



## **Monster Moms**

### **Motherhood on the Edge of Time**

Adrian, Stine Willum; Kroløkke, Charlotte; Herrmann, Janne Rothmar

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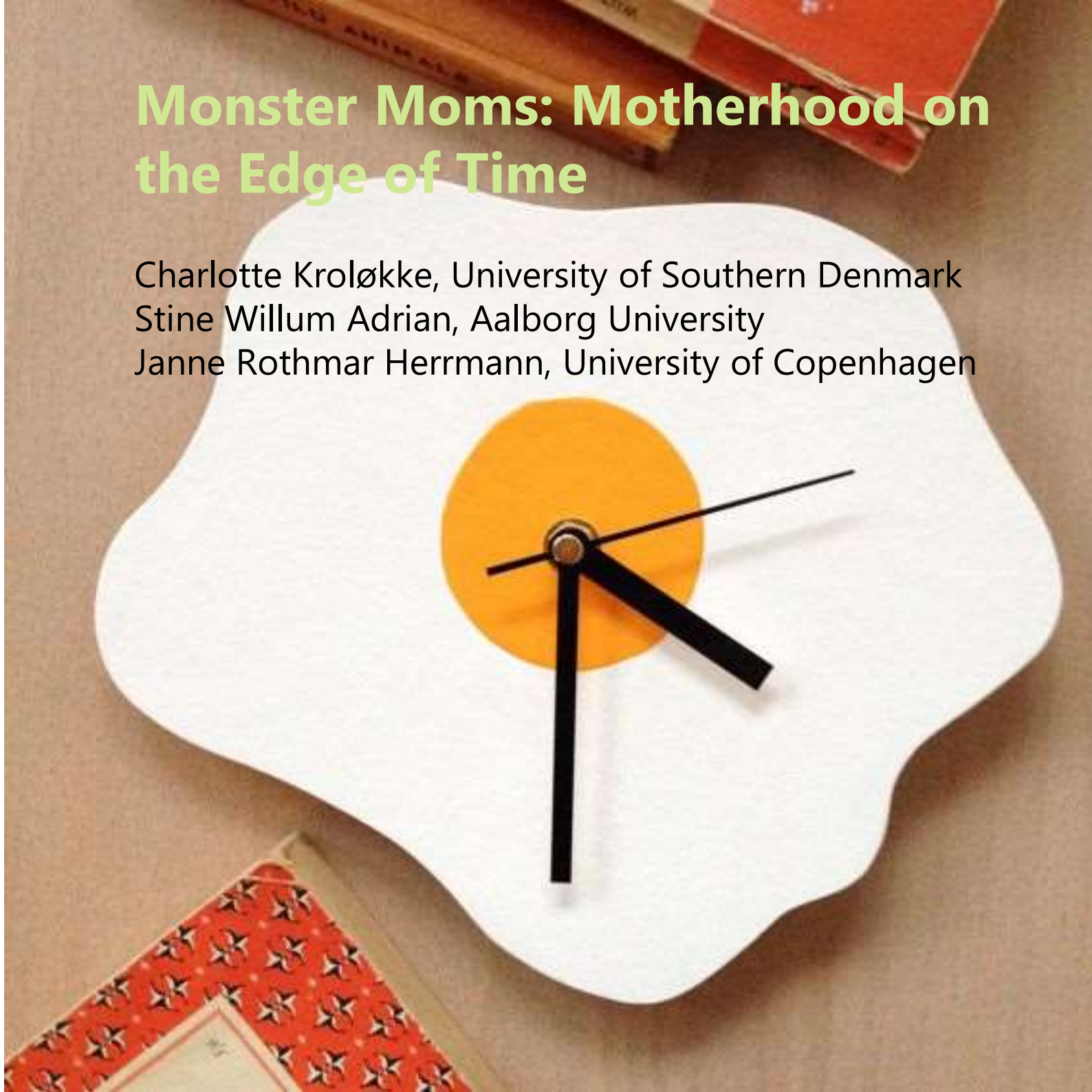
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# Monster Moms: Motherhood on the Edge of Time

Charlotte Kroløkke, University of Southern Denmark

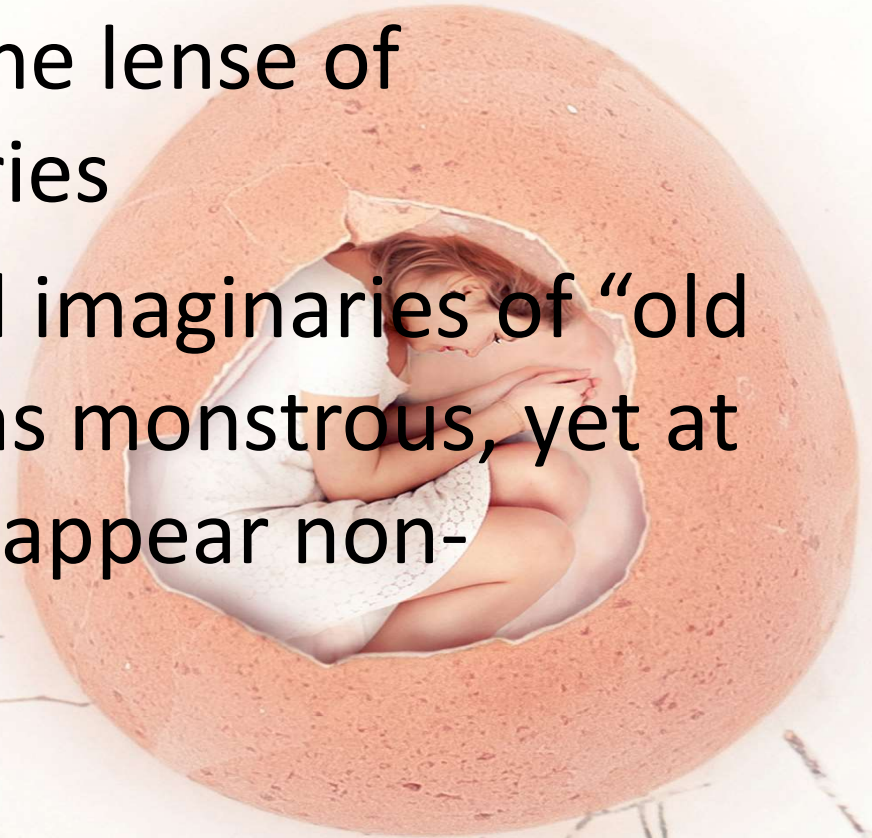
Stine Willum Adrian, Aalborg University

Janne Rothmar Herrmann, University of Copenhagen



# Presentation outline

- Methodology and data collection: jurisprudence, ethnography and cultural studies meet through the lense of sociotechnical imaginaries
- how are socio-technical imaginaries of “old mothers” constructed as monstrous, yet at times also are made to appear non-monstrous?



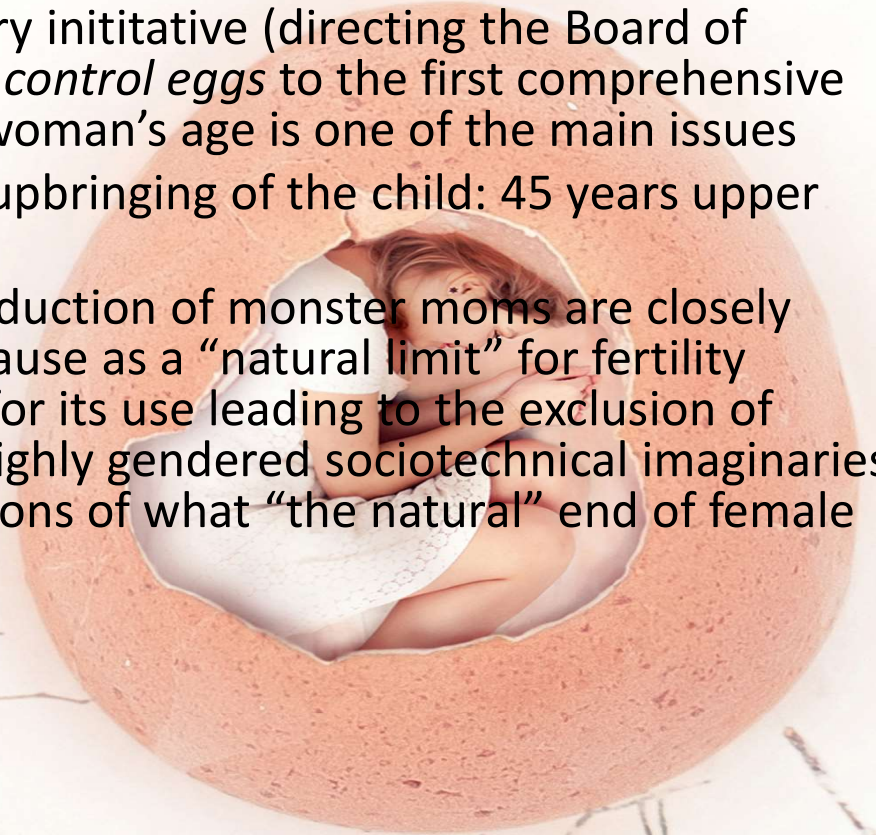
1983

Troels Renard Østbjerg (the first Danish IVF baby) is born



# The artificial and the natural

- Nature frequently figures as an organizing principle in treatment, care and regulation. This has been demonstrated in previous studies on the use of assisted reproductive technologies in both Denmark and abroad
- From the government's first regulatory initiative (directing the Board of Health to issue guidelines in order to *control eggs* to the first comprehensive "Act on Artificial Reproduction", the woman's age is one of the main issues
- On account of the maintenance and upbringing of the child: 45 years upper limit (for women) – no limit for men
- In the parliamentary debates the production of monster moms are closely linked with the perception of menopause as a "natural limit" for fertility treatment setting a moral boundary for its use leading to the exclusion of women above the age of 45. These highly gendered sociotechnical imaginaries centered on perceptions and discussions of what "the natural" end of female reproduction is



# Monstrosity: a burden to the welfare state

- The administratively set age limits for (free) treatment in public hospitals
- 37 put on waiting list
- 40 end of treatment



# **Monstrosity in the media and in the clinic**



# Monstrosity in the media (2007-2017)

When my friends went on a car vacation to the south, I had to stay home, because my parents had gotten too old for stuff like that. In Tivoli, I sat alone in the roller coasters (Rasmussen, 2007)





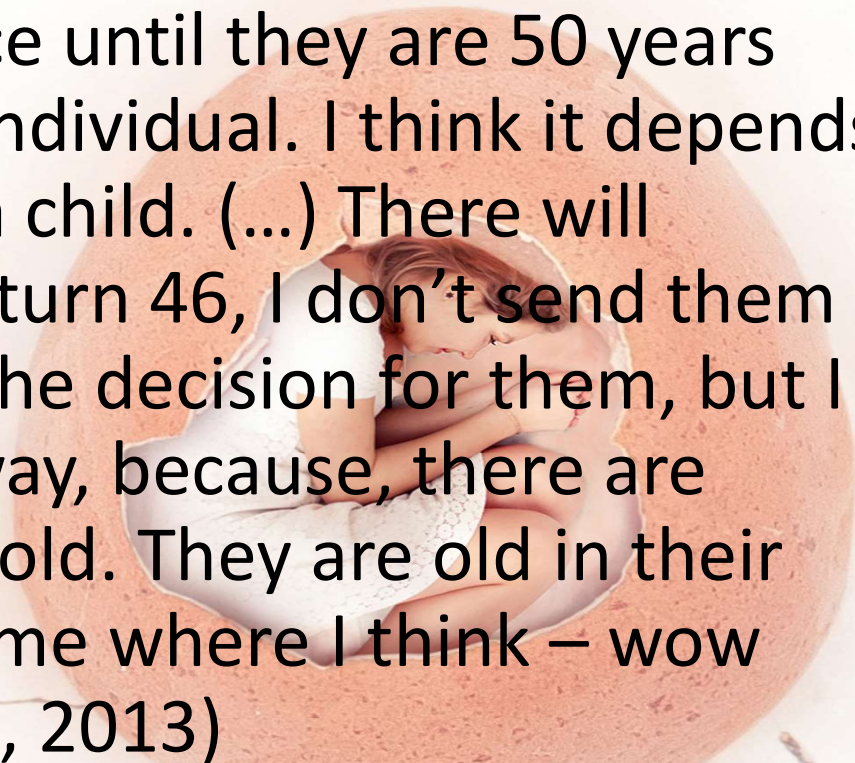
How much fun is it for instance to have spent your vacation with your mom in an arthritis sanatorium, when your school friends have been canoeing, been on skis or hiked in the mountains with their parents (Strand, 2007).



# Monstrosity in the clinic

*It makes me twitch when they are grey down there (Signe, 2012)*

I am sending patients to Greece until they are 50 years old. I think it depends on the individual. I think it depends when a girl is too old to have a child. (...) There will however be some, when they turn 46, I don't send them to Greece. I should not make the decision for them, but I can help them a little on the way, because, there are some where I think, they look old. They are old in their thinking. But there are also some where I think – wow they look like they are 37 (Mie, 2013)

A young girl with long brown hair, wearing a white lace-trimmed dress, is curled up and sitting inside a large, cracked orange eggshell. The eggshell is the central focus, with the girl's head and shoulders visible through the opening. The background is a soft, light-colored surface with some thin, brown, branch-like structures scattered around.

*Because we can – and really feel like it. We are not old in the ways that our parents were old, when they were 50*

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Foto: Pernille Kealund

Jon Stephensen , 56 år, med Rose på 6 år.

DANMARK 16. JAN. 2017 KL. 12.14



PER MUNCH  
Journalist

Læs artiklen senere

## 56-årig far med vind i håret: Vi får børn, fordi vi kan



*Sociotechnical imaginaries of age, fertility, and assisted reproductive technologies in legal regulations, media debates, and clinical practices.*

***Thank you!***

