RVS Metochi Summer School August 2020

The role of theory in empirical research

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<td>13-17</td>
<td>Lunch / Siesta</td>
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<td>Lunch, then:</td>
<td>Lunch / Siesta 1530: Hike to Limonos</td>
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<td>17-19</td>
<td>Group Sessions</td>
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<td>Trip to Petra and Dinner in Molivos</td>
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Lecturers:

**Geir Afdal** is professor of education at MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, and Østfold University College and director of RVS. Currently, he is working on these issues: religion and practice theories, accountability policies and teachers’ professional values, tolerance of the tolerant, and things he does not know much about, like programming and mathematics.

**Steve Sandage** is a psychologist on the faculty at Boston University as Albert & Jessie Danielsen Professor of Psychology of Religion and Theology and Research Director and Senior Staff Psychologist at the Danielsen Institute. He loves both theory and Lesbos and is looking forward to this summer school!

**Annette Leis-Peters** is professor in sociology of religion with particular focus on diaconal studies at VID Specialized University, Oslo. She is especially interested in doing research in the intersection between religion, welfare and civil society.

**Hilde Wågsås Afdal** is professor in education at Østfold University College and Centre for the Study of Professions, OsloMet. Her main research interests are teachers’ professional knowledge and values; teacher education; knowledge in curricula for professional programs; and comparing and contextualizing.

**Anne Austad** is associate professor in psychology of religion and practical theology at VID Specialized University, Oslo.

**Frank Rogers** is the Muriel Bernice Roberts Professor of Spiritual Formation and Narrative Pedagogy and the co-director of the Center for Engaged Compassion at the Claremont School of Theology.

**Tomas Sundnes Drønen** is professor in global studies and religion at VID Specialized University. His research has focused mainly on religious and societal change in Central Africa, but he has recently published works on religion and migration and global Christianity.
Lecture abstracts:

Geir Afdal

I will discuss different conceptions of theory, the difference between theory driven and empirical driven research – and different kinds of theories. Attention will be given to how theories at different level, particularly research paradigms or philosophies of science, influence and may help to create coherence in our understanding of research and the strategies we choose in our research. I will also give an introduction to the themes of the rest of week.

Steven Sandage

This presentation will consider differing approaches to the use of theory in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods social science research. Examples from studies will be used to explore the necessary choices about theory within research design. Practical strategies for expanding and refining conceptual frameworks will be offered.

Annette Leis-Peters

Starting with The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, one of the most influential theoretical contributions to the field of religion and society, the lecture will present different approaches to the theory section. It will be discussed what the theory section reveals about the understanding of the empirical material and about the context of the research.

Hilde Afdal

With the point of departure in a theory driven or inspired content analysis tradition (deductive approach), this lecture will provide some practical exercises and examples on how to operationalize theories and theoretical perspectives into an analytical framework in empirical research.

Anne Austad

The lecture will present different ways of using theory in data analysis, both as a processual enterprise and during the write-up of the analysis section or chapter. Taking Dressman’s classification of the use of social theory (see literature list) as a starting point, examples from various research projects will illustrate a range of possibilities. Different ways of relating theory to research will be linked to analytical strategies.
Frank Rogers

This presentation will explore the nature of narrative; the narrative dimensions of identity and meaning; the role of narrative theory on narrative research; and the methods of narrative inquiry as a form of qualitative and empirical research.

Tomas Sundnes Drønen

The lecture will be a case study of “Religion on the edge”, how Pentecostal Christianity has caused societal change (and vice versa) in Northern Cameroon. Theories of globalization and religious change will be presented and adapted to field data in an attempt to show how we move from theory to theorizing in an empirically based field study.

Literature:

Geir Afdal


Steven Sandage


Anette Leis-Peters


Weber, Max. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism; available in various editions; first published 1904/05 in German and 1930 in English.

Hilde Wågsås Afdal


Anne Austad


Frank Rogers


**Tomas Sundnes Drønen**


**Additional relevant reading**


