



PROFRES Doctoral Research School Spring Symposium 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

in Collaboration with

The School of Educational Sciences at Tallinn University



# PROGRAMME

## Grappling with Methods: The What, How and Why of Research

*What drives you as a researcher and what do you desire to achieve with your research outcome? How can you find your own way through the myriad of existing research method literature, procedures and traditions – while also being able to reflect on, and account for, your choices?*

There are different ideals for what constitutes quality in research, some of which are paradigmatic. However, the ability to critically reflect on choices made are demanded from all doctoral candidates, who have to learn to argue the *what*, *how* and *whys* of research throughout the PhD trajectory. Responding to such questions includes the ability to account for both the planned and the unintended impacts of choices, omissions and mistakes – or even the outright mess one makes<sup>1</sup> – in the course of conducting a research project.

This two-day Spring Symposium will offer PhD candidates state of the art knowledge on methods for data collection, analysis and interpretation, as well as vital discussions about what constitutes quality in research, according to different paradigms. Our aim is to strengthen doctoral candidates' understanding of problems and potentials in conducting research, and the ability to critically appraise methodological coherence in the relationship between theory, methods and writing, thereby supporting sound research practice.

Through a strand of thought-provoking lectures by international junior and senior scholars, the Spring Symposium will unfold central theoretical perspectives on research methods and methodology (*Strand One: Thinking about Methods*). Each keynote lecture is followed by a prepared response, or buzz groups, and a plenary discussion engaging doctoral candidates, to highlight the value of dialogue and reflect the differences and tensions that exist within the academic community on these key issues. Secondly, to complement Thinking about Methods, we offer a more hands-on Doing Methods strand with workshop activities relating to a) troubleshooting and reflecting on candidates' choice of and use of methods in their PhD projects, and b) candidates' written work in progress, whether an ongoing data analysis or a draft manuscript, with an emphasis on discussing presentation of methods and methodology with peers and academic staff (*Strand Two: Troubleshooting Methods*).

---

<sup>1</sup> Tanggaard, L. (2013) 'Troubling methods in qualitative inquiry and beyond', *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 9(3): 409-18.

# SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

## SUNDAY 17 MARCH 2024

- Bus from Tallinn Airport to the hotel on Sunday evening for PROFRES participants travelling with the group booking from Gardermoen.
- If you need assistance: our PROFRES Symposium Helpline for the 17-20 March is Øyvind Nystøl (+47 915 83 399) ☺

## MONDAY 18 MARCH 2024

- 08.30 Bus departs from hotel to campus for PROFRES participants.
- **Location for the Symposium (day 1 & 2): Mare Building, Uus-Sadama 5** (see Campus map on the last page of this programme)

09.00-12.00	STRAND ONE: THINKING ABOUT METHODS (plenary session)
09.00-09.30	<b>Welcome</b> Katrín Nílgas, Professor, Vice Rector for Research, Tallinn University, Estonia Inge Timoštšuk, Professor, Tallinn University, Estonia Birgitta Haga Gripsrud, Professor, Academic Director of PROFRES, University of Stavanger, Norway
09.30-10.40	<b>Keynote lecture</b> “Doing without Method” Alfred Sköld, Assistant Professor, Aalborg University, Denmark  Prepared response (10 mins) by Professor Linda Lundgaard Andersen, Roskilde University, Denmark  Plenary Q&A facilitated by Professor Birgitta Haga Gripsrud, University of Stavanger, Norway

10.40-11.00	COMFORT BREAK
11.00-11.55 ROOM M-218	<p><b>Keynote lecture</b>  “Developments in Mixed Methods Designs: What Have Been the Dominant Pathways and Where Might They Take Us in the Future?”  Katrin Niglas, Professor, Vice-Rector for Research, Tallinn University, Estonia</p> <p>Prepared response (10 mins) by Professor Chris Green, University of Essex, UK</p> <p>Plenary Q&amp;A facilitated by Associate Professor Marieke Bruin, University of Stavanger, Norway</p>
12.00-13.00 ATRIUM IN MARE 3 <sup>RD</sup> FLOOR	LUNCH
13.00-17.00	STRAND TWO: TROUBLESHOOTING METHODS (parallel sessions)
ROOM M-213	<p><b>Workshop A:</b> Writing as Method: Creating Transparency by Choosing Your Words with Care</p> <p><i>A central validity criterion in qualitative research is transparency. One way of looking at transparency is how “the act of writing” in part contributes to producing the research result (Altheide &amp; Johnson, 2011, p. 587). In a hands-on format, workshop participants are invited to take a meta-perspective on text examples, discussing in groups and plenary sessions how the various parts of a text have distinct functions in relation to each other and to the text as a whole, as well as to building your argument and convincing your reader that what you are presenting may be considered as evidence. Becoming aware of the distinct functions of the different parts of a text may help you choose your words with care, contributing to transparency and hence to the quality of your research.</i></p> <p>Facilitators: Associate Professor Marieke Bruin, University of Stavanger, Norway; Associate Professor Charlotte Wegener, Aalborg University, Denmark, Professor Birgitta Haga Gripsrud, University of Stavanger, Norway</p>
ROOM M-133	<b>Workshop B:</b> Critiquing Methods: How to Reflect on and Respond to Criticism of Your Work

*Part of a PhD process is to develop one's own voice and be able to defend one's choices as a researcher – but also challenge the choices of others. Academics, including the editors and reviewers of the journals you aim to publish in, will challenge you on the assumptions embedded in your methods and methodologies. You will also be expected to comment on and appraise the work of others. Such critical enquiry and justification have the potential to strengthen the collective efforts of researchers and the academy, but defending your research approach, and challenging the positions of others, can be both exciting and anxiety-triggering. How is it possible to be critiqued without being overwhelmed and how is it possible to provide constructive critique that adds to the collective learning of the academy rather than undermining it?*

*In this workshop we will engage these and other questions in a critical manner. Together, we will explore ways to articulate, explain and justify the approaches we have taken in our research, and reflect on the ways that we can both receive and offer constructive criticism. We will also practice the fine art of giving and receiving constructive feedback to others that create what Bateson describes as “a difference which makes a difference”. Throughout, we will be deliberate and conscientious about how to use reflective processes, alternating between plenary sessions and group-discussions, and inviting participants to take on different roles - as presenters, commentators and observers.*

Facilitators: Professor Siv Oltedal, University of Stavanger, Associate Professor Kjetil Moen, University of Stavanger, Norway; Professor Chris Green, University of Essex, UK

15.30

COFFEE & SOMETHING SWEET IS SERVED

17.00

**Workshops finish**

- 17.15 Bus departs from campus to hotel for PROFRES-participants

FREE EVENING/DINNER OF YOUR CHOICE

## TUESDAY 19 MARCH 2024

- 08.30 Bus departs from hotel to campus for all PROFRES-participants.

09.00-12.00	STRAND TWO: TROUBLESHOOTING METHODS (parallel sessions)
MARE BUILDING ROOM M-225	<p><b>Work in Progress: Troubleshooting Methods</b> (workshops)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MEET ALTOGETHER AT 09.00 FOR A BRIEF INTRODUCTION from Birgitta Haga Gripsrud.</li> <li>• Rooms will be assigned to each group.</li> </ul> <p>Students troubleshoot and peer critique methods in pre-submitted written work, in groups facilitated by staff in PROFRES and from Tallinn University</p>
12.00-13.00 ATRIUM IN MARE 3 <sup>RD</sup> FLOOR	LUNCH
13.00-17.00	STRAND ONE: THINKING ABOUT METHODS (plenary session)
13.00-14.00 MARE BUILDING ROOM M-225	<p><b>Keynote lecture</b>            “The Scientific Method and the Scientific Desire”            Jonna Lappalainen, Associate Professor, Södertörn University, Sweden</p> <p>Followed by 15 mins buzz groups (2-3 people) and plenary discussion facilitated by Associate Professor Kjetil Moen, University of Stavanger, Norway</p>
14.00-14.20	COMFORT BREAK
14.20-15.05 ROOM M-225	<p><b>Keynote lecture</b>            “Method and Theory – Distant Relatives or Siblings?”            Geir Afdal, professor MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society/Østfold University College, Norway</p>

<b>15.05-15.30</b> <b>ROOM TBA</b>	<p>Followed by 15 mins buzz groups (2-3 people) and plenary discussion facilitated by Professor Siv Oltedal University of Stavanger, Norway</p> <p><b>Keynote lecture</b>  “Exploring Creative Approaches to Data Analysis: Moving Beyond Mystery and Magic”  Ali Roy, Professor University of Central Lancashire, UK</p> <p>Followed by 5 mins Q&amp;A facilitated by Birgitta Haga Gripsrud, University of Stavanger, Norway. Further reflection to be continued in the panel conversation that follows</p>
<b>15.30-15.50</b>	<p>COMFORT &amp; COFFEE BREAK</p>
<b>15.50-16.50</b>  <b>ROOM TBA</b>	<p><b>Panel Conversation</b></p> <p><i>The panel conversation, marking the closure of the symposium, offers an opportunity for the participants to voice any need for clarification and elaboration of things that have been said and done during the seminar. In addition, panel participants will be invited to share their thoughts about how to develop one's own voice as an academic and how to preserve meaningfulness in one's work, when experience shows that both can come under pressure during a PhD process.</i></p> <p>Participants: Professor Linda Lundgaard Andersen (Roskilde University), Assistant Professor Alfred Sköld (Aalborg University), Professor Inge Timoštšuk (Tallinn University), Professor Ali Roy (University of Central Lancashire)  Facilitated by Associate Professor Kjetil Moen (University of Stavanger)</p>
<b>16.50-17.00</b>	<p><b>Final remarks and thank you</b></p> <p>17.15 Bus departs from campus to hotel for PROFRES-participants</p>
<b>19.00</b> <b>OLDE HANSA</b> <b>RESTAURANT</b>	<p>CELEBRATORY SYMPOSIUM DINNER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet in hotel lobby 18.40 for shared walk to the restaurant (or get there by yourself)</li> </ul>

## WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2024

For PROFRES participants: Wednesday morning is at your own disposal. **NB! 11.00 Bus departs from the hotel to the airport** for PROFRES participants travelling with the group booking (or similar departures) from Tallinn to Gardermoen.

# COLLECTION OF KEYNOTE ABSTRACTS

Alfred Sköld

## *Doing without Method*

"The only instrument that is sufficiently complex to comprehend and learn about human existence is another human" – Jean Lave

"And what is the use of an argument that leaves people unmoved?" – Paul Feyerabend

The greatest sin of modern philosophy, George Bataille argues in *Eroticism*, is to have "distanced itself from life itself". In this lecture, I will argue that the social- and humanistic sciences have moved in the same direction, and that the prime reason for this unfortunate development is an exaggerated focus on method. Method, that was supposed to be the way to the goal, has become the *sine qua non* of many research projects. Many young scholars spend their valuable time worrying about methodological details instead of doing what they are supposed to: learning, reading, listening, thinking, and writing. Reminded of Heidegger's concept of "the oblivion of being" (*Seinsvergessenheit*), we seem to have forgotten what research was all about: life in its endless complexity.

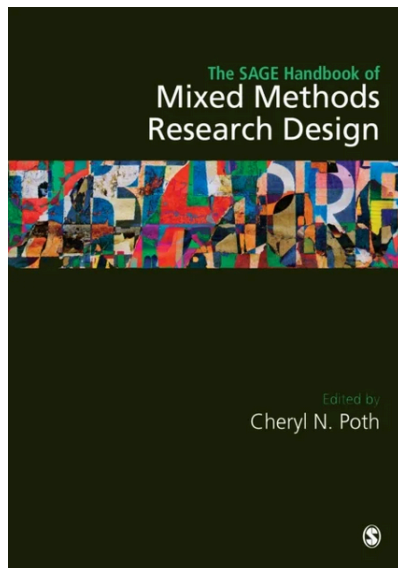
As a defiant response to the slavish adherence to methods that Kerry Chamberlain have termed "methodolatry", this lecture will be inspired by the qualitative tradition from Steinar Kvale (1938-2008) and Svend Brinkmann (1975-). In different yet related ways Kvale and Brinkmann develop a restless, passionate, and straightforward way of approaching the world where good and interesting research is a question of being 1) genuinely interested in one's subject matter, 2) theoretically informed, 3) in tune with one's personal and socio-cultural surroundings, and 4) prepared to learn through experience. In this lecture, I will discuss how the craft of qualitative research might be conceived of in this light and pose a number of questions that could serve as provocation and inspiration for PhD students.



Katrin Niglas

*Developments in Mixed Methods Designs:  
What Have Been the Dominant Pathways and Where Might They Take Us in the Future?*

The use of mixed methods (MM) designs has gained immense popularity in recent decades. In the SAGE Encyclopedia of Research Design, Pinto (2012, p. 813) claims that “Most study designs today need to include both quantitative (QN) and qualitative (QL) methods for gathering effective data and can thereby incorporate a more expansive set of assumptions and a broader worldview.” While I am somewhat more modest about the prevalence of MM designs, it is both exciting and challenging to navigate the variability and plethora of approaches the methodologists and practicing researchers from different continents and disciplines are bringing to the field. Building innovations on systematic and representative foundations helps to form a solid bridge to the future. Therefore, the aim of this keynote is to provide an overview of some influential historical developments and a glimpse from these grounds into the possible future trends related to MM designs.



The keynote draws on the following resource:

K. Niglas (2023). “Developments in Mixed Methods Designs: What Have Been the Dominant Pathways and Where Might They Take Us in the Future?”. Chapter 5 in [The Sage Handbook of Mixed Methods Research Design](#), edited by C.N. Poth, pp. 59-78.

Jonna Lappainen

*The Scientific Method and the Scientific Desire*

Science is driven by the desire for new knowledge or new discoveries. This also applies to the individual researcher; ideally a researcher is driven by a desire for new knowledge. But researching, doing science, also entails the commitment to be able to demonstrate how you have arrived at your results. An important part of demonstrating of approach is the scientific method. Method is the means for the researcher to achieve results. And sometimes the method is presented as the very demarcation between science and opinion. Even if this were true, it is important to consider the difference between science and method. Can too strong a focus on method lead to the suppression of the scientific desire at the expense of a desire to be methodologically rigorous and correct?

By starting from my own field of research, the theory of practical knowledge, I thematize some of the balances and decisions that individual researchers must make in their use of methods.

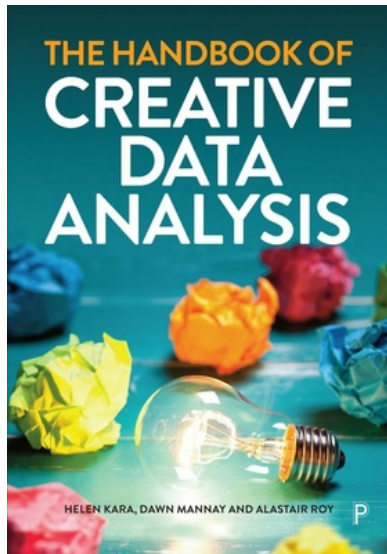
Geir Afdal

*Method and Theory – Distant Relatives or Siblings?*

The theme of the talk is the relationship between method and theory in empirical research. The argument is that the relationship can be understood as more distant on one hand and as more entwined on the other, and that the different understandings offer affordances and constraints. The talk has three parts. First, a short discussion on the two concepts *method* and *theory*, followed by a presentation of examples of distant and entwined positions. In the third and last part, these positions are critically discussed.

Ali Roy

*Exploring Creative Approaches to Data Analysis: Moving Beyond Mystery and Magic*



This session draws on a new *Handbook of Creative Data Analysis* to be published by Policy Press in May 2024.<sup>2</sup> (1). The handbook includes a vast range of innovations and creative approaches to working with data, which are in some cases entirely novel and in other cases inventive adaptations of existing practices. Creative data analysis refers to both ‘the analysis of data gathered using creative methods’ and the creative analysis of data gathered using creative or conventional methods. Data analysis has been described as the most complex and mysterious of all of the phases of research and one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in the literature. As editors, we realised that many people were looking for usable examples of doing data analysis differently; for practical resources which they can pick up and apply; and for texts that can describe, simply, how creative approaches have been undertaken and to what effect epistemologically, methodologically, and substantively. The session will consider some of the difficulties and as well as the benefits of using creative approaches to data analysis.

---

<sup>2</sup> Kara, H., Mannay, D. and Roy, A. (eds) (2024) *The Handbook of Creative Data Analysis*. Bristol: Policy Press.

## ABOUT THE MAIN KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND RESPONDENTS



Dr [Alfred Sköld](#) is Assistant Professor of Psychology at Aalborg University, Denmark, and currently a Research Fellow at the International Psychoanalytic University, Berlin. His PhD-dissertation, *Relationality and Finitude: A Social Ontology of Grief* (2021) focused on the existential and ethical aspects of grief. His current research project investigates the role of emotions in youth climate activism. Sköld is the editor of two anthologies in Danish: *The Struggle for Happiness* (2020) with Svend Brinkmann, and *The Register of Love* (2023). He has previously been a visiting researcher at Södertörn University and Yale University. Sköld is also the Director of the research group Qualitative Studies at Aalborg University, and the chairperson of Kvale-konferencen (The Kvale Conference).

[Linda Lundgaard Andersen](#), PhD, is Professor of learning, evaluation and social innovation at Roskilde University, former PhD School of People and Technology director, founder and prior co-director of the Centre for Social Entrepreneurship. She has supervised around 30 PhD students within a broad area of topics. Research interests include learning, social sustainability and social innovation in welfare services, democracy and forms of governance in human services, psycho-societal theory and method, ethnographies of the public sector, social entrepreneurship and social economy, voluntary organizations and social enterprises. Recently, she has been researching transformations and shifts of paradigms in the Danish and Scandinavian welfare services, focusing on a renewed discourse and practice of cocreation, coproduction and partnership in social work and human services. She is also a trained psychoanalytic psychotherapist from Nordic Psychoanalytic Collegium, DK. Linda Lundgaard Andersen is a Scientific Advisory Board member for PROFRES.





[Katrin Niglas](#) is Professor of Data Analysis at Tallinn University, Estonia. Niglas began her academic work in the speciality of informatics and computing. Having a strong background in the exact sciences and, at the same time, competence in education and psychology, she subsequently specialised in the field of statistics and data analysis. Within the framework of doctoral thesis, she has concentrated on the issues of research methodology, setting the focus on the topic of the combined use of qualitative and quantitative methods. Niglas is a founding member of the researchers' association Mixed Methods International Research Association and a member of the editorial boards of three high-level international research journals. She has participated in multiple research projects in different fields of social and educational sciences as an expert in methodology and data analysis.



[Chris Green](#) is Professor of Education and the Director of Education in the School of Health and Social Care (HSC) at the University of Essex, leading a range curriculum design and quality assurance projects. Chris has previously held leadership roles in Practice Partnerships, Medical and Clinical Education and Interprofessional Education. He undertakes and supports systematic reviews of health professions education and is Associate Editor for the Journal of Interprofessional Care and is a Scientific Advisory Board member for PROFRES. Chris' research interests include interprofessional education, critical theory and its use in health professions education and practice; his methodological interests span qualitative forms of enquiry, specifically grounded theory and critical discourse.



[Jonna Lappalainen](#) is an Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer at the Center for Practical Knowledge, Södertörn University Stockholm, Sweden. She wrote her doctoral thesis in philosophy on Søren Kierkegaards understanding of "the single individual". Lappalainen participates in an ongoing research project on collective practical knowledge. The project combines philosophical investigations of the concept of "collective phronesis" with a study of how professionals in the education system and the police force in Sweden and Germany – understand and relate to this very concept. In recent years she has conducted research on the role of thinking in higher education and how it has changed over the last 20 years of transformations in the education system. Jonna Lappalainen is a member of PROFRES' Scientific Advisory Board.



[Geir Afdal](#) is Professor of Education at MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, Norway. He was director of the research school Religion Values and Society (RVS). He has broad academic interests, including how values and knowledge in education may be understood on the background of processes of difference and globalization, both empirically and theoretically, thereby contributing to the understanding of tolerance in education. Afdal's research interests also include the relation between theory, practice and research, education and values, religious education, participative action research, the understanding of context, learning and knowledge-creation and the relationship between accountability policies and professional values. Geir Afdal is a member of PROFRES' Scientific Advisory Board.



[Ali Roy](#) is Professor of Social Research and Co-Director of the Centre for Children and Young People's Participation and the Psychosocial Research Unit at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK. Before becoming an academic he was youth and community worker and residential social worker. Roy is an inter-disciplinary scholar and with a particular interest in research methodology. He has worked on innovations in mobile, visual, map-making, narrative and participatory methods. Roy has undertaken applied research in the fields of substance use, mental health, youth homelessness, youth violence as well as in collaborative arts. Ali Roy is a member of PROFRES' Scientific Advisory Board.

## ABOUT THE ORGANIZING PARTNERS

The Spring Symposium is offered as part of a new international collaboration between The School of Educational Sciences at Tallinn University in Estonia and PROFRES 2.0 The Interdisciplinary, Interprofessional and Practice-Near Research School in Norway.

[Tallinn University](#) is the largest university of humanities in Tallinn and the third largest public university in Estonia, with more than 7,500 students (with 9.5% of them international), and over 800 employees, including close to 400 researchers and lecturers. Tallinn University is very strongly committed to internationalisation. [The School of Educational Sciences](#) is the oldest academic unit in Tallinn University with 100 years of experience in teacher training. Its 1500 BA, MA and PhD students are enrolled in five study areas: early childhood and primary education, educational leadership and innovation, inclusive education, non-formal education and lifelong learning, teacher education and educational science. The Academic staff participate in the TLU's Centre of Excellence in Educational Innovation and the Centre for Innovation in Education.

[PROFRES 2.0](#) is a doctoral research school profoundly preoccupied with conditions in working life, as evident in our remit for practice-near research problems in the fields of health, welfare and education. Through nine partnering institutions we recruit up to 60 candidates from nearly 20 PhD-programmes in Norway. Our overarching aim in PROFRES is twofold and complementary: 1) to cultivate excellence in a high-quality interdisciplinary and interprofessional learning environment for practice-near doctoral researchers, with focus on three major labour sectors in the welfare state; 2) to vouchsafe relevance by facilitating new co-creation spaces between academic and practice fields – mutually cultivating innovative knowledge-based professional practice and practice-near research with a view towards shaping future welfare.

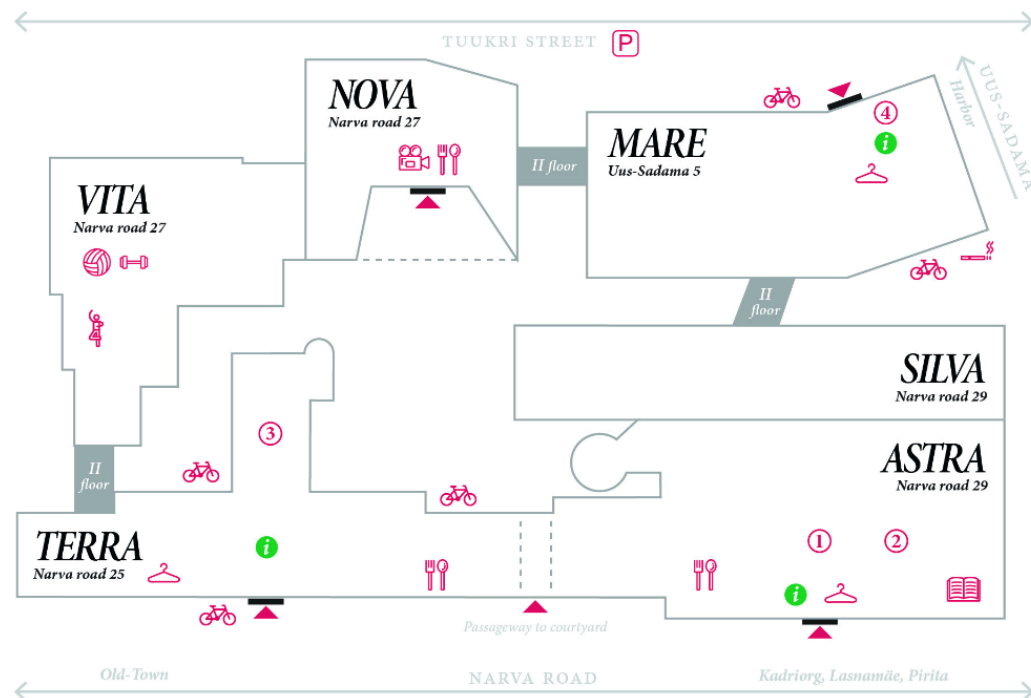
## ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

**Academic staff:** Birgitta Haga Gripsrud, Marieke Bruin, Kjetil Moen, Siv Oltedal, University of Stavanger, Norway; Inge Timoštšuk, Tallinn University, Estonia

**Administrative advisors:** Camilla Melhuus Line, Øyvind Nystøl, University of Stavanger and University of Agder; Elina van der Toorn, Tallinn University, Estonia.



# TALLINN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS



- |                   |                    |                   |                    |                  |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Parking lot       | Bicycle parking    | Caffeteria / Cafe | Sports hall        | GYM              |
| Researchers Forum | Auditorium Maximum | The Assembly Hall | Tallinn auditorium | Smoking corner   |
| Cloakroom         | Black box          | Cinema            | Library            | Information desk |