



## CALL FOR PAPERS

For the interdisciplinary seminar:

### **Trust and authority in the Lutheran North**

A theological and historical perspective  
on the trust culture sustaining the Scandinavian welfare states

*This seminar examines the possible influence from Lutheran theology and social teaching on the high-trust culture characteristic of Nordic welfare societies from an interdisciplinary perspective of social and political sciences, history, theology, and bordering fields.*

**2 - 3 December 2019**  
**Aarhus University**  
**Deadline: 1 September**  
**2019**

Scandinavians are world champions at trusting each other. They place more trust in their fellow citizens, in public authorities, and in the state than any other people in the world. In recent years, the high level of trust among Scandinavians has attracted great interest internationally as other countries seek to gain similar levels of trust because trust pays off. Trust based communities have a high degree of social coherence, a stronger economy and happier citizens.

In the last decades, trust has been the subject of theoretical and empirical inquiry in several different fields of research including sociology, psychology, social anthropology, philosophy, and cognitive science, all of which establish trust as fundamental for interpersonal relations on all levels of society. Prominent political theorists have explained trust as social capital combating corruption, enforcing democratic development, creating social cohesion, and reducing the complexity of social systems (e.g. Luhmann: 1968; Putnam: 1993, Fukuyama: 1995; Giddens: 1991; Ostrom: 1998; Duncan: 2018).

Researchers have shown how trust and mutual obligation are central to the formation and sustaining of the Nordic welfare states, which base themselves on trusting relations among citizens and between authorities and citizens resulting in very low corruption and a minimum of bureaucracy (Knudsen: 2000; 2002; Gärtner & Prado: 2016; Svendsen & Svendsen: 2016). The questions, which continue to haunt researchers, are, however, what caused this Scandinavian trust culture to emerge and what will safeguard its continuous wellbeing.



AARHUS UNIVERSITY



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CENTER FOR  
THE STUDY OF  
LUTHERAN  
THEOLOGY AND  
CONFESSIONAL  
SOCIETIES

# LUMEN

This interdisciplinary seminar examines the phenomenon of trust as a theological characteristic of Scandinavian culture tracing the cultural historical roots of the famous Nordic trust and investigating the possible influence of such a theologically informed trust culture on contemporary Nordic welfare states. Even though Scandinavia has developed into one of the world's most secular regions, up until recently Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland were all mono-confessional Lutheran states with Lutheran theology influencing not only the religious lives of individuals but presumably also their everyday lives as well as their understanding of social hierarchies, authorities, citizenship etc.

In Lutheran theology, trust is the defining characteristic of the relation between God and individuals and this patterns the Lutheran understanding of social relations as mutually obliging relations of trust and of society as consisting in hierarchies of obedient trust. The seminar aims to investigate if, and if so how, Lutheran theology and Lutheran social teaching are relevant for understanding the Scandinavian trust culture both past and present. The seminar focuses on the role of trust for understanding relations between citizens and authorities both in a historical and contemporary perspective.

The seminar is arranged by Gert Tinggaard Svendsen, professor of political science, Nina Javette Koefoed, associate professor of history, and Sasja Emilie Mathiasen Stopa, postdoc in systematic theology.

We invite interested scholars from the social sciences, history, theology and bordering fields to submit a paper proposal no later than the 1st of September 2019 to Sasja Emilie Mathiasen Stopa, [teoses@cas.au.dk](mailto:teoses@cas.au.dk).

Proposals should include a max 500 words abstract and a 150 word personal bio.

We look forward to hearing from you!

For updates see [www.lumen.au.dk](http://www.lumen.au.dk)

For questions: [teoses@cas.au.dk](mailto:teoses@cas.au.dk)

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