wing parties. Outside the party political sphere, there are a multitude of movements in civil society who mobilize (and counter mobilize) on these issues. On a top down level, European governments and elites have tried to limit both the access to the nation-states and to the welfare benefits by introducing or strengthening hierarchies of stratifications between groups deemed to be entitled/deserving in opposition to those not-entitled and undeserving.

The ongoing economic recession and the steadily growing levels of unemployment have triggered social mobilization of anti-immigration movements, as well as anti-austerity and Euroskeptical activities despite the governments’ attempt to control the situation.

The panel welcomes papers that deal with the consequences of ever-changing socio-economic circumstances and recent dramatic events in Europe in e.g. terms of changing patterns of party-political preferences and/or people's attitudes towards immigration and the welfare state. We encourage comparative analyses of commonalities and differences between reactions and mobilizations in particular regions, but also in a wider European perspective. We welcome papers that deal with for instance representations of "the other" in terms of voting behavior, with analyses of anti-immigration policies and public discourses and representations and also large-N studies in terms of e.g. popular attitudes towards immigration and the welfare state.

Please, send your abstract (approximately 250 words) to the organizers at anders.hellstrom@mah.se and cristian.norocel@helsinki.fi by **January 14, 2015**. The participants will get to know if their papers have been accepted soon after the IMISCOE board has made their decision.