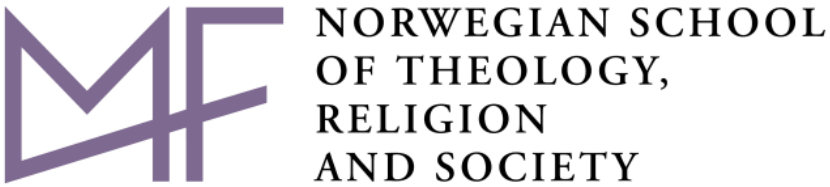
OVERESTIMATED
AND
UNDERESTIMATED

—

a Case Study of the Practice of Preaching for Children with an Emphasis on Children's Role as Listeners.

Linn Sæbø Rystad



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Linn Sæbø Rystad

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1. Introduction

Interviewer: *What are you thinking of? During the preaching events?*

Michael: *Oh, I am looking forward to it being finished…*

Interviewer: *(laughing) That's what you're doing…*

Max: *I am thinking about… like what is he going to say and teach us today?*

Interviewer: *Do you feel like you are learning anything?*

Max: *Yes, some*

Interviewer: *What about you, Miriam?*

Miriam: *how long it is going to take*

Max: *oh, and I think he is a really good rhetorician*

Interviewer: *ok, a good rhetorician… do you have any feelings at all? Do you feel happy or sad when the preacher speaks?*

Michael: *I am happy that I found Snorlax, Pikachu, and Onix!*

Interviewer: *Did you do that while the pastor talked?*

Michael: *(satisfied) Hmmm…*

The three children represented in the quote above demonstrate the diverse range of children's response to preaching events. I interviewed these three children directly after they had participated in a Christian education event in the Church of Norway called Wide Awake (Lys Våken). The Christian education reform in the Church of Norway implemented fully in 2010, has led to an increase of preaching for children, yet the area is under-researched, both in Norway and generally. Moreover, while the field of Homiletics has seen an empirical turn, resulting in more listener-response research, the listeners studied have primarily been adults.[1] Therefore, research on preaching for children is needed, and the context in the Church of Norway with the large Christian education reform provides a suitable opportunity to explore the topic of preaching for children from a homiletical point of view.

As we see in the quote, while Michael and Miriam are looking forward to the preaching event finishing, Max is looking to learn something and appreciates the preacher's rhetoric. Yet, in academic and popular literature, preaching for children is often presented as "one size fits all" as long as preachers take into regard what age the children are. With this thesis, I show that in the practice of preaching to children, the children are simultaneously overestimated and underestimated. Further, I hope to show that children are more than their age-group and that literature and research on the topic of preaching for children need to take into account that children are a diverse group of listeners.

In the thesis I demonstrate that not only homiletical literature, addressing preaching in general and preaching for children in particular, but also the preachers I interviewed have certain expectations

[1] Throughout the thesis, I adhere to the formatting guidelines of Chicago Manual of Style 17th edition. Yet, I deviate from the manual regarding the capitalization of areas of study. For clarity, I have chosen to capitalize these, like Homiletics and Practical Theology, although the Chicago Manual of Style recommends not capitalizing. The extended introduction is written in American English, while the attached articles are written in the version of English the different journals prescribed and also formatted according to the guidelines of the journals.

for how congregants should listen to preaching events; however, these expectations are tacit and not conveyed. As a listener, you simply must know that these expectations exist or already understand them on your own, which the children mostly do not do. In order to better understand the dynamic of preaching events and the subsequent discrepancy between the preachers and the children, I employed Bakhtinian dialogue theory and Schatzkian practice-theory. Hence, while building on other homiletical contributions that argue for considering preaching as a practice, in this thesis, I conceptualize preaching as a dialogical practice. Yet, separate from earlier homiletical contributions on preaching as a practice, this thesis especially concentrates on the listener's role in that practice. Furthermore, it singles out a particular group of listeners and a particular preaching practice, namely children and preaching for children.

When discussing preaching and children, I employ the term preaching for children. Although this term is not perfect, it avoids the directionality implied by "preaching to children", while maintaining the emphasis of the kind of preaching studied in this thesis—preaching aimed at children. The directional preposition "to" too strongly indicates a notion that preaching involves a transfer of meaning from the preacher to the listeners and the dialogical practice theories employed in this study make it difficult to discuss preaching as something done to someone. The preposition "for" does contain some directionality, yet it is less obvious. Moreover, other options included long sentences like "preaching in worship services where a Christian education event is embedded" or "preaching with children as the primary target group," which complicates the reading process. Thus, while keeping in mind that I do not embrace the idea of preaching as a transfer of meaning, I use the term "preaching for children" when referring to the kind of preaching studied in this thesis.

1.1 Research Aims

As an academic field, Homiletics has a long tradition.[2] With this thesis, I place myself in the long line of researchers who have tried to grapple with the phenomenon of what preaching is and what happens in the interaction between preacher and listener. Thus far, this long research tradition has traditionally focused on the preacher,[3] the preacher's preparation and manuscript,[4] the theology of preaching,[5] or, more recently, the adult listener's response to preaching.[6]

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[2] A. F. Nørager Pedersen, *Prædikenens Idéhistorie* (København: Gyldendal, 1980); Richard Lischer, *Theories of Preaching: Selected Readings in the Homiletical Tradition* (Durham: Labyrinth Press, 1987).

[3] Charles L. Campbell, "Preacher as Ridiculous Person - Naked Street Preaching and Homiletical Foolishness," *Slow of Speech and Unclean Lips: Contemporary Images of Preaching Identity* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2010) John S. McClure, "Preacher as Host and Guest," in *Slow of Speech*.

[4] David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (London: SCM Press, 1987); Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox, 2005).

[5] Gustaf Wingren, *The Living Word: A Theological Study of Preaching and the Church*, Predikan (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002).

[6] John S. McClure, *Listening to Listeners: Homiletical Case Studies* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004); Bernice Sundkvist, *En predikan - nio berättelser: en studie i predikoreception*, Skrifter i praktisk teologi vid Åbo Akademi. Vol 45 (Åbo: Åbo akademi, 2003).; Hans Austnaberg, *Improving Preaching by Listening to Listeners: Sunday Service Preaching in the Malagasy Lutheran Church*, Bible and Theology in Africa (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2012); Theo Pleizier, *Religious Involvement in Hearing Sermons: A Grounded Theory*

This thesis contributes to the field of Homiletics in three ways. The first is by concentrating on a group of listeners, children, that is under-studied. While the topic of children and religiosity has been widely researched in Religious Education, Psychology of Religion, and Religious Studies, it has been scarcely taken up in Homiletics.[7] Research on preaching responses, in particular, has primarily focused on adult listeners, while there has been almost no research done on children's response to preaching.[8]

Next, this thesis endeavors to contribute to the discussion on the dialogicity of preaching.[9] Along with empirical homiletical research's turn to listeners, another significant influence in Homiletics in recent years has been those arguing for a dialogical understanding of preaching. These homileticians view listeners as more active than previously supposed and claim that preaching is best understood as a dialogue between preachers and listeners. I build my foundational understanding of what happens in preaching on the contributions of Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen and Marianne Gaarden.[10] Following Lorensen and Gaarden, I see preaching as a communication event where the preacher and the listeners are co-creators of the preaching event. However, I believe that Lorensen and Gaarden do not pay sufficient attention to materiality, time, and space. Moreover, in keeping with the general trend in homiletics, their research focuses on adults' relationship to preaching.

Finally, this thesis contributes to the field of Homiletics in its suggestion that practice-theory can provide a new, rich understanding of preaching. In the field of Practical Theology, within which Homiletics is a sub-discipline, there has been a turn towards practice. Practice, especially in the U.S., is primarily conceptualized as *phronesis* or Christian practical wisdom.[11] While the reaffirmation of

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Study in Empirical Theology and Homiletics (Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2010); Marianne Gaarden, *Prædikenen Som Det Tredje Rum* (Fredriksberg: Forlaget Anis, 2015).

[7] Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen, "Religiøs læring i sosiale praksiser: en etnografisk studie av mediering, identifisering og forhandlingsprosesser i Den norske kirkes trosopplæring" (PhD. diss., Universitetet i Oslo, 2014); Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2006); Susan B. Ridgely, *The Study of Children in Religions: A Methods Handbook* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

[8] The three peer-reviewed articles I have found addressing the theme of children and preaching are: James A. Carr, "The Children's Sermon: An Act of Worship for the Community of Faith," *Perkins Journal* 36, no.3 (Spring 1983).; James Nieman, "Three Thuds, Four D's, and a Rubik's Cube of Children's Sermons," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 22, no. 4 (1995); Wilbert M. Van Dyk, "Preach the Word! To Children," *Calvin Theological Journal* 32, no. 2 (1997). See chapter three for a more thorough examination of the literature.

[9] David Rietveld, "A Survey of the Phenomenological Research of Listening to Preaching," *Homiletic* 38, no.2 (2013).

[10] Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen, *Dialogical Preaching: Bakhtin, Otherness and Homiletics*, Arbeiten zur Pastoraltheologie, Liturgik und Hymnologie. Vol 74 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).; Gaarden, *Prædikenen*. While there is an English translation of her book, a new edition is forthcoming from a different publisher. Hence, I have chosen to refer to the Danish version in the extended introduction. The English edition currently in print is: *The Third Room of Preaching*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017). Gaarden and Lorensen have co-written an article in English that provides an overview of their research: Marianne Gaarden and Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen, "Listeners as Authors in Preaching - Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives," *Homiletic* 38, no. 1 (2013).

[11] Ted A. Smith, "Theories of Practice," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Religion (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); Dorothy C. Bass et al., *Christian Practical Wisdom: What It Is, Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016); Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008);. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, "Five Misunderstandings About Practical Theology," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 16, no. 1 (2012).

practice as essential for Practical Theology has been fruitful and important, in my case, *phronesis* did not offer me a method of interpreting my empirical material. [12]

Thus, I utilize different theoretical sources for understanding practice than what are arguably the three main influences on Practical Theology's approach to practice: Hans Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics, Alisdair MacIntyre's moral philosophy, and Pierre Bourdieu's social theories.[13] In this thesis, I draw on the works of Theodore Schatzki and Mikhail M. Bakhtin to make the argument that preaching is a dialogical practice. [14] However, as dialogue is an integral part of practice, in the following I will refer to preaching only as a practice, not as a dialogical practice.[15] Bakhtin's emphasis on listening as an act is especially useful to my analysis as it allows me to think through preaching as a practice with more than one practitioner. To this end, Schatzki's conceptualization of practice is useful for grasping how preaching as a practice can be more thoroughly examined, its components broken down into parts to better understand not only why and how people do and say things, but also how they organize their doings and sayings.[16]

1.2 Research Design

The thesis is part of a larger research project called "Forkynnelse for små og store" [Preaching to Young and Old]. The relationship between the larger research project and this study is more comprehensively described in the methodology chapter. In the following, I present a brief account of the research design.[17] I begin by describing the relationship between phenomenon, case, and the study's unit of analysis. I then account for the theoretical research framework of the thesis, which I

[12] See sub-heading 7.3.1 Understandings of Practice for a more thorough discussion of the relationship between practice as phronesis and practice theories.
[13] Smith, "Theories of Practice," 246. For additional works of Practical Theology within this tradition, often combining Gadamer and MacIntyre, see: Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass, *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Bass and Dykstra, *For Life Abundant*.
[14] Works by Schatzki primarily employed: Theodore R. Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed Orders," in *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, ed. Karin Knorr Cetina ,Theodore R. Schatzki, and Eike von Savigny (New York: Routledge, 2001); "Sayings, Texts and Discursive Formations," in *The Nexuses of Practices: Connections, Constellations, Practitioners*, ed. Allison Hui, Theodore R. Schatzki, and Elizabeth Shove (London: Routledge, 2017); *The Timespace of Human Activity: On Performance, Society, and History as Indeterminate Teleological Events*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010); "Timespace and the Organization of Social Life," in *Time, Consumption and Everyday Life: Practice, Materiality and Culture*, ed. Elizabeth Shove, Frank Trentmann, and Richard R. Wilk (Oxford: Berg, 2009).
Works by Bakhtin employed: M. M. Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Wayne C. Booth (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. Mcgee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986); *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, trans. Vadim Liapunov, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).
[15] I account more thoroughly for this choice under the sub-heading 4.2.4 Consequences of the Ontological and Epistemological Considerations for the Research.
[16] Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed," 56.
[17] A more thorough account of the research design follows in the methodology chapter

define as dialogical and practice-theoretical. I also briefly address the epistemological and ontological concerns of both theories.

Following the explorative aim of the study—to describe and understand the practice of preaching for children—I have chosen an ethnographically inspired instrumental case study approach.[18] Thus, I have studied the case of preaching for children in Christian education events in the Church of Norway to understand more about the phenomenon of preaching for children.

However, the *unit of analysis* is narrower. In his discussion on how to define the unit of analysis, Eugene Matusov argues against a general or universal definition of unit of analysis and claims that unit of analysis has to be understood and arranged in the context of particular research projects.[19] He also contends that the unit of analysis needs to describe accurately that which the researcher has analyzed. Coherence in these matters has implications on the construct validity and consistency of the research.[20]

In this thesis, the unit of analysis has developed and widened throughout the research as new theoretical perspectives entered. Although it is present in the first article, the practice-theoretical approach is not at the foreground of the article's research design. There, I rely on the socio-cultural researcher and psychologist James Wertsch's understanding of the unit of analysis as "humans acting with tools."[21] Although Wertsch is not a practice-theoretical researcher, strictly speaking, his preoccupation with the "how" and "why" behind human action is similar to Schatzki's study of "why people do what they do."

Nevertheless, during the development of the study, I had to expand the unit of analysis to include more than "humans acting with tools," as I was studying a practice and not individual humans acting with tools. In defining my unit of analysis as the *practice of preaching for children in six Christian education-events in the Church of Norway*, I include both the theoretical perspective—the dialogical and the practice theoretical—and the empirical material—the case where I have studied preaching for children.

With this clarification of the unit of analysis, I turn to address the research question and its relation to the research questions in the articles. The main research question of this PhD-thesis is: *How can the practice of preaching for children be described and understood?*

The central focus of practice as the structuring and adhesive concept of the thesis is plainly visible in the question. The aim is to describe and understand a practice, and I do so in the three

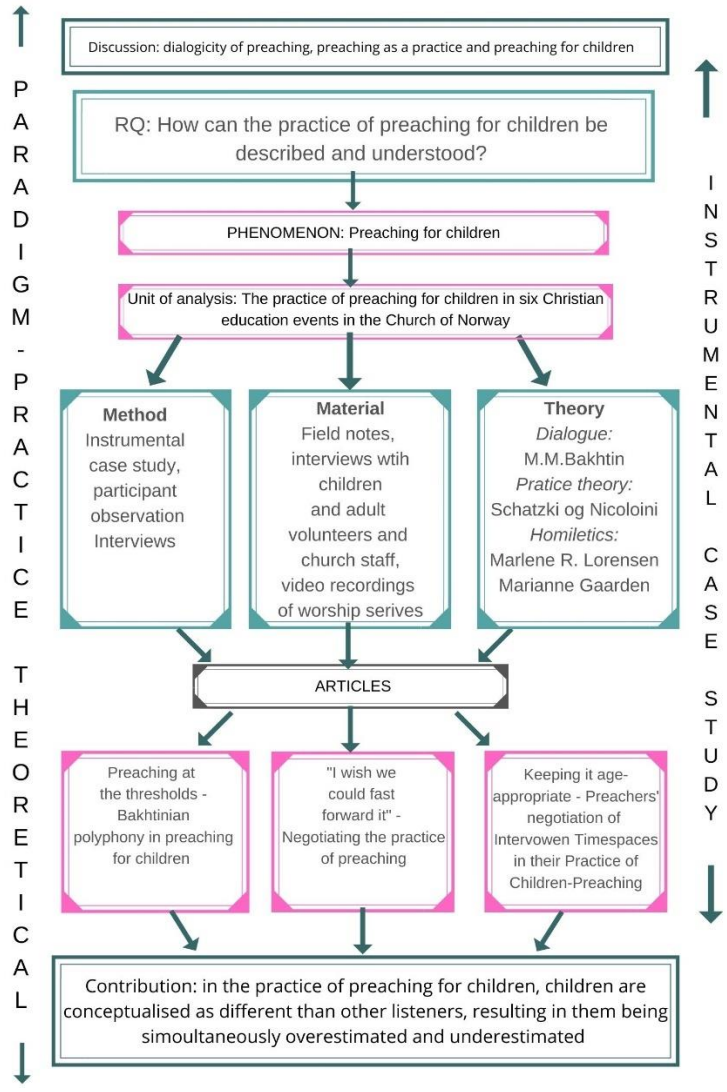
[18] Giampietro Gobo, "Ethnograpy," in *Qualitative Research: Issues of Theory, Method and Practice*, 3rd ed, ed. David Silverman (2011). Sarah Crowe et al., "The Case Study Approach," *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 11, no. 1 (2011). In an instrumental case study, the goal is to study a case in order to understand more about a phenomenon. For more on case study see chapter four on Methodological issues.
[19] Eugene Matusov, "In Search of 'the Appropriate' Unit of Analysis for Sociocultural Research," *Culture & Psychology* 13, no. 3 (2007), 308.
[20] Matusov, "In Search," 311-314.
[21] James V. Wertsch, *Voices of the Mind: A Sociocultural Approach to Mediated Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 12; *Mind as Action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 23-25.

articles by concentrating on different parts and actors in the practice—the preaching event, the role of listeners, and how preachers configure their practice of preaching for children. The research questions in the articles are:

1. *What happens when preachers use biblical narratives, drama, or material objects in the preaching event?*
2. *What do listeners do with preaching?*
3. *How does timespaces configure the preachers' practice of preaching to children?*[22]

Below I present a model of the thesis's research design.

Illustration 1. Research design



The theoretical point of departure for this study is Bakhtin's instance that listening is an action.[23] Bakhtin argues that dialogue ensues in the encounter between two consciousnesses.

[22] Schatzki loans the concept of timespace from Heidegger, yet also imbues it with his own meaning. The concept denotes that time and space are inseparable. Moreover, Schatzki argues that timespaces is what interweaves practices. Schatzki, *Timespace*. For a more thorough definition of the term see sub-heading 4.2.3 Timespace.

[23] Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 67-102.

Moreover, Bakhtin claims that no ideas or theories exist in the abstract; he argues that all ideas are embodied.[24] Like Bakhtin, practice-theoretical approaches consider mental processes to be bodily.[25] From this notion of listening as action and from analysis of the empirical material, I develop the case for considering preaching as a practice according to a Schatzkian understanding of practice, and I place the thesis within a practice-theoretical paradigm.[26]

Practice-theoreticians claim that the primary social entity is practice.[27] Therefore, the social is always produced and re-produced in practices. Moreover, it is in and through practice that meaning, understanding, and ordering of the social happen.[28] Thus, a Bakhtinian and practice-theoretical ontology presumes that identity and reality are relational, multiple, and provisional (unfinishable). [29] As such, both theories argue for a processual attitude to epistemology and ontology.

When it comes to theory, I have employed an intuitionist and abductive approach.[30] Both these approaches aim to establish a theoretical framework, or repertoire, that opens up the material to understanding and description.[31] Hence, while Bakhtin's theory of dialogue underpins my understanding of what happens in preaching, my aim is not to test his theories against the material.[32] Rather, in employing Bakhtinian dialogue theory and practice-theory, my goal is to provide a richer description and deeper understanding of the practice of preaching for children.

With this brief introduction of the research design and the theoretical framework, I now turn to define the key concepts of the thesis.

1.3 Key Concepts

The key concepts in this thesis are "dialogue," "practice," and "preaching," and in the following pages, I account for how I use these concepts.

1.3.1 Dialogue

Understanding how Bakhtin defines and uses the concept of dialogue is essential for understanding the rest of Bakhtin's theories. His concept of dialogue goes far beyond the common

[24] Bakhtin, *Problems*, 78-100 and 278-81.
[25] Davide Nicolini, *Practice Theory, Work, and Organization: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4.
[26] When speaking of "practice-theory," I am referring to a Schatzkian understanding of practice-theory.
[27] Karin Knorr Cetina, Theodore R. Schatzki, and Eike Von Savigny, *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1.
[28] Knorr Cetina et.al, *Practice Turn*, 1-7.
[29] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 177; Bakhtin, *Problems*, 166.
[30] Karin Knorr Cetina, "Intuitionist Theorizing," in Theorizing in Social Science: The Context of Discovery, ed. Richard Swedberg (Stanford: Stanford Social Sciences, 2014); Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldberg, *Tolkning och reflektion: vetenskapsfilosofi och kvalitativ metod* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1994). See p 68-69 for a more thorough account of the intuitionist and abductive approach.
[31] Mats Alvesson and Dan Kärreman, *Qualitative Research and Theory Development: Mystery as Method* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2011), 14-15; Knorr Cetina, "Intuitionist Theorizing," 38.
[32] I address the eventual limitation of Bakhtin's normative preference for the dialogical more thoroughly under the sub-heading 5.1.6 Normativity and Reflexivity.

understanding of dialogue as a conversation. It entails ontology, epistemology, communication theories, ethics, and aesthetics.[33]

The foundation of Bakhtin's theories is the notion that the smallest part of language is not the sentence; it is the *utterance*. In contrast to the sentence, which ends with a full stop, the utterance ends when there is a change in speaker.[34] Hence, an utterance is always social and relational; it is said by someone, in a place, at a time, to someone else. Besides, every utterance demands a reply.[35] Whenever we hear or read something, we reply to it, either verbally or non-verbally, at once or delayed, and as such, we participate in the dialogue. If you ask in a situation: "Who is doing the talking?" the Bakhtinian answer will always include at least two voices. [36] Dialogue is, as such, always a two-sided action, where both speaker and listener act in a dialogue.[37]

Bakhtin also argues that all utterances, insofar as they are both social and historical, are part of what he calls speech genres.[38] He divides speech genres into two categories: direct, or primary, speech genres (everyday conversation) and indirect, or complex, speech genres (novels, letters, etc.).[39] Preaching belongs to this latter category. As such, even if preaching is mostly perceived as a monologue, it is still a dialogue in a Bakhtinian understanding.

1.3.2 Practice

Another key concept is that of practice. In addition to theories on dialogue, a neglected part of Bakhtin's work focuses on providing a philosophy of the act (practice).[40] However, his philosophical theories on the act are difficult to operationalize and use as analytical tools for empirical material. Schatzki defines practice as a *"set of doings and sayings that is organized by a pool of understandings, a set of rules and something I call a 'teleoaffective structure."*[41]

Hence, Schatzki's definition provides an analytical lens for examining the different aspects of the practice of preaching and the organization of practices. Schatzki is also one of few practice-theoreticians who has focused on discourse as part of practice, or as a practice qua practice.[42] Preaching is a practice where discourse is a significant component; therefore, it is rewarding to turn to a practice-theoretician who highlights the role of discourse in practices.[43]

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[33] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 46; Caryl Emerson, *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 6; Bakhtin, *Problems*, xxv.
[34] Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 71.
[35]Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 71.
[36] Wertsch, *Voices*, 63.
[37] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 15.
[38] Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*.
[39] Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 60-62.
[40] Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*.
[41] Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed," 50.
[42] Schatzki, "Sayings, Texts and Discursive Formations."
[43] While Schatzki points out that Pierre Bourdieu, Andreas Reckwitz, and William Hanks have also paid attention to the discourse elements of practice, he still argues that practice-theoretical researchers should pay more attention to how sayings, text, and discourse can be brought into the analysis of the social. Schatzki, "Sayings, Texts and Discursive Formations", 126.

As I have already mentioned, practice is the organizing concept of the thesis, through which I explore how preaching for children can be described and understood. Practice-theory has proved a fruitful theory for dissecting preaching for children, in that it points out how practices have different actors; are configured by time and space; and are composed by understandings, rules, and teleoaffective structures. In arguing that studies of preaching for children should pay attention to the roles of listeners as well as preachers, the concept of practice has widened the range of roles to consider. Moreover, through practice-theory's emphasis on the materiality and timespace of practices—and on how they influence the configuration of a practice—the diverse materiality found in preaching for children was brought to the forefront. Additionally, in the exploration of timespace, several of the normative assumptions of preachers became explicit.

1.3.3 Preaching

In the following section, I define the approach to preaching used throughout the study. Like dialogue and practice-theory, the concept of "preaching" occurs in different forms in this thesis, namely in reference to the particular preaching events, a theoretical and empirical concept, and the field of study.

I understand preaching to be a dialogical practice where preachers and listeners are co-constitutive in creating "the preaching event." In this understanding, I draw on several homileticians who have used Bakhtinian theory in their works, in particular Lorensen, Gaarden, and Charles Campbell & Johan Cilliers.[44] Contributions from Lorensen and Gaarden can be found throughout the thesis, while Campbell and Cilliers are referenced only in the first article as an example of how Bakhtinian theories of carnival contribute to new understandings and perspectives in Homiletics.[45] While I build on the research conducted by Lorensen and Gaarden, I add to their research in highlighting the role of materiality and timespace in preaching and the role of children as listeners in the practice of preaching.

Bakhtin's notion of listening as an act is foundational for this thesis, as it facilitates a description of listeners as active, not only in listening, but also in responding and interpreting, and therefore, as creating meaning within the preaching event and thus co-creating the preaching event itself. Bakhtin's focus on the social, temporal and historical aspects of all utterances also provides a space for including additional aspects of preaching into the discussion on the dialogicity of preaching.

As I will detail in the review of relevant research, homileticians who discuss preaching as a practice seldom define the kind of practice or name the actors and tasks of that practice. In fact, preaching is mostly discussed as a practice for the preachers or the teachers of preachers.[46] What I

[44] Lorensen, *Dialogical*; Gaarden, *Prædikenen.;* Charles L. and Cilliers Campbell, Johan H, *Preaching Fools: The Gospel as a Rhetoric of Folly* (Waco: Baylor University Press CY, 2012).
[45] Campbell and Cilliers, *Preaching Fools.*; Campbell, "Preacher Ridiculous."
[46] Thomas G. Long and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice: A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008); Bass and Dykstra, *For Life Abundant*.

suggest is, that when discussing preaching as a practice, homileticians should not restrict the practice element of preaching to the preacher but should include the listeners as constitutive actors in the practice and, as such, study what listeners *do* with preaching.[47] In employing this new theoretical perspective on preaching, the different understandings, rules and teleoaffective ends of the practice of preaching may become tangible. It thus becomes possible to give a rich description, paraphrasing Schatzki, of why we do what we do (or do not do) in the practice of preaching.

Above I have defined the thesis's theoretical definition of preaching. Next, I reflect on the two main difficulties I encountered when determining what should be defined as preaching in the empirical context.

The interviewees seemed to hold broader views of what constitutes preaching than the theoretical definitions of preaching in Homiletics. Several of the preachers argued that the whole Christian education event, and every activity during the event, could be defined as preaching. In order to delimit my analysis, I employed a narrower understanding of preaching.[48]

There is also a discrepancy between how preachers and listeners understand preaching. While the volunteers and church staff expressed the broad understanding of preaching described above, they mainly discussed the Sunday Sermon in the interviews. The children, on the other hand, seemed to classify everything an adult from the church said to them as preaching, regardless of time or space. Based on these observations, I have broadened the traditional definition of preaching beyond the Sunday worship service. I included some of the activities, such as making Pearls-of-Life bracelets or advent candelabras, as preaching, mainly beacuse the children mentioned them in their discussions of preaching.[49] The empirical definition of what counts as preaching in the different Christian education events is, therefore, situational and contextual. As a result, to be classified as a preaching event in the analysis, there had to be someone addressing Christianity, Christian faith, or Christian practices to someone, where it seemed like it was intended that the listeners should respond either by listening and interpreting what they heard, or by performing some sort of activity like playing "the lost sheep" hide and seek or making a "Pearls-of-Life" bracelet.

1.4 Articles

In this section, I briefely present the three articles that make up the thesis and account for how the articles together answer the thesis's main research question.[50]

The first article, "Preaching at the Thresholds," focuses on mediational means as "foreign words" *in use* in preaching events. The mediational means are analyzed using Bakhtin's concepts of

[47] This question is similar to Gaarden's intention of exploring how listeners listened to sermons, however, in this question, Gaarden assumes that they are listening.
[48] This is keeping with the understanding of unit of analysis expressed in the sub-heading 5.1.3 Unit of Analysis.
[49] The Pearls of Life bracelet (Kristuskrans) is a bracelet that functions as a kind of rosary. It emerged from an idea by the Swedish bishop Martin Lønnebo. It is translated both to Pearls of Life and Wraith of Christ, however, I have chosen to use the translation Pearls of Life. See the English Wikipedia page for more detail in English. "Pearls of Life", Wikipedia, accessed September 21, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wreath_of_Christ
[50] A longer summary of the articles can be found in chapter six.

"dialogical" and "monological," as well as "architecture" and "scaffolding."[51] The article begins with the observation that "something extra" happens in preaching to children; such preaching almost always contains more meditational means than the preacher's words. In "Preaching at the Thresholds," I argue that although much preaching for children seems dialogical in form, it is often monological in the emphasis on conveying a message. I also point out the tendency to separate form and content in preaching for children, which I return to in the third article. Thus, this first article suggests how Bakhtinian theory might deepen the understanding of preaching while also in addition to advancing an initial turn towards seeing preaching as a practice.

The research question in the second article, "I Wish We Could Fast Forward It," revolves around the listener's role in preaching. Using Theodore Schatzki's definition of practice as an analytical lens, I argue that preaching is a practice, and therefore, one needs to study *what listeners do with preaching*.[52] In this article, I demonstrate that children and preachers have different understandings of preaching, that children do not follow the rules of the practice genuinely, and that children and preachers have divergent ends or goals for the practice of preaching for children. Hence, I not only show that children struggle to become full participants in the practice of preaching for children but also draw attention to the role of materiality and affective space as tools for overcoming this struggle. Further, I argue that by employing a practice-theoretical lens, it becomes possible to comprehend more of the actions of the listeners and better understand the practice of preaching for children.

In the third article, "Keeping it Age-Appropriate," I approach the practice of preaching for children by exploring the different timespaces produced in the preachers' practice of preaching for children. I identify four timespaces; school, age-appropriateness, "ordinary" preaching, and biblical texts. Through the analysis of timespace, I explore which normative assumptions the preachers make and how those assumptions configure the preachers' practice when preaching to children, namely, by defining preaching for children as *different* than preaching to adults. This leads preachers to the conclusion that children need different preaching events, and in making that conclusion preachers both over- and underestimate children's capabilities. I also point to how the timespace of age-appropriateness is dominant in almost every aspect within the preachers' practice of preaching for children.

1.4.1 Limitations

There are elements of this study that could very well fit in the field of Religious Education. Situating the thesis within this field or in the field of Childhood Studies or Religious Education would have provided a plethora of conversation partners. Despite this, I have deliberately situated this thesis

[51] Bakhtin, *Problems*, 181-269, especially page 187.; Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 58-59. Bakhtin and Lorensen employs the term architectural whole, which I have shortened to architecture. In doing so, I lose some specificity and gain some simplicity but argue that it does not change the meaning of the term.
[52] Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed," 50.

in Homiletics, as a homiletical approach to preaching for children is overdue and might provide additional knowledge on children's faith and religiosity. However, I recognize that employing the broad understanding of preaching, derived from the empirical material, may pose a danger of further blurring the line between preaching and teaching[53] and that someone with a starting point in Religious Education might classify some of what I have labelled preaching as teaching.[54]

Moreover, the thesis should also have covered the topic of emotions in a better way, as the children seem to respond to questions of emotive character better than more cognitive questions. Although the emotive aspect is to a certain degree covered in the exploration of teleoaffection and affective space, this is an area I could have explored more thoroughly.

1.5 Outline of Thesis

This compilation thesis follows "the Scandinavian model" in its two part structure: the extended introduction is followed by the three articles.[55]

The extended introduction consists of seven chapters. I first provide an introduction to the thesis as a whole. As the Christian Education reform is particular for the Church of Norway, I briefly account for the background of the reform in the second chapter. In the third chapter, I offer a review of relevant research, homing in on three discussions relevant for this thesis: the dialogicity of preaching, preaching as a practice, and preaching for children. The fourth chapter consist of an account of the thesis's theoretical framework, including the ontological and epistemological consequences of this framework. Then, I address methodology and methods, concluding the chapter with a discussion of questions of ethics, reliability, validity, and generalizability. In the sixth chapter, I provide an overview of the articles. Finally, I present the findings, discussing them across the articles and together with relevant theory and other contributions in the field. In this section, I also offer suggestions for further research, then conclude by providing the main contribution and argument of the thesis.

In the second part of the thesis, the articles are presented as published or submitted to journals.

[53] Throughout the thesis I employ the term "teaching" in the vernacular meaning of the word, not in reference to the concept of learning and learning education theories.
[54] In the second article, I point out that preachers mix preaching and teaching together when preaching with children as listeners and explore what this might mean for preaching.
[55] Bjørn Gustavii, *How to Prepare a Scientific Doctoral Dissertation Based on Research Articles,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 3. https://proxy.via.mf.no:2257/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=527887&site=ehost-live.

2. The Background of "God gives—We share" - Plan for Christian Education in the Church of Norway.

Below, I present a short introduction to the recent developments in the Church of Norway's Christian education following the Church's formal separation from the state.

In Norway, the religious education of children has been greatly influenced by the role of the Lutheran State Church tradition. Religious education in schools was denominational (Lutheran) and believed to be part of the Church's baptismal instruction until a change in education laws in 1969.[56] However, as Bengt Ove Andreassen argues, there continued to be a close relationship between Church and school regarding Religious education until further changes in 1990s when the subject expanded from "Knowledge of Christianity" to include "world religions, philosophy, and ethics".[57] In 2002 the subject was revised with the new curriculum mandating that 55 percent of the subject should be reserved for teaching Christianity.[58] After several changes to the name of the subject since 2002, now the subject is called KRLE (Christianity, Religion, Philosophies of life and Ethics). While this is still the case that over 50% of the subject is reserved for learning about Christianity, the present curriculum also instructs that the different Religions and Philosophies of life should be presented in an "objective, critical and pluralistic manner".[59] As a separation of Church and State drew nearer, the Norwegian Parliament approved funding for a large-scale Christian education reform in the Church of Norway in 2003. In response to the large-scale Christian education funding, the Church of Norway's General Synod presented the national plan of the reform "God Gives–We Share" ("Gud gir – Vi deler") in 2009.[60]

The reasons given for needing a Christian education reform were; changes in the role of Norwegian public schools in Christian education, changes in society (secularization and globalization), a developing view of children's rights to spiritual development, and a decrease in attendance in child- and youth programs at the Church.[61] The plan requires every congregation to have

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[56] Bengt-Ove Andreassen, "Religion Education in Norway: Tension or Harmony between Human Rights and Christian Cultural Heritage?," *Temenos* 49, no. 2 (2013): 137. For other articles discussing the relationship between Church and Public schools in Norway see: Elisabet Haakedal. "From Lutheran Catechism to World Religions and Humanism: Dilemmas and Middle Ways through the Story of Norwegian Religious Education," *British Journal of Religious Education* 23, no. 2 (2001): 88-97.; Geir Skeie. "Diversity and the Political Function of Religious Education," *British Journal of Religious Education* 28, no. 1 (2007): 19-32.; Einar Thomassen. "Religious Education in a Pluralistic Society: Experiences from Norway," in *Religious Harmony*, 257-66. ed. Michael Pye, Edith Franke, Alef Theria Wasim and Abdurrahman Mas'ud. Religion and Reason, Vol. 45. Berlin: DE GRUYTER, 2006.

[57] Andreassen, "Religion Education in Norway," 138.

[58] Andreassen, "Religion Education in Norway," 141

[59] The Norwegian Government, Department of Education, "Curriculum KRLE," accessed September 21, 2020, https://www.udir.no/lk20/rle01-03/om-faget/fagets-relevans-og-verdier. Students may also apply to be exempt from the subject, see The Lovdata Foundation, "Lov om grunnskolen og den vidaregåande opplæringa (opplæringslova)," accessed September 28, 2020, https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1998-07-17-61#shareModal

[60] The Church of Norway, "Plan for Christian Education 'God Gives - We Share'," (2010).

[61] Helga Byfuglien, *Når tro deles: styringsgruppas rapport fra trosopplæringsreformens forsøks- og utviklingsfase 2003-2008* (Oslo: Den norske kirke, 2008), 15.

a plan for systematic and continuous Christian Education for all baptized members between the ages of 0-18.[62] Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen points out that it is remarkable that Parliament argued that the reform should be aimed at all baptized children, thus making no distinction between active parishioners and others. Maybe the reason for this broad scope can be found in the discussions leading up to the funding of the reform, where the Norwegian Parliament argued that securing resources for a broad-reaching Christian education reform is vital as a means of ensuring that the Church of Norway remains a Folk Church.[63]

Even after the process of separating church and state now officially is finalized, 71% of the Norwegian population are members of Church of Norway. Yet, only approximately 2% attend Church at least once a month. [64] Hence, several of the children who attend these Christian education events might be described as what researchers call "unchurched."[65] Even so, the children I interviewed expressed that they went to Church often, as they went "every time something special happens," meaning; whenever someone is baptized, buried, confirmed or wed, as well as the 17th of May (Norway's Constitution day) and Christmas eve—or whenever they are invited to a Christian education event.

Such an utterance is quite typical of members in a former State Church, now commonly called a Folk Church.[66] Many of these members attend Church mostly when "something special" happens. [67] Attending church whenever "something special happens" can be an expression of what Grace Davie has argued: that in the Scandinavian Folk Churches, it seems like people are "belonging without believing."[68]

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[62] "Church of Norway information site in English for Christian Education," accessed, 6 July 2020, https://kirken.no/nb-NO/church-of-norway/resources/plan-for-christian-education/

[63]Johnsen, "Religiøs læring,"14.

[64] "Den norske kirke – Medlemsstatisikk"(Church of Norway – Membership statistics), accessed April 03, 2020, https://kirken.no/nb-NO/om-kirken/bakgrunn/om-kirkestatistikk/medlemsstatistikk/ . The revised law detailing the regulations for Religious and Life Stance Communities (tros-og livssynssamfunn) in Norway goes into effect January 1st 2021, however, the Church of Norway still has its own chapter in the law and is under different rules for funding than other religious and life stance communities, something which leads some still arguing that church and state is not yet really separated. See: The Lovdata Foundation, "Lov om tros- og livssynssamfunn," accessed September 28, 2020, https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2020-04-24-31#KAPITTEL_1 and the Norwegian Humanist Association, accessed September 28, 2020, https://human.no/politikk-og-debatt/stat-og-kirke/

[65]Robert C. Fuller, *Spiritual, but Not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). 3

[66] For an introduction to the Scandinavian Folk Churches see Kirsten Donskov Felter, Ninna Edgardh, and Tron Fagermoen, "The Scandinavian Ecclesial Context," in *What Really Matters: Scandinavian Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, ed. Tone Stangeland Kaufman and Jonas Ideström, 5-14. The Church of Sweden Research Series, vol 17 (Eugene: Pickwick, 2018, 2018).

[67] Joel Halldorf, Fredrik Wenell, and Stanley Hauerwas, *Between the State and the Eucharist: Free Church Theology in Conversation with William T. Cavanaugh* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 8; Fredrik Saxegaard, "Realizing Church: Parish Pastors as Contributors to Leadership in Congregations" (PhD. diss., MF Norwegian School of Theology, 2017), 16; Grace Davie, "Belief and Unbelief: Two Sides of a Coin," *Approaching Religion* 2, no. 1 (2012).

[68] I do believe that there should be a necessarily introduced into that sentence – Scandinavians are belonging without *necessarily* believing. Nonetheless, the phrase captures something of what makes the Scandinavian Folk

Nevertheless, the goal of the reform is to enable *all* baptized children to learn about Christianity, have experiences with faith practices, and acquire tools for coping with everyday life.[69] As mentioned, although their resources vary considerably, every congregation is required to design a local Christian education plan based on the national plan. Some Christian education events have already evolved into traditions, most prominently the handing out of books (containing psalms, Bible stories and cartoons adapted for children) to 4-year-olds, the *Tårnagenter* (Tower-Agents) to 7–9-year-olds, and *Lys Våken* (Wide Awake) to 10–12-year-olds.[70] The Christian education events usually last only a day or two.[71]

The reform has been evaluated and researched throughout the process, resulting in several books and reports.[72] In the wake of the reform, there has also been new academic interest in Christian education in general and on the reform in particular. Researchers have studied spirituality, confirmation, religious learning, worship services with confirmands, and—with this dissertation and my research group—preaching.[73]

2.1 The Thesis's Contribution to Research on Christian Education

The curriculum for Christian education in the Church of Norway, "God Gives – We Share," is concentrated on teaching and not preaching. In fact, preaching is only mentioned twice in the plan, once in a list describing which parts of the worship service children can participate in, and once in the list of core bible texts (Sermon on the Mount).[74] However, preaching is still something that participating children experience during all major events, and as it is recommended that every

Churches special. *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates*, European Societies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 18.

[69] The Church of Norway, "God Gives", 13-15.

[70] Reports show statistics for the Christian Education-event books for 4-year-olds, Tower-Agents and Wide Awake. The latest report from 2014 relays that, in 2013, 51% of all baptized children attended the 4-year-old book event, 20% of all baptized 8-year-olds attended a Tower Agent event, and 23% of all baptized 11-year-olds attended a Wide Awake event. Applied to the whole population of Norway, 33% of all 4-year-olds, 14% of all 8-year-olds and 17% of all 11-year-olds attended these events. "Tilstandsrapport Den norske kirke 2014" (Survey Report The Church of Norway 2014), accessed April 03, 2020, https://kirken.no/globalassets/kirken.no/om-kirken/bakgrunn/tilstandsrapport_den_norske_kirke_2014_kifo.pdf 33-35.
In the field, the boundaries of invitations to the events were more fluid than the directions in the national plan. As such, the age group interviewed was 7–12, not 8–11, which would have been "correct" according to the national plan.

[71] Tower-Agents and Wide Awake are most often done over a weekend. The children are invited to activities on Saturday and the worship service on Sunday. Other events, such as handing out books to 4-year-olds, consist only of worship services where the 4-year-olds are the focus.

[72] For a more thorough literature review on research on the reform see: Johnsen, "Religiøs læring," 48-52. For examples of reports see: Ida Marie Høeg and Irene Trysnes, *Menighetenes samvirke med hjemmet: evalueringsforskning på trosopplæringsreformen: rapport 1*, (Oslo: Stiftelsen Kirkeforskning, 2012); Harald Hegstad, Olav Aagedal and Anne Schanche Selbekk, *Når tro skal læres: sju fortellinger om lokal trosopplæring* (Trondheim: Tapir akademisk forl., 2008).

[73] Kristin Graff-Kallevåg and Tone Stangeland Kaufman, *Byggekloss-spiritualitet?: en studie av spiritualitet i Den norske kirkes trosopplæring* (Oslo: IKO-forl., 2018); Morten Holmqvist, "Learning Religion in Confirmation: Mediating the Material Logics of Religion: An Ethnographic Case Study of Religious Learning in Confirmation within the Church of Norway" (PhD. diss., MF Norwegian School of Theology, 2015); Johnsen, "Religiøs læring"; Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen, *Gudstjenester med konfirmanter: en praktisk-teologisk dybdestudie med teoretisk bredde* (Oslo: IKO-forl., 2017); Tone Stangeland Kaufman, *Mer enn ord?* (forthcoming)

[74] The Church of Norway, "God Gives.", 46.

Christian education event should include elements of worship services or conclude in a worship service,[75] I argue that the plan's approach to preaching is under-developed. As mentioned above, although there is much research on the plan, there is very little research on preaching in these events and worship services. This thesis highlights that there is quite a lot of preaching happening in these events and shows the need for further research on the relationship between Christian education and preaching.

[75] The Church of Norway, "God Gives.", 29.

3. Review of Relevant Research

The aim of this review of relevant research is to account for and contribute to three discussions surrounding preaching in general and preaching for children in particular. The discussions concern essential themes in this study: the dialogicity of preaching, preaching as practice and preaching for children. However, as there is no room to extensively cover all three debates, I briefly sketch the discussions on preaching as dialogical and preaching as practice and then provide a more thorough account of the relevant research on preaching for children.

3.1 Moving Towards Understanding Preaching as Dialogical

One of the significant consequences of empirical Homiletics is the turn towards studying the listeners and interviewing them about how they experience preaching. However, as Pleizier points out, even in this empirical turn the listener's role in preaching is seldom explicated or discussed.[76]

A turning point is found in the 1979 release of Fred Craddock's *As One Without Authority*, a seminal book which argued that preaching should be inductive, meaning that the preacher should try to envision the different listeners in the congregation and what occupied them. [77] It's commonly agreed that Craddock gave birth to what is now called New Homiletics, whose adherents argue for the concern for the intended audience.[78] John McClure's *Other-Wise Preaching* argues against the inductive preaching of New Homiletics, claiming the appeal to universal human experience in New Homiletics is flawed, and therefore, New Homiletics is also flawed since it fails to account for human's real and diverse experiences .[79] He claims that one should instead engage listeners in a round-table dialogue about the biblical texts. Another pivotal project is the North American collaborative study, *Listening to Listeners.*[80] In this study, listeners were categorized in order of how their listening fit the Aristotelian categories of logos, ethos, pathos, and the additional category of "embodiment."[81] Others who have conducted empirical response studies on sermons include Lori Carell, Bernice Sundkvist, Hans Austnaberg, Ian Hussey, and Stoorvogel et al.[82]

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[76] Pleizier, *Religious*., 13. While the turn towards empirical research has significantly heightened the role of listeners in Homiletics, earlier contributions are also occupied with listeners. See for instance: Wingren, *Living Word* and Carl Fredrik Wisløf, *Ordet fra Guds munn: aktuelle tanker om forkynnelsen* (Oslo: Lutherstiftelsen, 1963).

[77] Fred Brenning Craddock, *As One without Authority*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979).

[78] See for instance: Buttrick, *Homiletic*; Long, *Witness*; Jana Childers, *Performing the Word: Preaching as Theatre* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998). In a Norwegian context Olav Skjevesland and Halvor Nordhaug are clearly influenced by New Homiletics and inductive preaching. Olav Skjevesland, *Broen over 2000 År: bidrag til prekenlæren* (Oslo: Luther, 1981).; Halvor Nordhaug, *–Så mitt hus kan bli fullt: en bok om prekenen* (Oslo: Luther, 2000).

[79] McClure, *Other-Wise*, 52.

[80] McClure, *Listening*.

[81] This implied verification methodology is a limitation of the study, something which the researchers themselves have commented on in later publications. Ronald J. Allen and Mary Alice Mulligan, "Listening to Listeners: Five Years Later," *Homiletic* 34, no. 2 (2009): 10-11.

[82] Carell, Lori, *The Great American Church Survey* (USA: Mainstay Church Resources, 1991); Sundkvist, *En predikan.*; Hans Austnaberg, *Improving Preaching.*; Ian Hussey, "The Other Side of the Pulpit: Listener's Experiences of Helpful Preaching," *Homiletic* 39, no. 2 (2015); Stoorvogel, Henk, Mark van Vuuren, and Menno de Jong, "Sermons That Have Changed My Life: A Qualitative Study of the Factors in Sermons That Elicit Change," *Homiletic* 44, no. 1 (2019).

Then, there are those who argue for a specifically dialogical understanding of preaching. Homileticians who have employed Bakhtinian theory extensively in their research include James Henry Harris, Charles Campbell and Johan Cilliers, Jonny Karlsson, Marianne Gaarden and Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen.[83] Other scholars focus on dialogue with a dialogical approach to preaching that does not make use of Bakhtin. Take, for instance, Ronald J. Allen and O. Wesley Allen Jr.'s conversational preaching; Hans Malmström's linguistic approach to preaching, which claims that preaching is "hybrid discourse"; and Wilfried Engemann's argument that preaching is "processes of comprehension and communication."[84] Below, I account for Engemann and Gaarden's approach to the dialogicity of preaching. In the next section, I engage Lorensen, who also makes significant contributions to the understanding of preaching as practice.

Like Allen and Allen, Engemann specifies that to preach dialogically does not entail having two persons conversing in the sermon. Instead, he contends that preaching is dialogical whenever listeners are regarded as constitutive participants in the sermon and not simply as containers for the preacher's theological knowledge.[85] "So-called dialogue sermons," he claims, are not dialogues but often "monologues with assigned parts: the partner in the dialogue only serves to communicate a predetermined approach and solution."[86] Engemann makes a distinction between form and content and normatively contends that where many preachers go wrong is in creating sermons that are dialogical in form but not in content. For Engemann, it is a dialogical approach to content that makes sermons dialogical.[87]

Marianne Gaarden has studied how congregants listen to sermons using grounded theory. She discovered that listeners use the preachers' words as a dialogue partner for their inner dialogues. Gaarden establishes three categories of listener interaction with preaching: associative interaction, critical interaction, and contemplative interaction.[88] She thus describes preaching as emerging where meaning arises in what she calls "the third room"—in the encounter between the preacher's words and the listener's thoughts, experiences, and life situation.[89]

With Bakhtinian theory, Gaarden describes listeners as co-authors of the sermon.[90] However, she underlines that this does not mean that the preacher has become redundant or unwanted. The

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[83] Harris, *Word*.; Campbell, *Preaching Fools*.; Karlsson, *Predikans Samtal*; Gaarden, *Prædikenen*.; Lorensen, *Dialogical*. For a more thorough discussion of Harris, Campbell and Karlsson's use of Bakhtin, see: Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 126-137 (Harris), 146-150 (Campbell) and Karlsson (72).
[84] Allen and Allen, *Sermon*. Ronald J. Allen, Preaching and the Other: Studies of Postmodern Insights (St. Louis: Lucas Park, 2014). Hans Malmström, "What Is Your Darkness?," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 19, no. 2 (2015). In general, Malmström writes in the intersection of linguistics, interreligious dialogue and preaching as shown in his other works, among them: "Engaging the Congregation: The Place of Metadiscourse in Contemporary Preaching," *Applied Linguistics* 37, no. 4 (2014); Wilfried Engemann, *Homiletics: Principles and and Patterns of Reasoning*, trans. Helen Heron and Anna Walchshofer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 3.
[85] Engemann, *Homiletics*, 159. Allen, *Sermons.*
[86] Engemann, *Homiletics*, 160.
[87] Engemann, *Homiletics*, 188.
[88] Gaarden, *Prædikenen*, 84-97.
[89] Gaarden, *Prædikenen*, 81
[90] Gaarden, *Prædikenen*, 84-88. Gaarden's use of Bakhtin builds, to a certain extent, on Lorensen's work.

preacher is essential since, without her, the listener would not have a dialogue partner for the inner dialogue.[91]

Moreover, Gaarden critiques McClure for being part of the communicative system of transference, while also calling for a new way of thinking about communication.[92]

3.2 Preaching as Practice

If preaching is dialogical, it is not only necessary for preachers to be aware of listeners and their experiences, it is also the case that listeners are a constitutive part of preaching. As previously mentioned, though preaching is often referred to as a practice, most homileticians use the term "practice" in the vernacular sense of doing or performing preaching. Besides, when preaching is described as a practice, it is mostly described as the preacher's practice.[93]

In *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice*, Thomas Long and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale argue that practice is a fruitful organizational framework for Homiletics and advocate for a change in how preaching is taught to ministry students.[94] They define practice as: "a constellation of actions that people have performed over time that are common, meaningful, strategic, and purposeful."[95] Similarly, Leo Hartshorn, in his article "Evaluating Preaching as a Communal and Dialogical Practice"[96] builds on the understanding of practice put forth by Long and Tubbs Tisdale and argues that a flaw with seminary preaching evaluation is that it usually imagines the preacher as an isolated individual and that this evaluation mostly is done punctually. He contends that this way of evaluating sermons helps sustain a monological understanding of preaching as communication to passive listeners and, therefore, argues for understanding preaching as communal and listening as an action.[97]

In his thesis "Die Predigt Als Praxis der Veränderung," Manuel Stetter partially treats preaching as a practice.[98] Stetter employs Bruno Latour's concept of religious talk and zooms in on Latour's distinction between information and transformation, particularly emphasizing Latour's claim that religious talk should aim to transform.[99] Hence, Stetter argues that religion is complex and exists

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[91] Gaarden, *Prædikenen*, 79-97. Gaarden's contribution has functioned as a point of reference for several later studies, at least in Norway, among them Hilde Fylling's study of the role of the preacher's ethos in listeners' reception and Nils Terje Andersen's study of how Jesus is preached and heard in morning devotionals broadcast on Norwegian public radio. Hilde Fylling, *Hellige ord i vanlige liv: en studie av kirkegjengeres vurdering av prekener* (Tromsø: Kirkelig utdanningssenter Nord, 2015); Nils Terje Andersen, *"Så kommer da troen av budskapet som høres"- En studie av Jesusbilder i NRKs morgenandakter* (unpublished report, 2017)
[92] Gaarden, *Prædikenen*, 107.
[93] See for instance: Paul Scott Wilson, *The Practice of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995); Nancy Lammers Gross, *Women's Voices and the Practice of Preaching*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2017); Frank A. Thomas, *Introduction to the Practice of African American Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016).
[94] Long and Tisdale, *Teaching Preaching,* 3.
[95] Long and Tisdale, *Teaching Preaching,*12.
[96] Leo Hartshorn, "Evaluating Preaching as a Communal and Dialogical Practice," *Homiletic* 35, no. 2 (2011)
[97] Hartshorn, "Evaluating Preaching", 21.
[98] Manuel Stetter, *Die Predigt Als Praxis Der Veränderung: Ein Beitrag Zur Grundlegung Der Homiletik,* Arbeiten zur Pastoraltheologie, Liturgik und Hymnologie, vol 92 (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2018).
[99] Stetter, *Predigt*, 45. I also employ this distinction by Latour in the discussion in the second article. For Latour's distinction between the transformative and informative see Bruno Latour, "'Thou Shall Not Freeze-

of experiences, practices, and discourses, all of which aim to change the subject.[100] The combination of theories from Luther, Ricœur, Taylor, and Latour leads him to claim that preaching is a practice of appropriation both in producing and receiving sermons. Thus, for Stetter, both preacher and listener are active in the practice of preaching.[101]

Theo Pleizier, in *Religious Involvement in Hearing Sermons*, uses grounded theory to come up with a descriptive definition of preaching where he argues that preaching is a combination of inter-human and divine-human communication.[102] Pleizier claims that in the inter-human dynamic, preaching is a social act. He arrives at this theory by arguing that while speech-act theory provides a fruitful way of describing what happens in preaching, it is too narrow in focusing on the speaker to cover all communication happening in preaching. In calling preaching a social act, Pleizier wishes to emphasize that preaching consists of several people acting and that this acting is social.[103] Pleizier's understanding of preaching as a social act has three dimensions: (1) preaching is pseudo-discourse; (2) those who participate in preaching do so with a shared intentionality: to rehearse the historical Christ event, participate in a faith-sharing moment, and be called to live a particular life; (3) preaching involves activity on the part of the listener.[104] In the divine-human dynamic, Pleizier argues that neither preacher nor listener consciousness can sufficiently describe the preaching event. Therefore, he finds the preaching event to be religious, as he argues that both preacher and listener presuppose that God is present and active.[105]

Finally, combining the dialogical and practice-theoretical, Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen argues that preaching is dialogical in an ontological and foundational sense and aims to use Bakhtin's practice-theoretical theories in order to develop a "new methodological approach to homiletics." Moreover, she employs Bakhtinian theories of carnival to argue that preaching is a carnivalized genre.[106] In light of this, she analyses how the homileticians Svend Bjerg, James Henry Harris, John S. McClure, and Charles L. Campbell conduct Theology.[107]

In this thesis, I concentrate on Lorensen's call for developing a pragmatic and practice-oriented approach to preaching. Lorensen contends that one of the main challenges of Practical Theology in general, and Homiletics in particular, is the tension between theory and practice. Subsequently, she argues that empirical homiletical studies have shown that it is time for a

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Frame,' or How Not to Misunderstand the Science and Religion Debate," in *Science, Religion, and the Human Experience*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

[100] Stetter, *Predigt,* 27.

[101] Stetter, *Predigt,* 37 and 380.

[102] Pleizier, *Religious*.

[103] Pleizier, *Religious*, 45.

[104] Pleizier, *Religious,* 46.

[105] Theo Pleizier, "Religious Involvement in Hearing Sermons a Grounded Theory Study in Empirical Theology and Homiletics," *Yearbook for Ritual and Liturgical Studies* 26 (2010). Although Pleizier's theories also regard preaching as a practice, I chose to describe his contribution here in order to coherently present his argument.

[106] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 29

[107] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 68-160

reconsideration of our theological understanding of how faith emerges in preaching and that homileticians need to develop "pragmatic approaches to homiletical communication."[108] In her search for a practice-theory to help unite theory and practice in homiletics, Lorensen turns to Bakhtin and argues that his pragmatic, practice-oriented approach to language and communication is a fruitful theory to use in developing a new and pragmatic approach to homiletical communication.[109] By doing this, she hopes to suggest how homileticians might negotiate the tension between theory and practice.

Lorensen thus argues that Homiletics should focus on pragmatic and practice-oriented approaches, not only in empirical analysis but also in the theoretical and theological understanding of communication. She states:

> Rather than treating the object of research as a "voiceless thing" analyzed from a neutral position, the dialogical research is approached as an inter-subjective dialogue between situated participants. The practice-theoretical focus on socially embedded interaction is here maintained in the sense that the objects of the field of homiletics are studied as situated practices rather as texts abstracted from their discursive environment.[110]

Hence, Lorensen advocates a dialogical, pragmatic, and practice-oriented approach to preaching. This thesis is greatly indebted to Lorensen and her appropriation of Bakhtin's theories in Homiletics. Therefore, this project can be seen as an attempt to answer Lorensen's call to study objects in the field of homiletics as situated practices and an initial attempt to develop a new and pragmatic approach to homiletical communication.

3.3 Preaching and Children

In the review above I demonstrate that the empirical turn in homiletics has been a turn towards adult listeners. As I argue in all three articles, the topic of preaching for children has not received much research interest within the field of Homiletics, at least not when it comes to peer-reviewed research.

However, in the humanities child-centered research—research on children and with children—has surged in the last thirty years. In the field of Religious Education, much essential research has been undertaken on how children learn and how they reflect on their religiosity.[111] Theology of Childhood, as a field of study, has made a substantial contribution to systematic theology in its arguing for children as believers, not believers-to-be.[112] Yet, as Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen contends, from an

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[108] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 21-22.
[109] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 21-40
[110] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 36.
[111] Jennifer Beste, "Children Speak: Catholic Second Graders' Agency and Experiences in the Sacrament of Reconciliation," *Sociology of Religion* 72, no. 3 (2011); Jerome Berryman, *Godly Play: A Way of Religious Education*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991); Sofia Cavalletti, *The Religious Potential of the Child: Experiencing Scripture and Liturgy with Young Children* (Chicago, Ill: Liturgy Training Publications, 1992); Johnsen, "Religiøs læring."
[112] Sturla J. Stålsett, "'Barna roper i helligdommen': for en urovekkende barneteologi," in *Barneteologi og kirkens ritualer: perskektiver på trosopplæring, barn og konfirmanter*, ed. Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen, 31-42. Det praktisk-teologiske seminars Skriftserie nr. 14. Oslo, 2007, 31. See also Bunge, Marcia J. "The Child, Religion,

empirical point of view, the problem with Theology of Childhood is that it is still a matter of adults trying to take a child's perspective and not children addressing their own experiences.[113] Such is not the case in the fields of Children in Religions,[114] Religious Education, or Psychology of Religion,[115] where empirical studies concentrated on engaging children directly are many. In Practical Theology more broadly, leading scholars Joyce Ann Mercer and Bonnie Miller-McLemore have advocated for a theology that takes children seriously and includes children's perspectives and faith in theological work and congregations.[116]

What follows is a literature review of the topic of children and preaching, from a homiletical point-of-view. I first account for a discussion on children's sermons and move on to describing the discussion on preaching for children in Scandinavia, showing that the discourse is surprisingly similar across countries and decades. It's worth noting that my homiletical focus means that I have been unable to include several essential contributions on children and religious faith from the fields of Religious Education, Psychology of Religion, and Childhood Studies—some of which are mentioned above.

3.3.1 Preaching to Children—Same or Different?

I have located three peer-reviewed articles on the subject of children's sermons; one dates back to 1983 while the other two are from the 1990s.[117] Below I review the three peer-reviewed articles as well as three non-peer-reviewed contributions—two articles and one book. These contributions were selected after an extensive search for contributions on the topic of children and preaching in University databases.[118]

Although I strived to stay within the "homiletical lane," the contributions below can still be divided into contributions mainly emphasizing homiletical or religious educational theories. This challenge points to the lack of interest in preaching for children from Homiletics, as there were far more contributions employing theories from Religious Education.

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and the Academy: Developing Robust Theological and Religious Understandings of Children and Childhood." *The Journal of Religion* 86, no. 4 (2006): 549-79.

[113] Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen, "Jesu lidelse, død og oppstandelse. En barneteologisk analyse av trosopplæring om påsken," *Prismet* 61, no. 1 (2010): 21.

[114] For a good overview of the research history of the field of Children and Religion see the introduction in: Ridgely, *Children*.

[115] Roehlkepartain, *Handbook*.

[116] Joyce Mercer, *Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2005); Bonnie J Miller-McLemore, "Children and Religion in the Public Square: 'Too Dangerous and Too Safe, Too Difficult and Too Silly'," *The Journal of Religion* 86, no. 3 (2006); Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Let the Children Come: Reimagining Childhood from a Christian Perspective*, Families and Faith Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

[117] Carr, "Children's Sermon."; Nieman, "Thuds."; Van Dyk, "Preach!"

[118] Among others, I have searched the ATLA/ATLAS database and Norwegian, Swedish and Danish university databases. I searched for articles and books that address the theme of preaching to children as homileticians, placed themselves within the field of Homiletics, or at least, that the contributions aimed at engaging preachers.

Focusing on preaching— sameness

James Carr's fifty-page article from 1983 is the oldest of the texts.[119] Carr has conducted a comprehensive study, combining developmental and educational theories with homiletical and hermeneutical theories. [120] Although he employs developmental and educational theories that are outdated, I believe Carr still makes an essential contribution with his discussion of the object lesson and moral lesson.[121] He decries object lessons, arguing that: "The object is really more a prop than a mode. The object is used as a visual prop to hold attention and provide an introduction to a moral lesson."[122] Carr's issue with moral lessons is that in their emphasis on teaching children to be moral, they render preaching a mere extension of child-rearing. As such, "the moral lesson takes precedence over the gospel."[123] Carr concludes that storytelling is the best mode of children's sermons and encourages preachers to become storytellers.[124]

A decade later, James Nieman claims that the fundamental challenge for preaching for children is to see children's sermons as "sermons and nothing less."[125] He goes on to describe what he calls the three "thuds" of children's sermons. The first thud is when the preacher states: "In the lesson I just read…." Nieman points out that the preacher assumes the children listened to the text and that they, like adults, expect a connection between the reading and the sermon, which Nieman believes that preachers cannot do. The second thud is when the preacher takes out an object and asks "what am I holding here?" Nieman argues that this takes the focus away from the sermon and places it onto the object in question—an argument reminiscent of Carr's critique of the object lesson.[126] The third thud is the application at the end, the point when the preacher tries to make the sermon relevant for the children. Speculating, Nieman claims that children are not ready to handle this abstract application and will lose interest.

He then goes on to argue that these thuds appear not only because preachers ignore developmental psychology, but also because they disregard homiletical theory and thus "overlook the duties of any sermon in any time or place."[127] He moves on to account for what he believes are the four tasks for preachers when creating sermons, including children's sermons: (1) engage the Bible text, (2) use active and effective language, (3) attend to a specific context, and (4) remember that sermons are an inseparable part of the liturgy and ritual of the worship service.[128]

Nieman's final argument is that preachers', adults', and homileticians' views of preaching to children have been too narrow, and he claims that the perception of children as passive receivers of a

[119] Carr, "Children's Sermon."
[120] Carr, "Children's Sermon," 3.
[121] Carr, "Children's Sermon," 40-41, 45-51.
[122] Carr, "Children's Sermon," 40.
[123] Carr, "Children's Sermon," 50.
[124] Carr, "Children's Sermon."
[125] Nieman, "Thuds," 260.
[126] Carr, "Children's Sermon."
[127] Nieman, "Thuds," 260.
[128] Nieman, "Thuds," 260.

sermon *happening to* them is wrong. He also argues the preacher never performs the sermon alone and that all sermons are thus collaborative.[129] With this, Nieman is the only one of the contributions that refers to what at that time were new developments in the field of Homiletics.

Wilbert M. Van Dyk's main concern is to argue that a sermon is always a sermon and, therefore, should be prepared as a sermon and do what sermons should do.[130] Van Dyk makes a comprehensive case for why children ought to be a part of worship services, and provides a historical overview of the topic children and preaching as well as a typology of styles of Children's sermons.[131] These styles include:

> (1) Object lessons in which an item of interest becomes the springboard to the sermon, (2) moralisms in which biblical characters become examples of good and evil, (3) stories that are often the retelling of Bible stories, (4) dialogical sermons in which the minister develops a thought-through question and answer, and (5) participatory sermons such as drama and other interactive forms of communication.[132]

Contradicting Nieman, Van Dyk also argues that the audience in a children's sermon is not only the children but the whole congregation. Since Van Dyk is adamant that "a sermon is a sermon,"[133] he also claims that the keys to writing an excellent children's sermon are the same as to writing any other sermon. In other words, Van Dyk argues that preaching to children is the *same* as preaching to adults and notes that Scripture should be the departing point of *all* sermons.

In summation, these three homiletical contributions focus on the importance of ensuring that children's sermons are still sermons. While they employ some theories from Psychology and Religious Education, they argue for employing homiletical and hermeneutical tools when preaching for children and strongly oppose object lessons and moralizing stories.

Focusing on the children–difference

One of the typical traits of books and articles on preaching for children is to provide a list of "best practices." Turning now to three non-peer-reviewed contributions, I will describe the main arguments, as well as the lists of "best practices" provided in the three contributions, which serve as examples of a general trend in similar works.

Richard Osmer suggests that teaching the Catechism is a good way of performing children's sermons.[134] In his article, he offers six guidelines for teaching the Catechism through children's sermons. Among other guidelines he argues that when preaching for children, preachers should consider their audience and use visual aids and objects, "when appropriate."[135] Unlike those scholars

[129] Nieman, "Thuds," 263.
[130] Van Dyk, "Preach!," 432.
[131] Van Dyk, "Preach!," 432-34.
[132] Van Dyk, "Preach!," 436.
[133] Van Dyk, "Preach!," 438.
[134] Richard Robert Osmer, "Teaching the Catechism in the Children's Sermon: A New Possibility for Biblical and Theological Literacy," *Journal for Preachers* 4, no. 22 (1999).
[135] Osmer, "Teaching Cathecism," 39-41.

who solely rely on a Religious Education perspective, Osmer claims that it is important to establish a link between biblical texts and preaching for children.[136]

Ann M. Garrido tries to help preachers by highlighting seven "observations" about children before offering five suggestions for preachers:

1. Have a point and one point only.
2. Preach the great mysteries with wonder.
3. Focus on kerygmatic preaching over paranetic preaching (more good news than moral exhortion)
4. Consider the non-verbals
5. Read the Scripture with the eyes of the "small."[137]

O. Suthern Sims Jr. has an even more extensive list in his book *Creating and Leading Children's Sermons: A Developmental Approach*. His "suggestions for preparation" includes twenty-three bullet points. A few samples of the suggestions include:

- Children like repetition. Therefore, do not hesitate to repeat stories, biblical references, and materials.
- Keep words simple and within the experiences of children.
- Involve the children as much as feasible in the homily.
- Always talk to and with the children, not the congregation.
- Involve as many of the five senses as possible.[138]

While nuanced, the contributions above correspond with the patterns of such books being practical, normative, and prescriptive with their guidelines, examples of sermons, and heavy reliance on theories from Religious Education.[139]

Moreover, the six books and articles described above are also quite old. Most are published before the turn towards listeners and introduction of empirical research into Homiletics, and therefore, predate any of the recent advances in thinking about preaching, e.g. the dialogical, carnivalistic, "Other-Wise," relational, and conversational approaches to preaching.[140] While the idea of round-table preaching and the preliminary turn towards listeners through exegeting congregations emerged before

[136] Osmer, "Teaching Cathecism," 38-41
[137] Ann M. Garrido, "Preaching among Children," *Liturgical Ministry* 15, no. Winter (2006).
[138] O. Suthern Sims Jr, *Creating and Leading Children's Sermons* (Macon, Georgia, USA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing Inc., 1999).
[139] O. Suthern Sims Jr, *Creating.*
[140] Campbell, *Preaching Fools*; Gaarden and Lorensen, "Listeners,"; Lorensen, "Carnivalized,"; Allen and Allen, *Sermon*; McClure, *Other-Wise*; Robert Stephen Reid, *Slow of Speech and Unclean Lips: Contemporary Images of Preaching Identity* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2010); Lorensen, *Dialogical*; Sivert Angel, "Talerens troverdighet i prekener for konfirmanter," in *Gudstjenester med konfirmanter*, ed. Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen (Oslo: IKO-forlaget, 2017).

the millennium, these notions does not seem to have made its way into the books and articles on preaching for children (with the exception of Nieman).[141]

Preaching for Children in the Scandinavian and Norwegian Context

In a Scandinavian context of academical contributions on preaching for children, there are contributions on family worship services that have chapters or sub-sections on preaching for children, as well as contributions on the use of narrative to tell children biblical stories.[142] There is even one book, *Himmel over livet,* that is dedicated to preaching for children; however, no homileticians contributed to this volume.[143] The book presupposes that children are *different* than adults, and hence it focuses on forms of preaching that accommodate this difference.[144] In the chapter that mainly discusses preaching, Heid Leganger-Krogstad argues that preaching for children should focus on core biblical narratives and core Christian themes.[145] In general, she provides several well-founded pedagogical reflections concerning children and learning, affirming the book's grounding in Religious Education.[146]

Further, it is worth mentioning two Norwegian empirical homiletical studies of teenagers' responses to preaching. As part of the project "Grensesprengende forkynnelse og undervisning for ungdom anno 2008" [Expanding Borders of Preaching and Teaching for Youth Anno 2008], Hans Austnaberg interviewed churchgoing teenagers about their responses to preaching.[147] Austnaberg found that the preacher's ethos was essential for the youths' experience of meaningfulness.[148] Additionally, the youth expressed that preaching was meaningful when they felt it concerned them and their lives.[149] In the discussion, Austnaberg argues for a broad definition of preaching which can

[141] Lucy Atkinson Rose, *Sharing the Word: Preaching in the Roundtable Church* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997); Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*, Fortress Resources for Preaching (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).
[142] Leiv I. Møen et al., *Gudstjeneste med barn: noen prinsipper, erfaringer og forslag til praktiske opplegg for familie-, skole- og barnegudstjenester* (Oslo: IKO's læremidler, 1980); Holger Lissner, *Gudstjeneste for alle sanser,* (Valby: Unitas, 1995); Rolf Larsson, *På söndag: familjegudstjänst: ett hjälpmedel* (Älvsjö: Verbum förlag, 1983); Heid Leganger-Krogstad, "Forkynnelse i møte med en ny tid," in *Himmel over livet: forkynnelse for barn i en ny tid*, ed. Geir Hegerstrøm and Oscar Jansen (Oslo: IKO-forlaget, 2000); Eirin Hoel Hauge and Kristin Moen Saxegaard, *Fortell dine barn: bibelkunnskap for trosopplærere* (Oslo: Verbum, 2012).
[143] Geir Hegerstrøm and Oscar Jansen, *Himmel over livet: forkynnelse for barn i en ny tid* (Oslo: IKO-forlaget, 2000).
[144] Hegerstrøm and Jansen, *Himmel over livet*, 7.
[145] Leganger-Krogstad, "Forkynnelse," 23.
[146] Leganger-Krogstad, "Forkynnelse," 23.
[147] Hans Austnaberg et al., *Grensesprengende: om forkynnelse for ungdom 15-18 år* (Trondheim: Tapir akademisk forl., 2009). In the introduction, Austnaberg and co-editor Bård Mæland rightly draw attention to the fact that there is also scant research on preaching to youth. Hans Austnaberg and Bård Mæland, "Grensesprengende: om temaet og boken," in *Grensesprengende om forkynnelse for ungdom 15-18 år*, ed. Hans Austnaberg and Bård Mæland (Tapir akademisk forlag, 2009).
[148] Hans Austnaberg, "Om betydningsfull forkynnelse og endringserfaring," in *Grensesprengende om forkynnelse for ungdom 15-18 år*, ed. Hans Austnaberg and Bård Mæland (Tapir akademisk forlag, 2009); 80.
[149] Austnaberg, "Betydningsfull forkynnelse," 89 and 91.

include actions.[150] However, he adheres to a transfer model of communication and also theologically defines actions as diaconal actions.[151]

In a more recent contribution, Sivert Angel uses rhetoric theory and interviews with listeners (confirmands) to examine how the form and performance of preaching events contributes to shaping what listeners hear in the preaching events. Angel focuses on how preachers establish ethos in the preaching events. He then argues that the form of preaching is vital for how their ethos is perceived and thus for understanding the listener's response. [152] He contends that the composition of preaching events function as speech acts in the way that the preacher uses them to connect with the situation and the actors in the room. Moreover, he points out that the enactment of preaching events can overcome poorly written argumentation, contradict or block the preacher's intended message, or support what the preacher wishes to say. [153] His main finding is that there is a clear connection between the form of preaching events and how they were heard.

Same or Different?

Put simply, the books reviewed above that are influenced by Religious educational theories principally advise preachers to keep the preaching event short, simple, and engaging. Additionally, preachers are encouraged to use visual and material objects, although several authors warn that there is a difference between object lessons (not recommended) and employing materiality to highlight the preaching (recommended).[154] An additional observation is that exception for Osmer, these books and articles do not address the use of the biblical text in preaching for children.

As I have shown, in the extant texts on preaching for children, there exists a division between homileticians and religious educators. While homileticians underline the *sameness* of sermons, including their preparation and delivery, those with a more religious educational point-of-view underline the *difference* between children and adults when it comes to cognitive capacity, language, and attention span. What is most striking about the Scandinavian texts is that they give surprisingly similar advice as their US counterparts. This hints at a unified Western understanding of how preachers should do preaching for children, independent of context. Further, the empirical contributions on youth that were surveyed are more nuanced in their approaches and employ theories used in "ordinary" Homiletics.

[150] Hans Austnaberg, "Når forkynner vi?: fra ordforkynnelse til totalformidling," in *Grensesprengende om forkynnelse for ungdom 15-18 år,* ed. Hans Austnaberg and Bård Mæland (Trondheim: Tapir akademisk forlag, 2009).
[151] Austnaberg, "Når forkynner vi?," 36.
[152] Angel, "Troverdighet," 76-77.
[153] Angel, "Troverdighet," 117.
[154] Jr, *Creating*, 8; Carr, "Children's Sermon," 22.

3.4 Summing Up

At the beginning of the chapter, I pointed towards three discussions in Homiletics. First, through this review, we have seen that the turn towards listeners in Homiletics also precipitates a more dialogical view of preaching, as it concentrates on the interactions between preachers and listeners. In this more dialogical understanding of preaching, Bakhtinian theory is quite widely used by homileticians. Yet, with the exception of Gaarden, Bakhtinian theory has been used to make theoretical arguments for the dialogicity of preaching. By combining empirical homiletical research, Bakhtin's theories and practice-theory, I aim to move the discourse on preaching, dialogicity in Homiletics a step further towards an understanding of preaching as not only dialogical, but also as a practice.

Second, I have demonstrated that although preaching often is considered a practice, most homileticians do not account for how it is a practice. However, there is a growing number of homileticians who do argue for understanding preaching more communally and as some sort of practice. This thesis especially builds on the contributions from Gaarden and Lorensen in working towards a pragmatic and practice-oriented approach to Homiletics and suggesting that considering preaching as a practice that extends beyond the preacher is fruitful for Homiletics.

Finally, the research on listeners' responses to preaching cited above is soley focused on adult responses to preaching. Additionally, most of the studies, especially those from outside the Nordic countries, have been based on interviews with regular churchgoers. Hence, this thesis contributes to building the field in its emphasis on (relatively) unchurched children. Moreover, I show that the topic of preaching for children is under-researched, at least from a homiletical point-of-view. I also highlight the division in the literature between those who argue that preaching to children is similar to other kinds of preaching (homileticians) and those who argue that since children are different from adults, preaching for children needs to be different (religious educators).

4. Towards a Theoretical Framework

In the following, I situate the thesis within a practice-theoretical paradigm and illustrate the ontological and epistemological consequences this has had for the research. I go on to describe the three key concepts of practice, dialogue, and preaching. Finally, I elaborate on the operationalization of concepts in the three articles. Throughout the theory chapter, I also try to show connections between Schatzki and Bakhtin where they previously had been made and where I have found echoes or connections. [155]

Scholars often divide theory use into three levels: paradigm level theory, middle-range theory ,and operationalized theory.[156] However, I have used theory more in line with what Karin Knorr Cetina, building on theories from neuroscience and cognitive science, describes as "intuitionist theorizing."[157] This she defines as: "unconscious mental activity that consists in transforming information absorbed in the empirical reality we study as researchers into theoretical concepts, relationships and accounts that clarify the research area and help us understand the questions and problems posed."[158] Hence, an intuitivist researcher uses theory as a toolbox from which she can pick "selectively and flexibly."[159] Knorr Cetina highlights that this selection is not made freely, "but in relation to a research community that shapes how the theoretical toolbox looks. Therefore, the intuitivist researcher does not come at theories without any previous knowledge or assumptions."[160]

As already stated, the theoretical framework in this thesis derives from different, albeit similar traditions—Schatzki's version of practice-theory and the dialogical theories of Bakhtin. However, through the account of the theories below, I believe I demonstrate that, together, they provide an interpretive repertoire that has been fruitful for opening up and interpreting the empirical material in this thesis. [161] Since Bakhtin and Schatzki are quite philosophical in their approaches, their ontological and epistemological considerations profoundly shape their theories. Further complicating the matter,

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[155] As I account for later, Schatzki belongs to the strand of practice-theory that employs Heidegger's theories extensively. Holquist and Clark point out that Bakhtin's theories of responsibility are similar to Heidegger's theories of responsibility in *Being and Time*. However, Bakhtin writes before Heidegger and is published much later. Holquist and Clark, therefore, claim that it is not likely that they have read each-other; it is more likely that they both struggled with philosophical topics that were at the forefront of intellectual debate in the early twentieth century. Clark, *Mikhail Bakhtin*., 94.; Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability*, xxxv-xxxix. For a discussion of the similarities of Bakhtin and Heidegger see David Patterson, "Bakhtin and Heidegger: Word and Being," in *Literature and Spirit: Essays on Bakhtin and His Contemporaries*, ed. David Patterson (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2015); Maria Cristina Hennes Sampaio, Karla Daniele de Souza Araújo, and Ezequiel Bezerra Izaias de Macedo, "Bakhtin and Heidegger: Paths to the Understanding and Interpretation of the Event of Being in Language," *Bakhtiniana: Revista de Estudos do Discurso* 10, no. 3., (2015).

[156] Berth Danermark, *Explaining Society: Critical Realism in the Social Sciences*, (London Routledge2002). 125; Robert Merton, "On Social Theories of the Middle Range (1949)," in *Classical Sociological Theory* ed. Craig Calhoun, et al., (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), 448; W. Lawrence Neuman, "Theory and Reserach," in *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, ed. W. Lawrence Neuman (Boston: Pearson, 2011), 56.

[157] Knorr Cetina, "Intuitionist."

[158] Knorr Cetina, "Intuitionist," 38.

[159] Knorr Cetina, "Intuitionist," 44.

[160] Knorr Cetina, "Intuitionist," 43.

[161] Alvesson and Kärreman, *Qualitative*., 48-49.

Bakhtin, in particular, does not write in a manner where different levels of theory are orderly separated.[162] Therefore, a basic understanding of the philosophical background is essential in order to grasp his more pragmatic theory.

4.1 Theories of Practice

I place this thesis within what Davide Nicolini labels a strong program of practice-theory, meaning that I understand practices as the "primary social thing."[163] In defining what is distinctive for a practice-theoretical approach, Nicolini claims that such an approach has "at least" five distinguishing traits.

First, practice-theoretical approaches, on an ontological and epistemological level, emphasize that there is productive and reproductive work behind all the apparently durable features of our world. Hence, placing this thesis within a practice-theoretical paradigm translates to treating the social—including the religious—as something which is produced and re-produced in practices where mind, body, time, space, and materiality interact.[164]

Nicolini argues that in the world we experience, someone is always doing and saying something in order to produce reality.[165] Yet, the notion that reality is produced does not mean that nothing is "real" or that everything is relative. Moreover, adopting a practice-theoretical approach to the social, offers a way beyond dichotomies that other theories have either created or failed to solve, such as mind/body, social/material, or theory/practice. Nicolini contends that a practice-theoretical approach does not resolve the traditional dualisms but rather dissolves them as they are no longer relevant dualisms when the world is seen as nexuses of practices that are continuously made and re-made.[166]

Second, a practice-theoretical approach puts the importance of the body and objects in social matters at the forefront. It is not possible to imagine a practice without bodies or material objects, because in practice-theory, mental processes are not separated from bodily processes. However, this equalling motion does not necessarily stop with the mind and the body, as there are practice-theoreticians who believe that non-human objects have agency. As an example of one such theoretician Nicolini mentions Bruno Latour. Although Nicolini admits that Latour might protest to be labelled a practice-theoretician, he argues that Latour equalizes human and non-human actors in social practice and gives non-human objects agency. Thus, in Latour's theories, an object can exert direct impact on human action.[167] In contrast to Latour, Schatzki, though recognizing the importance of

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[162] Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1984). 1-3.
[163] Knorr Cetina et al., *Practice Turn*. 1; Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 13.
[164] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 1-2 and 11-12.
[165] Further comment on the epistemological and ontological consequences of practice-theory and its connections to Bakhtin is provided in the next sub-section.
[166] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 2-3
[167] Nicolini, Ibid. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 63-86.

materiality, claims that only humans carry out practice. He does not believe that materials exert a direct impact on human action; they are not equal.[168] In Schatzki's theories, material arrangements are used by people when they perform practices.[169] While I do find Latour's theories intriguing, in choosing Schatzki as my main practice-theoretician, in this thesis I have treated materiality and objects as essential for practice but not as exerting any direct impact on human action.

Thirdly, practice-theoretical approaches demand that researchers rethink the role of agents and individuals. Meaning and identity are formed in and through practices, as they both concern intelligibility. Meaning is understood as something intelligible *to* someone, and identity as being intelligible *as* someone. In Schatzki's approach to practice-theory in particular, both meaning and identity are relational, multiple, and provisional. Hence, this approach seeks to place agency neither solely within the individual nor within systems, since both individuals and systems are always at work in practices. It is in human action and interaction that the individual and the system meet and can be changed. Nicolini calls this form of agency post-individualist, as it is not possible to grant ontological primacy to either practitioners or practice.[170]

This relational understanding of meaning and individuality is similar in the theories of Bakhtin, for whom meaning and individuality arise in the meeting of at least two responsible consciousnesses.[171] While Bakhtin believes the human act, rather than practices, to be the foundational part of the world, he also argues that this human act encompasses not only the individual, but also the historical, social, traditional and cultural parts of the world. For Bakhtin, human acts are always performed in relation to others.[172] Furthermore, this notion of the subject as relational and provisional also corresponds with this thesis's epistemological considerations concerning how to view children.[173]

Fourth, a practice-theoretical approach contributes to shedding new light on epistemology and discourse. In a practice-theoretical approach, knowledge is created and shared within the practice. Thus, knowledge is expressed in mastering to perform the practice. Additionally, discourse becomes practice, as it is seen to interact with and act on the world rather than represent observations of the world. However, practice theories argue that discourse alone cannot explain the social; it is always part of practices.[174] This view of discourse is compatible with a Bakhtinian understanding of dialogue and communication. Against a Structuralist understanding of language (and in line with a practice-

[168] See p xx and also: Sonia Hazard, "The Material Turn in the Study of Religion," *Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 4 (2013): 58-78.; Theodore R. Schatzki, "Materiality and the Social Life," *Nature and Culture* 5, no. 2 (2010).
[169] Spaargaren, Gert, Don Weenink, and Machiel Lamers. *Practice Theory and Research: Exploring the Dynamics of Social Life*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016.
[170] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 178.33
[171] Bakhtin, *Problems*, 283-301.
[172] Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, xix; Bakhtin, *Philosophy*.
[173] Lesley-Anne Gallacher and Gallagher, Michael "Methodological Immaturity in Childhood Research? Thinking through 'Participatory Methods'," *Childhood* 15, no. 4 (2008); Sirkka Komulainen, "The Ambiguity of the Child's 'Voice' in Social Research," *Childhood* 14, no. 1 (2007).
[174] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 5-6.

theoretical approach to discourse). Bakhtin argues that language is social, and that dialogue is a two-sided action.[175]

The final trait Nicolini ascribes to practice-theory is that it reaffirms the centrality of interests and power in everything we do.[176] He argues that practices and the way practices are organized in time and space "produce and reproduce differences and inequalities." [177] Hence, someone's interest is always prioritized over another's. Yet, practices are also undetermined and are thus open and changeable.[178]

While power and power structures have not been a central theme in this thesis, research that includes children always needs to reflect on the relationship between children, as research participants, and the adult researcher. I address the topic of asymmetry between researcher and research participants in the chapter on methodology.

4.2 Ontology and Epistemology - Practice-theory in Dialogue with Bakhtin and Childhood Research

Nicolini calls the ontology in Schatzki's approach to practice a "mikro foundationalist ontology."[179] With this, he means that in Schatzki's theories, the social is reconstructed as practice-based. Quoting Schatzki, he argues that in such an ontology, human lives "hang together through a combination of 'intentional relations, chains of action, the interpersonal structuring of mentality and intelligibility, as well as through layouts of, events occurring in, and connections among the components of material settings' which are all effects of practices."[180]

As already mentioned, Nicolini argues that, in practice-theoretical approaches, the world is always made and re-made. Hence, such approaches oppose both relativism and what Nicolini calls "crude realism."[181] Both Nicolini and Schatzki argue that practice-theoretical reflections of ontology coincide with a flat ontology, meaning they perceive reality as existing on one single level. There is nothing above or below reality, no hierarchies or underlying structures.[182] The world and the real are approached as relational entities, where the real is assembled and re-assembled.[183] Hence, all of reality happens on one level, and no experiences are postulated to be outside this reality.[184]

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[175] Clark, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 81 and 221-225.; Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 61, 68, and 81
[176] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 6.
[177] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 6.
[178] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 6.
[179] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 175.
[180] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 175.
[181] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 177.
[182] Theodore R. Schatzki, "Practice Theory as Flat Ontology," in *Practice Theory and Research (*London: Routledge, 2016). 29-30; Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 14.
[183] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 3.
[184] This flat ontology might sound like a challenge for a theological conception of reality. For an extensive argument on the relationship between flat ontology and theology see: John Reader, *Theology and New Materialism: Spaces of Faithful Dissent*, Radical Theologies and Philosophies (New York: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2017).

4.2.1 Schatzki and Flat Ontology

While Schatzki has written extensively on this subject, it is important to note that practice-theory is not alone in a flat ontology approach. Schatzki mentions, among others, Bruno Latour, as another scholar who advances a flat ontology, though he believes Latour's approach differs.[185] Schatzki argues that practice theories are flat because they "(1) treat practices as the central element in the constitution of social phenomena, and (2) practices are laid out on one level."[186]

According to Schatzki, practice theories dissolve the division between micro, meso, and macro levels. He claims that social life is made up of bundles of practices and material arrangements which together make the "plenum in which all social affairs transpire."[187] Schatzki's bundles contain both macro and micro phenomena, which leads to the claim that these bundles go from smaller to larger, rather than from micro to macro. Therefore, a macro phenomenon is just a large bundle.[188]

4.2.2 No Abstract Ideas – Ontology in Bakhtin

In Bakhtin's theories, anthropology and ontology are closely linked, and all these theories stem from the foundation of dialogue as two-sided action. Hence, a dialogic ontology "suggests that people are born 'needy,' as they depend on others for values or embodied ideas to give a clear sense of who they are…"[189] Bakhtin argues that humans need each other in order to exist in being, as we have no possibility to see ourselves. Hence, we are dependent on the Other's surplus of vision; the Other sees us from the outside and through the eyes of the Other we then see and get to know ourselves.[190]

Moreover, vital to Bakhtin's ontology and epistemology is his theory that there is no such thing as an abstract idea. In his discussion on truth, Bakhtin uses the incarnation as the ultimate argument for this theory. He claims that the incarnation is proof that even God had to become embodied in order for humans to have a personal relationship with God. Moreover, Bakhtin argues that in the incarnation, Christ "saves God from the necessary neutrality of a disembodied consciousness and allows him to participate fully in the world."[191] From his contention that there are no abstract thoughts, it follows that there is also no abstract ontology or transcendent reality.[192] Hence, Bakhtin's ontology is embodied and anthropological.

This insistence on no abstract ideas has consequences for how Bakhtin views human action. For Bakhtin, the human act is a responsible act, a notion he bases on the uniqueness of all humans.

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[185] Schatzki accounts for this difference in Schatzki, "Flat Ontology."
[186] Schatzki, "Flat Ontology," 32.
[187] Schatzki, "Flat Ontology," 32.
[188] Schatzki, "Flat Ontology," 34
[189] Paul Sullivan, *Qualitative Data Analysis: Using a Dialogical Approach* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012)., 5
[190] Bakhtin, *Towards*, 47; Clark, *Bakhtin*, 73.; Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 135-137. Bakhtin has been critiqued for having a too naïve view of the Other's vision in assuming that it is always loving. See for instance Emerson, *First Hundred*, 261-264
[191] Ruth Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin: God and the Exiled Author*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Unversity Press, 1998). 35.
[192] Bakhtin does retain a possibility for transcendence through what he calls the super-addressee. The super-addressee functions as a sort of fail-safe; an entity that always hears and responds to any utterance. For a more thorough account of the super-addressee see Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 108-110.

Hence, Bakhtin argues that "man-in-general does not exist; I exist and a particular concrete other exists – my intimate, my contemporary (social mankind), the past and future of actual human beings (of actual historical mankind)."[193]

In our responsible actions, we unite the oppositions of givenness and positedness; we are found in being (we live here in this world), and we actively participate in it.[194] It is in Bakhtin's theories on the human act that there are the most apparent connections to practice-theory.[195] Although Bakhtin does not speak of practices, the way he conceptualizes the human act—as something that encompasses both the given and posited of human experience, theoretical knowledge, the cultural, the historical, and time (chronotopical) of being in the world—is not far from how practice-theoretical approaches think of the world and how humans act in it.[196]

While Bakhtin does not promote a strictly flat ontology and retains a possibility of transcendence through the super-addressee, there are enough motions towards levelling, and motions away from abstraction and transcendence, that I argue that his theories can be used together with a practice-theoretical notion of flat ontology as promoted by Schatzki.

4.2.3 Timespace

Timespace is a concept used as an analytical tool in the third article, but as it is part of the epistemological and ontological theories of both Schatzki and Bakhtin, I address it here.

Schatzki has made significant contributions to the discussion of time and place in practice-theory with this concept of timespace, developed in large parts from Heidegger's work.[197] Schatzki argues that a timespace is something other than "objective time and space"[198] and that timespaces "form a kind of infrastructure through which human activities coordinate and power works."[199] In other words, a timespace is produced by actors and through practices and concerns the dimensions of the practices.

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[193] Bakhtin, *Philosophy*, 47.

[194] Bakhtin, *Towards*, 41. While Bakhtin strongly opposed a Hegelian view of the world and did not like dialectics, he often divides the world into what at first glance seems to be binary oppositions. The basis for all this is an understanding of the concepts "given" and "posited". Bakhtin claims that the world is filled with both "given" and "posited" events and acts, and that living is an eternal negotiation between the "given" and the "posited", or between closure and openness, stasis and process. Bakhtin decisively favors the "posited", openness and process, though he is clear that a life, an act or a novel always contains both. The different concepts also cluster together. For instance, the official, the monological, and the abstract belong together. These are all given forms and as such closed and static. Coates, *Christianity Bakhtin*, 26-29; Clark, *Bakhtin*, 7-8 and 74-77.

[195] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 28-30.

[196] Coates, *Christianity Bakhtin*, 28.

[197] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein Und Zeit* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

[198] Schatzki argues that objective time is essentially a matter of succession. While existential or experimental time (or time as it is understood in timespaces) is a matter of dimensionality, rather than succession. Theodore R. Schatzki, "Where Times Meet," *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 1, no. 2 (2005): 192-93.

[199] Schatzki, "Timespace," 1.

According to Schatzki, objective time is most often defined as succession, and objective space is usually defined by geometrical space.[200] Timespaces are, as such, not a substitute for objective time and space. Neither are timespaces subjective experience of time and space. Both objective time and space are also part of practices; however, timespace concerns an opening of the dimensions of time and space. Hence, Schatzki defines timespace as "acting towards ends departing from what motivates at arrays of places and paths anchored at entities." [201]

Fundamental to the concept of timespace is the belief that past, present, and future occur at once. Schatzki claims that humans act (present) from motivations (past) towards ends or teloses" (future).[202] Yet, Schatzki stresses that no human activity is determined in advance and that there is no kind of causality between the motivation and telos of the activity and the actual performance of the activity.[203]

Thus, while it at times is challenging to distinguishing between timespaces and practices in Schatzki's work, timespaces are part of practices. In practices, several timespaces can be found and these interweave practices and structure them. Thus, timespaces are also part of human action and events and cannot be separated from them. Although Schatzki stresses that "timespaces are features of individual human life," he expands this notion to argue that timespaces are also essential for social life and are not only an inherent part of practice but inherent in how practices are organized. [204]

Bakhtin also employs the concept of timespace in his theories. Although Bakhtin might be best known for his use of *chronotope* (timespace in Greek) as part of a literary analysis, Kristoffel Demoen et al. argue that Bakhtin does not reserve his concept of the *chronotope* for literature:

> It [chronotope]addresses not only the perception of the fictional world but also points at the spatial and temporal embedding of human action in order to offer a better understanding of how humans act in their biotopes and semiospheres. Although Bakhtin's theory is on this point rather underdeveloped and even premature, there are sufficient impulses in his writings to allow us to say that it serves as an analytical tool aimed at understanding how literature meditates on human action in a profoundly ethical fashion. [205]

For Bakhtin, then, timespace is a matter of epistemology, and of how humans make sense of themselves and the world.[206] Schatzki is more occupied with timespace as part of practices and not so much with the individual's agency and responsibility. Both theorists, however, point to how time and space are constitutive parts of practices, or acts, and cannot be separated from human action and

[200] Schatzki, *Timespace*.
[201] Schatzki, *Timespace,* 60.
[202] Schatzki, Timespace, 59.
[203] Schatzki, *Timespace,* 175.
[204] Schatzki, *Timespace,* 65 and 215.
[205] Kristoffel Demoen et al., *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives,* (Gent, Belgium: Academia Press, 2010). iv.
[206] Demoen. et.al, *Bakhtin's Theory*, 25.

events. Further, they also claim that time and space themselves cannot be separated; we never experience or act in time and not in space.[207]

With this, we move on to ontological and epistemological theories concerning research that includes children.

4.2.4 Epistemology of Research that Includes Children – a Childhood Perspective

In addition to addressing ethics and questions of trust and rapport in research with children, Samantha Punch draws up a discussion similar to the one I discovered in the literature concerning preaching for children in Childhood Studies. Within Childhood Studies, there is a debate between camps. On the one side are those who think that children are fundamentally *similar* to adults and hence, researchers do not need to adjust their research methods to accommodate children. Others argue that children are fundamentally *different* from adults, and therefore, researchers need to employ methods that are modified and explicitly directed at children.[208]

Punch rejects the dichotomy and argues that the best way to do research that includes children is to combine traditional research methods used with adults and methods considered to be more tailored to children. In this way, the children are not patronized, yet their difference from adults is still respected.[209]

In line with Punch's arguments, Lesley-Ann Gallacher and Michael Gallagher, also remark critically on the epistemology that they observe in children's studies. They argue that current research is based on two imperatives: (1) that the children should be studied in and of themselves and (2) that researchers should be attentive to the peculiarities and specificities of individual childhoods as "geographically, historically, and social situated."[210] Gallacher and Gallagher claim that these two imperatives result in an epistemology which assumes that children, and all persons, are transparently knowable to themselves and that their voice is the most authentic source of that knowledge.[211] As a result, they argue against such an epistemology and instead suggest an epistemology that is "emergent, constitutionally unfinished, 'almost-not-quite' ontology" where "the subjectivity is performatively produced through the continuous unfolding of action."[212]

Their understanding of subjectivity as produced in action is close to a practice-theoretical understanding of subjectivity.[213] Moreover, Gallacher and Gallagher problematize the use of participatory methods as the "right" research methods in childhood research, claiming that such research is in danger of doing precisely the opposite of what it attempts. Namely, in advocating for

[207] Schatzki, "Timespace," 2.
[208] Punch, "Research Children," 322.
[209] Punch, "Research Children," 330.
[210] Gallacher and Gallagher, "Methodological Immaturity," 500.
[211] Gallacher and Gallagher, "Methodological Immaturity," 500.
[212] Gallacher and Gallagher, "Methodological Immaturity," 510.
[213] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 4-5.

participatory methods, and particularly dividing participation into active and passive, it is the adult researchers who decide what counts as "active participation."[214]

Sirka Komulainen has argued along the same lines as Punch, Gallagher, and Gallacher. Her contribution addresses the possible problematic notion that research on or with children often aims at "giving children a voice."[215] Komulainen draws attention to an ambiguity in the ethical motivation of giving children a voice, as the children are conceptualized not only as dependent and vulnerable but also as agents with their own voices.[216] Moreover, many such studies seem to understand the concept of "voice" as a "mental, verbal, and rational property of the individual."

Against this, Komulainen, employing Bakhtinian theory of dialogue, claims that it is essential to remember that voice is always social. Hence, "voices" are not located solely within the individual, but are part of discourses and practice and are socially constructed.[217] She also points out that adults expect children's voices to be expressed through choices; however, this presupposes that children are rational and want to make choices. In conclusion Komulainen argues that researchers need to entertain the possibility that "children can be, at the same time, vulnerable and competent" and draws attention to how it is primarily adults who decide which position children are perceived as having.[218]

Hence, Punch, Gallacher and Gallagher, and Komulainen all argue for approaching children as capable of addressing their experiences even while still developing. In other words, children are both different from and similar to adults, yet what defines the difference is not necessarily that they are children. In their emphasis of exhibiting an attitude of humility and methodological immaturity, as we all are constitutionally immature and in the process of becoming, the researchers provide an ontology and epistemology of children that is similar to that of practice-theory and Bakhtin. Such immaturity means acknowledging that subjects and knowledge are produced in the research and that we can never fully know ourselves, the research participants, or the area of research.

4.2.4 Consequences of the Ontological and Epistemological Considerations for the Research

The epistemological and ontological notions above have affected this thesis in numerous ways. The primary effect being the object of study—preaching for children as a practice. The reason for not specifying it as a *dialogical* practice throughout the thesis lies in Bakhtin's understanding of speaking and dialogue as action. To say that preaching is a dialogical practice thus becomes redundant, as dialogue is considered an action and is part of all practices.

On an epistemological level, the theories presented above form an understanding of knowledge where knowledge is always created and never static. While it is possible to create

[214] Gallacher and Gallagher, "Methodological Immaturity." A remark is in place here, their objection against participation is not on behalf of the researcher, but on the children and the way the method pushes children into active participation.
[215] Komulainen, "Voice."
[216] Komulainen, "Voice," 13.
[217] Komulainen, "Voice," 13.
[218] Komulainen, "Voice," 26.

knowledge by doing fieldwork, it is not possible to enter fieldwork to extract knowledge that already lies there. Other consequences of these kind of epistemological standpoints concern how I have interacted with the research participants, especially the children. I offer a more detailed account of this in my chapter on methodology.

Furthermore, in employing practice-theory and Bakhtinian dialogue theory, everything becomes levelled, so to speak—the preacher, the listeners, the room, the enactment of the preaching, the social setting, the history and the tradition of the particular, and the general church. This levelling does not, however, mean that the preacher is redundant or that God cannot be an actor in preaching. Instead, it provides a way of maintaining all the elements and actors of the practice and the interactions between them as essential in the production and performance of the practice of preaching. Moreover, as practice-theory underlines that practices are assembled differently depending on the individuals participating in the practice, the timespaces created in them, and the context around practice, practice-theory provides a framework that can be used in multiple contexts.

From this overview of theories of practice and their ontological and epistemological foundations, I turn to examine Schatzki and Bakhtin's theories more thoroughly, focusing primarily on the parts I have used as analytical tools in the articles. I end with an argument for why Bakhtin and Schatzki's version of practice-theory are theories that can be fruitful to combine when researching preaching.

4.3 Schatzki – Practice Mind-ed Order

Schatzki has significantly contributed to academic discussions on the social and how it is organized.[219] He argues that what he calls "the site of the social" is made up by nexuses, or bundles, of practices and material arrangements.[220] While Schatzki has also been particularly occupied with the ontological and philosophical foundations of practice-theory, he contends that his theories are meant for practical implementation.[221]

In his introduction to practice theories, Nicolini places Schatzki within the tradition of practice-theory that draws on heritage from Heidegger and Wittgenstein. Theorists in this tradition mainly focus on intelligibility: that people most of the time do and say "what makes sense for them to do (and say)."[222] Schatzki underlines that to do what makes sense to you to do is not the same as rationality. Practical intelligibility is determined by orientations toward ends (teleology) and by how things matter (affectivity), and both of these things can divert someone from doing what is rational. [223] It is easy to equate order with structure or regularity, but this is not what Schatzki means by order. For

[219] Theodore R. Schatzki, *The Site of the Social: A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change* (2002). As mentioned in the introduction, in this thesis I only use parts of Schatzki's extensive production. I mainly lean on *Timespaces*, "Timespaces", "Practice Mid-Ed Orders" and "Sayings."
[220] Schatzki, "Theories of Practice," in *Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture,* ed. Dale Southerton (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2011).
[221] Schatzki, *Timespace*.
[222] Nicolini, *Practice Theory,* 163.
[223] Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed," 47-48.

him, order is found in arrangements, which he defines as: "a layout of entities in which they relate and take up places with respect to one another… social order can be defined as arrangements of people and the organisms, artifacts, and things through which they coexist."[224]

Schatzki goes on to argue that meaning and identity are tied to social ordering and to how entities in a social order relate to each other. As already mentioned, for Schatzki people, social orders and things do not possess identities. Identity and meaning are always made and created when they are arranged in relation to each other; one arrangement results in one meaning, while a different arrangement of the same things and persons results in a another meaning.

Hence, Schatzki argues that we express mental states in behavior; however, the mental states do not inform activity by causing them. [225] By saying this, Schatzki is not claiming that there are hidden objects that cause and determine behavior. For him, the mind is not a representation of hidden objects that cause behavior, but rather "practical-intelligibility-determining states of affairs that are expressed in behavior." He goes on to provide a definition of practice where he argues that social practices are organized through a "pool of understandings, a set of rules, and something I call a 'teleoaffective structure'."[226]

Schatzki points out that understandings, rules, and teleoaffective structures can change over time. Although he argues that practical intelligibility is a form of mental determination, Schatzki does not argue that what makes sense for people to do is found in the head of the practitioner; the sense is always shown in practice. Because of this, one needs to look at real-time practices if one wants to understand human behavior and social order.[227] Hence, although preaching often has been understood as the preacher's practice or as a mental practice, this does not mean it cannot be studied empirically.

In the articles, I use concepts from Schatzki's definition of practice as analytical tools to study the practice of preaching. In the following, I describe how materiality mattered throughout the thesis. Then, I account for three of the concepts employed in the articles, understandings, rules, and teleoaffective structures.

4.3.1 Materiality

As Nicolini argues, one of the defining traits of a practice-theoretical approach to research is interest in and a focus on how material objects, as well as time and space, are part of practices.[228] In a practice-theoretical approach to preaching, there is no detached cognitive understanding of the preacher's words. A practice-theoretical approach to studying preaching will therefore pay attention to preaching and listening as embodied acts, while also including how material objects like a Bible, the pulpit, liturgical clothing, pews, mobile phones, children's books, snacks, the church room are used or

[224] Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed," 47-48.
[225] Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed," 49.
[226] Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed," 50.
[227] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 162-63.
[228] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 162-63.

not used as part of the practice.[229] Hence, this thesis focuses on materiality and materiality in use in the practice of preaching for children.

My first introduction to the critical function of materiality came through the theories of James Wertsch and his notion of mediated action.[230] While I only employ this theory in the first article, it was foundational for my understanding cognition and action in a new manner. Wertsch is mainly occupied with what he calls "mediated action," by which he means that it is impossible for a human being to act without using some form of mediational means in order to perform the act.[231] Mediational means are always material, yet, Wertsch argues that this also includes spoken language, as well as the more apparent material objects we use when we act.[232] On this subject, Wertsch and Schatzki retain similar positions. As I have already mentioned, Schatzki does not believe that materials exert a direct impact on human action, yet he considers materiality and objects as vital parts of practices.[233]

The case of preaching for children provides a unique opportunity to analyze how materiality *is used* in preaching, since all the preaching events from the empirical material employ some sort of materiality in the enactment of preaching. Even though materiality and its use in preaching events are most clearly analyzed and debated in the first two articles of the thesis, the whole thesis relies on the theories above to provide a sensibility to examine materiality and its use. Both articles demonstrate that materiality and how it is used shape the preaching event and the listeners' interaction with and reflection on preaching events.

4.3.2 Understandings

In different works, Schatzki operates with some variation within this concept, making it challenging at times to grasp the difference between practical intelligibility and general understandings. However, I understand practical intelligibility to be an umbrella term, under which general understandings lie.

Regarding practical intelligibility, Schatzki argues against understanding the concept as similar to Bourdieu's notion of understandings as a "sense for the game." Schatzki claims that both Bourdieu and Giddens talk of intuition in their concepts of habitus and practical consciousness, and that neither concept manages to explain why we do what we do, or why we do anything at all—only that we do it. He suggests that these concepts "lack the multiplicity for crediting them very often with the determination of which specific actions people carry out."[234] Instead of relying on intuition, Schatzki argues that understandings are about *knowing how to x* when x is a constituent action in that

[229] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 162-63.
[230] Wertsch, *Voices*; *Mind*.
[231] Wertsch, *Mind*. Wertsch alternates between using "mediational means" and "cultural tools" as terms to describe the same phenomenon. I have chosen to employ "mediational means" as this is most commonly used.
[232] Wertsch, *Mind*, 30-31.
[233] See p xx and also: Sonia Hazard, "The Material Turn in the Study of Religion," *Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 4, no. 1 (2013); Theodore R. Schatzki, "Materiality and the Social Life," *Nature and Culture* 5, no. 2 (2010).
[234] Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed," 50-51.

practice. He also argues that it is through linking several x-es that are interdependent and cross-referenced that practices are composed.[235] However, Spaargarten et al. argue that the differences between Schatzki's concept of "practical intelligibility," Gidden's concept of "practical consciousness," and Bourdieu's concept of "sense for the game" are unimportant and that the focus should instead be on their shared notion that humans often act in ways that are non-discursive, tacit, and embodied.[236]

In the thesis, the role of understandings in the practice of preaching for children is especially vital in the second article where it helps show how the preachers and the children have diverging understandings of preaching.

4.3.3 Rules

While understandings can determine practical intelligibility, Schatzki argues that it is primarily rules, teleology, and affectivity that do so. With rules, Schatzki means "explicit formulations that enjoin or school in particular actions." This does not mean that for the rules to apply, they have to be written down; they can be "rules of thumb." He continues to argue that the rules of a practice can be seen in what people do or try to avoid doing in a practice, as what people do often reflect the rules of the practice. Schatzki goes on to argue that practices have rules that the practitioners are meant to follow, again pointing to how normativity is embedded in practices. However, rules alone do not determine what people do.[237]

In this thesis, identifying the rules of the practice of preaching for children in particular helped in making implicit normativity explicit. Since Schatzki does not focus on deciding whether people genuinely follow the rules of the practice or just happen to act accordingly, in the second article I refer to practice-theoretician David Bloor who argues that rule-following is supposed to be genuine. For Bloor, there is a difference between happening to follow the rules and genuinely following them.[238] This distinction became essential for my analysis in the second article, as several of the children did not genuinely follow the rules even though they looked like they did.

4.3.4 Teleoaffective Structures

Teleology is an orientation towards ends, or goals, while affectivity concerns what matters to people. Schatzki contends that the teleoaffective structures are very influential in determining why people do what they do.

What matters to us and how things matter to us both determine what kind of actions we are prepared to do in order to reach our ends. Schatzki argues that the teleological and affective determination of practical intelligibility is a mental determination. Therefore, what matters to us is greatly influenced by our beliefs, hopes, expectations, moods, and emotions.

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[235] Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed," 51.
[236] Spaargaren, *Practice Theory and Research*.
[237] Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed," 51-52.
[238] David Bloor, "Wittgenstein and the Priority of Practice," in *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, ed. Katrin Knorr-Cetina, Theodore R. Schatzki, and Eike von Savigny (Routledge, 2001).

Moreover, he contends that the "teleoaffective structure" has a normative component. In every practice, some ends are acceptable and correct while other ends are deemed incorrect or unacceptable.[239] However, Schatzki strongly emphasizes that this normativity does not mean that practice or actions within practice are predetermined.[240]

Concentrating on teleoaffective structures provided me with a deeper understanding of what both preachers and children wanted to achieve by participating in preaching for children and also revealed a discrepancy of teleoaffective structures between the preachers and the children. Moreover, identifying the goals and affectivity of the preachers' practice of preaching for children also contributed to making implicit normativities explicit.

4.4 "To be is to communicate" – Bakhtinian Dialogue Theory

Bakhtin lived what he learned, employing his theories of dialogue and unfinalizability in his writing. He tended to revisit the same territory, pursuing different questions instead of redacting his past writings something which at times makes his works hard to read.[241] Additionally, it is vital to be aware, as I account for elsewhere, that Bakhtin's theories are normative in their preference for the dialogical.[242]

In her description of the weaknesses in Bakhtin's theory, Lorensen argues that it can be difficult to "discern and differentiate between the many different positions in order to keep the 'polyphonic' interaction alive rather than conflating the different voices into one harmonic whole."[243] It is easy to claim Bakhtin for your own purposes, which is not my intention in this thesis. Fully aware that Bakhtin was not first and foremost a homiletician, I have tried, true to his theories, to borrow some of his words and make them my own.

4.4.1 Dialogue and Responsive Understanding

Bakhtin's is primarily known for his theories on the novel, and especially for his analysis of polyphony in Dostoevsky and carnival in Rabelais.[244] His primary concern is "texts" in a broad sense of the term, and he pays extra attention to the science of language, where he focuses on the human utterance. Bakhtin sees the utterance as a "product of the interaction of langue and the context of the

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[239] Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed," 52-53.
[240] Schatzki, *Timespace*, 175.
[241] Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 13, xi-xiii. Clark and Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*. I use different parts of Bakhtin's works for different parts of the thesis. The connection between Bakhtin and practice-theory is mostly found in his writings on methodology and the human sciences, which he directly discusses in "Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences," and in a discussion on the act and aesthetic creation in *Philosophy* and *Answerability.* These are also his most philosophical work and where he lies the foundation for all later philosophy. The parts of his theory that revolve around language and communication is mainly taken from *Problems*, *Speech Genres* and *Dialogic Imagination.* There are also some controversies regarding which books can be attributed to Bakhtin and not. I will not spend time on this discussion but, instead, refer to those who have written extensively on the subject. See for instance: Emerson, *First Hundred.*
[242] See sub-heading 5.1.6 Normativity and Reflexivity.
[243] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 20.
[244] Bakhtin, *Problems*; Bachtin, M.M. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Vol. MB 341. A Midland Book. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

utterance – a context that belongs to history."[245] This means that utterances are not individual or unlimited in variety, and hence, the utterance is also not beyond research (as Saussure would argue).[246] For Bakhtin, the utterance becomes the object of inquiry in a new science of language that he calls *Translinguistics*.

Contrary to sentences, which are typically considered the smallest unit of language, utterances end whenever there is a change in speaker. Therefore, an utterance could be smaller than a sentence or could be comprised of many sentences.[247] Earlier, I described how Bakhtin claims that all utterances need a response. When I say something, I say it to someone. This is what Bakhtin calls "addressivity," which demonstrates that all utterances are directed at someone.

Against this, one could argue that empirically, this is not correct. We talk with ourselves, and especially when preaching or giving a speech, it can seem like no one is listening. Bakhtin anticipates these objections and invents what he calls the superaddressee: someone somewhere who hears all utterances and responds to them, even though we might not hear the response.[248]

However, the most critical dimension of the utterance is its dialogism, or what one could call its intertextual dimension.[249] Bakhtin is adamant that words are not new or unused; words are always used by someone else before I take them and use them for my purpose. Todorov argues that according to Bakhtin: "… after Adam, there are no nameless objects nor any unused words. Intentionally or not, all discourse is in dialogue with prior discourses on the same subject, as well as with discourses yet to come, whose reactions it foresees and anticipates."[250]

That is to say, when we speak, we need others' voices and others' words in order to speak at all. Todorov claims that this realization led Bakhtin to re-interpret the concept of "culture." In Bakhtin's mind, culture lives in dialogue, kept alive by collective memory. This culture is something everyone with a voice; everyone who utters anything must place themselves in relation to. Therefore, Bakhtin argues that it is not just the novel that is heterogeneous; human beings are also irreducibly heterogeneous, because human beings exist only in dialogue. [251]

4.4.2 Speech Genres

In the introduction chapter, I defined dialogue as two-sided action where both the speaker and the listener act. Additionally, in this encounter between two consciousnesses, meaning is created. Therefore, the listener is a co-creator in meaning and dialogue.

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[245] Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, x
[246] Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, xvi. The distinction Bakhtin makes between primary and secondary speech genres should not be confused with the distinction Saussure makes between *langue* and *parole*. While Saussure argued that individual language was not tied to anything and that individuals could choose their words and their meanings freely, and thus, this kind of language was impossible to study, Bakhtin makes the exactly opposite argument. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 80-81.
[247] Schatzki, "Sayings," 132-133.
[248] I have accounted in detail for the superaddressee in a footnote on p 33.
[249] Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 13, 60-74.
[250] Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, x; Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 279.
[251] Bakhtin, *Problems*, 283-302.

However, utterances are not made randomly or freely. They are part of "speech genres." A speech genre is made up of relatively stable, thematic, compositional, and stylized types of utterances and Bakhtin argues that all speech can be categorized within different speech genres.[252]

He divides these speech genres into two main groups— primary (simple) and secondary (complex)—and makes no distinction between oral and written communication. The primary speech genre is what you would call everyday dialogue, or conversations. The secondary genre consists, for instance, of all scientific research and novels. It originates in a more complex, developed, and organized form for cultural communication. In the secondary speech genre, a whole novel, or a preaching event, can be considered as one utterance.[253] Even though speech genres are relatively stable and stylized, they still always assume meaning in a context, and the possibilities of different contexts are endless.[254]

Hence, Bakhtin expands the notion of dialogue beyond the realm of everyday dialogue. Moreover, he contends that when we speak, we are always faced with two choices: to either use the dialogical foundation of all utterances to stimulate more dialogue and polyphony, or to speak monologically, assuming that we can formulate every perspective there exists about something. This choice between a monological or dialogical approach to utterances is also present in various forms of complex language genres where, in contrast to everyday conversation, the dialogue is indirect.[255] Therefore, even though the preaching event often feels like and looks like what we usually call a monologue, it is still dialogical.

4.4.3 The Foreign Word

In separating monological utterances from dialogical utterances, Bakhtin emphases whether the "foreign words" (of texts or conversation partners) are used as scaffolding or as architecture. If used as scaffolding, the words are not allowed to constitute the discourse in itself. They build up the discourse but do not influence or change it. If the words are used as architecture, they are allowed to influence discourse so that its original perspective and presuppositions are changed. Therefore, they can transform the dialogue.[256] According to Lorensen, the concept of "the foreign word" is not something Bakhtin treats comprehensively in any work but refers to throughout his writings. She claims that "the foreign word can be defined as any word that belongs to another human being, whether it has been written in my mother tongue or in any other language. In that sense, it can be described as any word that is not mine."[257]

Therefore, words are only ours when we fill them with our intention or accent, or when we appropriate them and thus adapt them to our own semantic and expressive intentions. The words do

[252] Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 60.
[253] Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 61-62.
[254] Clark and Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 218.
[255] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 61.
[256] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 58-59.
[257] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 59.

not exist as neutral and impersonal language before that, as they have been someone else's words, used in another context—in another mouth, serving another's attention.[258]

In other words, according to Bakhtin, language is social and relational. In this description, it is important to note how much action it takes to utter something. This appropriation can seem familiar to preachers, in that we often take other's words (whether it is the words of the Bible or references to something in the news) and try to make them our own in the preaching event. Similarly, listeners also have to appropriate the "foreign words" of the Bible and the preacher and make these words their own. This notion of Bakhtin's is similar to Manuel Stetter's argument that preaching is a practice of appropriation where the preaching event needs to be appropriated both by the preachers and the listeners. [259]

In the thesis, the concept of "foreign words" and their appropriation is both part of the foundational understanding of dialogue and as an analytical tool in the first article, in which I explore how "foreign words" like drama, Bible texts, and materiality are used in preaching events. In this article, I also go on to discuss whether the "foreign words" are used in a dialogical or monological manner, according to whether they are used as scaffolding or architecture, authoritative or inner persuasive discourse, or are polyphonic.

4.4.4 Authoritative Words and Inner Persuasive Discourse

Another distinction concerning whether or not utterances are dialogical is that between authoritative words and inner persuasive words. Bakhtin claims that the authoritative word is placed at a distance from us and is always connected with the past. Such words feel hierarchically higher than our own words, and Bakhtin classifies this type of discourse as monological. The reason why such words are monological is that authoritative words have meanings that we cannot change; we have to accept or reject them.[260]

The internally persuasive word is opposite and does not have status or authority and is tightly interwoven with our "own words."[261] This word is creative and challenges other internally persuasive discourses, which are filled with words that are dialogical, open, and unfinalizable.[262] In challenging these words, the persuasive word shapes us from within. In the first article, I employ this distinction as I explore whether there is room for disagreement within the preaching events and whether the preachers' own thoughts and ideas come to the surface or not.

4.4.5 Polyphony

It is in analyzing the novels of Dostoevsky that Bakhtin develops the concept of polyphony. He claims that what separates Dostoevsky from other authors is that his characters are not merely

[258] Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 294-95.
[259] Stetter, *Predigt*, 37 and 380.
[260] Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 342-43.
[261] I have placed the word "own" in quotation marks because of Bakhtin's insistence that no words are our "own."
[262] Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 345-46.

characters but have their own consciousnesses and voices. Therefore, Dostoevsky's novels are dialogical because the interaction between multiple consciousnesses forms them, and this interaction between consciousnesses is what he calls polyphony. [263] Moreover, the polyphonic author does not hold on to his or her authority to impose their monological ideas on their characters but instead lets the characters of the novel and the readers engage in a polyphonic interaction on the same plane. This means that the reader does not only hear the voice of the author when reading the book, she hears also all the polyphonic voices of the characters and is drawn into dialogue with them. [264]

Extrapolating this to preaching, Lorensen argues that "if preaching, despite of its monological appearance, is to function as a dialogical encounter, one of the most important tasks for the preacher, from a Bakhtinian perspective, is to avoid conflating the voices of the listener, preacher, and scripture into one and instead let the three positions interact in a way that lets them transform and enrich each other mutually." [265] Following Lorensen, in her argument that preaching should aim to let the different voices of the actors in preaching events enrich each other, I use the concept of polyphony in the first article, as I search for how many and which voices can be heard in the preaching events. Yet, I add to her list of actors in preaching events by including mediational means as part of the voices in the preaching event.

The concepts of dialogue and polyphony intertwine in Bakhtin's theories to the extent that Clark and Holquist argue that polyphony and dialogue are simply two words to describe the same thing.[266] However, while the term dialogue is usually taken to mean two voices, polyphony denotes an idea of more than two voices. Hence, the two terms both describe Bakhtin's penchant for the diverse and dialogical, yet polyphony does more to emphasize dialogical interaction with more than two voices.

4.5 Speech Genres and Practice-theory

Schatzki points out that practice theories have paid little attention to language and how language is an element of practice. In *Nexuses of Practice*, Schatzki argues that practice theories need to start paying attention to the role of language in practices.[267] To do so, Schatzki draws attention to essential insights from Bakhtin and, hence, legitimizes Bakhtin as a part of the theoretical apparatus of practice-theory. Schatzki argues that "the organisation of practice also determines which doings and sayings belong to it. To say that practice organisations pertain to sayings as much as to doings, implies, among other things, that sayings are intentional, oriented to ends, parts of tasks and projects and variously emotional, that they are carried out in light of rules and that they, to varying degrees,

[263] Bakhtin, *Problems*, 6.
[264] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 66.
[265] Lorensen, *Dialogical*, 67.
[266] Clark and Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, 242.
[267] Schatzki, "Sayings," 130.

articulate general understandings."[268] He claims that just like Bakhtin approached language as a social phenomenon through speech genres, so practice theories approach language.

In addition to appropriating Bakhtin's speech genres as a way of approaching language as social, Schatzki points to how Bakhtin's understanding of the utterance goes further than Austin's speech acts.[269] Since the utterance ends when there is a change in who speaks, within one utterance there can be several actions. Unsurprisingly, Schatzki critiques Bakhtin for paying too much attention to discursive action, and for overlooking that practices are what organizes both sayings and doings. Yet, while Bakhtin has a sharper focus on the human act, dialogue, and the individual's responsibility for her actions and place in being, Bakhtinian theory and practice-theory complement each other in that they both describe a world that is always made and re-made, both through dialogue and practices, and where individuals and systems meet in the human act.

Therefore, although preaching is a largely discursive practice, by tapping both Schatzki and Bakhtin, this thesis attempts to pay attention to both sayings and doings and the collective organization of them in practices. As such, understanding preaching as a more comprehensive practice than the preachers' practice is an important emphasis in this thesis and one of its main theoretical contributions.

4.6 Operationalizing the Conceptual Framework in the Articles

In the following, I explain and describe how I operationalized concepts from Schatzkian practice-theory and Bakhtin's dialogical theories in order to use them as analytical tools on the empirical material.

4.6.1 Article 1 – "Foreign Words" and Mediational Means

The first article began with the observation that most preaching for children are filled with materiality. Hence, the article aims to explore how this materiality—as well as biblical texts and their dramatizations—are used in preaching events. In the analysis, I combine Wertsch's concept of mediational means with Bakhtin's concept of "foreign words."[270] In this article, I claim that it is not only words that need to be appropriated. The listeners must also appropriate the materiality in use in the preaching events. Hence, I analyze how the preachers appropriate the "foreign words" of the Bible text, the dramatizations, and the material objects in their preaching events and then ask whether they use them in a dialogical or monological manner. To operationalize the analysis of how "foreign words" are used in a dialogical or monological context, I formulated questions based on three other Bakhtinian concepts which discuss the dialogicity of utterances: 1) whether there was more than one voice and consciousness in the preaching events (polyphony); 2) the distinction of whether "foreign words" are used as architecture or scaffolding; and 3) whether the preaching events were part of an authoritative or inner-persuasive discourse.

[268] Schatzki, "Sayings," 130.
[269] Schatzki, "Sayings," 130.
[270] Wertsch, *Voices*, 6-17.

4.6.2 Article 2 - Understandings, Rules and Teleoaffective Structures

The second article concentrates on the listeners—the children—and their role in the practice of preaching. The aim is to examine "what do listeners do with preaching?" In the article, I argue that it is not enough to ask, as homileticians have done thus far, how listeners listen to preaching or what they hear when they listen. No, we must ask what listeners *do* with the preaching events. In making this case, I operationalize Schatzki's definition of practice. First, I establish a provisional practice-theoretical definition of preaching by combining Schatzki's definition of practice with different homileticians' definitions of preaching. Secondly, I examined the field notes and the interviews with the children and preachers for utterances which concern the understanding of preaching (knowing-how-to-x), the rules, and the teleoaffective structures that both the children and the preachers have for preaching. In this article, the children are in the foreground as listeners.

4.6.3 Article 3 – Coordinating, Conflicting and Harmonizing Timespaces

The third and final article concentrates on the preachers' practice of preaching for children and how they negotiate between different timespaces in this practice. Employing Schatzki's theory in a slightly new manner, I explored which timespaces I could identify in the preachers' practice. In order to this, I did an initial analysis where I identified four timespaces as essential for the organization of the practice of preaching: school, age-appropriateness, the Bible, and "ordinary preaching" (as opposed to preaching for children). Then, using the concepts of coordinating, conflicting, and harmonizing timespaces, I analyzed how the preachers negotiated between the different timespaces I had identified in the initial analysis and how these timespaces configured their practice of preaching for children.

5. Methodological Issues

In this chapter, I address the methodological issues concerning this thesis and present how the empirical material was produced and analyzed. Since I use empirical material from both FoSS and my own fieldwork, it is essential to note that in the following I account for the fieldwork I conducted at St. Nicholas, St. Mary, St. Emmanuel, and St. Sophia.

The chapter is divided into four parts. In the first, I address the research design of the study and the three articles. In the second part, I account for the sampling strategies and the methods employed. Then, I present the analysis strategies and process, both with regard to an initial analysis of the material and within the three articles. Finally, I account for questions concerning the ethics, reliability, validity, and generalizability of the thesis.

5.1 Research Design and Ethnographically Inspired Instrumental Case Study

The research design is the architecture of any study. Yin points out that a research design is a "logical place for getting from *here* to *there*, where *here* may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and *there* is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions."[271] Additionally, a research design is more than a work plan. It confronts a logical problem and not a logistical problem.[272] Many accounts of research designs purport an image of the research process as a clean and straight line. However, the road in research design is seldom straightforward. I have worked continuously with the research design of this thesis, tweaking it when necessary, and I have also made substantial changes such as changing the paradigm.[273] As my experience shows, a research design is not a fixed and static structure, as it often changes in the course of the research.[274] Nevertheless, it is still vital that the reader can trace the steps taken to get from *here* to *there*, and therefore, it is essential to be able to present the research design and be transparent about which changes were made and why.

My process began when I applied to be a PhD researcher affiliated with the research project FoSS. Hence, the field of study, Homiletics, and the phenomenon of the study, preaching, was decided at the outset of my research—though this intersection has always been my research interest. Further, FoSS was concerned with preaching in a particular setting, the Church of Norway, and its Christian Education-events. While FoSS studied preaching to several generations simultaneously, I quickly narrowed my focus to children's responses to preaching.

5.1.1 Qualitative Research and Ethnography

Ethnography is a broad and multifaceted methodology which has developed to include almost every form of research and is sometimes perceived as synonymous with qualitative studies.[275] In the field of Practical Theology, and especially in the milieu of Ecclesiology and Ethnography,

[271] Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2009), 26.
[272] Yin, *Case Study Research*, 27.
[273] While this was a substantial change, the socio-cultural and the practice-theoretical paradigms are both on the constructive end of the paradigm-spectrum.
[274] Law, *After*.
[275] Gobo, "Ethnography," 16.

ethnography usually is broadly understood and almost considered equal with qualitative studies of ecclesial practices.[276] However, several researchers, among them Giampietro Gobo and Patricia Leavy, argue that it is essential to distinguish between research that uses methods often associated with ethnography from actual ethnographic research, where observations are given primacy over other data.[277]

Agreeing with the arguments from Gobo and Leavy, this thesis is not strictly ethnographic; while I have employed participant observation as one of several methods, observations alone are not my primary data. Even so, the material from the observations is vital to the study, thus, I argue that this thesis is inspired by ethnographic methods. [278]

5.1.2 Establishing the Case

In the theory chapter, I placed this study within a practice-theoretical paradigm with considerable influence from Bakhtinian dialogue theory. In this thesis, preaching is theoretically conceptualized as a (dialogical) practice. This foundational understanding of preaching meant that it was not enough to study preaching manuscripts or preachers' views of preaching for children. Instead, I had to employ a broad range of ethnographically inspired research methods, and hence I chose to conduct a case study.[279]

The approach to case studies adopted in this thesis is in line with Crowe et al.'s definition of a case study as: "a research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context."[280] Moreover, Crowe et al., classifies case studies as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective.[281] An intrinsic case study focuses on a unique phenomenon and defining what makes this phenomenon unique, while an instrumental case study uses one case to learn more about a broader phenomenon. The collective case studies employ several cases, either simultaneously or in sequence, to understand more about a broader phenomenon.[282] Although I have studied more than one congregation, I argue that this thesis is an instrumental case study, as the case is not the particular congregations but the practice of preaching for children. The aim of the thesis is not to learn more about each congregation but to explore the phenomenon of preaching for children.

In defining the case studied in this thesis, I employed the research question, an initial review of literature and theory as a point of departure, and labelled the case preaching for children.[283]

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[276]Tone Stangeland Kaufman, "Mapping the Landscape of Scandinavian Research in Ecclesiology and Ethnography - Contributions and Challenges," in *What Really Matters: Scandinavian Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2018, 2018); "Ecclesiology and Ethnography Network," accessed 26.05.2020, https://www.ecclesiologyandethnography.net/about/

[277] Gobo, "Ethnography," 461; Patricia Leavy, *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[278] Gobo, "Ethnography," 15.

[279] Robert K. Yin, *Applications of Case Study Research*, (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 6.

[280] Crowe et al., "Case Study."

[281] Crowe et al., "Case Study," 1.

[282] Crowe et al., "Case Study," 2.

[283] Crowe et al., "Case Study," 5.

Furthermore, conducting the study at Christian education events in the Church of Norway provided a clear boundary for the case.

5.1.3 Defining the Unit of Analysis

While Yin argues that the case is the primary unit of analysis in a case study,[284] it is vital for the design of this case study that, albeit similar, the case study and the unit of analysis are not identical. According to Helen Simons, finding a unit of analysis will also help in demarking the case study, yet the case study is still broader than the unit of analysis.[285]

Defining the unit of analysis in a practice-theoretical approach presents some challenges, the primary challenge being that in practice-theoretical research it can be difficult to set boundaries for the research, as the unit of analysis is never the practitioners but the practices.[286] As explained earlier, Matusov argues that it is vital to establish a unit of analysis that it is possible to study while ensuring that it is not too reductive.[287] Hence, the unit of analysis needed to be broad enough to include the practice, yet narrow enough to be able to study. The empirical definition of the unit of analysis was partly given with the connection to FoSS and partly decided in my choosing to concentrate solely on children.

Therefore, in this thesis, the phenomenon is *preaching*, the case is *preaching for children*, and the unit of analysis is *the practice of preaching for children in six Christian education-events in the Church of Norway*, thus the unit of analysis brings together the empirical place of study with the theoretically defined practice of preaching for children.

5.1.4 Research Question

Robert Stake argues that forming a research question is a movement back and forth between the question you pose, the methods you intend to employ, and the place where you intend to do the study. Therefore, any research question is always refined as the research progresses.[288]

The main research question of this thesis is: *How can the practice of preaching for children be described and understood?* This research question is quite broad and explorative, yet with it I aim to place the thesis within the field of Homiletics and also demonstrate that I wish to address the area of preaching for children. Further, it shows that the empirical case is preaching for children. In this research question, the word "practice" also theoretically and paradigmatically places the thesis within practice-theory.

Hence, what structures and binds together this thesis is the focus on preaching for children as a practice. Writing within a practice-theoretical paradigm—and thus approaching preaching for children as a practice according to a Schatzkian version of practice-theory—has provided a way of seeing the

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[284] Yin, *Applications*, 6.
[285] Helen Simons, "Case Study Research: In-Depth Understanding in Context," ed. Patricia Leavy, *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 461.
[286] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 7.
[287] Matusov, "Unit of Analysis," 323. Matusov does argue that holism is a better ditch than reductionism.
[288] Robert E. Stake, *Qualitative Research: Studying How Things Work*, (New York: Guilford Press, 2010), 74.

different bits and pieces of practice and exploring how they are put together in the preaching practices in question. The thesis is structured around a further exploration of three vital components of preaching for children as a practice, the preaching event, the role of the listener, and the preachers. In each of the articles, practice-theory's attention to materiality, embodiment, and time and space is expanded upon and employed as analytical tools for deeper understanding of the practice. The research questions in the articles are as follows:

- Article 1: What happens when preachers use biblical narratives, drama, or objects in preaching events?
- Article 2: What do listeners do with preaching?
- Article 3: How do timespaces configure the preachers' practice of preaching to children.

While these research questions are more empirically than theoretically construed, the research question in the first article demonstrates the initial concentration on mediational means and their use in preaching events. However, the two next research questions place the thesis theoretically within practice-theory by asking what listeners do with preaching and how timespaces configure the preachers' practice of preaching for children. Although there is a shift in theory, all three questions address the main research question in contributing to providing a richer description and deeper understanding of preaching for children.[289]

5.1.5 The Relationship Between FoSS and the Thesis

I began my PhD studies after the FoSS research group had conducted the fieldwork and entered the project in the analysis phase. Yet, for the following reasons, I also conducted my own fieldwork. First, it is a vital part of the training as a researcher to perform one's own fieldwork, and second, my fieldwork was meant to supplement the larger research project. As I have shown in the account of research design, my thesis, albeit similar, has had a different research design and aim than FoSS.

The primary disadvantage of working with two sets of materials is that I have more in-depth knowledge of the fieldwork I conducted myself. On the other hand, the primary advantage of being part of a research group was the learning it provided me as a new researcher. I learned much from listening to discussions and presenting early drafts of my articles to the research group. Additionally, I had help conducting the first fieldwork. It was initially the idea that St. Nicholas would be my contribution to the fieldwork in FoSS. Therefore, we were two researchers—Hallvard Olavsson Mosdøl and myself—conducting the fieldwork and interviews in St. Nicholas. I felt the advantage of having a collaborator most acutely in conducting interviews, as we could interview more people in less time. Since it was already established that my research focus was preaching for children, I conducted the interviews with the children alone. I was also responsible for contacting the congregation and arranging the fieldwork.

[289] I present the research design of the articles in chapter six.

From the FoSS-material, I have utilized two transcribed preaching events and video-recordings of the Sunday worship service from St. John and St. Michael in the first article. I have also used the interviews with preachers in St. John and St. Michael in the third article, where I focus on the preachers' practice of preaching for children.

The preacher interviews from St. John and St. Michael were included in the third article to tie the thesis closer to FoSS. Following this line of argument, one should expect that the interviews with children from St. John and St. Michael had been included as well. Unfortunately, there are no interviews with children from St. John, while the interviews with children from St. Michael are used in several articles in FoSS and are, as such, difficult to use without seeming repetitive. Therefore, I chose not to include any empirical material from St. John and St. Michael in my second article, where the emphasis is on the children's response to preaching.

5.1.6 Normativity and Reflexivity

The underlying attitude of this thesis is one of reflexivity. As Tone Stangeland Kaufman argues, attention to underlying normativity through reflexivity is particularly vital in practical theological research since much such research is done by persons who often are personally invested in their research.[290] Furthermore, she claims that researchers need to be attentive to normativity throughout the research process, as normative assumptions play a role at every stage of the research, not just in theological theory but also in the "ongoing practices of the church." [291]
Kaufman highlights that this also includes the researcher and her normativity. Hence, being reflexive can help to clarify normativity in the field and in theological theory, as well as within the researcher herself.[292] Moreover, as Alvesson and Sköldberg note, the researcher's reflection on how she constructs the research is essential to questions regarding its validity, reliability, and generalizability.[293]

Further, Kaufmann and Ideström suggest that there are four dimensions of normativity at play in ethnographically oriented ecclesiological research. They call these "evaluative normativity, prescriptive normativity, rescriptive normativity, and emergent normativity."[294] In the following I define them briefly and address some of the ways, in which these dimensions of normativity occurred in conducting this study.

Evaluative normativity is defined as the type of normativity we often think of when using the term; authoritative theories used as standards against which we measure other theory, actions, or statements. Prescriptive normativity is normativity that takes shape as advising on performing a certain practice. Rescriptive normativity denotes the kind of normativity that goes beyond describing the field

[290] Tone Stangeland Kaufman, "Normativity as Pitfall or Ally?," *Ecclesial Practices* 2, no. 1 (2015): 91-92.
[291] Kaufman, "Normativity", 93-94.
[292] Kaufman, "Normativity", 95.
[293] Alvesson and Sköldberg, *Tolkning*, 325 and 486-87.
[294] Jonas Ideström and Tone Stangeland Kaufman, "The Researcher as Gamemaker – response" in *What Really Matters: Scandinavian perspectives on ecclesiology and ethnography*, 174.

and into re-describing it, and thus contributes to producing knowledge. Finally, emergent normativity is normativity that develops when the different voices of the material, theory, and researcher blend together in a conversation. Yet, this does not mean that the researcher has full control of either the conversation or the normativity that emerges from it.[295]

One of the main concerns regarding normativity in this thesis is how I have employed Bakhtinian theory in different parts of the research. I base my foundational understanding (evaluative normativity) of what happens in preaching events on a Bakhtinian dialogue theory. Although Bakhtin, for a time, holds the dialogical and monological as different ways of describing novels and communication, he lands on a clear preference for the dialogical.[296] Therefore, I have approached the fieldwork and the empirical material with the assumption that preaching is not (evaluative normativity) and should not be thought of as (prescriptive normativity) a transfer of abstract, cognitive ideas. However, this view of communication is not just normative; several homileticians have already empirically described that what happens in communication cannot adequately be explained by the transfer model of communication but should instead be described by some form of dialogical encounter.[297]

Nevertheless, Bakhtin's explicit preference for the dialogical is a challenge. Additionally, the intuitionist approach to theory contributes to diffusing levels of theory and, therefore, to imbuing Bakhtin's normative preference for the dialogical on several levels of the thesis. Hence, the evaluative normativity which stipulates that the dialogical is better than the monological is an undercurrent in the thesis, and it certainly effects its ontological and epistemological stance towards dialogicity.

In this regard, I realize that the first article comes close to evaluating preaching events as "good" or "bad" according to whether or not they are monological. This was the first article I wrote, and while I do believe I demonstrate some interesting findings in it, there are also aspects that I would have changed had I written it at a later stage of the research. Namely, I would make this implicit, evaluative normativity more explicit, or problematize it more. However, the analysis in the first article was not based on deductively employing Bakhtinian concepts on the material. I first approached the analysis more inductively, searching for key moments, and then turned to the Bakhtinian concepts in order to make sense of the initial findings from the analysis of key moments.[298]

Yet, the version of normativity I mostly encountered in the field and in the literature on preaching for children was prescriptive normativity. Both the literature—with its different lists of "best practices"—and the preachers' utterances—how "obvious" it was that preaching for children

[295] Ideström and Kaufman, "Gamemaker", 174-75. Ideström and Kaufman also highlight the contributions that rescriptive and emergent dimensions of normativity bring to research. Ideström and Kaufman, "Gamemaker", 180.
[296] Todorov argues that Bakhtin has a "perpetual, infinitely changing conflict between a tendency toward unification and a contrary tendency that maintains diversity… The conflict between the two tendencies is ultimately won by the impulse toward diversity". Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, x.
[297] Rietveld, "Survey Phenomenological Research."; Gaarden, *Prædikenen*.
[298] For a more detailed account of analysis through finding key moments see p xx

needed to include material and visual objects and be age-appropriate, short, and simple—are versions of prescriptive normativity that permeates the practice of preaching for children. Schatzki's version of practice-theory pays attention to normativities, and as such, the normativities of the preachers became a focus of the analysis in the third article. I believe that exploring these normativities through Schatzkian practice-theory made them explicit and thus helped me see inside normativities "from the outside."[299]

5.2 Sampling

As Bryman argues, there are different levels of sampling during a research project.[300] In this thesis, the sampling of congregations (context) has one set of criteria, while the recruitment of interviewees (participants) has newer sampling approaches and criteria.[301] I have primarily used purposive sampling, which usually closely connects the sampling and the research question. [302]

5.2.1 Sampling of Cases

Above, I have argued that the thesis's case study approach is consistent with an instrumental case study. Inherent to an instrumental case study is some variant of generalization, from case to phenomenon. As case studies have often been critiqued for being non-generalizable, the sampling of the case and making an argument for what kind of generalization the sampling allows for is essential.

Crowe et. al claims that selecting an "atypical" case can provide an opportunity for the researcher to potentially "identify causal processes, generate hypotheses, and develop theory."[303] Similarly, Flyvbjerg argues that what he calls critical cases are cases that have "strategic importance in relation to the general problem."[304] Flyvbjerg contends that knowing whether a case is a critical case or not is difficult and takes experience, yet he suggests that a way of selecting a critical case is to look for "most likely" or "least likely" cases, "that is, cases which are likely to either clearly confirm or irrefutably falsify propositions and hypotheses."[305]

In my opinion, Crowe. et.al's description of an "atypical" case and Flybjerg's description of a "least likely" case both describe the kind of case studied in this thesis, and in the following I will employ the term "atypical" case. I argue that the case of preaching for children is an "atypical" case as it is fundamentally defined as different from other kinds of preaching. In the review of relevant research, I show that most homiletical studies of listeners have researched adult and church-going listeners. While I did not directly sample for unchurched children, on account of the Christian

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[299] Tone Stangeland Kaufman, "From the Outside, within, or in Between?: Normativity at Work in Emprical Practical Theological Research," in *Conundrums in Practical Theology* ed. Joyce Ann Mercer and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore. Vol. 2. Theology in Practice (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
[300] Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)., 417.
[301] Monique M. Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2020), 97.
[302] Hennik, Hutter and Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 92; Bryman, *Social Research Methods*. p 417.
[303] Crowe et al., "Case Study," 7.
[304] Bent Flyvbjerg, "Five Misunderstandings about Case-study Research," *Sosiologisk Tidsskrift* 12, no. 2 (2004), 127.
[305] Flyvbjerg, "Five Misunderstandings," 129-130.

education reform's broad reach, most of the children I interviewed can be described as unchurched and, hence, as "least likely" listeners. Although this makes it harder to generalize the findings of this thesis to churched children, especially in a Folk Church setting, the findings of what unchurched children do with preaching might also contribute to understanding what unchurched adults do with preaching. Furthermore, the findings here at least raise some questions that might still be relevant for those who engage in or research preaching for children to churched children. Therefore, I contend that in studying preaching for children to describe and understand more about the phenomenon of preaching for children I have sampled an "atypical" case.

5.2.2 Sampling of Congregations

Two factors significantly affected the sampling of congregations. First, in the background chapter I show that extant research on Christian education in the Church of Norway has mostly been conducted in cities and suburbs, where congregations typically have substantial staffs.[306]

Second, as this thesis was part of FoSS, I aimed to supplement that project's empirical material. The seven congregations that made up the empirical material in FoSS were from the Western and Eastern parts of Norway, and all were located in or around cities and towns and had large staffs. The two congregations employed in this thesis from the FoSS material were both from Western Norway. Therefore, I sampled congregations in rural areas from the North, Middle, South, and East of Norway. Each congregation had relatively little staff. All told, the thesis's empirical material benefited from geographical diversity. While geographical variation is not a goal in itself, religious affiliations in Norway are known to change according to geographical location,[307] and thus, it is rewarding to include congregations from different parts of the country in the study.

However, the research does not make much use of this geographical sampling, which is a limitation of this study. Looking back, I regret not employing the FoSS material in a more comparative manner, as this might have provided a critical contribution to research on the Christian education reforms in the Church of Norway in regards to whom the reforms benefit and how they are implemented by the different congregations.

5.2.3 Interview Sampling

I approached recruiting interviewees with a broad strategy. With regards to the interviews of preachers, I interviewed everyone throughout the event who talked with the children about Christian faith and Christian practices. Therefore, in some of the congregations I interviewed three preachers, whereas in others, I interviewed only one.

For the interviews with children, I interviewed everyone who wanted to be interviewed and

[306] See among others: Kjetil Botvar, Ånund Brottveit, Nina Hoel, Elisabeth Haakedal and Ulla Schmidt, *Avsluttet reform eller fortsatt læring og utvikling? Trosopplæring som arbeidsform i menighetene* (Oslo: KIFO, 2015), 39-41, accessed April 03, 2020, http://old.kifo.inbusinessclients.no/doc//RAPPORTER/KIFO%20rapport%202015_1%20til%20web.pdf

[307] Harald Hegstad, Ida Marie Høeg, and Ole Gunnar Winsnes, "'Folkekirke 2000' - en spørreundersøkelse blant medlemmer i Den norske kirke," ed. KIFO (Oslo: KIFO 2000), accessed October 01, 2020, http://www.kifo.no/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Folkekirke-2000-.pdf

had participated in the Christian education event. In this broad approach, I aimed at circumventing interviewing only children that the adult gatekeepers (preachers and adult volunteers) thought would be "good interview subjects."[308] Who could be interviewed was also dependent on whether they had a parent present in the worship service that could sign off on the consent form.[309] The age-group available for interviews was decided by the age of the children invited to the Christian education events, which were 7-12 year-olds.

How many children were interviewed in the different congregations varies: at St. Nicholas, I interviewed all eight children that attended the event, while at St. Mary, I only interviewed three out of 24. At both St. Sophia and St. Emmanuel, I had trouble finding boys who wanted to be interviewed and also had their parents present. Consequently, my interview sampling suffers from a gender bias, as I have interviewed more girls. This does not reflect the gender balance in the Christian Education-events, where the gender division was reasonably even. Regarding responsiveness in the interviews, my experience is that this varied more according to congregation than gender. When it comes to identity markers like race and class, all but two of the children attending the four Christian education events were white, and most seemed to be middle-class children, reflecting the majority of households in Norway in general, and among Churchgoers, in particular.[310]

Table 1. Table of the interviews

Congregation	Focus group interviews with children	In-depth semi-structured interviews with preachers
St. Nicholas	Two focus group interviews with, respectively two boys and one girl and three girls and two boys	Pastor and catechist
St. Mary	One focus group interview with two boys and one girl	Two pastors and one church educator
St. Emmanuel	Two focus group interviews with respectively five girls and then five girls and one boy	Two volunteers
St. Sophia	One focus group interview with four girls and one individual interview with one girl	Pastor
St. John	Three individual interviews with preachers	Pastor, two church educators
St. Michael	Two individual interviews with preachers	Pastor and church educator

[308] Punch, "Research with Children," 327.
[309] "Notification form," Norwegian Centre for Research Data, accessed 02.07.2020, https://nsd.no/personvernombud/en/index.html
I discuss these consent forms and the ethical considerations concerning children's consent under sub-heading 5.7.1 Ethics.
[310] Hegstad, Høeg, and Winsnes, ""Folkekirke 2000" 72-73. In this quantitative study from 2000, 63% answered that they were employed, most of the respondents reported to work as teachers, public officials, or within health care, 33, 2% reported having attended higher education (university etc). Statistics Norway reports that in 2020 36,4% of the Norwegian public as a whole have attended higher education. Statistics Norway "Educational Attainment of the Population", accessed September 29, 2020. https://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning/statistikker/utniv

5.2.4 Saturation

Regarding saturation, the answer to how many research participants and how many interviews are enough differs from study to study, as well as according to the aim of the study.[311]

In my case, I quickly found the first three congregations willing to participate in the study; however, after performing the fieldwork, I struggled to find a congregation from the South. When I finally did find a congregation in the South that was willing to participate in the study and fit all my sampling criteria, I had already started analyzing the other material. Therefore, I was unsure of whether I needed this congregation or if the material was saturated already. During the fieldwork, an accident took place which has made it challenging to use this fieldwork without compromising the anonymity of the congregation. Additionally, the children mostly discussed this incident in the interviews.

Even though this fieldwork was defined by the accident, what the little the children said about preaching mostly underlined my preliminary analysis. Therefore, although this fieldwork has been complicated to use, it still has been useful. I have not made explicit references to these interviews with the children in the articles; however, their eagerness to discuss existential and challenging themes also helped underscore how important such themes were for the children in all the congregations.

5.3 Fieldwork – Interviews and Participatory Observation

The fieldwork spanned approximately one year (June 2016 to June 2017). I visited four congregations and attended two Wide Awake events (St. Mary and St. Emmanuel) and two Tower Agent events (St. Nicholas and St. Sophia). I contacted potential participant congregations by e-mail or telephone to ask whether they wished to be part of the study.

In this initial contact, I described the aims of the study, which at that stage was to research how children respond to preaching and how I would conduct the study. I explained that I would interview preachers and children attending Christian education events, observe the event—including sleeping over at church with the children at the Wide Awake events—and film the worship services on Sunday. Before the contact with the congregations, I had the study approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). I communicated this to the congregations, underlining that they could withdraw from the research at any point without stating a reason.[312]

[311] Hennik, Hutter and Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 109.
[312] I also informed the participants about the possibility to withdraw from the research at any time, and without stating a reason, in the consent forms provided at the start of the interviews.

Table 2. Overview of Fieldwork

Congregations	Children interviewed	Preachers interviewed	Duration of participant observation	Video recording	Type of Christian Education-event
St. Nicholas	7	2	Two days, Saturday and Sunday	Sunday worship service	Tower-Agents
St. Mary	3	3	Two days, slept in the church	Sunday worship service	Wide Awake
St. Emmanuel	11	2	Two days, slept in the church	Sunday worship service	Wide Awake
St. Sophia	6	1	Two days, Saturday and Sunday	Sunday worship service	Tower-Agents

At the beginning of each Christian education event, one of the leaders or myself explained that I was a researcher. I, or we, told the children why I was there and that I would ask some of the children if they wanted to be interviewed after the Sunday worship service. In each congregation, the children asked questions concerning the research. Some said that they wanted to participate in the research as long as I promised not to give them a shot; others wondered if I had found any gold (in the literal sense), and several wondered if being interviewed entailed being on television. Additionally, most of the children found it strange that it was possible to research worship services. These questions from the children displayed insight into what they consider research. In their descriptions, research is in no small degree something natural scientists does.

The adults did not have any problems in categorizing the study of congregations as research. However, not all had a comprehensive view of what undertaking PhD research entails. As I describe more thoroughly below, this affected which position I was given in the Christian education events and how the adult leaders related to me.

During the events, the children were often divided into groups, and when that happened, I chose one group I followed around. In the first fieldwork, at St. Nicholas, I wrote down observations in a notebook throughout the event. However, during the fieldwork, I felt that the notebook took too much attention and transitioned to writing notes on a note app on my phone in the three following fieldworks. I completed my notes after the events finished.

5.3.1 Participatory Observation

Kim Knott argues that there are four positions the researcher can adopt in fieldwork: the complete observer, the observer as participant, the participant as observer, and the complete

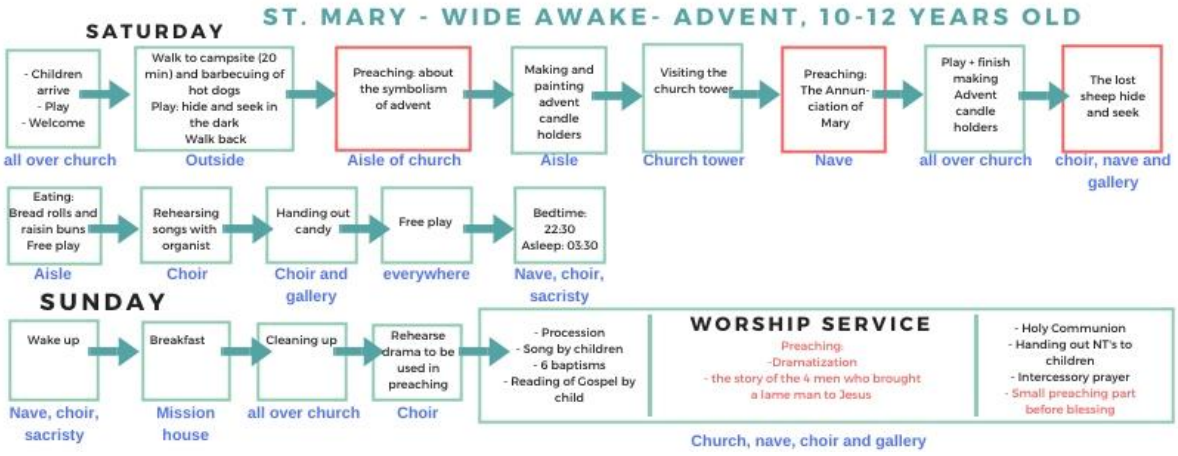
participant. [313] This discussion on researcher participation also touches on what social scientists have called "the insider/outsider problem."[314] Although the insider/outsider problematic is still a debate, some scholars argue that this debate might be outdated.[315] Accordingly, Jeppe Sinding Jensen posits that the insider/outsider distinction is a gradient and not a rift.[316] I find both the objections appealing, as they align with the main theories of the thesis, and also echo the experiences I describe in the following.

Reflections on My Role as a Researcher in the Fieldwork–the Insider/Outsider-Problem

In this section, I reflect on how the insider/outsider problem manifested itself in my fieldwork on two levels. The first level concerns membership. The second concerns how I was treated and felt during the fieldwork. As mentioned, I conducted the fieldwork in four congregations in the Church of Norway. I am trained as a theologian and am an ordained pastor in the Church of Norway. Before starting my PhD, I worked as a pastor who organized and enacted Christian education events for children. Therefore, I am an insider. At the same time, I am no longer a child, and even when I was one, I never attended the events I now studied. In that regard, I was more an outsider than an insider.

Secondly, I experienced varying degrees of feeling like and being treated like an outsider or insider in the different congregations. Below, I provide models of how the Christian education events unfolded. Preaching events are marked red, and places are marked blue. To better understand the experience from the fieldwork, I describe the roles I tried to take and the roles I was given using Knott's four positions.

Illustration 2. St. Mary[317]

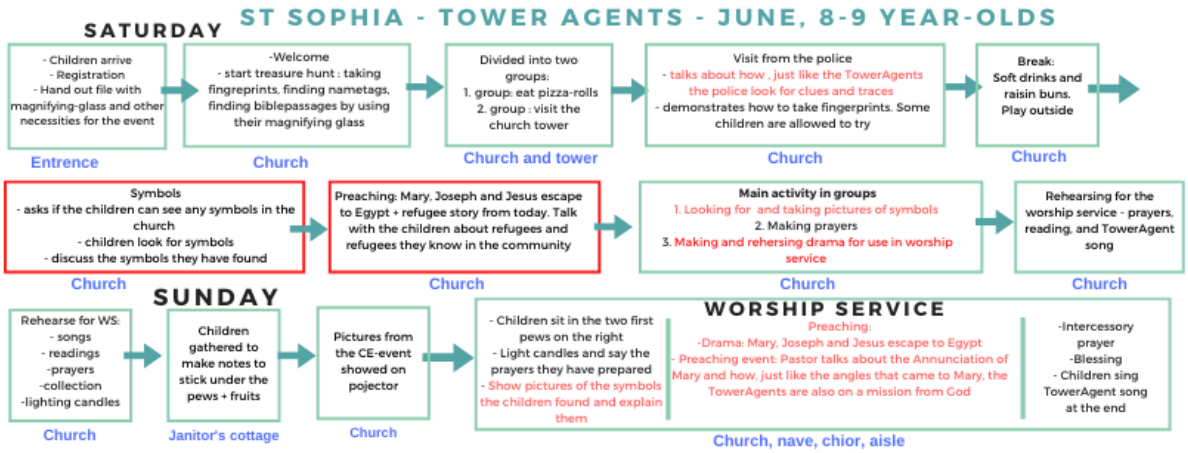


[313] Kim Knott, "Insider/Outsider Perspectives," in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. John R. Hinnells (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 245-46.
[314] Knott "Insider/Outsider," 245-246.
[315] Knott "Insider/Outsider," 255.
[316] Jeppe Sinding Jensen, "Revisiting the Insider-Outsider Debate: Dismantling a Pseudo-Problem in the Study of Religion," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 23, no 1, (2011): 42-43. Jensen also goes into an ontological and epistemological argument on whether it makes sense to talk about insiders and outsiders at all, claiming that the distinction rests on "a myth of the subjective." I will not go into the ontological and epistemological discussion here.
[317] Preaching events are marked with red boxes or red letters in the illustrations.

At St. Mary, they were delighted when I arrived as they had not been able to find a female leader to attend the sleepover at the church, a role they now expected me to fill. I expressively said that I was there as a researcher, not as a volunteer leader, but that I could be called on in exceptional cases. Yet, I spent the night comforting crying children who longed for home and calling parents and grandparents to have them come and pick up children who wanted to go home. Even though the male leaders that the children knew were still there, the children came crying to me.

Moreover, throughout the event, the male pastor continuously gave me "hints and tips," as though I was there to learn from him, not about him. Here, I was treated like *a pastor* or even a *pastor-apprentice*, and not like a researcher.

Illustration 3. St. Sophia



At St. Sophia, I had the opposite experience and felt like a *complete observer*. I was introduced as a researcher, as someone who was going to be “a fly on the wall.” I did not have an opportunity to introduce myself or the research project, and throughout the event I struggled to build a rapport with the children. Hence it became difficult to observe what they were doing, as I was not invited to follow them around and had little possibility to engage them in small-talk.

Illustration 4. St. Nicholas

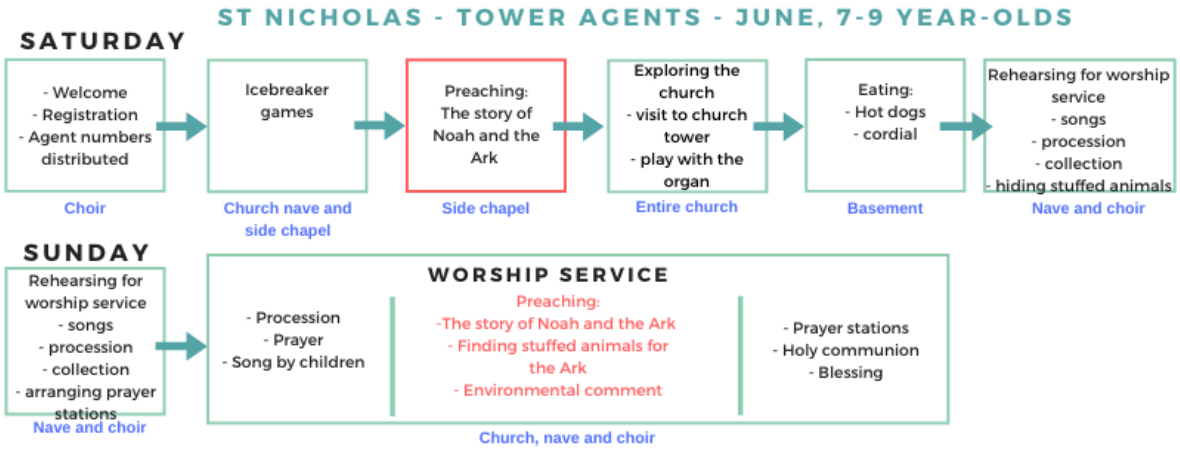
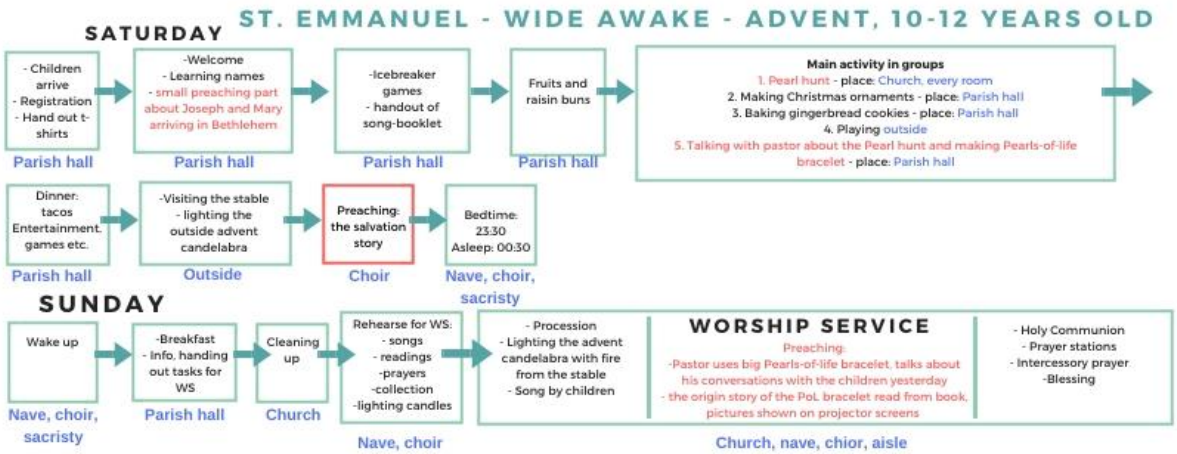


Illustration 5. St. Emmanuel



At St. Nicholas and St. Emmanuel, I was introduced to the church staff and volunteer leaders before the event started. I was allowed to present both myself and the project. Later I was also introduced to the children as a researcher. I got to describe the project to the children, and they could ask questions. I believe that my best interviews took place at these two churches, which is not surprising given the level and type of interaction with the children. It seems that being able to give a more thorough description of the project helped lay a foundation of trust that made it easier for the children to talk openly in the interviews. Here I was treated like a "*participant as observer*."

While the literature on this subject seems to argue that it is up to the researcher which position she takes towards the research and the research subjects, my experience is that which position I obtained owed a lot to the leaders of the Christian education events, how they perceived my status and what part of me they saw— the pastor or the researcher or a hybrid. Their assigning me a role happened even though I was upfront about my position and goals. It turns out that managing my reception and communication as a researcher was not something I could always control.

I believe that gender played a role in this. Carling, Erdal, and Ezzati argue that gender and physical appearance matters in fieldwork, which they back with Ezzati's experience that being young and female made her less threatening to her informants.[318] At least at St. Mary, I believe that being young and female made me less authoritative in the pastor's mind and, therefore, someone he could lecture. At the same time, being young and female might have helped me to establish a relationship with the children. Carling et al. describes how female ethnographers in post-colonial settings can experience increased access, for as outsiders they can become "honorary males" and are thus able to operate in spaces where local women typically would be excluded.[319] I would not say that I became an "honorary child," but I was treated more like a big sister than an adult. Moreover, physical appearance

[318] Jørgen Carling, Marta Bivand Erdal, and Rojan Ezzati, "Beyond the Insider–Outsider Divide in Migration Research," *Migration Studies* 2, no. 1 (2014).
[319] Carling. et.al, "Beyond," 45.

might also define the researcher's position. Looking younger and maybe not looking "like a pastor" can have contributed to the children treating me differently than the other adults. [320]

In her discussion on research ethics, Anne Ryen points out that research participants do have power: they can choose how active they want to be in the research and what information to give the researcher. They might even have their own agendas and goals for participating in the research. [321] In my case, this dynamic appeared with the pastor who gave me "tips," and when other pastors signaled they wanted feedback on whether their preaching was good enough. As for the children, it seemed like their goals were to be famous. In every interview-situation with the children, some asked if they were going to be on TV or radio. Most were happy to hear that they were going to be in a book. This all points to the fact that even though research organizes and orders reality in order to try to understand more about it, reality is never as ordered as we present it. The research process can be quite messy.[322]

5.4 Video Recordings

All the worship services in the empirical material were video-recorded and are a vital part of the material as a whole. Christian Heath argues that video gives ethnographic research a new and exciting opportunity to study activity as it happens in the natural settings of the research participants.[323] The main advantage is that video recordings "can be subject to detailed scrutiny" and might show "details that are unavailable to more traditional methods of data collection including, for example, interviews and participant observation."[324] Therefore, the primary use of the video was to observe the children's behaviors during the preaching events in the Sunday worship services.[325] Elements from these observations are present in the analysis and discussion in all three articles, especially the observation that in several congregations, children raised their hands to ask questions during the preaching events. Furthermore, it is different reading a transcribed preaching event after also seeing it on video, for then the different preachers come alive on the page. Knowing their voices and tones has influenced how I have analyzed the interviews with the preachers.

It is a limitation of this thesis that I have not employed and analyzed the video material more rigorously and according to a video analysis method. Nevertheless, the material still contributed to

[320] For an interesting article treating the concept of not looking "like a pastor" see Natalie Wigg-Stevenson, "You Don't Look Like a Baptist Minister: An Autoethnographic Retrieval of 'Women's Experience' as an Analytic Category for Feminist Theology," *Feminist Theology* 25, no. 2 (2017).
[321] Anne Ryen, "Ethics and Qualitative Research," in *Social Research Methods*, ed. Alan Bryman, (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2011), 430-31.
[322] Law, *After*.
[323] Christian Heath, "Embodied Action: Video and the Analysis of Social Interaction," in *Qualitative Reserach - Issues of Theory, Method and Practice*, ed. David Silverman (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011), 252.
[324] Heath, "Embodied Action," 252.
[325] Severin S. Rödel and Malte Brikman, and Liv K. Kristensen all suggest analytical methods for analyzing video recordings. Unfortunately, I started the analysis process without reading enough about video analysis. As a result, I have not transcribed the videos. Severin Sales Rödel and Malte Brinkmann, "Theory and Methodology of Pedagogical-Phenomenological Video Analysis," *Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy* 3, no. 1 (2018): 1.; Liv Kondrup Kristensen, "'Peeling an Onion': Layering as a Methodology to Promote Embodied Perspectives in Video Analysis," *Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy* 3, no. 1 (2018).

refining the analysis and findings, and as such, I argue that I have arrived at a richer description of the case than I would have without the video recordings.

5.5 Interviews

Below, I reflect on the experience of conducting interviews before discussing the choice of focus groups and semi-structured interviews. I also address the topic of knowledge production and meaning-construction in interviews. While it is always vital to build trust and rapport in interview-situations, scholars argue that this is even more critical when interviewing children. Hence, I especially address trust and rapport-building in interviews with children.

I have based all the interviews on an understanding of the interviewees as persons, as subjects engaged in meaning-making, and not as objects who are mechanically controlled by causal laws, as is advocated by Kvale and Brinkmann.[326] The understanding above is in line with a dialogical approach to research that emphasizes the importance of treating those who are the object of research as subjects.[327] Moreover, understanding the interviewees as subjects had consequences for how I conducted the interviews and empowered me to follow the interviewees' lead and allow off-topic discussions.

All interviews were recorded and later transcribed. In the transcriptions, I marked pauses, overlapping speech, and fumbling for words.[328] The focus group interviews with the children were, at times, challenging to transcribe as they talked over each other, and it was particularly challenging to distinguish between the different voices in the interviews with five girls.

5.5.1 Focus Group Interviews with Children

Although the interviews varied somewhat in length, most were around thirty minutes. This was a result of several practical considerations, including tired children and parents eager to go home. In fact, every one of the interviews was interrupted by impatient parents. Since I interviewed the children before the preachers, I also had to take into account how long the preachers had time to wait. Most of the interviews went smoothly and often felt like stimulating conversations about Christian education events and preaching. I asked questions, yet, the children also took control over the interviews at times and seemed eager to relate their thoughts about and experiences of the Christian education event and preaching.

According to David Morgan, a focus group is: "a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher."[329] The choice of a loose focus group

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[326] Svend Brinkmann and Steinar Kvale, *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2015), 3.
[327] Sullivan, *Qualitative Dialogical*., 14.
[328] Hennik, Hutter and Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 213. Because St. Nicholas originally was supposed to be part of FoSS, the person hired to transcribe the FoSS interviews transcribed these. I transcribed the rest myself. In the first article, I re-transcribed the parts of the preaching events used as quotes in the article. This I did using the method of transcription Paul Sullivan argues for in his dialogical approach to data analysis. As I moved away from a strict dialogical approach to analyzing data in the second and third articles, I did not continue to follow this model of transcription. Sullivan, *Qualitative Dialogical*., 69.
[329] David Morgan, "Focus Groups," *Annual Rev. Sociol.* 22 (1996).

method was based on colleague's recommendations after their experiences from FoSS, where they found group interviews with children to be more rewarding than individual interviews. The focus group method also aligns with the theoretical perspectives in this thesis, which advocates dialogue and a polyphony of voices.

Additionally, as a research interview is not a conversation with equal partners, I had to be especially attentive to the further asymmetry between adults and children.[330] Attention to this was another reason for interviewing the children in groups, as I hoped that the asymmetry would be smaller with a group of children and one adult.[331] Moreover, much research on, or with, children employs different methods than research on, or with, adults. Hence, in research on children, the researcher needs to balance the (often researcher-driven) need to employ novel and new methods for interviewing children with an emphasis on the agency and capability of children to speak about their lives, thoughts, and experiences.[332]

In the interviews at St. Nicholas, I wanted to experiment with using figures from the flannelgraph in the interviews. However, as I had trouble with getting the children to even sit still, I abandoned the attempt. At St. Mary, I conducted the interviews without any attempt at child-friendly methods. But subsequently, these interviews did not feel very successful. Therefore, I searched for a more child-friendly method to introduce into the interview process, and I was pointed towards a method called a "message-form".[333] This method has been developed by Norwegian researchers and family counsellors within the program "Children in Mediation."[334] The aim of the program is to "give children a voice" when their parents' relationship ends. Children are encouraged to tell their parents how they feel through the counsellor. At the beginning of the conversation, the counsellor shows the children a piece of paper, tells them that this is a message-form which they will fill out at the end of the conversation and that this form will summarize the most essential message the children want to convey to their parents. I was initially hesitant to employ the message form as I felt it was close to a transfer model understanding of communication. However, the concept aims at introducing children's voices into a dialogue in which they usually are ignored. As such, the message-form contributes to a more polyphonic discussion in matters that concern children, hence it does not rely on a transfer model of communication.

In sum, employing the message-form offered a useful framework for the interviews as well as a clear method of including the children's interpretations and reflections into the research. It has also

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[330] Brinkmann and Kvale, *Interviews*, 4-6.
[331] See i.e. Punch, "Research with Children," 325; Ridgely, *Children*, 7; Priscilla Alderson, "Children's Rights in Research About Religion and Spirituality," in *The Study of Children in Religions: A Methods Handbook*, ed. Susan B. Ridgely (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 52-53. See Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 504, on feminist reasons for why focus groups can be applied to children as well.
[332] Gallacher and Gallagher, "Methodological Immaturity."
[333] A special thanks to Gjertrud Jonassen, who gave me the tip and who herself has been instrumental in the development of Children in Mediation.
[334] Strandbu Astrid and Thørnblad Renee, "Hva står på spill? - barns deltakelse og budskap i mekling," *Fokus på familien*, no. 04 (2015).

functioned as a check-point during the analysis.

5.5.2 In-depth, Semi-Structured Interviews with Preachers

In-depth interviews are often done using a semi-structured interview guide and are used when the researcher aims to understand more about an individual's experience and reflections on a topic.[335] The semi-structured approach also affords the researcher flexibility to pursue topics that interviewees bring up during the interview.[336] The aim of interviewing preachers was to gain more insight into how they experienced and reflected on their practice of preaching for children, and therefore, I chose an in-depth, semi-structured interview approach.

The interviews with the preachers were longer, ranging from forty minutes to over an hour. In these interviews, I found the preachers eager to discuss Christian education events and preaching for children. Notably, in congregations where there were disagreements concerning the Christian education events and their place in the worship service, the adults often steered the interviews towards a more general conversation regarding the Christian education reform and its impact on the "rest of the congregation." In keeping with a semi-structured interview method, I did not interrupt these digressions as they often eventually led to interesting reflections on preaching. [337]

5.5.3 Knowledge Production and Meaning-Construction in Interviews

When you interview someone, you hope to get answers to your questions. But regardless of the answers—or non-answers—one thing is certain: the interviewer will be given information of one sort or another. But what, exactly, does the researcher get information about when she interviews someone? Different research paradigms come to different conclusions when answering that question. Jody Miller and Barry Glassner sketch some leading positions in an essay called "The 'Inside' and the 'Outside': Finding Realities in Interviews."[338]

Contrasting paradigmatic positions such as positivist, emotionalist, and social constructivist, they advocate for what they call an interactionist position to knowledge production and meaning-making in interviews. In this approach, qualitative interviews are understood as providing access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social world; however, this knowledge is not "out there" but rather created.[339] Moreover, they also argue that in interviews, researchers do learn more about the interviewee's lived experience. However, it is vital to acknowledge that what one learns in the interview is never all there is to be said about that experience. [340]

This interactionist position is similar to the Bakhtinian theory that meaning occurs in the encounter between two consciousness. Hence, in the process of interviewing, meaning arises.[341] As

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[335] Hennik, Hutter and Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 116-17.
[336] Kathryn Roulston, *Interactional Studies of Qualitative Research Interviews* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2019), 31.
[337] Brinkmann and Kvale, *Interviews*.
[338] Jody Miller and Barry Glassner, "The 'Inside' and the 'Outside': Finding Realities in Interviews," in *Qualitative Research: Issues of Theory, Method and Practice*, 3rd ed, ed. David Silverman (2011).
[339] Miller and Glassner, "The 'Inside'," 133-135.
[340] Miller and Glassner, "The 'Inside'," 136.
[341] Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*.

mentioned before, Bakhtin also argues against knowledge existing outside of embodied utterances. Therefore, there is no knowledge "out there" that the researcher can gain access to without interacting with another human. In a dialogical approach to knowledge, the question is not if it is possible to gain insight to the world through interviews but rather if it is possible to gain insight into the world without some form of interaction.[342] This point is also echoed in practice-theory, which places a large emphasis on the production of the world, while simultaneously arguing that a produced reality is no less real.[343]

Relying on these theories, I approached the interviews as spaces where knowledge is produced and created, and where the researcher plays a part in creating knowledge and producing meaning.

5.5.4 Building Trust and Rapport

A critical topic that prompts scrutiny when interviewing children is how to build trust and rapport without exploiting the asymmetry between adult and child, researcher and research participant. However, questions of trust and rapport does not only concern interviews with children but all research interviews.[344]

Anne Ryen claims that “trust is the classic key to good field relations and is a constantly unfolding challenge during the research process.”[345] I conducted all the interviews after the worship service on Sunday. By then, I had been together with the preachers and the children several hours over two days. However, as I have discussed earlier, the way I was introduced in the fieldwork and how the adult leaders of the event perceived my role both made a considerable difference in what kind of trust and rapport I was able to build with the interviewees. Moreover, for some of the preachers, knowing that I, in addition to being a researcher, am also an ordained minister might have contributed to their trusting me.

Punch argues that researchers might have problems establishing rapport with children because they lack experience in talking with children. Additionally, in order to begin building rapport with the children, the researcher first has to build rapport with "the gatekeepers" (often adults) who provide access to the children.[346] She also claims that adult researchers, who often have read method literature about approaching children in interviews, might be afraid of being too patronizing or finding common ground with the children.[347] In other words, the interviewer might be too concerned with finding a line between getting to know the children while not embarrassing oneself by acting weirdly or childishly.

I struggled with this balance in conducting the interviews. Having read about how to conduct interviews with children, especially in the first two interviews, I was highly self-conscious. I continuously deliberated whether I had used appropriate language and tone, and whether I had been

[342] Sullivan, *Qualitative Dialogical*, 14.
[343] Schatzki et.al., *Contemporary Turn*., 3; Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 2-3.
[344] Hennik, Hutter and Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 128.
[345] Ryen, “Ethics,” 420.
[346] Punch, “Research with Children,” 327.
[347] Punch, “Research with Children,” 327.

embarrassingly friendly or not. What eventually helped me get comfortable was a reminder of why I was talking with these children: I believed they had something vital to say and I wanted to include their experiences and utterances about said experiences in homiletical research. Additionally, I found Punch's suggestion to follow the children's lead to be reassuring and helpful. [348]

During the fieldwork, I actively participated in the Christian education event, and whenever there were activities, I usually followed the children. I also tried to pick out points in the program where I would encounter all the children. Yet, I realize that most of the children who volunteered for interviews were children I had either followed around when they were in groups, children I had sat next to during meals, or children that I had talked with for some time the day before. This highlights the importance of being conscious when choosing how one interacts with research participants; in my case, the children's feeling they knew me made a difference in their willingness to be interviewed.

5.6 Analytical approach – Key moments and Thematic Analysis

In a compilation thesis, the different articles may have different analytical strategies. While this holds true for this thesis, some analysis was common to all the material. In this chapter, I first account for this initial and overarching analysis and then present a table showing the analytical strategies of the articles.

5.6.1 Analytical Approach – Abduction

I approached the analysis with the goal of letting the empirical material form themes that could later be explored in the analysis. Hence, I have not sought concepts from theory in the empirical material, but instead, in keeping with the ethnographically inspired case study method, I have tried to arrive at a "rich" description of the case of preaching for children.

Following the intuitionist approach to theory, I have not adhered to one existing method of analysis but have instead combined approaches and crafted a theoretical and analytical framework fitting the aim and design of the thesis. Hence, the intuitionist approach to theory lies close to an abductive approach to analysis. An abductive approach emphasizes that even in inductive analysis of empirical material, researchers still have theoretical preconceptions that play a role in their analysis. The approach is a rejection of the inductive-deductive divide, as well as a rejection of the divide between empirical material and theory.[349] This way of conceptualizing analysis is similar to both practice-theory and Bakhtin's rejection of the divide between theory and practice. Within this analytical approach of abduction, I used the analytical technique of "key moments," developed by Paul Sullivan, and the analytical strategy of thematic analysis.

5.6.2 Analytical Technique

In *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Dialogical Approach* Sullivan advocates a dialogical approach to data analysis based on Bakhtinian theory and argues that employing Bakhtinian theory has consequences for methodology and analysis. Methodologically speaking, he claims that the Bakhtinian

[348] Punch, "Research with Children," 329.
[349] Alvesson and Sköldberg, *Tolkning*., 56.

notion that the self is needy and thus dependent on others leads to an awareness that there is not just one possible interpretation of data. Further, the aim of a dialogical approach to interpreting data is not to find "the meaning" of the data but instead to "make sense of the different and ambiguous ways in which meaning may be experienced."[350]

I conducted the initial analysis by using Sullivan's analyzing concept of "key moments." In this approach, "key moments" are defined as "utterances of significance."[351] A key moment can be a sentence or a significant portion of an interview or field notes. Beginning wide, you select different extracts that you find interesting or that seem the most relevant to the research question. Then, you exclude moments based on the criteria you have set. Based on criteria Sullivan employed in his research, I set criteria for both content and form.[352]

These criteria were, to some extent, influenced by the theoretical point of departure of the thesis (abduction). Within the category of content I looked for utterances that i) mentioned the preaching event; ii) were a reply to a question about the preaching event; iii) were something the children expressed as essential to them; iv) showed reflection about texts, stories, the Christian education event as a whole, or particular preaching events; v) mentioned doings or materiality. As for the category of form, I looked for utterances where i) the form was elusive, and they had trouble finding words; ii) anecdotes the children or preachers told about themselves, their friends, or their family; iii) that started with "I thought" or "I felt." The next step of analysis was to give every key moment a label (theme).

Sullivan states that key moments are especially useful in the initial analysis of a data-set.[353] Nevertheless, he admits that using key moments also has its limitation and describes them as "inconsistent units of analysis in terms of length." Further, he points to how key moments might vary from long text to a few lines, and that a single key moment also may change in the course of the analysis.[354] This is recognizable, as I classified almost everything in the interviews as key moments when I first tried the approach. However, as I combined different approaches of analysis, I only used

[350] Sullivan, *Qualitative Dialogical*, 13-17. At the beginning of the analysis process, I tried using the software Atlas.ti Although I did not stick with the program, it did help me to see how empirical material could be categorized and coded. The reason I abandoned Atlas.ti was that I felt the analysis became too quantitative, static, and monologic. A foundational theory for Bakhtin is that the smallest unit of the language is not the word but the utterance. When I tried to code the interviews, it felt like I was, to a large degree, cramming utterances into codes (words). I wholeheartedly admit that it might just be me who did not "crack the code" of Atlas.ti. and that the program might be used in exactly the way I had wanted.
[351] Sullivan, *Qualitative Dialogical*, 72-73.
[352] This separation might seem odd, as in the articles and the discussion I strongly argue against separating form and content in preaching events. In the analysis, this separation was done for analytical purposes only and the categories had porous borders. The twin focus also provided the discovery of some key moments that I might have missed had I not specified the focus on form.
[353] Sullivan, *Qualitative Dialogical*, 72-73.
[354] Sullivan, *Qualitative Dialogical*, 73. Sullivan's account of the difficulty of setting boundaries for the unit of analysis resembles the discussion surrounding the unit of analysis in research within socio-cultural and practice-theoretical approaches. Matusov, "Unit of Analysis"; Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 7.

key moments in the initial analysis. Thus, key moments were never the unit of analysis in this study as a whole or in the articles.

5.6.3 Analytical Strategy in the Three Articles

The analysis conducted in each of the articles most closely resembles a thematic approach to analysis. Bryman argues that thematic analysis "follows the abductive rationale of inference; it is a continuous analytical dialog between data and theory. The themes are data-generated in the way that the categories and coding are identified through the data. The themes are also conceptually driven as they relate to the research questions, with theoretical concepts used as springboards for themes."[355] Nowell et al. contend that the advantages of a thematic analysis lie in its flexibility and its accessibility, arguing that it also offers a manner of giving rich, detailed, and complex descriptions of data.[356] As such, a thematic approach to analysis is fruitful for a thesis which employs an intuitionist and abductive approach.[357] In utilizing an abductive approach and a thematic strategy of analysis, there is a possibility for the approach tilting towards the deductive, especially as Bakhtinian theory has a normative streak. Therefore, although much of the analysis in the articles is done using conceptually driven themes, it is essential to stress that this analysis builds on the initial, empirically driven analysis of "key moments," as described above. The analytical process with the articles was also subject to reviews from journals and peer-reviews which often offered substantial and vital feedback and frequently led to changes in the articles.

In the table below, I present the analytical approach, technique, and strategy for the three articles.

[355] Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 580.
[356] Lorelli S. Nowell et al., "Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16, no. 1 (2017): 2.
[357] Knorr Cetina, "Intuitionist"; Alvesson and Sköldberg, *Tolkning.*

Table 3. Analysis in the articles

Articles	1 – Preaching at the Thresholds	2 – "I wish we could fast-forward it"	3 – Same or different?
Research question	What happens when preachers use biblical narratives, drama, or objects in the preaching event?	What do listeners do with preaching?	How do timespaces configure preachers' practice of preaching to children?
"Key moments" (labels) addressed	Drama, objects, involvement, theology, dialogue?	Boring, materiality, confusion, gap between children and adults, when is it fun?	Preachers do the same, normativity, theology, communication, texts, difference between Saturday and Sunday
Analytical technique	Thematic	Thematic	Thematic
Analytical tools or concepts	Bakhtinian dialogue theory -Polyphony -Architecture and scaffolding -Authoritative or inner persuasive voice	Schatzki's definition of practice: -Understandings (know-how-to) -Rules -Teleoaffective structure	Schatzki's notion of timespace: -How time and space is produced in the practice -How they interweave (coordination, conflict and harmonization) -Normative assumptions

5.7 Ethics, Reliability, Validity, and Generalizability

Alan Bryman argues that validity in qualitative research can be seen in two ways. One can stay close to quantitative research's focus on measurement and replication, or one can argue that validity and reliability in qualitative research should instead be thought of in terms of whether the research is trustworthy and authentic.[358] The latter argument thus follows a constructive view of the social where the social is conceptualized as dynamic and changing, and, thus, it is never possible to replicate precisely the same event. [359] As shown in the ontology and epistemology section of this thesis, I have approached reality as constructed, produced, embodied, and practiced. As such, I agree with those who argue that it is not possible to replicate events or find reality or truth as static entities "out there."

Similarly, I have approached the empirical material in this thesis in the fashion Alvesson and Kärreman argue for here:

> Empirical material should be opened up rather than viewed as a source of constraint and discipline in research work. As we see it, the interplay between theory and empirical material is more about seeing the latter as a source of inspiration and as a partner for critical dialogue.

[358] Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 390.
[359] Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 390.

> Empirical material is then not viewed as a guide to or as the ultimate validator for knowledge claims.[360]

Such an approach claims that the goal of theories is to enable researchers to see new aspects of their material. Thus, plausibility rather than validity becomes essential for good research.[361] However, claiming that all research is construction and, therefore, that plausibility and trustworthiness are better ways of measuring research, does not exempt the researcher from the responsibility of describing and arguing for their acts of construction.[362] With this in mind, I relate to, but also problematize the concepts of validity, reliability, and generalizability. Nevertheless, for clarity, I still use these concepts as headlines when accounting for the study below. I begin by describing ethical considerations of the study.

5.7.1 Ethics

Discussions about ethics in social research often revolve around four topics: informed consent, invasion of privacy, harmfulness, and deception.[363] I address all these topics below with an emphasis on informed consent, confidentiality, and harmfulness.

Informed Consent

The role of informed consent is to ensure that research participants know that they are being researched, are informed about the project in question, and are informed that they can withdraw their consent at any point in the research process without providing a reason.[364] In Norway, it is mandatory to have research projects that handle sensitive or personal issues approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD).[365]

As I had trouble getting approval to film the worship services, I had to apply twice and implement the precautions deemed necessary. This entailed providing each congregation with a poster describing the project and why the worship service would be filmed. It was also mandated that I reserve a space outside the camera's view for congregants to sit if they did not want to be filmed and inform the congregation both orally and in writing about this space. Additionally, I asked the church staff if they wanted the camera turned off during Holy Communion, as this might be considered more personal than attending the worship service in general. Moreover, who attends Holy Communion or not, has historically been a theological and culturally sensitive issue, especially in certain parts of the country.[366]

All these modifications were provided so that research participants could be as informed as possible

[360] Alvesson and Kärreman, *Qualitative*, 14-15.
[361] Alvesson and Kärreman, *Qualitative*, 26-27.
[362] Alvesson and Kärreman, *Qualitative*, 35.
[363] Bryman, *Social Research Methods*. 135
[364] Ryen, "Ethics," 419.
[365] "Notify Project," Norwegian Centre for Research Data, accessed 02. July 2020, https://nsd.no/personvernombud/en/notify/index.html
[366] Bjørn Sandvik, *Det store nattverdfallet: en undersøkelse av avsperring og tilhørighet i norsk kirkeliv*, (Trondheim: Tapir, 1998).

and should not experience harm or invasion of privacy.[367] These precautions also address the problem of the deception, for they made evident to the congregation that this worship service was part of a research project.

This was also addressed through the consent form, which was signed by the preachers and by the parents or guardians of the children I interviewed. I first always asked the children if they wanted to take part in the interviews, and then they asked their parents. Moreover, I provided the parents and children with additional information about the research if they wished.[368] A problem with consent forms can be that the moral responsibility of research can become limited to the beginning of the project. In this context, it is merely a box to check. The danger is that this can turn research ethics into an either-or issue – participants either consent or they do not, research is either harmless or harmful.[369] This only shows that it is essential to remain attentive of research ethics throughout the project. Even though one's research participants have signed a consent form, the researcher has to continuously reflect on ethical considerations.

Confidentiality

Participants in the research should be sure that their personal information is stored confidentially and securely. One way of achieving this goal is for the researcher to use pseudonyms for both places and participants.[370] In this thesis, all names are pseudonyms, both for people and places. The names of the persons in the interviews were anonymized in the transcription of the interviews. I have kept the audio recordings in either a locked computer, a secure cloud-service, or a locked office. I have taken care not to listen to the audio recordings outside the office.

Moreover, I abandoned my intention of writing in detail about the layout of the churches as this could jeopardize anonymity. Although I have had a highlighted focus on materiality and space, I argue that I have been able to address the areas of materiality and spatiality without describing the churches in detail.

Harmfulness

On the last day of fieldwork, before the worship service on Sunday began, there was an accident an outside the church. When we gathered for the interview, the children began the interview before I was ready. They were overflowing with emotions and wanted to discuss what had happened. I quickly abandoned the interview guide and let them discuss the accident, their reactions, and concern.

Some might argue that interviewing children after such a terrifying experience is harmful, or that it is an invasion of privacy for a researcher to ask questions of persons who have just experienced something shocking. Additionally, it is a goal for ethical research to disturb participants as little as possible.[371] However, all research, to a certain point disturbs its participants. The disturbance could

[367] Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 139.
[368] Consent forms are provided in the attachments at the end of the thesis.
[369] Ryen, "Ethics," 431-32.
[370] Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 136.
[371] Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 136.

also be positive, as participants can learn from being a part of the research and reflecting on their experiences. In the above, I had to lay my research ambitions and interview guide aside and let the children talk. Hence, one could argue that the children might be able to process the incident better because of the research situation, as the interview provided a space for them to process, talk, and reflect on what had happened.

In addition to the accident described above, one of the surprising discoveries in the interviews was that the children brought up many existential themes and questions that often, for me, seemed unrelated to the preaching events and the Christian education events, for instance their feelings about dead and sick family members or pets. Anne Ryen posits that researchers can be too strict in what they perceive as research-relevant and argues for letting the interviewees talk, even though it might not seem "right on subject."[372] Ryen claims that this is part of what makes the question of harmful vs harmless research difficult; it is always contextual and complex, and not necessarily something that can be put into a form.[373] Therefore, in line with the reflective stance in the thesis, I have approached ethics as a reflexive and situational area of research.[374] The reason for interviewing the children in the first place was a belief that their thoughts and reflections around preaching are essential contributions to Homiletics and theology. Therefore, it would be strange not to allow their reflections on existential topics in the interviews. Hence, allowing these conversations to take place accords with the ethical and epistemological stance that I have accounted for above.

5.7.2 Reliability

In a more positivistic research framework, when measuring the reliability of research, one evaluates whether or not the study can be replicated. Keeping with a constructivist epistemological standpoint and a case study approach, the goal of this research is particular, in-depth knowledge, and hence, it is not crucial whether the study can be replicated or not. However, in translating the concept of reliability, it is essential whether the study is trustworthy and consistent.[375] Below I account for crucial elements in its construction. The goal is to show the construction of the study and to establish trustworthiness and consistency.

Since the two leading theories I employ in this study—Bakhtinian dialogue theory and Schatzkian practice-theory—are not used together much, throughout the thesis I have worked to establish a rationale for how they are fruitful to employ together and for how I have done so. In the ontology and epistemology section of the theory chapter, I account for how it is possible to argue that Bakhtinian dialogue theory fits within a practice-theoretical paradigm, showing that both theories argue for understanding the world as complex, constructed, and focused on embodied human action.

[372] Ryen, "Ethics," 431.
[373] Ryen, "Ethics," 431-32.
[374] Ryen, "Ethics," 422. This is opposed to a universalist understanding of ethics.
[375] Brinkmann and Kvale, *Interviews*, 28.

One of the aims of the study is to contribute to empirical homiletical discussions on the dialogicity of preaching. By employing Bakhtinian theory and homileticians like Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen, I have argued that preaching can be seen as dialogical in a Bakhtinian sense, that is, as an interaction of at least two consciousnesses. However, this is a theoretical argument; hence, I also had to study preaching in its "natural" setting, in the church. In this empirical work, exploring how the practice of preaching for children can be described and understood, a case study approach suited my aim of an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of preaching.

Furthermore, Bakhtin's focus of listening as an action provided a way of seeing preaching as a practice with more than one practitioner. However, while Bakhtinian theory offered this way of seeing the listener, it has not established an operationalizable theory of practice and, therefore, could not fully account for observations I made in the fieldwork and the interviews. Thus, my turn towards practice-theory was motivated by the empirical material talking back to the Bakhtinian theories, as well as the need for theory that was easier to operationalize. As already mentioned, this shift of theory forced me to continuously reflect on the thesis' consistency, coherence, and consequences for the research design.

Since this is a compilation thesis, I have received feedback from reviewers on each of the articles. This feedback has raised questions of consistency within the articles, as well as for the thesis as a whole.

5.7.3 Validity

Kvale and Brinkmann argue that validity concerns whether you have studied what you claim to study.[376] In this respect, the sections on research design above address the question. However, the question of validity can also be interpreted as a question of research craftmanship. With that in mind, I now account for how I have subjected the thesis to feedback from research communities and the research participants.

As part of the PhD program, I presented the articles and parts of the extended abstract in different research forums. I presented the articles at conferences, both before and after publication. I also made deliberate efforts to orally present the research to practitioners so as to discern whether the theories and findings are plausible and recognizable to them.

After finishing the fieldwork, I asked the adult research participants if they wanted to read the articles. Two of the congregations declined, while the other two accepted. Therefore, I sent the second article to the contact-person in the two congregations that accepted. One of the preachers had comments on the second article. This feedback resulted in an e-mail correspondence, and I made several clarifications in the article to accommodate his comments and more clearly argue my position. After this round, the remaining two congregations notified me that I did not need to send them the next article, stating lack of time as the main reason.

[376] Brinkmann and Kvale, *Interviews*, 282.

This is a limitation for the research, as the second article definitively improved after the discussion with the preacher, and it also presents a challenge for the dissemination of research and for the potential of the congregations learning from the research. One additional hurdle might also be that I write in English. It would take less time and effort for practitioners to read Norwegian. A further limitation is that research articles are not the most fitting reading material for children aged seven to twelve. Thus, the children have not been able to respond to the research and express their questions and concerns regarding the interpretation of their utterances. However, I have attempted to use their remarks in the message-forms to check my interpretations throughout the research.

5.7.4 Generalization

Case studies are often criticized for being ungeneralizable, for being more useful for generating hypotheses than testing hypotheses, for having a bias towards verification, and for being challenging to summarize and use to develop general propositions and theories.[377] Such critiques mostly stem from a more positivistic research paradigm.

One researcher who has argued extensively against the critiques above is Bent Flyvbjerg. He protests against the notion that general theoretical knowledge is more valuable than concrete case knowledge. Further, Flyvbjerg claims that the highest level of knowledge is gained by an intimate knowledge of several concrete cases in a specific area of expertise and that this knowledge is necessarily context-dependent. He also contends that social studies are always context-based and, in their final instance, such studies have nothing else to offer than concrete, context-dependent knowledge. Hence, while case studies are uniquely well suited to produce context-dependent knowledge, they are not inferior to other sciences. [378] In line with Flyvbjerg, Simons argues that it is the particularity of case study research that makes it interesting and vital for knowledge-production.[379] Additionally, both a Bakhtinian and a practice-theoretical approach to research protests against a division of theory and practice, arguing that it is not possible to postulate some "general theoretical knowledge" that is not enacted and embodied in practices.[380]

Nevertheless, case researchers argue that the choice of case might affect to what extent a case study can be generalized. As I have argued earlier in this chapter, the case of preaching for children is an instrumental case study where I have chosen a "least likely" or atypical case, and thus, subsequently, I argue that it is possible to make generalizations from the study of preaching for children in the particular Christian education events that I have studied to preaching for children, at least in a Folk Church context.[381]

Drawing on Flyvbjerg's argument that case studies are "ideal for generalizing using the type of test that Karl Popper called 'falsification… The case study is well-suited for identifying 'black

[377] Simons, "Case Study Context," 466; Bent Flyvbjerg, "Case Study," 302.
[378] Bent Flyvbjerg, "Case Study," 303.
[379] Simons, "Case Study Context," 457.
[380] Nicolini, *Practice Theory*, 2.; Bakhtin, *Philosophy*.
[381] Flyvbjerg, "Five Misunderstandings," 129-130; Crowe. et. al, "Case Study."

swans' because of their in-depth approach: what appears to be 'white' often turns out on closer examination to be 'black'", I argue that in this study, what initially appeared "white" has often turned out to be "black."[382] Most prominent is the discovery that homileticians should ask listeners not how they listen to preaching events but instead what they do with preaching events, as the children often do not listen at all. Moreover, the study shows that many methods which are taken for granted as "best practices" in preaching for children, might actually not be so great—or at least will need nuancing from other theories and practices to become "best practices." Identifying these "black swans" in an "atypical" case means that this study can point to generalizable findings concerning the practice of preaching for children. Hence, I argue that although I have studied preaching for children in Christian education events in the Church of Norway, I have made discoveries that pertain to preaching for children, and to a certain extent "ordinary" preaching, in general, especially when it comes to understanding preaching as a practice with several participants and how the production of time and space configures how preachers preach.

[382] Flyvbjerg, "Five Misunderstandings," 126

6. Summary of the Articles

To answer the main research question *how can the practice of preaching for children be described and understood*, I have studied six congregations' Christian education events as one case of preaching to children and have written three articles.

Each article concerns one part of the practice of preaching: 1) the use of mediational means in transcribed preaching events, 2) what listeners do with preaching, and 3) the preachers' negotiations of different timespaces and how these configure the preachers' practices of preaching for children.

In this chapter, I offer a table of research design in the articles and a summary of the articles.

Table 4. Research design in the three articles

	Article 1	Article 2	Article 3
Title	Preaching at the Thresholds – polyphony in preaching to children	"I wish we could fast forward it" – Negotiating the practice of preaching	Keeping it age-appropriate- Preachers' Negotiation of Interwoven Timespaces in Their Practice of Preaching to Children
Unit of analysis	Biblical narratives, drama and material objects in use in the transcribed preaching events	Children's actions in preaching events in three Christian education-events	The preachers' utterances and normative assumptions concerning their practice of preaching to children.
Research question	What happens when preachers use biblical narratives, drama, or objects in the preaching event?	What do listeners do with preaching?	How do timespaces configure preachers' practice of preaching to children?
Material	Two transcribed preaching events and video recordings of two worship services	Fieldnotes from three Christian education-events, five interviews with children, five interviews with preachers, and video recordings of three worship services	Fieldnotes from four Christian education-events, eleven interviews with preachers, video recordings of six worship services
Methods	Document analysis and video recording analysis	Participant observation, interviews, and video recording	Participant observation, interviews, and video recording
Analytical strategy	Thematic analysis and theory-driven analysis: "foreign words" and mediational means, architecture and scaffolding, authoritative discourse and inner persuasive discourse	Thematic: listeners activity, understandings, rules, and teleoaffective structures	Thematic: Timespaces and preaching
Theory	Bakhtin, Wertsch, Dysthe	Schatzki, Bakhtin, Reckwitz	Schatzki, Bakhtin

Article 1: Preaching at the Thresholds – Bakhtinian Polyphony in Preaching to Children

In this article, I use Bakhtin's contention that how one appropriates the "foreign words" of other's words and texts is what separates monological and dialogical utterances. However, I argue that Bakhtin's concept of "foreign words" should be expanded beyond words to include materiality or mediational means.

In examining how the "foreign words" of biblical narratives, dramatizations, and material objects are used in two transcribed preaching events, I search for polyphony, whether the "foreign words" are used as architecture or scaffolding and whether there is any room for inner persuasive discourse in the preaching events. The main finding of the article is that even though both preaching events are seemingly dialogical in that several persons and voices partake in the preaching events, they are in fact monological. The reason is that while several persons participate in the preaching events, they all become assembled into one voice. Therefore, only the first part—the dramatization of the Zacchaeus story in the preaching event at St. John where different voices were heard—is polyphonic.

Further contributing to the monologicity of the preaching events, the second part of the preaching event at St. John and the whole preaching event at St. Mary were structured around "the message" the preachers want to deliver. This "message" is delivered authoritatively with little room for inner persuasive discourse. Thus, the listeners either have to reject or agree with the "message" of the preaching events. Finally, I argue that the material objects in these preaching events are sometimes used as architecture, in those instances, they help create a more dialogical preaching event. However, most of the time, they are used as scaffolding and as such contribute to monologicity. I conclude that employing dramatization and material objects is not a quick fix to make preaching events more dialogical. What matters is how they are used.

In the discussion, I make an initial attempt at arguing for understanding preaching as a practice. I claim that in viewing preaching as dialogical, where meaning is produced in at the thresholds of meeting consciousnesses, a space opens up for viewing preaching as a practice.

Article 2: "I wish we could fast forward it": Negotiating the Practice of Preaching

In the second article, I turn to the listeners. Leaving Wertsch and the socio-cultural paradigm behind, I now place the thesis solidly within a practice-theoretical paradigm. The article aims to explore what listeners *do* with preaching.

Using practice-theory language and surveying preaching definitions in numerous homiletical contributions, I establish a description of preaching as a practice. I argue that the understanding of preaching that emerges out of the homiletical contributions is that the preacher reads a text, interprets it, then delivers this interpretation to a congregation which is expected to listen and interpret what they hear. The rules of the practice are that while the preacher speaks, the listeners should sit silently and listen. The aim of the practice is for listeners to find relevance for their lives and faith.

I proceed to analyze interviews with children through the practice definition provided by Schatzki, searching for the children's understanding of the practice of preaching, the rules of the practice, the ends of the practice, and how those ends matter. Concerning ends, I compare the children's ends to the preacher's ends, and thus also employ the preacher interviews to a small degree.

I find that the children struggle with *knowing-how-to-x*. While many of them do listen, they do not know that the preaching event is supposed to be relevant for their lives. I show that in the instances where the children do *know-how-to-x*, it is due to dialogical use of the materiality of the affective space of church. In the discussion, I claim that the homiletical definitions of preaching take for granted that listeners listen while this this cannot and should not be assumed. Here I enter into a discussion with the understanding of practice as phronesis, to which several homileticians and practical theologians adhere, particularly in the U.S.

I contend that the discreteness of the Christian education events makes learning the practice of preaching from experienced practitioners almost impossible, and therefore, a different view of practice is needed in the Norwegian context. Further, I argue that there lies a possibility in regarding preaching as a practice because if preaching is a practice, it can be taught.

Article 3: "Keeping it Age-Appropriate"—The Preacher's Negotiation of Interwoven Timespaces in Their Practice of Preaching for children

In the third article, I turn back to focusing on the preachers. The article explores which timespaces are part of the preachers' practices of preaching for children and how the preachers negotiate these interwoven timespaces. I also examine how the preachers' normative assumptions, as expressed in the interviews and in the preaching events, configure their practice of preaching for children. I demonstrate that literature on preaching and children is characterized by a distinction between those who claim preaching to children should be similar to "ordinary" preaching and those who argue that since children are different from adults, preaching to children should be different from "ordinary" preaching.

To analyze the preachers' practice, I employ the Schatzkian concept of timespace. Schatzki contends that timespaces function as an infrastructure of practices, interweave different practices, and are always part of human actions and events. As part of the first round of analysis, I identify four timespaces: school, age-appropriateness, the Bible, and "ordinary" preaching. Timespaces can also be coordinated, harmonized, or conflicting, and in the next step of the analysis I show how preachers negotiate these timespaces in coordination, harmony, or conflict with their practice of preaching for children.

I argue that the timespace of school is used in either a coordinating way, where the preachers build on knowledge about what the children learn at school, or in a conflicting way where the preachers define the timespace of school against the notion of preaching about "what really matters." The most important finding in this article is that the timespace of age-appropriateness and the timespace of ordinary preaching are negotiated as incompatible and in conflict. However, the

timespace of age-appropriateness wins the negotiations almost without exception. I contend that this conflict is visible in the preachers' preaching events, as the preachers separate form and content while emphasizing methods that conform to the normativity produced in the timespace of age-appropriateness. Furthermore, the timespace of the Bible is used to harmonize, leading the Biblical texts to lose influence in preaching for children.

In the discussion, I comment on the dominance of the timespace of age-appropriateness and argue that recent developments within Homiletics might help balance the practice of preaching, diminishing the dominance of both the timespace of age-appropriateness and the focus on the preaching's form. I claim that this is required to provide more space for seeing children as persons with intersecting identities. Finally, I suggest that we should not think of preaching for children as similar to or different from ordinary preaching but as simultaneously similar *and* different.

7. Children as Listeners – Overestimated and Underestimated

In answering the primary research question—*How can the practice of preaching for children be described and understood?*– it must be said that practices are messy, and in the practice of preaching for children, with its many elements and actors, this is certainly the case. The most important actors, though, are the preachers and the listeners—the children. Yet, there are also a myriad of places, objects, and visual aids employed in the attempts to directly involve the children in the preaching events.

As I have shown in the articles, all the preaching events included dramatizations, material objects, visual aids, or the active involvement of the children. Additionally, how the literature described preaching for children was strikingly similar across decades and countries. Hence, the question of why preaching for children is so similar eventually became a focal point and, I believe, the key to answering the main research question. I suggest that it all starts when children are conceptualized as different than adults and thus needing a different form of preaching, and argue that this conceptualization of children as different leads to children being overestimated and underestimated at the same time in the practice of preaching for children.

This final chapter has three parts. First, I present the findings across the articles, organizing the section around the three major findings—materiality and its influence on the practice, the children struggling to understand preaching, and the conceptualization of children as different and therefore in need of different preaching events. Then, I discuss how in light of previous homiletical theories and studies, children are being both overestimated and underestimated in the practice. Finally, I suggest areas for further research.

7.1 Findings In and Across the Articles

Since an eye for materiality is inherent in practice-theory, it is no surprise that I uncovered preaching events filled with material objects like stuffed animals, flannelgraphs, bracelets, costumes, and other props. Additionally, research conducted in FoSS had already demonstrated that Christian education events included a great deal of materiality. More unexpectedly, I discovered that *how* this materiality was used in the preaching events was essential and that this use mattered to the children's response. When preachers used materiality as architecture in the preaching events, it helped children overcome their difficulties in participating fully in the practice of preaching (article I and II).

Used as architecture, the materiality became part of the structure of the preaching event and seemed to open up a space for the children to possibly appropriate the "foreign words" of materiality (article I and II). On the other hand, when materiality was used as scaffolding, or as a prop, not unlike how the literature describes the derided object lessons, material objects alone did not help the children participate in the practice of preaching (article I and II).

Second, as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, employing practice-theory opened up the empirical material and made me realize how the preachers and I both presumed that the children knew what preaching was and that they knew what to do with preaching, which was not the case. In

analyzing the goals of preachers, I discovered that preachers have a twofold goal for preaching for children: that children should learn more about Christian faith and practice and that the preaching events should be relevant for the children and their lives (article II). The latter aim in particular is very similar to how homiletical literature describes the aim of preaching (article II).

Subsequently, I found that while many of the children did listen and could retell much of the preaching event, they struggled to interpret it. In other words, they intuitively understood one task of the role of the listener in the practice of preaching (listening) and were able to retell the gist of the preaching event, but they did not know or understand that there was a second task (interpreting) (article II). Although some of the children state that their goal is to learn more about being a Christian and some find relevance for their lives in the preaching events, the main goal of the majority of the children is what I labelled "escaping" (article II).[383] Thus, even if the children looked like they were following the rules of the practice, many were really engaged in actions furthering their aim of "escaping" preaching events (article II).

Thirdly, employing the Schatzkian concept of timespace, I demonstrate that the preachers produce a time and space in the practice of preaching for children in which the timespace of age-appropriateness is dominant (article III). In analyzing the preachers' normative assumptions on preaching for children (article III), I found that the preachers believe that preaching to children needs to be age-appropriate, short, simple, and directed at a target audience. They believe it should contribute to involvement and employ pedagogical methods like using drama or material and visual objects. They not only believe this, they also enact it in their preaching-events (article I and III).

In the third article, I demonstrate that in preaching for children, the main conflict of timespaces is between the timespaces of ordinary preaching and age-appropriateness. To resolve this conflict, most of the preachers separate form and content. In doing so, they lean on the timespace of age-appropriateness for the form and the timespace of ordinary preaching for the content. This choice means that in the negotiation between focusing mainly on children or preaching, the preachers choose to concentrate on children and thus also adopt preaching methodology that is in compliance with the timespace of age-appropriateness (article I and III).

This discovery echoes the findings of separation of form and content described in the first article, and I will discuss both in more detail shortly. While the findings listed above might seem like a critique of preachers, it is vital to note that this is not a criticism of the individual preachers. The aim of this thesis is to understand and describe the practice of preaching for children, not to evaluate individual preachers. To that effect, the analysis of timespace shows that the preachers participate in a practice in which normative dimensions are deeply embedded, even to the point of determining what makes sense for the preachers to do.

[383] With escaping I mean that the children were doing other activities than listening during the preaching events. Some were plainly being bored and others were playing games on their phones.

7.2 Different or Same?

As I have demonstrated above, there is a division between those who argue for understanding children as different or similar to adults. Further, if children are considered different from adults, the logical consequence is that they also need different preaching, which introduces the timespace of age-appropriateness and adaptations to the form of preaching events. The discussion on preaching for children is mirrored in the field of Childhood studies where those who argue that children are different (and also often "special") claim that this must result in research methods that are different when researching children.[384] One of the main findings in this thesis is the degree to which the academic field and the practice is dominated by those who argue for conceptualizing children as different, and consequently, that preaching to children is different (article III). This results in the children being treated according to their age group, not as individuals.

As I demonstrate in the third article, the timespace of age-appropriateness dominates the preachers' configurations of their practices of preaching for children. This fixation on addressing children according to age group results in the children being treated as an audience where the preachers assume they know how the children feel, what experiences they have, and on what they are able to reflect. Against this, I argue that children are not only different from adults, they are also different from other children within their age-group. Moreover, drawing on McClure and Gaarden's critique of New Homiletics, knowing the targeted audience of a preaching event does not guarantee a knowledge the listeners' thoughts, experiences, or feelings.[385]

However, this conceptualization of children as different is easy to sympathize with and, to a certain extent, it is correct: children *are* different from adults. Nevertheless, the degree of difference might be overstated. Hence, the findings in this thesis point to preachers simultaneously overestimating and underestimating their listeners. I argue that children are overestimated when it is assumed that they know what preaching is and what to do with it and underestimated when their assumed difference leads to preachers engaging in specific, "age-appropriate" methods when preaching.

7.3 Overestimated – Children Do Not Know What Preaching Is or What To Do With It

In the section on article findings, we saw that the children struggle to become participants in the practice of preaching. In the discussion below, I debate the understanding of practice as *phronesis* employed in much of Practical Theology and then argue that practice-theory in the vein of Schatzki and Nicolini is more useful for gaining a deeper understanding of the practice of preaching for children. I suggest that such a practice-theoretical approach offers possibilities for a more comprehensive examination of preaching as a practice than the *phronesis* approach to practice can achieve. This especially relates to the theory's potential for making implicit normative assumptions

[384] Punch, "Research with Children,"; Komulainen, "Ambiguity,"; Gallacher and Gallagher, "Methodological Immaturity."
[385] McClure, *Other-Wise*, 50; Gaarden, *Prædikenen*, 21-23

explicit through naming understandings, rules, and teleoaffective structures of the practice. It also relates to this theory's emphasis on materiality and the Schatzkian concentration on timespace. I then discuss how the preachers' production of time and space contributes to children being overestimated in the practice of preaching for children.

7.3.1 Understandings of Practice

In the literature review and theory chapter I demonstrate that some homileticians argue that preaching should be considered a practice, and that they also provide a way of doing so.[386] As I have already pointed out, Long and Tubbs Tisdale and Hartshorn mostly adhere to an understanding of practice that relies primarily on MacIntyre. This way of understanding practice, with a heavy emphasis on practice as *phronesis*, is one of the three dominant practice theories employed in Practical Theology, as demonstrated by Ted Smith.[387]

In the following, I enter into a discussion with the understanding of practice as *phronesis*, exemplified by Long, Tubbs Tisdale, Hartshorne, and the editors of *Christian Practical Wisdom*—Dorothy C. Bass, Kathleen A. Cahalan, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, James R. Nieman and Christian Sharen—each of whom has been influential in North-American Practical Theology's turn towards practice. [388] This sets up the premises for the discussion and inclusion of the concept of practice within the field.[389]

While the authors of *Christian Practical Wisdom* advocate a general turn towards practices, they home in on both the tacit knowledge embedded in practices and the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis*.[390] In the concept of *phronesis*, practical wisdom is understood as imparted through learning from experienced practitioners over time. According to the authors of Christian Practical Wisdom, the concept of *phronesis* highlights that knowledge is also practical, not just a matter of technical (*techne*) or cognitive (*episteme*) skills.[391] For a Lutheran theology which, in its emphasis on the Word, leans toward the cognitive, this has been a much-needed correction.

However, as I show in the second article, there are problems with using the *phronesis* approach to practice in the context of events in the Christian education plan in the Church of Norway. Namely, children attending the events are usually not there long enough to start learning from

[386] Long and Tisdale, *Teaching Preaching*.
[387] Smith, "Theories of Practice."
[388] Bass et al., *Christian Practical Wisdom*.
[389] Other important scholars in this turn to practice is Don Browning, Miroslav Volf, and Craig Dykstra. Browning, *Fundamental Practical Theology*; Volf and Bass, *Practicing Theology*; Bass and Dykstra, *For Life Abundant*. Browning has received much criticism from, among others, British Practical Theologian Elaine Graham, who purports a different approach to practice than the US scholars mentioned above. However, as her discussion of practice has not been implemented among any homileticians who discuss practice, she is not discussed in this section. Elaine L. Graham, *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2002).
[390] Miller-McLemore, "Five Misunderstandings Practical Theology," 13-15.
[391] Bass et al., *Christian Practical Wisdom*.

experienced practitioners over time.[392] More generally, such learning also requires that both the preachers and the children consider preaching a practice that can be learned, not only as a preacher, but also as a listener. This thesis shows that few understand preaching as a practice in this manner, and that the children usually do not know what to do with preaching. This, combined with little time for emersion in the practice, results in the overestimation of the children. It is difficult for them to learn a practice over time when there is no time, and it is difficult for them to know that preaching is a practice they are supposed to learn when nobody tells them so.

While I follow Long and Tubbs Tisdale in their turn to practice as an organizing framework for preaching, they use practice as an organizing framework for the practice of preachers alone. They do address listeners in one chapter, in which Tubbs Tisdale argues for exegeting the congregation, yet listeners are not conceptualized as co-authors or active participants of preaching. As far as I can tell, materiality or space is not part of their discussion of practice.

Against this one could argue that Long and Tubbs Tisdale do not aim to discuss the role of listeners, materiality, or time and space in preaching. Nevertheless, I contend that a practice approach to preaching needs to pay attention to all actors of the practice, including materiality and time and space. In my understanding, the Schatzkian version of practice-theory offers better tools for examining the different practitioners in the practice and why they "do what they do," including a focus on the role of materiality and timespace in human action.

Moreover, there is a contextual element to my critique. The context for preaching in a US congregation is not always comparable to preaching in the Norwegian Folk Church. Hartshorne specifies that he assumes "a believers church" which makes his arguments challenging to appropriate into the context of Christian education events in the Church of Norway. [393] Thus, while Long and Tubbs Tisdale and Hartshorne make essential points on the preachers' practice, I argue that by focusing solely on one actor of the practice—the preacher—they have not taken advantage of the possibilities offered by practice as an organizing framework for preaching.

Here it is worth discussing how theoretical and practical knowledge is treated in *Christian Practical Wisdom*. Throughout the work, the authors hedge profusely against the notion that they are refuting theoretical knowledge.[394] With the argument below, I do not suggest that they disprove of theoretical knowledge; on the contrary, I agree with their ambition to highlight the role and importance of practical knowledge. Nevertheless, I contend that the *phronesis* approach to practice, while arguing for embodied knowledge, still operates with a binary between practical and theoretical knowledge and thus treats embodied practical knowledge and disembodied theoretical knowledge as two separate forms of knowledge. In the introduction to *Christian Practical Wisdom*, the authors state: "In this

[392] Knut Tveitereid, "Bredde og dybde, tidsavgrensing og kontinuitet: nødvendige motsetninger i kirkelig trosopplæring?," in *Byggekloss-spiritualitet?: en studie av spiritualitet i Den norske kirkes trosopplæring*, ed. Kristin Graff-Kallevåg and Tone Stangeland Kaufman (Oslo: IKO, 2018).
[393] Hartshorn, "Evaluating Preaching."
[394] Bass et al., *Christian Practical Wisdom*, 227-28.

book, we claim that a kind of knowing resides in the core of the Christian life that is closer to practical then to abstract reason – closer, that is, to embodied, situated knowing-in-action than to disembodied, theoretical knowledge.[395]

Throughout this thesis, I have embraced the practice-theoretical and Bakhtinian argument that a division of embodied practical knowledge and disembodied theoretical knowledge is impossible, as all knowledge is, in some form or another, both embodied and theoretical.[396] This is demonstrated in all articles, where I show that all the actors in preaching for children act according to what makes sense for them. However, what makes sense for them is determined by practical intelligibility. Incorporated into their practical intelligibility are several theoretical and normative ideas, productions of time and space anchored in materiality, and their teleoaffective goals for the practice, not to mention past experiences. Hence, both theoretical knowledge and abstract reason is embodied and enacted in practices.

Furthermore, the conclusions in the second article set up a strong argument against presupposing that practices are done with pre-determined motivations and aims, as the US practice theologians seem to assume. In several of the US contributions, Christian practices are seen to be done "in response to and in the light of God as known in Jesus Christ."[397] The children interviewed in this thesis do not express such a shared understanding of preaching (article II). Instead, I have shown that the children struggle to understand what preaching is. Thus, to presuppose that the children have a clear conceptual and theological understanding of preaching, is to overestimate the children (and maybe most adults, as well).

The above objection against practitioners having a pre-determined, shared understanding of preaching also offers an argument against Pleizier's understanding of preaching as a social act. Pleizier does underline that understanding preaching as a social act entails an understanding of listeners as active. However, he also claims that, in his understanding, seeing preaching as a social act involves both speaker and listener sharing an understanding of preaching as a religious event.[398] As the children interviewed do not have such a shared understanding before, while, or after listening to preaching, the thesis's findings support Gaarden's critique against Pleizier's claim that preachers and listeners hold a shared understanding of preaching as religious action.[399]

This means that, at least in the context of the Norwegian Folk Church, it is not possible to presume that listeners have the religious motivation for action assumed by several practical theological definitions of practice and Pleizier's definition of preaching.[400] Hence, the notion that all Christian

[395] Bass et al., *Christian Practical Wisdom*, 2.
[396] See sub-heading 4.2 Ontology and Epistemology.
[397] Volf and Bass, *Practicing Theology*, 3.
[398] Pleizier, *Religious*, 45.
[399] Gaarden, *Prædiken*.
[400] For a detailed and interesting discussion of the differences between a Lutheran and an US approach to practice within theology (focusing especially on Dykstra, Bass and Dean) see Bård Eirik Hallesby Norheim, *Practicing Baptism: Christian Practices and the Presence of Christ* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

practices and all preaching events contain a pre-determined teleos or shared intentionality conflicts with the findings in this thesis and points to the children being overestimated in regards to the practice of preaching for children.

7.3.2 Space and Time

In the second article, I demonstrate that from Saturday to Sunday there is a change in rules for the preaching events, while in the third article I argue that there is also a difference in the time and space produced in preaching events on Saturday and Sunday. The preaching events that take place on Saturday seem to require less negotiation for the preachers. In these preaching events, there is often a conversational element where children and adults engage, pose real questions to each other, and spend time on the answers and reflections spurred by the reflections. On Sunday, while still including age-appropriate methods and forms of preaching events, the preachers interact less directly with the children and largely adhere to a conventional model of preaching.

While the preachers in the interviews argue that everything they do in the Christian education events is preaching, the majority of them primarily refer to the Sunday sermon in the interviews. Moreover, for the preachers, the parish hall, Church nave, and what we might call the timespace of the worship service, are all clearly defined as different spaces. However, as I demonstrate in article II and III, the children do not register a difference between preaching outside or within worship services. Since nobody tells them that Saturday preaching events in the parish hall or church are different from the preaching events happening on Sunday in the church, they treat them alike and seem to consider as preaching all instances where adults talk with them about the Bible or Christian faith and practices.

Furthermore, the children seem to categorize everything happening in the Christian education events as taking place at church (article II). For them, there is no spatial shift between Saturday and Sunday. If there is a shift, as I argue in the second and third article, it is only a change of place, from one room to another, and not a change in space, as everything happening in the events seem to register as the affective space of the church.

The above shows that there is tacit knowledge in how we produce time and space and demonstrates that this production is linked with materiality. The preachers presuppose that the children understand that preaching events on Saturday in the parish hall and preaching events on Sunday in the worship service are different and have different rules. They do this, even though they are simultaneously aware that there are much the children do not know. Yet, this awareness seems to mainly be concentrated around elements of the worship service they assume are foreign, like walking in a procession, praying and reading scripture aloud—not around changes in time, space, and rules. Therefore, I argue that in understanding preaching as a practice, preaching should be added to the list of foreign elements needing to be rehearsed.

In summation, children are overestimated when it comes to their understanding of what preaching is and what to do with it, as well as in their recognizing different variations of preaching according to the location and time of the preaching. Conceptualizing preaching as a practice in a

practice-theoretical manner provides a way of making these implicit normativities explicit. What is more, if preaching is considered a practice, it can be added to the list of practices that children are taught in Christian education events.

7.4 Underestimated

As to how children are underestimated in the practice of preaching for children, I have already demonstrated in the first and third article that the assumption that children are different from adults leads the preachers to separate form and content, emphasizing form over content, or how to preach over what to preach. I suggest that this separation of form and content has large consequences for the practice of preaching for children regarding how (1) theology, (2) communication, (3) Bible texts, and (4) dialogue are viewed, expressed, and enacted in the practice. Below I address how the separation of form and content matters for the four areas listed.

7.4.1 Consequences for Theology

Homileticians have long advocated against the separation of form and content. Fred Craddock claims that "the method is the message. So it is with all preaching: how one preaches is to a large degree what one preaches."[401] Craddock also maintains that the method communicates theological content and hence, he argues strongly against separating form and content.[402] Other homileticians have also argued against separating form and content. Contributions like Buttrick's *Moves and Structures*, and Lowry's *The Homiletical Plot*, as well as McClure's *Other-Wise Preaching* and Rose's *Roundtable Preaching* all demonstrate that the form of preaching and the content of preaching are closely tied together.[403] In the literature review, I discussed Angel's contribution on preaching to confirmands. What is particularly interesting in Angel's contribution is that he shows how composition (form), enactment of preaching events, and listeners' response build on each other and together might advance or impede listeners actions.[404] It follows that changing the form alone does not necessarily help listeners. If "the method is the message" and form and content should not be separated as many argue, it is fascinating that the preachers in this thesis separate form and content, treat theology as something that can be inserted or withdrawn from the preaching event, and seem to think that theology belongs to content and not form (article III).[405]

Whereas the preachers say in the interviews that they are concerned with content, in the enactment of preaching events, they make large changes in form and small changes in content. The changes in content are frequently limited to using simple words and speaking in short sentences. Thus, the content of those same preaching events remains quite theologically sophisticated and dogmatic—e.g., the ransom theory of atonement, sin, or God's destruction of the world through a flood—or the

[401] Craddock, *Authority*, 44.
[402] Craddock, *Authority*, 5.
[403] David Buttrick, *Homiletic.*; Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); McClure, *Other-Wise.*; Rose, *Sharing the Word*.
[404] Angel, "Troverdighet," 117.
[405] This is similar to what Gaarden claims, that the transfermodel has long been theoretically refuted, yet still is alive and kicking among practitioners. Gaarden, *Prædikenen*, 21

polar opposite, namely simple "messages" repeated throughout the preaching event, like "Jesus wants you to be friends with everyone."[406]

When discussing theology, the preachers seem ambivalent. In the interviews, they argue for a dynamic and a static understanding of theology at the same time. Despite describing theology as dynamic and changing, several of the preachers state that they concentrate on delivering their "message" to the listeners. I believe this ambivalence is partly the result of the two competing timespaces in preaching for children—the timespace of ordinary preaching and the timespace of age-appropriation—which again results in the preachers solving their dilemma by separating form and content. As a consequence, theology ends up concerning content whereas age-appropriateness concerns form.

7.4.2 Consequences for Communication

As I argue in the third article, this separation of form and content might also indicate an underlying understanding of communication as a transference of a message. In this case, the conceptualizing of children as different, together with the emphasis of a specific form of preaching that is thought to be dialogical, reveals an underlying understanding of form as a means of effectively and efficiently communicating a message to listeners.

Thus, to be a bit satirical, in preaching for children, the preachers need to minimize noise in order to "get the message across" to the children. In other words, they need not only to preach to the children, but also to entertain and teach. In the practice, it has become "obvious" that if you do not have drama or bring an object when preaching to children, you have failed before you have begun, because the children will most likely not want to listen to you. While the statement above is hyperbolic, I suggest that it also contains some truth. I believe this thesis shows that in these normative assumptions, there are several statements regarding preaching, children, and preachers that are either un-true or at least in need correction.

The statement above greatly underestimates both children and preaching. Firstly, as this thesis has shown, there is no quick fix when engaging in preaching for children. Changing the form does not necessarily help the preachers arrive at their aim of creating relevance for the children. It does provide the children relief from boredom, yet, should not preachers aim higher than relieving boredom? The interviews with the children also show that they are very occupied with existential themes and questions and many attend these events with a curious and attentive attitude. Hence, to underestimate the children and treat them as a group prone to boredom instead of as curious individuals only causes frustration for both preachers and children.

Second, the notion above underestimates preaching and preachers and reads like negative advertising. No one wants to buy a product in which the salesperson does not have faith. This might explain a certain frustration that was palpable among the preachers: they really wanted to say

[406] Kristin Graff-Kallevåg and Jan Olav Henriksen, "Jesus og Kaptein Sabeltann - en analyse om hvordan det forkynnes om frelse for små og store," (forthcoming).

something important to the children attending the events and believed that they had something vital to say, yet they harbored experiences and maybe some ingrained normativity that told them it would be a daunting task.

I wonder if this experienced discrepancy between wanting to preach about "what really matters," to borrow a phrase from Eva at St. Emmanuel, yet finding it difficult to keep the children's attention, might occur as a result of simultaneously overestimating and underestimating children in preaching for children. Perhaps overestimating that children know what preaching is and what to do with it, and at the same time underestimating which kind of content is suitable for the children, results in a practice where the preachers become frustrated because the children seem disinterested while the children become frustrated because they do not know what to do with preaching or find the content of preaching irrelevant as it mostly does not address their existential needs. Yet, this does not mean that I argue that preachers should revert to never employing drama or material and visual objects in preaching events. The children do say that using material objects and being able to move around makes the preaching events less boring. However, as mentioned above, they do not say that it makes the content easier to understand or interpret.

Bridging the divide might be a matter of employing a dialogical and practice-oriented understanding of communication, where the aim not is to transfer a message from a sender to a receiver but to create a space for reflection and appropriation. One of the advantages of a dialogical approach is that some of the pressure is taken off the preachers; if meaning is created in the meeting of consciousnesses, the preacher and the listener share the responsibility and (at least some of) the power of meaning creation. Another advantage is that such an approach weakens the temptation and opportunities to tailor preaching to the target audience, as the focus of a dialogical and practice-oriented understanding of communication argues for interaction between conscious individuals, not with groups. Hence, also treating children as individuals, and not according to their age group, might make it easier to address the children's existential needs.

Third, as I have shown, when preaching is considered a practice, it can also be taught. This realization does not necessarily make preaching for children easier, as it is also challenging to teach practices.[407] Yet, conceptualizing preaching as a practice that can be learned might contribute to the children being less overestimated and thus offer more possibilities for the children participating in preaching.

Finally, a dialogical and practice-oriented approach to communication does not negate the possibility of regarding God as an actor in preaching events, but it does not theologically presuppose that all preaching is religious for everyone who participates in the practice.

[407] Learning practices in Christian education has previously been discussed and highlighted by the findings in Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen's PhD-thesis. Johnsen, "Religiøs læring," 150-153.

7.4.3 Consequences for Bible Texts

In this separation of form and content, it is essential to consider the role the biblical texts play in these preaching events. The homiletical contributions in the review of relevant research also identify the use of biblical text as crucial in preaching for children. James Nieman normatively argues that preaching for children fails because it disregards foundational tasks of preaching, among which he places engaging the biblical text.[408] Yet, he admits that actually actively engaging biblical texts makes preaching for children more complicated than "ordinary" preaching as he regards exegeting biblical texts with preaching for children in mind as more difficult. Similarly, Van Dyk also states that biblical texts should be the point of departure for all preaching.[409]

After analyzing the material in this study, I have come to agree with Nieman and Van Dyk on the importance of the biblical texts in preaching for children, too. When Christian education events become part of the worship services, there is often a negotiation concerning which biblical text to use in the worship service. In the majority of the congregations I studied, the text provided by the lectionary was substituted for a text that better suited the theme of the Christian education event. Besides, when the biblical text is used, it is often used as scaffolding (article I) to help the preacher deliver his or her message (article I) or to justify why the preacher targets the children (article III).[410]

Hence, the biblical text is repeatedly marginalized in favor of the theme of the Christian education event or the message of the preacher. Such use of the biblical texts might cause the texts to lose their capacity to disrupt positively and allow for the reinterpretation of the preaching event or the text itself. The problem, I suggest, lies in that the architecture of preaching events becomes the preachers' message, leading to preaching events becoming what Carr, Nieman, and Van Dyk call moral lessons rather than preaching. When using biblical texts as scaffolding, their voice disappears in the preaching events. Hence, using the biblical texts as the architecture of the preaching events might counter the propensity for object lessons and moral lessons in preaching for children.

The use of biblical texts as scaffolding seems to be a consequence of a normativity in the practice of preaching for children where theme is preferred over text. In their eagerness to make preaching for children simple and age-appropriate, many preachers seem to avoid employing their exegetical competencies—which tend to render texts more polyphonic—when preparing preaching for children. I argue that how Bible texts are viewed and used in preaching for children is intertwined with how theology and communication is viewed. If preaching for children is a practice where a message should be delivered in the best possible way to a disinterested and passive audience, it also makes sense to harmonize the biblical texts with the message. If instead preaching for children is a practice where preachers strive to create a space of possible appropriation, then the biblical texts can have more influence as one of the many voices that contribute to producing that space.

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[408] Nieman, "Thuds."
[409] Van Dyk, "Preach!".
[410] There are exceptions here, as some of the preachers, at least in the interviews, highlight the importance of using biblical texts.

7.4.4 Consequences for Dialogue

In this thesis, inspired by Lorensen and Gaarden, I argue for a foundational understanding of preaching as dialogical and as a practice.

From their endeavors to make preaching accessible to the children and include dramatizations, visual and material objects, activities, and preaching events shaped as a conversation between two or more people, it can be inferred that the preachers attempt to make preaching events less monological and more dialogical. Further, a majority of the preachers recognize that there often is a discrepancy between what they have said and what the listeners have heard. Yet, they also discuss preaching as delivering a message and theology as something that can be inserted or taken out of preaching events. Hence, the empirical material of this thesis shows that in the preachers' negotiations of preaching for children lies an ambivalence to whether or not preaching is dialogical. As argued before, the preachers' enactment of preaching events suggests that they believe that it is possible to separate form and content and that in preaching for children, what is essential is that the form of preaching is dialogical.

The preachers in this material attempt to make preaching events age-appropriate and hit the target audience. In doing so, the preachers do consider the listeners. Nevertheless, as I have argued above, their way of considering listeners lies closer to a version of Craddock's inductive preaching where the preacher can gain insight into the listeners' experiences, reflections, and desires, than it does to a Bakhtinian understanding of listeners as co-authors of preaching who actively take part in creating the preaching event. Thus, as the preachers do not regard listening as an activity, it becomes a goal for the preachers to directly involve the children in the preaching events. Therefore, while the preachers consider the listeners in treating them as a group and adapting their preaching so it is consistent with what the children are thought to be able to process, they underestimate the children.

Furthermore, as I argue in the first article of this thesis, such preaching is often only seemingly dialogical or is dialogical in form only. As a result, many of the preaching events are monological dialogues instead of dialogical monologues. This brings us to a distinction between conversation and dialogue, or perhaps between a theoretically informed use of the word dialogical and the everyday conversational use of the word dialogical. Like Engemann argues, to preach dialogically does not mean that there has to be more than one person talking in the preaching event.[411]

Engemann's understanding of dialogue is similar to a Bakhtinian understanding of listeners who become active participants in the preaching event just by sitting in the pews and listening. Moreover, Engemann claims that "so-called dialoge [sic] sermons" are not dialogues but often "monologs [sic] with assigned parts: the partner in the dialoge [sic] only serves to communicate a predetermined approach and solution."[412] Engemann thus describes what I find in the first article,

[411] Engemann, *Homiletics*, 158.
[412] Engemann, *Homiletics*, 158-159.

namely that even though there are several persons and voices engaged in the preaching events, the events are structured around the "message" and function as monological rather than dialogical.

Engemann normatively contends that where many preachers go wrong is in making sermons that are dialogical in form but not in content. On the contrary, it is a dialogical approach to content that makes sermons dialogical.[413] This is especially interesting as the preachers in my material prioritize form over content. However, nuancing both Engemann and the preachers I interviewed, I claim that for preaching to be dialogical, form and content should be held together. Hence, it is neither solely the form nor the content that makes a preaching event dialogical. It is both form and content. As I demonstrate in this thesis, dialogue happens when several voices can be heard in the same preaching event. However, as I have already stated above, claiming that form also matters for creating dialogical preaching events does not mean arguing for a specific form.

Moreover, this thesis, as well as other empirical homiletical studies, demonstrates that inner dialogue is not inferior to an "outer" dialogue and need not be called "pseudo-conversational," as Pleizer does, or "hybrid dialogue," as Malmstöm does.[414] Therefore, preaching is dialogical, in a Bakhtinian sense, even though the listeners may not perceive its form to be dialogical in the "regular" sense of the word. This way of perceiving dialogue also implies that listeners are as constitutive to the dialogue as the speaker. In contrast to the transfer model of communication, meaning is made in the encounter between speaker and listener, where both parties have a constitutive role to perform in order for a dialogue to take place. The consequence for preaching is then that listeners are not only crucial because the preacher wants them to listen in the best way possible, they are essential because, without them, there is no dialogue.

7.5 Further Research

As I have placed this thesis within an area of little-studied homiletical research, through working with it, I have found several areas in need of further research. Most pressing is the need for further investigation into preaching for children with a homiletical point of departure. In neglecting this area of Homiletics, other fields have taken over and dominate the academic discussions on children and faith as well as the discussion of how practitioners approach the practice. Since I have conducted research on mostly un-churched children, another area of future research is to study church-going children as well. Karin Rubenson is currently researching worship services and children in the Church of Sweden and is interviewing children who regularly attend church.[415] However, two studies do not make a field. They can be perceived as snapshots in time and context and thus not generalizable to preaching for children in general. I believe that the field of Homiletics would benefit from more studies on preaching for children, particularly from outside Scandinavia, which can add voices to the discussion on listeners' responses to preaching.

[413] Engemann, *Homiletics*, 188.
[414] Pleizier, *Religious*.; Hans Malmström, "What is Your Darkness?".
[415] Karin Rubensson, (PhD. diss., forthcoming)

Moreover, this thesis has demonstrated that materiality, time, and space influences preaching practices in no small degree. This is an area of research that should be expanded within Homiletics. One particular suggestion for further research is to examine what the use (or non-use) of a pulpit does to the practice of preaching. In my empirical research and in the FoSS research, no preacher used the pulpit. Exploring what this does to the authority of preachers and why so many of them avoid the pulpit would make an interesting contribution to several homiletical discussions, especially on the concept of the preachers' authority and on the way materiality is part of the practice and configuration of preaching.

I want to draw attention to the many normativities that practice-theory helped uncover in the practice of preaching for children. In doing so, I encourage preachers and Christian educators to examine their own normative assumptions regarding the practice of preaching for children. Moreover, I suggest that if we start to consider preaching as a practice, it can also be taught as a practice. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide an attempt at prescribing how preaching as a practice would be taught, I do want to highlight this as a significant area for further research.

In conclusion, I offer a question—developed throughout the work on this thesis—which is mainly directed at practitioners. As mentioned, the preachers argue that their aim is that everything that happens in the Christian education event should have meaning, or be a form of preaching in some way. This has led me to wonder if perhaps it would be less challenging for the children to participate in preaching events if the difference between preaching, teaching, rehearsing, and playing were more defined? If so, I see great possibilities for employing materiality, as well as attention to how we produce time and space, as tools in defining practices. This would hopefully lead to the creation of spaces where children have numerous possibilities for appropriating meaningful preaching events as their own.

8. Conclusion – How Can the Practice of Preaching for Children Be Described and Understood?

In this thesis, I have found that what describes preaching for children, at least in the context of the Church of Norway, is that children are conceptualized as different from adults, leading them to be simultaneously overestimated and underestimated.

Children are overestimated in:

- That it is presumed that they know what preaching is and how to participate in it
- That are expected to know that there are different rules for different preaching events and that these rules change according to where and when preaching takes place

Children are underestimated in:

- That they are treated as group where preachers can gain access to their experiences and what occupies them.
- That it is widely accepted that children will only listen to preaching if it is formed in a way that takes into account their age group, directly involves them, and is simple and short.

In trying to understand this ambiguity, I show that in adhering to the notion that preaching for children needs to be age-appropriate, the preachers separate form and content, thus creating preaching events where form and methodology is emphasized over content and what to preach. The form is often seemingly dialogical, while the content remains static and theologically complicated. I argue that this separation is unfortunate and that it creates preaching events that are dialogical monologues. I claim that the practice of preaching for children needs to hold together form and content and begin treating children more as individuals and less according to their age group. In doing so, preachers might benefit from using their homiletical training and skills, as well as incorporating recent homiletical theory, in preaching for children as they might when preaching to adults.

Thus, with Gaarden and Lorensen, I argue that Homiletics is in need of a new, pragmatic theological understanding of communication. However, I claim that this understanding of communication needs to highlight even more the extent to which communication is action and practice, which in turn produce time and space. In this thesis, I have shown that in combining a Bakhtinian emphasis on dialogue as two-sided action and Schatzkian practice-theory's tools for making normative assumptions and tacit knowledge explicit, there lies potential for a new, pragmatic, theological understanding of communication.

9. Literature

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Article 1:

Linn Sæbø Rystad, “Preaching at the Thresholds – Bakhtinian polyphony in preaching for children”

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Preaching at the thresholds – Bakhtinian polyphony in preaching for children

Linn Sæbø Rystad

Children and preaching

Preaching to children is a task that most preachers encounter at some point during a life of preaching. Some hate it, some love it, some think it is easy and others think it is difficult, but everyone thinks it is important. From the fieldwork conducted in the research project Preaching for Young and Old (FoSS)[1] and in the fieldwork for my own PhD thesis, it appears that preaching in worship services where children are present is often different from "ordinary" preaching. When children were present, the preaching events always contained drama, a symbolic act, or material objects, or the whole preaching event was constructed as drama or a symbolic act. It therefore becomes clear that preachers preach differently when children are present in the worship service.

Recent empirical research within the field of homiletics has focused on listeners and their response; however, this response has been an adult response.[2] Children´s voices and opinions on preaching are seldom or never heard. The word pair **children-preaching** has received little research interest within the field of homiletics. A lot of interesting research has been conducted on the theology of children, but this research relies on adults attempting to adopt children's perspectives and not the children's perspectives themselves (Johnsen 2010).

So what happens when preachers use biblical narratives, drama or objects in the preaching event? Does the use of these mediational means, these "foreign words", automatically make the preaching event more fun and easier to understand for children?

Key concepts – dialogical preaching, mediational means and Bakhtin

Before we examine the preaching events, it is necessary to clarify some key concepts and theory. I will first discuss the understanding of preaching that I employ in this chapter. I will then describe mediational means before presenting the Bakhtinian concepts of polyphony, architecture and scaffolding, and authoritative or inner persuasive discourse.

Dialogical preaching events

I have chosen to use the word preaching event, instead of sermon, and am beholden to two Danish homileticians, Marianne Gaarden and Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen, for my understanding of

[1] In Norwegian "Forkynnelse for små og store", abbreviated FoSS.
[2] David Rietveld has given a comprehensive and thorough overview of the empirical research conducted on sermons and listeners in the last decades (Rietveld 2013).

preaching. Gaarden has conducted an empirical study on how listeners listen to preaching. She describes that listeners are co-authors of the sermon, since they enter into an inner dialogue with selected parts of it. In this inner dialogue, what Gaarden refers to as the "third room of preaching", meaning is created, and this meaning is often different from that which the preacher had intended for the listener. Gaarden underlines that this does not make the preacher superfluous or unwanted. The preacher is important because, without him or her, the listener would have no dialogue partner for his/her inner dialogue. Gaarden describes the sermon as emerging; in other words, as something that grows out of the situated worship service between the preacher's words and the listener's thoughts, experiences and circumstance of life (Gaarden 2015).[3] Gaarden only hints at the importance of materiality (for example, the church building) for preaching, but, within the research project Preaching for Young and Old (hereafter: FoSS), which uses a sociocultural framework, we were keen to make materiality a priority. We therefore paid extra attention how materiality plays a role in worship services.

Claiming that the preaching event is a dialogue is not the same as claiming that it is a conversation. In addition to Gaarden's theoretical and empirical contribution on preaching as dialogue, I see preaching as dialogical in the light of the theories of the Russian linguist, philosopher and communication theorist Mikhail M. Bakhtin and the subsequent interpretation and application of his ideas by Ringgaard Lorensen in homiletical research (Lorensen 2014).

Bakhtin's theories rest on the idea that the smallest part of language is not the sentence but the *utterance*. An utterance is always social and relational; it is said by someone, in a place, at a time, and to someone. Every utterance demands a reply (Bakhtin 1986, 71). Bakhtin argues that, when we speak, we are always faced with two choices. We can either use the dialogical foundation of all utterances to stimulate more dialogue and polyphony, or we can assume that we ourselves are able to formulate every perspective that exists about something and consequently speak monologically. This choice between a dialogical and a monological approach is ever present, not just in everyday conversations but also in various forms of complex language genres in which the dialogue is indirect, such as letters, academic articles, novels or preaching events (Lorensen 2014). In line with Bakhtin's theories, I view the preaching event as an utterance directed towards the response of the other. The

[3] An English article that draws up her main claims is: Marianne Gaarden and Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen, "Listeners as Authors in Preaching - Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives,"(Gaarden and Lorensen 2013Marianne Gaarden and Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen, "Listeners as Authors in Preaching - Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives," *Homiletic* 38, no. 1 (2013).

task for preaching then becomes to create a threshold experience or a liminal space[4] where dialogue can take place.

Mediational means

The socio-cultural researcher James Wertsch claims that an underlying condition for sociocultural research is that humans do not have direct access to the world; they have access to the world through mediation. Mediational means is what bridges the gap between actions and cultural, historical or institutional settings (Wertsch, Río and Alvares 1995). According to Wertsch, the unit of analysis for any sociocultural research can never be the human but must be the human acting with mediational means (Wertsch 1998; Hillebrandt 2018, 1). Mediational means can only have an effect when they are in use. They can shape action, but they can never decide or cause action if they are not in use (Wertsch, Río and Alvares 1995).[5]

Bakhtin - polyphony, architecture and scaffolding, and authoritative or inner persuasive discourse.

It is mainly in relation to the novels of Dostoevsky that Bakhtin addresses the concept of polyphony. He claims that what separates Dostoevsky from other authors is that his characters are not merely characters; they have their own consciousness and voice. Dostoevsky's novels are dialogical because they are formed by interaction between multiple consciousnesses. This interaction between consciousnesses, both within the novel and between the characters and the reader, is what he calls polyphony. In my analysis in this chapter, I search for polyphony by asking who is talking and to whom. I also ask which voices can be heard.

Bakhtin argues that, based on how we use "foreign words", it is possible to make a distinction between monological utterances and dialogical utterances. Bakhtin further claims that words are only ours when we appropriate them and adapt them to our own semantic and expressive intention. These "foreign words" can be used as scaffolding or as an architectonical whole. If used as scaffolding, the words are used to build up the discourse, not to influence or change it. If the words are used as an architectonical whole, they are allowed to influence the discourse in such a way that its original perspective and presuppositions are changed and can be transformed by the dialogue that

[4] The term liminality stems from Arnold van Gennep. He used the term to describe the rituals humans have to mark the important transitions in life, rites of passage. See page 40-43 in *Preaching Fools* for an overview of the use of the term (Campbell and Cillers 2012, 40-43). Campbell and Cilliers advocate the preacher as foolish and an interrupter and through this move preaching and the church to liminal spaces where new discernment is possible (Campbell and Cillers 2012, 162).

[5] It is important to note that it is not only the preacher who can appropriate the mediational means; the churchgoer sitting in the pews can also do this. However, the listener's response lies outside the scope of this chapter. The mediational means discussed here are therefore those that can be said to be in use when examining the transcribed preaching event.

takes place (Lorensen 2014, 58-59). Bakhtin originally only used the concept of “foreign words” for words and speech genres. However, I argue that “foreign words” should be expanded to include mediational means in order to better understand how these mediational means are used in the preaching event. When analysing through this lens, I ask questions such as: How is the biblical text used? Is the preaching event structured around the mediational means, or is the mediational means there to underline “the meaning of the sermon”?

Another important distinction is whether the words are part of an authoritative or an internally persuasive discourse. The authoritative word is placed at a distance from us and always connected with the past. Such words feel hierarchically higher than our own words. This type of discourse is monological. It has meaning that we cannot change; we have to accept or reject it (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981, 342-43). The internally persuasive word does not have status or authority and is tightly interwoven with our “own words”.[6] This word is creative and enters into battle with other internally persuasive discourses. In doing so, it shapes us from the inside. The inner persuasive discourse is filled with words that are dialogical, open and unfinalisable (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981, 345-46). In this part of the analysis, I try to identify room for disagreement and expression of thought. Does the preacher express his or her own thoughts in the preaching event? Is there room for disagreement with the text or the preacher in the preaching event? And finally, and very importantly, are there any real questions asked?

Background

The empirical material analysed in this chapter is from video recordings of worship services in two Church of Norway congregations, St. John and St. Michael. Both worship services are part of events in the Church of Norway’s Plan for Christian Education, which includes events (NO-2010 events) for children aged between 0-18. The plan recommends ending each event in a worship service. All baptised children receive an invitation to an age-appropriate event and the subsequent worship service.[7] The worship service is simply the main Sunday service that follows the event; there is no alternative for “the rest of the congregation”.

[6] I have placed the word “own” in quotation marks because of Bakhtin’s insistence that no words are our “own” (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981, 345).
[7] kirkerådet Den norske kirke, "God Gives - We Share, Plan for Christian Education " (Oslo2011).

Preaching event in St. John

The text used in St. John is Zacchaeus meeting Jesus (Luke 19:1-10).[8] At the start of the preaching event, the children are invited to come and sit on the steps in front of the altar. The preaching event starts with the church educator, June, stating that she is going to tell them a story from the Bible. She is quickly interrupted by loud knocking, which seems to come from inside a large Bible placed on her right. After a conversation between June and the children concerning whether or not she should open the book, she opens it. Out of the Bible a woman emerges.

The person emerging from the book is dressed in a robe and has a kitchen towel wrapped around her head. She is frustrated and tells June how excited she was to see Jesus and how she had prepared what to say to him if he had stopped to talked to her. Then she describes how angry she was when Jesus talked to Zacchaeus and not her or any of her friends. She is not happy with the way Jesus acted and questions Jesus's sanity: *"I am starting to wonder if Jesus may be a bit crazy? He stops and talks to THAT guy who has done SO many horrible things! They say that Jesus is the Son of God, but if that's really the case shouldn't he have known that Zacchaeus is the most DISHONEST man there is?!"*[9]

She then admits that she is basing her opinion of Zacchaeus on what other people say about him, because she would never befriend such a terrible man. While she is talking, someone else climbs out of the Bible. It is Zacchaeus. She sees him and hurries off out of view. Zacchaeus appears, looking surprised, pensive and humble. His voice is barely audible when he tells June that he has had a visit. He talks to June about his meeting with Jesus and how it has changed him. He continues to speak about the meeting while he starts to climb the cardboard tree. While he climbs it, a part of the tree falls off and the stepladder hiding beneath it becomes visible. The children burst into loud laughter. He is visibly somewhat distracted by this, but he continues speaking. Zacchaeus now understands that it was wrong to steal money from people and wants to give it back. He then climbs down from the tree and back into the Bible. Seconds after this, the woman reappears and says: *"Has he gone? He seemed different in a way. Maybe Jesus is not so crazy after all."* She climbs back into the Bible.

[8] This is not a text from the lectionary. Nor is it the suggested narrative text for the day. In these worship services, there is a tendency to let the event trump the church year and lectionary. For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between preaching and lectionary in the Church of Norway, see "Preaching in Times of the European 'Refugee Crisis' – Scandinavian Perspectives" (Lorensen, Kaufmann, Sunberg et al. 2017, 78, 81, 83)

[9] In transcribing the preaching events, I have used the following guidelines (Sullivan 2012, 69):

((swallow))	Additional comments from the transcriber in double parenthesis.
CAPITALS	Mark speech that is emphatic
()	Empty parenthesis signify inaudible talk
_	Underlined words signify stress in tone

After Zacchaeus leaves, June concludes the preaching event in the form of a more traditional "sermon". She retells and summarises the whole story: *"Maybe we all are like Zacchaeus, that we all want things and money… The greatest treasure we can get is to be friends with Jesus."* She then introduces another story from a book she had as a child. The book is about two children, Julie and Magda, and how they were initially not friends but became friends. She goes on to apply this story to the children's lives, telling those who will soon start school that they can try to be friends with someone who needs it. She ends the second part of the preaching event with a prayer.

Initial analysis of St. John

In the first part of the preaching event in St. John, there are several voices. At the outset, it is June who does the talking. The preaching is shaped like a conversation with the children in which she poses questions and the children answer.

> ***June:*** *Do you think we should look inside?*
> ***Children:*** *yes, yes, YES, YES!*
> ***June:*** *Do you think we should look? OOOOHHH, do we dare? ((about to open the book)). They say that the Bible is God's living word, but this is a bit too () well, let's see ((opens the book)). OI,OI,OI, NO, I don't know if I dare to open it! ((the book is fully opened. Inside there is one side that looks like a bookshelf filled with books and another side with a door)).*
> *((The loud knocking continues.))*
> *OOOHHH, someone sounds angry! ((More knocking.)) WÆÆH! ((turns around quickly)) should we open it? OOOHH, OI, OI, OI!*

She poses more questions than the children answer. Most of the questions are leading. It is taken for granted that the children will answer yes to her question of whether she should open the Bible and look inside. If the children had said no, June would still have opened the book. When June opens the Bible, a new voice enters the preaching event in the form of a female character. She tells June her story and faces her. At the same time, one can see that she is aware that there are more people present. When Zacchaeus emerges from the Bible, he too turns to June to tell his story. And he too tells it through some form of conversation between him and June, though he has several long monologues. He shows little sign of being aware of the presence of more people in the room. In St. John, the dramatised narrative, which has let different voices tell the story, is summed up by June. This forms the second part of the preaching event. In this part, June's voice is the only voice we hear. She tells the listeners which voice they should identify with*, "maybe we all are like Zacchaeus",* and she reveals the "real" meaning of the narrative: *"Jesus wants to be our friend and Jesus wants us to be nice to each other".*

Preaching event in St. Michael

In St. Michael, the children present at the worship service are invited to come forward for the preaching event. The pastor starts by referring to an Easter event in which the children participated before the worship, and she asks them what happened during Easter. A child answers: *"Jesus died and then he rose again."* The pastor confirms the answer and then repeats and interprets it. She then asks the children a question about a woman they had met that morning: *«Do you know who she was? Do you know who Mary was? Who was Mary? Yes? »* Another child says that she was Jesus' mother. The pastor confirms that this is correct and asks Mary to come forward. A woman dressed in a robe with a kitchen towel wrapped around her head, carrying a basket of eggs, steps forward.

The rest of the preaching event is formed as a conversational drama between the pastor and Mary.

*«**Mary:** Yes, and do you know that Jesus didn't want any comfort at all? He was too PROUD to be comforted. Jesus, he carried all the sins of the world. HE was going to make EVERYTHING new.*
***Pastor:** But HOW was he going to make everything NEW?*
***Mary:** Yes, that's a good question. Jesus died for EVERYBODY. And he did it so that all of mankind could be TOGETHER with God in heaven. Jesus actually opened the WAY into heaven for everyone.*
***Pastor:** Jesus opened the way into heaven. That was nice to hear.*
***Mary:** Yes, that's what he did. He was STRONGER than death. He rose again as a happy man. I was so HAPPY; I could almost not believe it. But it really was true. It really was.*
***Pastor:** And that was the thing that made Jesus so SPECIAL, that he ROSE from the grave. Because I don't know ANYBODY else that has done so."*
***Pastor:** But, what are you doing with all those EGGS?*
***Mary:** (holding a basket full of eggs) I'll tell you. I was in my garden and I discovered some eggs, and you know me, I am INCREDIBLY FOND of eggs.*
***Pastor:** Well, is there anything INSIDE?*
***Mary:** I hope so. I hope there are some chickens in there.*
***Pastor:** Maybe we can open one and take a look?*
***Mary:** Yes, if you hold this for me. ((turning towards the children)) Do you want to open this egg? Do you think there's anything inside? OH, LOOK! OH, THEY'RE SO CUTE!*
***Pastor:** Little chickens are really cute. Have you ever seen a REAL ONE? ((one child raises his hand but is not noticed by the pastor)). They are so cute.*
***Mary:** The eggs are so WHITE, they look DEAD, but then they are FULL OF LITTLE, CUTE CHICKENS".*
***Pastor:** The eggs can teach us that even though something looks dead it can be FULL OF LIFE. And when we die Jesus will give US new LIFE. Yes, he will give us a place in HEAVEN."*

They then make a transition from talking about the eggs to talking about the Holy Communion. They say that Jesus wanted the Holy Communion to be a party to which everyone is invited. Everyone

is also welcomed into heaven because *"Jesus opened the way into heaven for us"*. At the end of the preaching event, the pastor makes everyone repeat after her: *"Jesus is our redeemer"*.

Initial analysis of St. Michael

In St. Michael, the pastor and Mary talk to each other but at the same time try to address the children. Their utterances are short and simple. They take it in turns to lead the conversation, but, mostly, Mary says something and the pastor interrupts to establish Mary's utterances as true.

> ***Mary:*** *Yes, that's a good question. Jesus died for EVERYBODY. And he did it so that all of mankind could be TOGETHER with God in heaven. Jesus actually opened the WAY into heaven for everyone.*
> ***Pastor:*** *Jesus opened the way into heaven. That was nice to hear.*

Like in St. John, the questions used here are mostly rhetorical. In this preaching event, I initially thought that there were two voices: Mary and the pastor. However, when I analysed it more carefully, I saw that this was not the case. Even though we can see and hear two people and two voices, there is only one voice emerging from the preaching event. It is not two separate consciousnesses that appear in the preaching event. It is one.

Polyphony in the preaching events

As I have shown in the initial reading of the two preaching events, both events start with multiple voices but end in one voice. Although there are more people present, these people ultimately appear with one voice. Apart from the pastor or the church educator, are there any other voices present in the preaching event?

In both preaching events, Jesus' actions and words are referred to. Jesus does not speak. It is other people who refer to what Jesus thought or said. In St. John, both the woman and Zacchaeus do this, and June refers to what Jesus wants us to do in the last part of the preaching event. In St. Michael, Jesus is mentioned a number of times. He is distinguished as special and one of a kind. This preaching event only refers to actions Jesus has made in the past. The story of Jesus is told at a distance and Jesus' voice is "kidnapped" by the pastor and Mary and blended into their joined consciousness.

The children's voices are present at the beginning of both preaching events, answering the questions posed to them by the preachers. For the remainder of the preaching event in St. Michael, both the pastor and Mary address the children on several occasions, but they never allow the children to respond aloud. At one point, one of the children raises his hand in order to answer a question posed by the pastor. He is ignored. In St. John, the children interrupt the preaching event once. When Zacchaeus climbs the tree and it breaks, the children start laughing. Their laughter disrupts the preaching event and creates 'before the tree incident' and 'after the tree incident'

sections within the event.[10] After the tree incident, the children seem to pay less attention and become increasingly more skirmish. The children´s involvement in the preaching events is decided by the pastors and leaders. In neither preaching event do the children emerge as individual consciousnesses; in St. Michael, they are taken up into the consciousness of the pastor and Mary and, in St. John, they are taken up into the consciousness of the church educator.

Polyphony or transferring the message?

The Bible is used as a door into the biblical world and what happens in that world is presented through several voices. Both the woman and Zacchaeus are independent consciousnesses. They are integral to the plot of the preaching event and their characters are used as architecture in the preaching event; if you remove one of them, the whole preaching event changes. The way the biblical narrative and the different mediational means are used in this part of the preaching event gives rise to interaction between multiple consciousnesses and can be called polyphonic.

The second part of the preaching event in St. John functions in the opposite way. It is monological. It closes both the listener's inner persuasive discourses and the Bible's inner persuasive discourse. We can no longer hear multiple voices; we can only hear one, authoritative voice interpreting the meaning of the narrative. The listeners are not forced to participate in the dialogue, but they are steered towards accepting the interpretation June has laid out for them. The same applies to the preaching event in St. Michael. Although two people are talking, we hear only one voice, a voice that is amplified by using religious language to underline its authority. The foreign word of the biblical narrative, mediational means, and the preaching event remains foreign. The listener is not encouraged to make it his/her own or fill it with his/her own meaning. As such, although these preaching events contain drama and are filled with dialogue, they end up functioning monologically.

Architecture or scaffolding

Both preaching events are structured around a biblical narrative. However, the biblical narrative is used differently in the two events. The first part of the preaching event in St. John is shaped and structured around the biblical narrative of the meeting between Zacchaeus and Jesus. Here the biblical narrative structures and affects the entire preaching event. In the second part of the preaching event in St. John, the biblical narrative is used, but not as structure. What structures the preaching event is what is formulated as the "meaning of the story".

June explains and interprets the narrative for the listeners and tells them how it should be understood. The biblical narrative is no longer used as architecture but rather as scaffolding. Its

[10] See further discussion under 4.4.1. Laughter as agent of change

function is to support June's interpretation of the biblical narrative. The biblical narrative and the tree are ornaments that help June expound the two utterances she wants the listeners to remember: *"Jesus wants to be our friend and Jesus wants us to be nice to each other."*
The same happens in St. Michael. The biblical narrative of Easter lies as a foundation for the preaching event and, to a certain degree, it structures the drama.[11] The preaching event starts at the beginning of Easter and concludes at the end. However, what really structures the drama is what the two preachers have agreed upon as the message, that *"Jesus has opened the way into heaven for everyone"* and that *"Jesus is our redeemer".* Everything that is said and done is built around this. These utterances are the architecture of the preaching event.

The connection to the Bible is made clear through the use of the large physical Bible in St. John. The book is a mediational means that also helps structure and affect the preaching event, and it is used as architecture. It is not static but living. People emerge from it, and the listeners do not know who will emerge or how they will tell their version of the biblical narrative. The biblical narrative is an example of a mediational means whose use changes. In the first part of the preaching event in St. John, the biblical narrative is used as architecture; it is allowed to structure the preaching event and to affect everything that happens in the drama. In this part, the preaching event provides tools for how listeners could expand their interpretation and understanding of the biblical narrative. In the second part, the biblical narrative is used as scaffolding. The most important aspect here is not the biblical narrative but the agreed upon meaning.

In St. Michael, Mary is both a person who co-creates the preaching event and a mediational means. The church educator is dressed as Mary. She is "Mary". I initially thought that the role of "Mary" was used as architecture in the preaching event, but this proved not to be the case. It is in fact the "meaning" of the narrative that structures the event. The role of "Mary" is there in order to tell the narrative in a different way. She is used as scaffolding.

As mentioned above, when the eggs are brought into the preaching event, something happens. The preachers move from describing what happened in Jerusalem many years ago to discussing the present and the future. The eggs carry several social and cultural discourses into the preaching event. They are meant to symbolise the transforming miracle of Easter – what looks dead can be full of life. In this illustration, the preachers seem to try to bridge the 'then' of the Easter narrative with the 'now' of the worship service. Viewed in this way, one could say that the eggs are used as scaffolding, they are used to promote and illustrate the agreed upon meaning of the preaching event. At the

[11] I do not know which Gospel version of the Easter narrative was used. The reading was from a Children's Bible that combined different Gospel Easter narratives.

same time, the eggs affect and change the preaching event, at least in time, so one could also argue that they are used as architecture.

Laughter as an agent of change

The preaching events involve more than just words. They also involve the Bible, the biblical narrative, costumes and the tree. These different mediational means are used in different ways, both monologically and dialogically. Initially the tree in St. John is used as scaffolding. As I have already stated, something special happens when the tree falls apart. Immediately before this event, Zacchaeus stands in the tree and describes the most exciting thing that has ever happened to him: that Jesus saw him, even though he was high up in the tree. The children listen intently, taking in the story. Zacchaeus continues to explain how a visit from Jesus is different from other visits, and, at this point, the tree falls apart. The children start laughing. Zacchaeus turns to see what is happening. June, who is facing the tree and can see what's happening, says: *"It seems like it is autumn in Jericho",* and laughs a short laugh. Zacchaeus quickly continues his story. Zacchaeus and June have faced each other for most of their conversation, but now they both turn and face the children. They stay facing the children for approximately 40 seconds and then turn back to face each other for the remainder of their part of the preaching event. Until their laughter, the children´s voices had been used as scaffolding, but, by bursting into laughter, the status of the children´s voices changes. They break the boundary of being the silent listeners. In their book on preaching as folly, Campell and Cilliers write that laughter can be used by preachers in masking and unmasking and in framing and reframing (Campbell and Cilliers 2012, 167-80). Here the opposite happens. The children actively take part in co-creating the preaching event and unmask the tree as simply a step ladder. By doing so, they contribute to reframing the preaching event by adding their excluded voices to it. Their laughter disrupts and changes the preaching event.[12] The tree is no longer a tree, the enchantment of the story is broken, and they show that they have seen through the costume. In this way, the children also claim agency in the preaching event. Both preaching events, even though they are supposed to focus on the children, seem to place the children on the fringes of the event. When the children interrupt with their laughter, they claim a place, make themselves visible for the preachers and show that they are part of the practice of the preaching event.

Authoritative or inner persuasive discourse?

Both of the people who emerge from the Bible in St. John are complex characters that display their internally persuasive discourses. The woman from the crowd enters into a struggle with an

[12] Campbell and Cilliers write: *"Laughter – as we understand it – is an act of deconstruction by means of incongruity, while humour tests the flexibility of seriousness and truth"* (Campbell and Cilliers 2012, 128)

authoritative image of Jesus being a "good guy". She also demonstrates the ability to change her mind. Within the framework of the preaching event, her opinion of both Jesus and Zacchaeus changes. Jesus moves from being someone famous she hoped to see, to being disappointing by not talking to her, to being someone who might be more than simply famous. Zacchaeus moves from being a terrible man to being a changed man. Her change of opinion results from overhearing Zacchaeus explaining that he would like to return the money he has stolen. After this, Jesus is no longer bordering on crazy and Zacchaeus might not be a terrible person. In this way, her character shows that the biblical narratives are narratives that can be contested and understood in different ways – not just by different people but also by the same person. She shows us how different inner persuasive discourses have fought within her and how she challenges different authoritative discourses in the wake of it.

Zacchaeus' story gives the listeners another glimpse into the biblical narrative. He does not battle with authoritative discourses in the same way as the woman from the crowd, but he still expands the image most people have of Zacchaeus. He shows Zacchaeus' internally persuasive discourses fighting with each other. Through the drama, "the foreign word" of the biblical narrative and of the Bible is allowed to disturb the authoritative discourse and help create a space in which inner persuasive discourses can battle with each other.

The second part of the preaching event is more monological. June interprets and closes the dialogical potential that the first part laid open. This is not because she interprets but because she seems to embrace the authoritative discourse and reveals nothing about her internally persuasive discourse. Her utterances concerning the biblical narrative and her questions to the children serve the greater purpose of conveying the message. Both Bakhtinian and sociocultural theory claim that words are connected with the social, the cultural, the historical and the institutional. In this case, the history of how this text has been read and interpreted will play a part. June's interpretation is not radically new. Her interpretation is similar to common, authoritative interpretations of the narrative (at least in Norway). June borrows Jesus' authority when she summarises the meaning. It is now not only June who wants us to read the Bible narrative in this way; it is also Jesus.

The preaching event in St. Michael is also founded on a biblical narrative, into which the preachers inserted what we might call the Bible's Grand narrative, with a particular focus on Jesus opening the path to heaven for everyone and being our redeemer. This interpretation comes from an authoritative discourse, the ransom theory of atonement.[13] In this preaching event, the theory of atonement is accepted, strengthened and assumed by the two preachers. In addition, the preachers

[13] For a more detailed analysis of this, see K. Graff-Kallevåg and J.O. Henriksen in the forthcoming book as part of the FoSS project.

use other authoritative religious language, such as*: Jesus died for everybody, Jesus carried the sins of the world, and Jesus is our redeemer*. There is little room for the pastor's or "Mary's" inner persuasive discourse or for battles with the authoritative word.

The biblical narrative is largely used "as it is" in the preaching event, yet the preachers often add adjectives that do not exist in the biblical text, such as proud, nice, happy and special. These adjectives serve to strengthen the authoritative discourse. For example*: "Jesus was too proud to be comforted" or "he rose from the grave as a happy man"*. And, just like in St. Michael (described in the polyphony section above), although there are two people speaking, we only hear one voice, the voice of an authoritative interpretation of the biblical narrative.

Even though the Bible is part of a traditionally authoritative discourse, within the Bible, different genres and narratives are found. For example, the four Gospels represent four different voices telling the same story. In the preaching event in St. Michael, these different narratives are conflated into one comprehensive understanding. There are also different authoritative and inner persuasive discourses present in the Bible. It is therefore worth asking whether our preaching events could reflect the contradictions and complexity in the Bible more than we think. In St. John, the drama becomes a polyphonic narrative that moves the biblical narrative from being part of an authoritative discourse to becoming more oriented towards an inner persuasive discourse. The physical Bible is also used as a mediational means to show that there are different stories and different ways of reading the stories in the same book. This use of the Bible as mediational means could pave the way for alternative discourses about other people or content in the Bible. Perhaps this shows that the Bible can handle our internally persuasive discourses?

Authoritarian, authoritative, or inner persuasive discourse?

The concept of authoritative or inner persuasive discourse is particularly interesting when researching preaching. Preaching is traditionally part of an authoritative discourse. Preachers have authority. However, being a preacher does not automatically create the same sense of authority it once did. Fred Craddock's ground-breaking book "As one without Authority" argues that the preacher should step down from the pulpit and the position above the congregation and try to identify with the listeners (Craddock 1979). This idea of assuming the listener's perspective represented a significant turn in homiletics. Craddock's inductive approach has been criticised by many scholars. One of their objections is that it is no longer possible to find something that listeners have in common. Another objection is that, on Craddock's approach, the preacher does not actually renounce his/her authority, since it is still only the preacher who engages in interpretation. Over recent decades, homiletical research has turned to empirical research and begun talking to the

listeners. One main finding from empirical studies is that the preacher´s ethos plays an important role in how listeners listen (Gaarden 2015, 17; McClure 2004; Fylling 2015). The listeners want a preacher who is authentic, and through authenticity comes authority. The main question then becomes: How should the preacher use this authority? Different approaches to homiletics propose different answers to this question. The Barthian vein of theology claims that the preacher should not "stand in the way of the message". This notion is rejected by more listener-focused approaches. John McClure advocates the preacher as having a double role, being both host and guest (McClure 2010). Campbell and Cilliers claim that the preacher should be a foolish person who melts the solidity of the world. This is a subversive kind of authority where the preacher is more of a trickster than an official figure (Campbell and Cilliers 2012). Gaarden argues that the ethos of the preacher is important for how preaching is responded to. Dialogical preaching cannot happen without the preacher (Gaarden 2015, 23).

Preachers in worship services in the NO2010 are often reluctant to use the pulpit. Of the 12 I observed, only one used the pulpit. However, I would like to argue that, although the preachers avoid using the pulpit when they preach, they still use their special authority and in a relatively authoritarian way. The Norwegian pedagogics professor Olga Dysthe, referring to Morson, nuances Bakhtin´s concept of authority. She claims that there are three, rather than two, types of discourse. The first is authoritarian discourse, which is based on power and tradition; the second is discourse with authority, which is based on trust and respect, and the third is inner persuasive discourse without authority, which is promoted through dialogically questioning, testing and valuing (Dysthe 2006). Unfortunately, it appears that, in an attempt to preach clearly and simply to children, preachers do not avoid the first type of discourse, though I do believe they aim for the second and third type. This raises the question of whether preaching too often attempts to speak the final word[14] on a matter, particularly when preaching to children. In my opinion, the problem with part two of the preaching event in St. John and the entire preaching event in St. Michael is that they are authoritarian and leave no room for other interpretations. The preaching event becomes the final word on the text and the matter; it becomes monological. The listener's only choice is to decide whether they accept or reject this way of interpreting the narrative.

[14] The final word opposes what Bakhtin would see as the ever unfinalisable quality of all speech and people. He argues that, in his books, Dostoevsky creates characters that show that *"a living human being cannot be turned into the voiceless object of some secondhand, finalizing process. In a human being there is always something that only he himself can reveal… that internally unfinalizable something in man... "* (Bakhtin 1984, 58). When we choose to speak as if we are able to say everything there is to say about a subject, we attempt to speak a final word (monological) and thus reject this unfinalisability.

Dysthe´s nuancing might create a different space for the preacher. My point is not that preachers should not interpret. As Gaarden underlines, preachers need to say something in order to be a good dialogue partner. The preacher cannot disappear. He or she still needs to be present and, through his or her authority as a professional, and a human being, help the listeners develop their own inner discourse. My point is simply that there is a position between being completely open and completely closed. This becomes even more relevant when preaching with children present.

Preaching at the thresholds

What would have happened if the dramatisation in St. John had been allowed to be the whole preaching event or if the preachers had been tasked with preaching the same text to adults? We will, of course, never know. Nevertheless, I find it interesting that the dramatisation is not allowed to stand alone. As I have shown, the dramatisation changes from being dialogical to being monological during the course of the preaching event.

Bakhtin claims that, in the novels of Dostoevsky, it is always at the thresholds that important things happen. Campell and Cilliers call this liminality and argue that preaching should aim to create liminal spaces at the threshold (Campbell and Cilliers 2012, 162). This approach to preaching is also supported by the listeners' demand for an authentic preacher. As a preacher, you need to put yourself, the words and the listeners in a place where there is something at stake. When this does not happen, the preaching often becomes monological and authoritative. I would argue that Gaarden´s description of the third room describes such a liminal space. Nevertheless, I believe that Gaarden's third room should be expanded to include even more dialogue partners, bringing the approach even closer to a practice theoretical approach with homiletical terms. The terms threshold, liminality and third room all denote the importance of preaching as something that happens *in between*. Understanding preaching as an event, as dialogical, as something that *happens in between*, allows us to describe and research preaching in terms of practice theory. In understanding preaching as an event, as dialogical and as a practice with more participants than the preacher, the biblical text and God, preaching becomes something that is processual, performative and emerging. This way of understanding preaching is also radically relational. The preacher no longer has a primary place in describing what happens in the preaching event. Preaching happens in relation to listeners and the church room, and the preacher always preaches with mediational means, including language. Meaning is no longer produced in the preacher's head, in the manuscript of the sermon or in the biblical text. Meaning, or sense-making, is something that is produced in the third room. A room where listeners, text, materiality, history, tradition and the preacher's words meet. Such an understanding also allows us to address power asymmetry in preaching events. Focusing on

materiality might highlight what preaching from a pulpit does or does not do in the communication situation, or which body it is that is preaching (Afdal, 2018, 4-6). Preaching then becomes something that is not final but evolving and emerging.

On a practice theoretical approach, it makes little sense to separate form and content. However, it does appear that the preachers in the two preaching events consider it possible, and recommendable, to experiment with form, but not content (perhaps especially when preaching to children).[15] The content of the preaching event is simple, "easy to remember", and traditionally dogmatically sound, but it seldom moves or dares. This could stem from an understanding of theology as static and knowledge as a bundle of information that can be passed on if properly communicated (Afdal; Gaarden 2015, 13; Hilmqvist and Afdal 2015, 4). However, the result is that the polyphonic biblical narratives of Easter and the meeting between Zacchaeus and Jesus are distilled into a monological message. I am convinced by Campbell and Cilliers's argument that the biblical narratives, rather than being forced or explained towards a resolution, need to remain unsettling when preached (Campbell and Cilliers 2012, 104). Moreover, by analysing empirical material, we have seen that this also applies when preaching to children. In the FoSS project, we observed that children, just like adults, act as co-authors of their own preaching events. Combined with theory on dialogical preaching and preaching at the thresholds, these empirical findings challenge the notion that preaching an easy and simple message is the best method. To a certain extent, it also challenges the idea (which we tend to take for granted) that children listen to preaching events in a completely different way from adults and thus require their own preaching approach.

Not a quick fix

At the beginning of this chapter, I asked what happens when preachers use biblical narratives, drama or objects in the preaching event and whether the use of these mediational means, these "foreign words", automatically makes the preaching event more fun and easier to understand for children.

The answer is no. It is not a quick fix. There clearly is a significant difference in how the mediational means are used. If they are used as architecture in the preaching event, they often function dialogically, but, if they are used as scaffolding, they often make the preaching event more monological. For the "foreign words" of the biblical narratives, mediational means and drama to

[15] Within the field of homiletics there is, in general, a broad recognition that it is not possible to separate form and content (but that one sometimes needs to make a distinction). This was one of the criticisms New Homiletics made against its predecessors (Gaarden 2015, 15). A new and exciting empirical study from Norway on this subject found that form, structure, content and performance all played a large part in how listeners listened to preaching, and it proposes a move to what Angel has coined "relational rhetoric" (Angel 2017).

function dialogically, they must be used in a polyphonic way, as architecture, and they must dare to challenge authoritarian discourses.

This analysis shows that polyphony is the most important consideration when laying the groundwork for dialogical interaction with a preaching event. Polyphony helps create a threshold space in which authoritarian discourses are challenged and narratives are re-interpreted. I claim that preachers need to re-frame how they think of preaching for children, to embrace complexity, and to search for threshold moments, also in such preaching events. In the places in the preaching events where multiple voices are heard simultaneously (and not conflated), a dialogical room with rich potential for inner persuasive dialogues and for appropriation of foreign words opens up. In such threshold spaces, preaching can, in a dialogical and polyphonic way, move, disrupt and re-frame the listener's experiences, thoughts and lives.

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Article 2

Linn Sæbø Rystad, “I Wish We Could Fast Forward it - Negotiating the Practice of Preaching,” *Homiletic*, vol 44, no 2 (2019)

"I Wish We Could Fast Forward it" - Negotiating the Practice of Preaching

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Abstract: *Though recent decades in empirical homiletics have significantly contributed to the understanding of what happens with preaching from the listener's point of view, empirical homiletics needs to do another turn and ask: what do listeners do with preaching? This article introduces children as a new group of listeners into empirical homiletics, and by a thick description of preaching as a practice. Children seldom become full participants in the practice of preaching, mainly because they do not understand what preaching is, they struggle to follow the rules, and they have different ends for the practice than the preachers. One implication for homiletics is that if preaching is considered a practice, it can also be taught. This might help children to easier become participants in the practice of preaching.*

1. Introduction

Though several homileticians talk of "the practice of preaching" few accounts for what they mean by practice or how this practice can be explained and understood. However, there are some exceptions. Homileticians Thomas Long and Leonora Tubbs-Tisdale have argued for practice as the best organizational concept when describing preaching. Though the book is an important work on preaching understood as practice, it is directed at understanding the practice of preachers and how preaching can be taught to Ministry-students. [1] Danish homiletician Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen also argues for a practice-oriented and dialogical approach to preaching. She claims that such an approach needs to shift from analyzing texts to looking at preaching as situated acts[2], or practice. I agree that practice is an excellent organizational concept for describing preaching; however, I argue that it is not enough to consider the preacher to understand preaching as a practice. To arrive at a more detailed description of what the practice of preaching is one also has to include the active listening[3] and interpreting task performed by the listeners.

With this article, I aim to contribute to the empirical vein of homiletics. The field of Homiletics has seen a turn towards listener-oriented research.[4] This turn has primarily included adult listeners.[5] In other fields, research, both child-centered research, research on children and with children, have had a boom in the last 30 years.[6] Within the theological

[1] Thomas G. Long and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice : A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008). I also disagree with some components in how they view practice, which I will return to in the discussion.
[2] Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen, *Dialogical Preaching : Bakhtin, Otherness and Homiletics*, vol. vol. 74 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 36.
[3] The notion of listening as an activity is informed by M.M. Bakhtin's theories on dialogue. M. M Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (USA: University of Texas Press, 1986), 68-70.
[4] See David Rietvield's overview article of phenomenological preaching David Rietveld, "A Survey of the Phenomenological Research of Listening to Preaching," *Homiletic* 38, no. 2 (2013).
[5] With the exception of the research group that I have been a part of in Norway, "Preaching for Young and Old", *book forthcoming*, and another Norwegian study where they have studied confirmand's response to worship services, including preaching: Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen, *Gudstjenester Med Konfirmanter : En Praktisk-Teologisk Dybdestudie Med Teoretisk Bredde*, vol. 12, Prismet Bok (Oslo: IKO-forl., 2017).
[6] For a good overview of the research history of the field of Children and Religion see the introduction in: Susan B. Ridgely, *The Study of Children in Religions : A Methods Handbook* (New York: New York University Press,

world, it is the fields of Religious Education and of Theology of Childhood that has led the way. The field of Religious Education produces a lot of relevant research on how children learn and reflect on their religiosity.[7] Theology of Childhood has made a substantial contribution on the more systematical theological side, arguing for seeing children as believers, not believers to be. [8] In the narrower field of Practical Theology, both Joyce Ann Mercer and Bonnie Miller-McLemore has written about children.[9] They both advocate a theology that takes children seriously and includes children's perspectives and faith in theological work and congregations. Mercer promotes a feminist approach to a theology of childhood.[10] The contributions of Mercer and Miller-McLemore are very valuable as a starting point for including children and their experiences as an essential field of study in Practical Theology.

Nevertheless, within the field of theology, most of these books and articles are still adults advocating on behalf of children without actually talking with children. Though the subject of children and preaching are sometimes touched upon or reflected on in these works, there is extremely little research done on this subject within the field of homiletics.[11] There is some more or less research-based work done on the topic of children's sermons. In the 80 and 90s in the US, there was a debate on whether children's sermons was a good idea or not.[12] Those who argue for it often use developmental psychological or educational arguments to support why children need adjusted sermons[13] or theological arguments to argue for the necessity to include all in the worship.[14] The few I found that is writing from a homiletical

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2011). In Psychology of Religion see Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, The Sage Program on Applied Developmental Science (Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE, 2006).

[7] A few examples are: Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen and fakultet Universitetet i Oslo Teologisk, "Religiøs Læring I Sosiale Praksiser: En Etnografisk Studie av Mediering, Identifisering og Forhandlingsprosesser I Den Norske Kirkes Trosopplæring" (Det teologiske fakultet, Universitetet i Oslo, 2014); Morten Holmqvist and menighetsfakultet Det Teologiske, "Learning Religion in Confirmation : Mediating the Material Logics of Religion : An Ethnographic Case Study of Religious Learning in Confirmation within the Church of Norway" (Department of Religion and Education, MF Norwegian School of Theology, 2015); Jennifer Beste, "Children Speak: Catholic Second Graders' Agency and Experiences in the Sacrament of Reconciliation," *Sociology of Religion* 72, no. 3 (2011).

[8] In Norway one of the nestors of Theology of Childhood was Dagny Kuhl. Other important figures are Sturla Sagberg, Sturla Stålsett, Odd Kjetil Sæbø (no relation to the author of this article) and Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen. Internationally Freidrich Schweitzer in Germany, Marcia Bunge and Robert Orsi in the USA, have played important roles in the field of Theology of Childhood/ The study of Children in Religions. See Friedrich Schweitzer, "Religion in Childhood and Adolescence: How Should It Be Studied? A Critical Review of Problems and Challenges in Methodology and Research," *Journal of Empirical Theology* 27, no. 1 (2014). Friedrich Schweitzer, Birgitte Thyssen, and Eberhard Harbsmeier, *Barnets Ret Til Religion* (Frederiksberg: Aros, 2006); Marcia J. Bunge, *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2001); Christopher W. Skinner, "The Child in the Bible – Edited by Marcia J. Bunge," (Melbourne, Australia2010).

[9] Joyce Mercer, *Welcoming Children : A Practical Theology of Childhood* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2005); Bonnie J Miller-McLemore, "Children and Religion in the Public Square: "Too Dangerous and Too Safe, Too Difficult and Too Silly"," *The Journal of Religion* 86, no. 3 (2006); Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Let the Children Come : Reimagining Childhood from a Christian Perspective*, Families and Faith Series (San Francisco, Calif: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

[10] Mercer, *Welcoming Children : A Practical Theology of Childhood*.

[11] There are a several books in the genre of "how to preach to children". It would have been interesting to do research on what such books say about preaching and children, but this has not been the subject of this article. In this overview I have chosen to only include peer reviewed articles or books.

[12] One of the most striking examples I found is this small discussion piece Sheldon Tostengard and Michael Rogness, "Children's Sermons," *Word & World* 10, no. 1 (1990). (not peer-reviewed)

[13] Ronald H Cram, "Children and the Language of Preaching," (Journal for Preachers1994).

[14] Wilbert M. Van Dyk, "Preach the Word! To Children," *Calvin Theological Journal* 32, no. 2 (1997): 432; Anna Carter Florence, "A Prodigal Preaching Story and Bored-to-Death Youth," *Theology Today* 64, no. 2 (2007).

viewpoint either argue against children's sermons[15] or say that there is a need for children's sermons, but strongly argue for these sermons to remain in "the sermon genre" and not become entertainment.[16] Others again, refuse to take a side in the discussion, but rather argues that since children's sermons have become normalized and here to stay, the challenge is to develop the best possible practice of doing them.[17] This debate shows that homileticians to a certain degree has been interested in the theme of children and preaching, but that it has not resulted in any substantial research on the topic.

In this article, the empirical material is from Christian Education-events (CE-events) and worship services aimed at children in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway. The Church of Norway does not have a tradition with children's sermons. There is a tradition of Sunday School, but in the worship services that I have studied, there is just one preaching event, and this is meant to be for everyone present, children, youth, adults, and old. Even so, I believe the findings in this article also has value for churches that have children's sermons.[18]

1.1 New turn in empirical homiletics?

I have interviewed children about their experience and response to preaching, thus including the perspective of another group of listeners into the listener-oriented vein of homiletics. The turn to interviewing listeners has provided the field of homiletics with valuable insight on what listeners hear when listening to preaching.[19] Nevertheless, I believe that there is time to do yet another turn and ask the question: *What do listeners do with preaching events?*

I will explore what listeners do with the preaching events by using Theodore Schatzki's definition of practice as an analytical tool, looking at how the children are able to participate in the shared understanding, rules and teleoaffective structures of the practice of preaching. In the end, I will discuss which implications the findings have for the field of homiletics.

2. Background, material, and method

First; some information about Christian education in The Church of Norway and the two events that are the material of this article. The Plan for Christian Education is a nationwide reform of the Church of Norway's work among children and youth that was set in motion in 2009. It requires every congregation to have a plan for systematic and continuous Christian Education for all baptized members between the ages of 0-18.[20] *Tower-agents* is an event for children aged 8-9, where the children are invited to be detectives/agents in the church and explore the church. The event spans over a few hours on a Saturday and ends with a worship service on Sunday where the children participate. This event takes place sometime during spring. *Wide Awake* is an event for children aged 10-12. The children are invited to a sleep-over at Church where they are to celebrate the Church's New Year. This event usually takes place on the first Sunday of Advent, and it spans from Saturday afternoon/evening to after the worship service on Sunday. This worship service is the main worship service of the congregation. The invites to the events go out to all children baptized in the Church of

[15] Paul R. Raabe, "Children's Sermons and Luther's Small Catechism," *Concordia Journal* 15, no. 2 (1989).
[16] Van Dyk, "Preach the Word! To Children," 438-43; Robert T. Carlson, Jr., "Sacred Speech and Children: The Relationship of the Children's Sermon and Liturgy," *Journal for Preachers* 23, no. 4 (2000). (Not peer-reviewed)
[17] James Nieman, "Three Thuds, Four D's, and a Rubik's Cube of Children's Sermons," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 22, no. 4 (1995).
[18] It would also be interesting to look at how children experience preaching in regular worship services. As far as I know there is no recent research done on this.
[19] Marianne Gaarden, *The Third Room of Preaching* (Louisville, Kentucky Westminster John Knox Press, 2017); John S. McClure, *Listening to Listeners : Homiletical Case Studies* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2004).
[20] https://kirken.no/nb-NO/church-of-norway/resources/plan-for-christian-education/ downloaded 09.11.17

Norway in the relevant age groups. However, it is possible to bring friends that have no connection to any church/religion or are members of other churches or religions.

My material consists of field notes of participatory observation of three Christian Education events (CE-events), one *Tower-Agent* and two *Wide Awake* events, in three different congregations—St. Nicholas, St. Mary, and St. Emmanuel[21]—and semi-structured interviews with children who attended the happenings and as well as with the adult leaders. Most of the children usually do not attend church on Sundays. However, when asked if they attended church often, the children expressed that they believed they did. Because they went every time something special happened, like a wedding, baptism, funeral, or when they were invited to a happening like this. Such an utterance is quite typical of members in a Folk Church.[22] Though the Church of Norway is no longer a state church, the members of the church to a large degree concurs with those who live in the area. Many of these members attend church mostly when "something special" happens. [23] As Grace Davie has pointed out, in the Scandinavian Folk Churches, it seems like people are *"belonging without believing."*[24]

I also have video recordings of the Sunday worship service. These video recordings have been used to view the worship services again and as a backup of my field notes. The children were interviewed in groups, using a focus group approach.[25] The reason for interviewing the children in groups was a hope that the asymmetry of an adult interviewing a child would decrease with a group of children and one adult.[26] I have done six focus group interviews with children with 3 to 5 in each group. Also, I have one semi-structured interview with one girl alone.[27] The adults were mainly interviewed individually, using semi-structured interviews. I have six interviews with pastors and adult volunteers.[28] The children were interviewed right after the worship service was finished. The children in St. Mary and St.

[21] All names of congregations and persons are anonymized.

[22] For a good introduction to the Scandinavian Folk Churches see Kirsten Donskov Felter, Ninna Edgardh, and Tron Fagermoen, "The Scandinavian Ecclesial Context," in *What Really Matters: Scandinavian Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography* (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick, 2018, 2018).

[23] Joel Halldorf, Fredrik Wenell, and Stanley Hauerwas, *Between the State and the Eucharist : Free Church Theology in Conversation with William T. Cavanaugh* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 8; Fredrik Saxegaard and menighetsfakultet Det Teologiske, "Realizing Church : Parish Pastors as Contributors to Leadership in Congregations" (MF Norwegian School of Theology, 2017), 16; Grace Davie, "Belief and Unbelief: Two Sides of a Coin," *Approaching Religion* 2, no. 1 (2012).

[24] I do believe that there should be a necessarily introduced into that sentence – Scandinavians are belonging without *necessarily* believing. Nonetheless, the phrase captures something of what makes the Scandinavian Folk Churches special. *Religion in Modern Europe : A Memory Mutates*, European Societies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 18.

[25] Focus groups can be done in various ways, depending on which discipline one writes in. Some have a more stringent method than others. I have used a loose methodology, leaning on David Morgan, who defines focus groups as: *«a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher.»* David Morgan, "Focus Groups," *Annual Rev. Sociol.* 22 (1996): 130.

[26] See i.e. Samantha Punch, "Research with Children. The Same or Different from Research with Adults?," *Childhood* 9, no. 3 (2002): 325; Ridgely, *The Study of Children in Religions : A Methods Handbook*, 7; Priscilla Alderson, "Children's Rights in Research About Religion and Spirituality," in *The Study of Children in Religions: A Methods Handbook*, ed. Susan B. Ridgely (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 52-53.The choice was also based on practicalities such as time and recommendations after experiences from the project "Preaching for Young and Old", where they found group interviews with children to be more rewarding than individual interviews.

[27] This girl could not be found when it was time for the interviews. However, she was waiting outside when we had finished and insisted to be interviewed. The rest of the children who had attended the CE-event had gone home, so I interviewed her alone.

[28] With the exception of one adult interview that is also a group interview (for practical reasons). In this interview there were 3 present.

Emmanuel are between 10 and 12 years old, and the children in St. Nicholas are between 7 and 9 years old.[29]

2.1 What counts as preaching in this article?

Going into the fieldwork, I had the presumption that preaching is more than what happens in the worship service on Sunday. My thought was that everything that happens during the CE-event would affect how the children listen and create meaning from the preaching event on Sunday. In the above, there are several presumptions. I presumed that the most important preaching is happening in the worship service, that the children listen to preaching, that they create meaning from what they hear, and that they connect what happens in the CE-event on Saturday with what happens in the worship service on Sunday. These presumptions became visible in the questions I ask during the interviews. As shown in the analysis, most of my assumptions were wrong, and I had to revise and reject many of them.

In this article, I employ a very broad understanding of preaching. The reason for this is empirical. The preachers' self-understanding is that what they do at these happenings is mainly preaching. Into preaching they include the activities and all "talking in between." In the interviews with the children, it is sometimes difficult to discern which preaching event they are talking about. The different preaching events seem to blend into one box labeled preaching. The understanding of what counts as preaching that emerges from the empirical material is fluid. I, therefore, had to make some boundaries and select what I categorize as preaching for this article. In the concept of preaching I have included all instances during the CE-events where an adult is speaking to the children about the Bible, the church or faith where the goal was that the children should experience these instances as relevant for their lives and faith. This means that there are some parts of the event that I have categorized as not preaching that my informants would have classified as preaching. It also means that some of what I have categorized as preaching is "talking in-between" or closely connected with an activity, as well as scheduled preaching events.

As said, I analyze these preaching events by employing concepts from Theodore Schatzki's practice theory. So, before we come to the analysis, a short introduction to the main concepts used in the usually follows.

3. Practice Theory

There is not one coherent "Practice Theory." There are different versions, and each has a particular focus. Practice theoretician Davide Nicolini claims that practice theoretical approaches have five distinctive traits. Firstly, practice theoretical approaches emphasize that there is productive and reproductive work of some kind behind all the durable features of our world. Secondly, it demands that we rethink the role of agents and individuals. Thirdly, equaling mind and body, it puts the importance of the body and objects in social matters at the forefront. Fourthly, a practice-theoretical approach contributes to shedding new light on epistemology and of discourse. Moreover, finally, through all the things mentioned above, it also reaffirms the centrality of interests and power in everything we do.[30]

3.1 What is practice?

I have chosen Schatzki as my main theorist because I believe his definition of practice used as an analytical tool helps open up the inner workings of practices. Schatzki defines

[29] In the field work I experienced that though the CE-events are aimed at certain age groups, the congregations operate with somewhat flexible boundaries on who is allowed to attend, so the youngest children interviewed are 7 years old.

[30] Davide Nicolini, *Practice Theory, Work, and Organization : An Introduction*, Practice Theory, Work, & Organization (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6.

practice as a *"set of doings and sayings that is organized by a pool of understandings, a set of rules and something I call a 'teleoaffective structure."*[31] Nicolini places Schatzki within the vein of practice theory that draws on heritage from Heidegger and Wittgenstein. Theorists in this vein of practice theory particularly focus on intelligibility – that people most of the time do what makes sense for them to do and say. Schatzki much underlines that to do what makes sense to you to do is not the same as always acting rationally. Practical intelligibility is determined by orientations toward ends (teleology) and by how things matter (affectivity) and both these things can divert someone from doing what is rational.[32] However, a practice theoretician will not find this sense in the mind of the practitioner; the sense is always shown in practice.[33]

3.2 Clarification of concepts

I will use the concepts of understandings, rules, and teleoaffective structures (ends and how things matter) as analytical tools in the analysis. After the clarification of concepts, I turn to define the practice of preaching by using Schatzki's terms. To operationalize the concepts, I developed questions based on the concepts that I use in the analysis. These are presented at the end of this section.

3.2.1 Understandings

With understandings, Schatzki does not mean some sort of intuition that other prominent practice theorists seem to use to explain much of human behavior. He argues against both Bourdieu's concept that actors develop a 'sense for the game' and Giddens notion that it is a practical consciousness that determines routine acts. He deems both of these problematic and says that they fail at explaining why we do what we do, or why we do anything at all; it just demonstrates that we do it. Schatzki aims for a thicker description of practice, to explain why we do what we do or how we know what to do. He claims that actions are better explained as *knowing-how-to-x,* or which doings or sayings that constitute doing *x* in a situation.[34]

3.2.2 Rules

When Schatzki speaks of rules, he means things practitioners of a practice are supposed to observe when they are participating in that specific practice. Through looking at rules, it is possible to see what makes sense to practitioners to do because what people do often say something about how they understand the rules of a practice and which rules they want to avoid following. [35]

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[31] Theodore R. Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed Orders," in *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, ed. Karin Knorr Cetina (New York: Routledge, 2001).

[32] Schatzki, T. Practice mind-ed orders, ibid., 47-48.

[33]This means that the mind is not given priority over the body. Yet, this equaling motion does not necessarily stop with the mind and the body, some practice theoreticians believe that non-human objects have agency Nicolini, *Practice Theory, Work, and Organization : An Introduction*, 162-63. ibid. Nicolini places Bruno Latour on one end of the scale but points out that Latour might protest to be labelled a practice theoretician. Latour equalizes human and non-human actors in social practice and gives non-human objects agency. In Latour's version of practice theory, an object can exert direct impact on human action. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 63-86. Schatzki, though recognizing the importance of materiality, claims that only humans carry out practice. He does not believe that materials exert direct impact on human action; they are not equal. See also: Sonia Hazard, "The Material Turn in the Study of Religion," 4, no. 1 (2013); Theodore R. Schatzki, "Materiality and the Social Life," *Nature and Culture* 5, no. 2 (2010).

[34] "Practice Mind-Ed Orders," 49-51.

[35] Ibid., 51-52.

3.2.3 Teleoaffective structure

The third concept consists of two things, ends (telos) and how things matter (affectivity). Schatzki argues that what makes sense for people to do substantially depend on what matters to them and how things matter to them.[36] There is a normative component to the teleoaffective structure. In a practice, not every end is acceptable or correct. The same goes for the different tasks, beliefs, and emotions of the practice.

3.3.3 Preaching as practice in practice theoretical terms

A preaching event is made up of several components. Most homileticians would agree that the following components are part of a preaching event: the preacher reads a biblical text, interprets it, and then proclaims this interpretation to the congregation. The congregation's task is to listen and interpret.[37] In this interaction, God is also an active participant, both in the preacher's preparations, in the act of preaching and in the act of listening.[38] Using a practice theoretical language, one can say that this is the *knowing-how-to-x* of the practice. The rules differ according to context, but most of the time they involve: sitting still and listening attentively and quietly.[39] The teleoaffective structure of the practice of preaching is that the listeners should find meaning and relevance for their own lives and faith in the preaching event.

3.4 Analytical questions

In the analysis, I will explore what kind of understanding, or *knowing how to x*, one needs to have to participate as a listener in the practice of preaching. This can be reformulated into the question: *What do you need to know to carry out the listening and interpreting (x) part of the practice of preaching?*

Because the practice of preaching does not have any written rules, I have tried to extract some by looking at my field notes and sayings about preaching from interviews with children and adult leaders. The questions that guided my analysis were: *Which rules does the*

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[36] Ibid., 52.

[37] This description of the components of preaching is informed by searching for definitions of preaching in several influential homiletical books. I have supplied this selection with books that have been used in teaching homiletics at MF. This is by no means a complete review of the field of Homiletics in regards to preaching definitions, but a sample to show that across different ways of approaching preaching, many agree on which components preaching consists of. See: Fred Brenning Craddock, *As One without Authority*, 3rd ed. ed. (Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon, 1979), 33; David Buttrick, *Homiletic : Moves and Structures* (London: SCM Press, 1987), 11-13; Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*, Fortress Resources for Preaching (Minneapolis, Minn: Fortress Press, 1997), 11-29; Halvor Nordhaug, *-Så Mitt Hus Kan Bli Fullt : En Bok Om Prekenen* (Oslo: Luther, 2000); John S. McClure, *Other-Wise Preaching : A Postmodern Ethic for Homiletics* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2001), 9-10; Charles L. Campbell, *The Word before the Powers : An Ethic of Preaching* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 68-70; Jana Childers, *Purposes of Preaching* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2004); James Henry Harris, *The Word Made Plain: The Power and Promise of Preaching* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), ix; Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2nd ed. ed. (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox, 2005), 15-18; Robert Stephen Reid, *Slow of Speech and Unclean Lips : Contemporary Images of Preaching Identity* (Eugene, Or: Cascade Books, 2010), 1-5; Bo Larsson, *Recept Eller Replik? : Om Predikans Teologi Och Praktik* (Stockholm: Verbum, 1998), 10; Carina Sundberg, "Här Är Rymlig Plats: Predikoteologier I En Komplex Verklighet: Theologies of Preaching in a Complex Reality" (2008); Ringgaard Lorensen, *Dialogical Preaching : Bakhtin, Otherness and Homiletics*, vol. 74, 68-94; Marianne Gaarden, *Prædikenen Som Det Tredje Rum* (Fredriksberg: Forlaget Anis, 2015), 9; Olav Skjevesland, *Broen over 2000 År : Bidrag Til Prekenlæren*, Teologi I Dag (Oslo: Luther, 1981), 34-62; Gustaf Wingren, *The Living Word : A Theological Study of Preaching and the Church*, Predikan (Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 13; Mary Catherine Hilkert, *Naming Grace : Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination* (New York: Continuum, 1997), 48.

[38] In this article God as an actor in the practice is not at the forefront since the children do not address God as an actor in the way they talk about preaching.

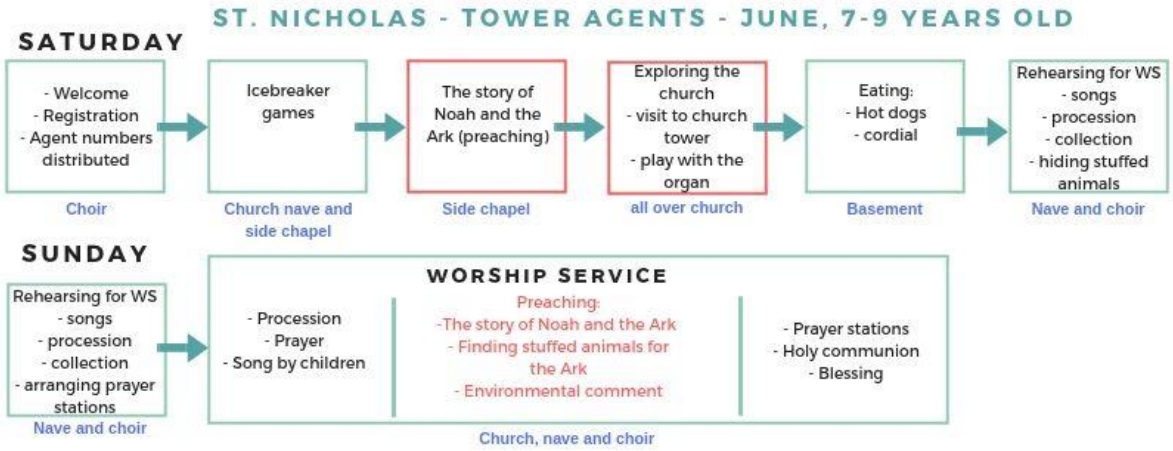
practice of listening to preaching contain? Which rules are observed (or not) and how are these rules understood?

Lastly, I looked at which teleoaffective structures children and adults expressed in the interviews, asking: *Which ends do the different participants of the practice have, and are they correct or acceptable according to the understanding of preaching gleaned from the homiletical definitions? What do the listeners do to reach their ends? How do things matter to the listeners?*

4. Preaching events

Below the different congregations and central preaching moments are described. I have made a timeline of the event for each congregation while describing some preaching events in a closer manner. The preaching events described are those I perceived to be the central, or primary, preaching events of the CE-event. Preaching events are marked with red boxes or letters.

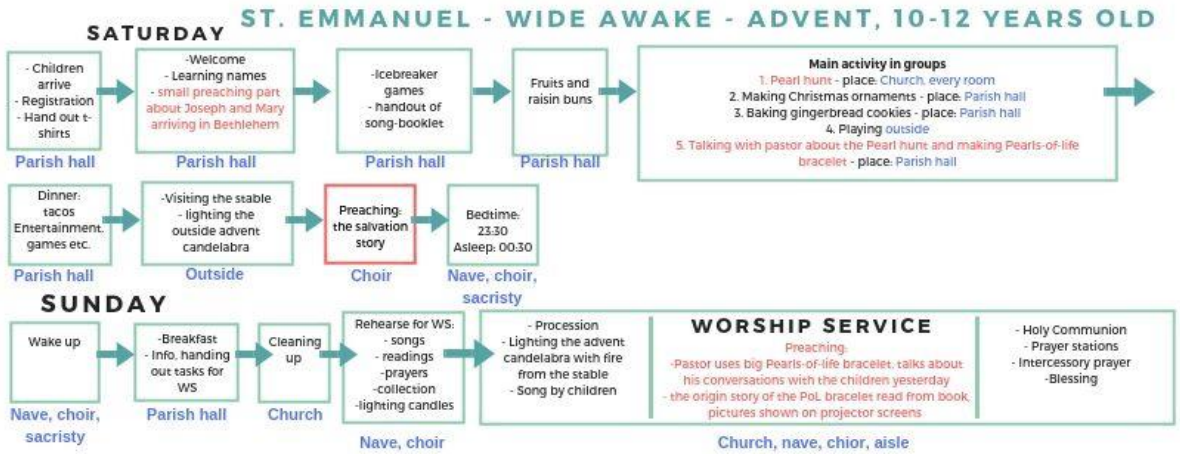
4.1 Flannelgraph and the Noah-story in St. Nicholas congregation



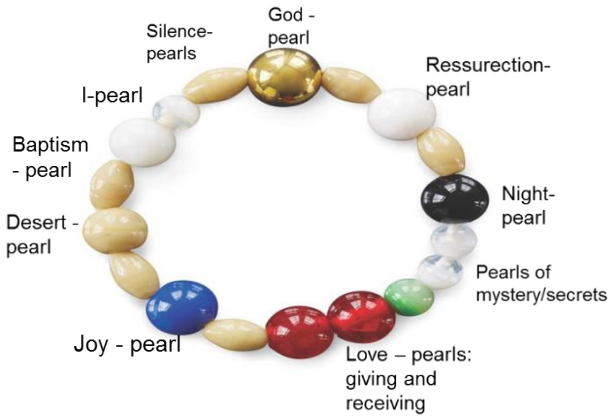
In St. Nicholas the main preaching event on Saturday starts with the catechist, Nicole, stating that she is going to tell the children a story, the story of Noah's Ark. Nicole uses the flannel graph while she is telling the story. She asks the children which animals Noah needed to bring into the ark. Nicole says that they are allowed to come up to the flannelgraph, one at the time, and find an animal and put it onto the flannelgraph. Soon everyone is inside the Ark, and Nicole removes all the trees and all the land from the flannelgraph. She continues her story but is interrupted by one of the children who say: *«but all the other humans died.»* This statement sparks a conversation about evil, revolving around the question of whether it is ok to kill people that are evil or if they instead should be taught to be good.

In the worship service on Sunday morning, Nicole tells the same story during the preaching event. This time, however, it is without the interjections and questions of the children. The children are activated once during the preaching event when they roam around the church trying to find all the stuffed animals; they have hidden in the room the day before. The stuffed animals represent the animals in the Ark. At more than one point during the preaching event children sat with their hands raised, trying to ask questions or answer rhetorical questions posed by Nicole. They were ignored.

4.2 Pearls-of-Life-bracelets in St. Emmanuel congregation



In St. Emmanuel, the children were divided into groups of approximately five or six in each group. Then one group at the time was sent into the church. The church was filled with different stations, one for each pearl in *the Pearls-of-Life-bracelet* (from now on *PoL-bracelet*).[40]

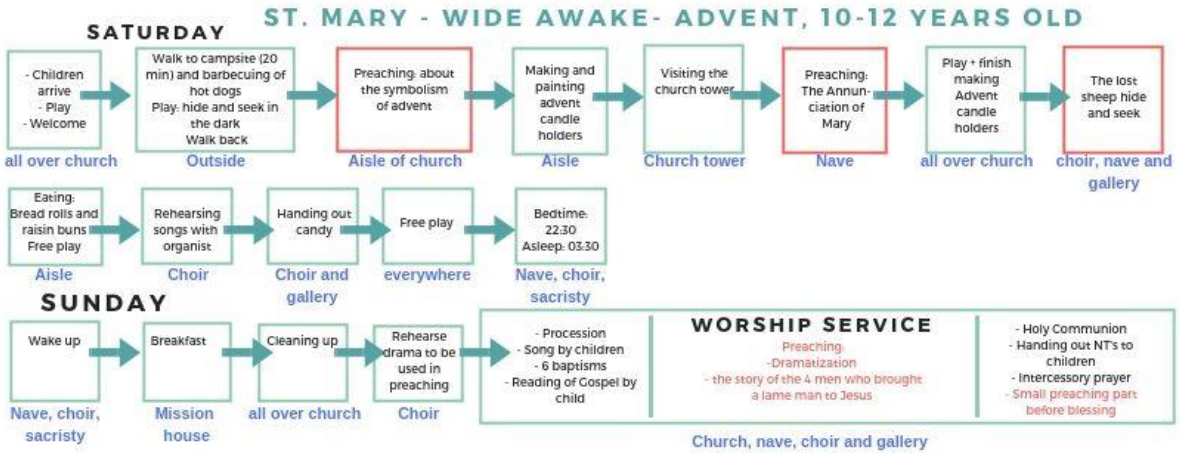


On each station, there is a pearl, some information about that pearl, a verse from the Bible or a poem, and often something the children can do. At the end of each station, they each receive the pearl of that station. The children stay very quiet except for when they ask questions about the pearls. At the post of the baptism pearl, they ask several questions, such as: *"What about those who are not baptized? Do they get a baptism pearl?" "Does God care about those who are not baptized?" "Can someone who's not baptized be here at this event?"* The leader, Eva, answers some of their questions, but not all of them. Sometimes she says that she does not know, or that they are asking good and important questions, other times she asks them back: *"What do you think?"* After the group finished at the church, they walk over to the parish hall. They now have all the pearls it takes to make a bracelet in one of the rooms the pastor, Eric, waits. He has the rubber-band needed to complete the bracelet and a prototype so that the pearls are put on in the correct order. While they finish making the bracelet, Eric asks the children about the experience they have had in the church. He talks with them about which pearl they liked the most, or remembered the best, and why they liked/remembered that pearl.

[40] The Pearls-of-Life-bracelet (*Kristuskrans*) is a bracelet that functions as a kind of rosary. It is made after an idea by the Swedish bishop Martin Lønnebo. There is an app available for ios that explains the bracelet in English https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/fralsarkransen/id441215781?mt=8# downloaded 08.11.17

In the worship service on Sunday morning, Eric opens the preaching event by showing a large version of the *PoL-bracelet* to the congregation and tells them about what the children have been doing the day before. When he describes how he talked with the children about which pearl they remembered, he quotes himself saying: *"Which pearl did you remember and why?*" The hands of the children sitting in the pews shoot into the air. Eric looks a bit startled but turns to the children and lets them answer the question. He repeats this a couple of times. Then the preaching event continues with the reading of a children's book that tells the origin story of the *PoL*-bracelet. Eva reads the story while pictures from the book are projected onto the wall of the church.

4.3 Advent candelabras and the story of when Jesus forgives and heals a paralyzed man in St. Mary congregation



In St. Mary, one activity on Saturday evening was to make an advent candelabrum. The pastor, Mark, gathered all the children attending the happening around some tables placed in the aisle of the church. He opens by talking about the color purple and asks the children if they know which colors one needs to mix to get purple. They say: *"blue and red.*" Mark replies: *«Yes, blue and red. Do you know what those colors symbolize?»* Several children say that blue is a symbol of heaven, and he replies that they are correct. Then he asks: *"what is red then?"* Some say blood. One of the boys says: *«Satan.»* Mark answers him in a light and amused tone: *«no, Jesus came so that we did not have to worry about that guy.»* Then he answers his own question*: "blue and red, heaven and earth that meet when Jesus comes to us."* After this preaching event, they are allowed to start painting. They have blue, yellow, green, black, grey, and glitter paint. However, no red paint. Mark does not seem stressed by this and orders the children to start painting. Then he disappears to try to find some red paint. He is unsuccessful. This results in some green and blue, but a lot of greyish or brownish advent candelabras. The candelabras are set out to dry and not mentioned again until the end of church coffee where the Church-educationer, Marlon, has to remind the children to take them with them before they leave.[41]

The Sunday worship service has a different theme. The text Mark uses in the preaching event is the story about the four men who carried a paralyzed man to Jesus and lowered him through the roof.[42] Some of the boys who attended the event dramatize the story. Mark then goes on to talk about friendship, sin, and Christmas for about 10 min.

[41] In the interview with the adults the pastor (and preacher) says that they plan on sending out a text-message with some information about advent and suggestion for a psalm to sing.
[42] Mark 2, 1-11 or Luke 5, 17-26.

5. Analysis

5.1 Understanding - knowing how to x

Knowing how to x in the practice of preaching involves a series of tasks. The preacher reads a biblical text, interprets it, and then proclaims this interpretation to the congregation. The congregation's task in the practice is to listen and interpret. Several of the children show that they do not necessarily *know how to x* in their part, the listening and interpreting, of the practice of preaching. In general, it seems like the children manage the first but struggle with the last task. When I asked questions on what they remembered from the worship service in general or the preaching events in particular, they very often could answer. When I tried to prod deeper and asked for the relevance and significance of the preaching event for them, many struggled.

> ***Interviewer:*** *I was wondering, is it anything that Mark has said, today or yesterday… that you think, like, you recognize it from your own lives? Is anything of what he says important to you?*
> ***Michael:*** *Is this a sort of a camp?*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Yes*
> ***Michael:*** *I have been to camp several times.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Ok, mmm…*
> ***Michael:*** *At NN*
> ***Interviewer:*** *But I was wondering, does it happen when Mark talks to you about God and Jesus that you go: "Oh, this was interesting?"*
> ***Michael:*** *We used to have like these bible-gatherings at camp.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Ok, are they different from these?*
> ***Michael:*** *What?*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Are they different from the ones here, or are they similar?*
> ***Michael:*** *Not so very different*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Ok, so what do you think of such gatherings then?*
> ***Michael:*** *(quietly)… I don't know what to say…*[43]

Michael has been part of another similar practice and tries to use the understanding of that practice to understand the one he was participating in now. Schatzki argues that sometimes, practices might overlap and that this could affect what makes sense for people to do in a situation. Another practice can break into the practice you are currently doing and change how that practice is organized, and thus, also what makes sense for you to do.[44] Michael says that what he calls the "bible-gatherings" at camp and the preaching events that he has experienced at Church are "not that different," but he does not know how he feels about them. He is negotiating between the two different practices, the practice of preaching in the event that he has just attended and the "bible-gatherings" he previously has attended at camp. When I try to turn the interview back to my line of questioning; the relevance of preaching for him, Michael continues to talk about the" bible-gatherings" at camp. When I continue to search for an interpretation process, he is not able to answer me. Some would argue that this is because Michael is too young to verbalize such abstract and difficult

[43] The theoretical framework of practice theory was not part of my original theoretical framework, before the interviews. Had I held the interviews again I would have tried to focus more on what the children did with the preaching events and asked for this.
[44] Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed Orders," 53.

interpretation processes. Such an argument is problematic. If this is the case, and the end of the preaching event still is to have the listeners interpret the preaching event in a way that is relevant to their lives, one also basically argue that children are too young to listen to preaching. In addition to this, theologian Tobias Faix argues that youth do have the ability to express their faith and believes. They just do it with other words than adult researchers.[45] What is more, some of the other children did know *how to x*.

Already it is easy to see how I operated with a different understanding of the practice of preaching than many of the children did. Even though it was not my intention, I was under the impression that Michael and I had the same understanding of what doing *x* was as a listener in the practice of preaching. I continuously searched for Michael's interpretative process, believing that *x* in this situation is to listen and interpret. Michael, however, is trying to figure out what this thing, preaching, is, by comparing it to something he already knows.

Another example from St. Nicholas shows a different version of negotiation. Nina, Neil, and Nigel can retell the words of the preacher. In the sense of transference of knowledge as parroting what has been said, they have learned a lot.[46] However, when I ask for their interpretative process, they struggled.

> ***Interviewer:*** *If you were to tell me what Nicole talked about, when she talked alone, what did she say?*
> ***Nina:*** *She talked about those people, with Noah and all that…*
> ***Neil:*** *She talked about how God wanted to destroy the world.*
> ***Nina:*** *And she had only found two girls, but then she found the rest.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *She found some more today, yes. And she said something about God destroying the world?*
> ***Nina:*** *Yes, there was something she did not say today. The thing about that they had to bring 14 sheep because they had to slaughter some.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Yes, right… What did you think about while she talked about Noah and the animals?*
> ***Nina:*** *I don't know.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Nothing? What did you think of?*
> ***Nina:*** *No…*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Nothing? Did you pay attention?*
> ***Nina:*** *YES! I tried to like…*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Was there a point where you thought that what she talked about was something that could have been about you and your lives? (silence)*
> *Was that a weird question?*
> ***Nigel:*** *Hm?*
> ***Interviewer:*** *It looked like it was an odd question (laughing) You have a very skeptical look.*

As with Michael, my line of questioning presupposes that Nina, Neil, and Nigel have the same understanding of preaching as I did. Like Michael, Nina manages the first task of the twofold task of the listener in the practice of preaching. She has listened or tried to listen. Yet, she does not know what to do with the things she has heard. I will return to this interview because I changed my line of questioning and then got very different answers from Nina.

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[45] T. Faix, "Semantics of Faith. Methodology and Results Regarding Young People's Ability to Speak About Their Beliefs," *Journal of Empirical Theology* 27, no. 1 (2014).
[46]Gaarden, *Prædikenen Som Det Tredje Rum*, 21; Morten Holmqvist and Geir Afdal, "Modes of Learning and the Making of Religion. The Norwegian and Finnish Curricula for Confirmation," *Nordic journal of religion and society* 28 (2015): 4..

Nigel, on the other hand, thinks the question is weird. He does not voice the same struggle as Nina; his reaction is mostly conveyed through body language. In his response, it is also evident that our understanding of what is going on in the practice of preaching is not the same. When asked whether the preaching event had anything to do with his life he says "*Hmm?"* followed by a grimace that I interpreted as meaning that my question to him was odd. During the rest of the interview, Nigel states that what he liked the most about the worship service, in general, was to walk in the procession at the start and to carry the Bible while doing so. When asked about how he liked the story of Noah and the ark, he replies that it was fun and exciting, holding two thumbs in the air. Nigel has no answer as to why it was exciting. He is also unequivocal in his opinion that the preaching event would have been even more boring if Nicole had not used the flannelgraph. In other words, Nigel also exhibits that he understands part of the practice of preaching. He has listened, and he likes the biblical story. Just as with Michael and Nina, it is the interpretative task of the practice that is unknown.

Some of the children did *know how to x*. When asked about what she thought about during the preaching event on Sunday morning, Emily from St. Emmanuel congregation answers:

> ***Emily:*** *Well, I thought about that blue pearl, the happiness one.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *The blue?*
> ***Emily:*** *Because I don't like to think about sad things and things like that.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Why did you… what did you think about when you thought about that blue pearl? Did you have something to be happy about?*
> ***Emily:*** *…Well, there has been some stuff going on in my family, stuff that I have not liked.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Mmm, oh, ok…*
> ***Emily:*** *But now it seems like it's going to turn out to be fine… and then I am happy, yes.*

Here we can see Emily both listening and interpreting. She listens to Eric and Eva and then uses the blue pearl to think about the stuff that has been going on in her family. Emily is interpreting what she hears in the preaching event and applying it to her own life, making the preaching event relevant to her. In other words, she *knows how to x*. Emily was not the only child in St. Emmanuel who did this. Several say that during the preaching event they thought of their bracelet and then something to do with their lives, and in the video, you see at least one boy looking intently at his bracelet while Eric talks. This stands out from the two other congregations.

5.2 Rules

We have already established that the practice of preaching is an interpretative practice and that it is supposed to further relevance or meaning for the listener. However, to get to that end, there are rules to follow. The children I have interviewed clearly understood that there were some rules connected to the practice of preaching. They can be formulated like this:

- When listening to preaching, you need to sit still in the pew and (look like you) listen
- When listening to preaching, you should not talk with others in the pews.
- In the worship service, you should let the preacher talk uninterrupted. Those preaching events are not usually a place for questions.
- If the preaching event takes place outside the worship service, other rules apply.
- When listening to preaching, you should not fall asleep.

Michael from St. Mary is of special interest with regards to rules.

Interviewer: *What are you thinking of? During the preaching events?*
Michael: *Ohhh, I am looking forward to it being finished…*
Interviewer: *(laughing) That's what you're doing… Are you happy or sad when the pastor speaks?*
Michael: *I am happy that I found Snorlax, Pikachu, and Onix!*
Interviewer: *Did you do that during the preaching event?*
Michael: *(satisfied) Hmmm…*

The concept of rule-following in practice theory is mostly taken from Ludwig Wittgenstein. Rule-following can sound like something out of a rationalist paradigm. Though, following the Wittgensteinian tradition, it is not. Wittgenstein argued against the notion of rules being some structure is predetermined and waits for us outside of ourselves. According to him, there is nothing preexisting structure "out there" to guide us. He also claimed that when we follow a rule, we follow it blindly. By this, he meant that although there may be some interpretation process in motion when we follow a rule, in the end, we just act. This does not mean that we always follow the rule correctly (according to the shared understanding of the practice). What it means to follow a rule correctly (the normative aspect) is decided by consensus among different rule-followers. All this sounds straightforward, but there is a problem. Is there any distinction between genuinely following a rule and just happening to behave like you follow the rule? David Bloor, interpreting Wittgenstein, claims that there is. He suggests that what Wittgenstein meant by rule-following was the genuinely following of rules; that you follow the rule because you know it is a rule and that you are aware of what you do.[47]

Michael expresses a deep wish for all the preaching events he participates in to be quickly finished. Nevertheless, he obeys the rules; he sits still and looks like he listens. However, Michael is not really listening; he spends the preaching event playing Pokémon Go.[48] Obeying the rules, but not obeying them at the same time, or, not genuinely following the rule. This can be explained as another manifestation of the lack of shared understanding Michael brings to the practice of preaching.

One of the interviews in St. Nicholas portrays a different version of rule-following; not following the rule of listening to the preaching at all:

Interviewer: *When Nicole was talking, was there ever a time where you thought: «oh, I can think about the same sometimes. Or, I can relate to that? »*
Nora: *No…*
(they talk over each other, and there are a lot of noise)
Interviewer: *Why could you not relate? Was it because it was about something that happened so long ago?*
Nathanael: *it was because I could not be bothered to listen.*
Interviewer: *why not?*
Nathanael: *Because… blablablabla.*
Interviewer: *it was boring?*
Nathanael: *YES!*
Nora: *I wish we could fast forward it…*

[47] David Bloor, "Wittgenstein and the Priority of Practice," in *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, ed. K. Knorr-Cetina, Theodore R. Schatzki, and Eike von Savigny (Routledge, 2001), 96-97.
[48] https://www.pokemongo.com/en-us/ accessed 20.12.18

Interviewer: *Was it THAT boring?*
Nathanael: *Yes!! I will never go to church again…*

Nathanael seems to be in direct opposition to the rules. He could not be bothered to listen at all. However, when I conferred with my field notes, all the children sat still in the pew and did not talk to each other for most of the preaching event. Nathanael did follow the rules, but at the same time not. Although it seemed like he was listening, he was in fact not listening but being bored. Elsewhere in the interviews, Nathanael sticks to his story of the preaching event being "*blablabla*." Nathanael is not the only one from the interviews who deems sitting still and listening quietly to the preaching event as boring or *"blablabla."* Even though the two examples are two boys, this is not a gendered issue. In St. Nicholas, Nora, and Nadine feel the same way, and in St. Mary, Megan also says that she never listens to what the preacher is saying. Both in St. Emmanuel and St. Mary, the children also express that following the rules of sitting still in the pews, being quiet and listening to what the different adults say is difficult and boring. This is one of the strongest patterns in the material across all four congregations.

In the sense of genuinely following the rules, the children seldom do so; except the rule of being quiet. They do not protest against the rule of being quiet. Maybe this is because they are used to being told to be quiet when adults are speaking, or because the space of the church invites quietness. The rules that are difficult to follow, both genuinely and not, are to sit still and to listen. These rules the children have different ways of circumventing, while still appearing to follow the rules.

5.3 Ends

The church staff has explicit and implicit ends they hope the children should achieve. However, within the ends of the church staff, there are multiple ends, and sometimes competing ends.

From the interviews with the church staff and adult volunteers, I have formulated these ends:

Teaching	**Preaching**
To teach the children about being a Christian	To have all the activities of the happening underline what they say when they preach
To develop faith	To help the children reflect on their lives, faith, place in the world and relationship with God
To pass on the love of biblical stories	That what they (the preachers) say and do should have an impact on the children and hopefully make a difference in their lives
	To link the biblical texts and the world today, make it relevant
	To point to Jesus

If we compare the ends of the adults with the end of the synthesized definition of preaching I established earlier, we see that they are close to each other. I presented the end of the synthesized definitions of preaching to be *"that the listeners are to use the preacher's words as a way of interpreting their own life, faith and the society around them."* The adults seem to share the understanding and goals of the practice of preaching. They have usually had

one or more meetings before the CE-events to discuss what to do during them and to "get everyone on the same page." All this means that the leaders, most of the time, have developed an additional understanding of what the CE-events means and what they should mean for the children. They have agreed on the ends. Still, the ends are not entirely in unison. The end of teaching children about being Christian, to pass on the love of biblical stories, and to develop faith have a somewhat different tone than the rest. These ends aim at a more didactic understanding. Some of the pastors were occupied with what they perceived as a lessening of Christian Education in Norwegian schools and wanted very much to remedy this through these CE-events. The adults thus have two main ends that compete with each other during the preaching events.

The children's ends spread out more than the adults. Some children do share the end of learning more about being a Christian, and some want to learn something new. Nevertheless, most of the ends are very different from the ends of the adults:

Learning (teaching)	**Reflecting (preaching)**	**Escaping**
To learn more about being a Christian	To stop thinking about "bad thoughts/feelings."	That the preaching event should be as short as possible (it is always too long)
To learn something new		To get away with doing something else other than listening
To show their parents what they have learned, made and done the day before		

The ends I have labeled "escaping" are not "correct" or "acceptable" according to the shared understanding of the practice. However, this is the most common end — the notion that preaching is boring and long pops strongly up through the ends of the children. There are far more children talking about wanting the preaching event to be as short as possible than children who are stating that they want to learn about being a Christian.

One of the ends that I find the most instructive is the one stating that the goal of the preaching event is to show their parents what the children have learned, made, and done the day before.

> ***Interviewer:*** *But, ehhh… when the pastor preached, or when Kevin and Katrine preached…*
> ***Emily:*** *Mmmm*
> ***Interviewer:*** *What was it about?*
> ***Erica:*** *Was it not about the bracelet?*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Mmm*
> ***Erica:*** *About what the different pearls were.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *How did you like it? To sit and listen to that?*
> ***Emily:*** *Well, it was like, we went through all that yesterday… so it was a bit like we were showing the others that were not there yesterday what we had learned.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *So you thought the preaching was not to you, but to the others, those who were not present yesterday?*
> ***Emily:*** *Yes.*

Even though Emily did *know how to x*, listening to the preaching and connecting it to reflections of her own life, this is not her end. So, one could argue that though Emily does the practice accurately, she still does not entirely share the understanding and the teleoaffective structure of the practice.

In order to reach the end of making time pass more quickly or at least in a less boring way, the children deploy different strategies. Michael from St. Mary plays Pokémon Go. Max, also from St. Mary, suggests that his time could have been spent in a better way, like playing hide-and-seek. The most common doing is to simply not listen. In St. Emmanuel, where none of the children say that the preaching event is boring, and where several of them state that their ends are to learn and to learn more about being a Christian, they use the bracelet as a means of making sense of the preaching event. This leads us to affectivity; how things matter.

5.4 Affectivity

Part of the teleoaffective structure is also how things matter. What is it that makes things matter to us?

a) Materiality

The preachers are not naïve; they know that the children do not always pay attention to what they say. They try to remedy this by being funnier, including drama, including materiality in different ways (like the flannelgraph, bracelets, advent candelabras) or asking questions. This sometimes "works"; nevertheless, the children mostly find preaching boring. In St. Emmanuel, the *PoL-bracelet* is used by the children to listen and interpret the different preaching events. The children are, in no small degree, helped to take part in the shared understanding of what the *PoL-bracelet* means and how it can be used. This is done by first introducing the children to each pearl, then talking with them about which pearl they remembered best and why, and by using the bracelet actively in the worship service. The children are told that the pearls have names and functions, like the pearl of joy, but they are not told what kind of joy to associate with the pearl. There is an open room where the children can go in an appropriate the different pearls and fill them with their own intentions.

Homileticians Ringgaard Lorensen, Gaarden and Campbell, and Cilliers have pointed to the theories of M.M. Bakhtin as fruitful for homiletics[49]. Bakhtin argues that when we speak, we face two choices; to speak monologically or dialogically. This choice between a monological or dialogical approach is ever-present, not just in everyday conversations, but also in various forms of complex language genres where the dialogue is indirect, like in preaching events.[50] Bakhtin claims that words always belong to someone – they are never neutral. We have to appropriate the Other's words and make them our own; to do this, we need to populate the words with our own intention.[51] I claim that this theory also can be used as a means of describing how materiality matters in preaching events. In St. Emmanuel the *PoLbracelet* is used dialogically. Used in this way the bracelet becomes an introduction to the task of listeners in the practice of preaching.

In St. Nicholas, both the flannel graph and searching for the stuffed animals makes the preaching event in the worship service more bearable. The children all say that listening to preaching events without the flannel graph is much more boring. However, the use of the flannel graph and the searching for the stuffed animals do not have the same effect on the

[49]Charles L. and Cilliers Campbell, Johan H, *Preaching Fools: The Gospel as a Rhetoric of Folly* (Waco SN: Baylor University Press CY, 2012); Gaarden, *The Third Room of Preaching*; Ringgaard Lorensen, *Dialogical Preaching : Bakhtin, Otherness and Homiletics*, vol. 74.

[50] Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen, *Dialogical preaching : Bakhtin, otherness and homiletics*, vol. vol. 74 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).

[51] Michail Bakhtin, Michael Holquist, and Caryl Emerson, *The Dialogic Imagination : Four Essays*, vol. no. 1, Voprosy Literatury I Ėstetiki (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 293-94.

children in St. Nicholas as the *PoL-bracelet* has in St. Emmanuel. The children do not mention either the dramatization nor the making of Advent candelabras in St. Mary. They do mention many of the other activities. They talk about being outside (the first activity), playing sheep and shepherd- hide and seek (an activity mentioned as "special"), being allowed to see and touch the church bells (an activity mentioned as "very fun"). In St. Mary and St. Nicholas, the children are to a much larger degree left without any open space for their appropriation. The materiality is used as a distraction, entertainment, or to prop up the words of the preacher.[52] Therefore the materiality remains unused by the children and the potential that the different materiality has to help the children become part of the shared understanding of the practice of preaching also remains unused.

b) Affective spaces

One of the most striking things in the interviews is how many of the children who say they think about death, severe illness and family issues when they listen to preaching, even though I never perceived these themes to be the main subject in the preaching events. My hunch is that these themes and emotions are activated by being in church. Andrew Reckwitz argues that social theory has lost sight of space when discussing social matters. He argues for including what he names affective spaces. He states that *"affections can, of course, occur between subjects and single objects… But they can also emerge and are in fact much more likely to emerge within comprehensive three-dimensional settings comprising extensive arrangements of artifacts within which human bodies move."*[53] Reckwitz argues that spaces need to be appropriated by those using it to form affects. The appropriation always brings forth the user's past experiences and different implicit social and cultural backgrounds. [54]

We return to Nina. When I ask her how she felt during the preaching, her answers change.

> ***Interviewer:*** *Did you feel anything? Were you sad, happy, or bored or something?*
> ***Nina:*** *I thought some thoughts that I don't like*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Oh, would you like to tell me what kind of thoughts they were?*
> ***Nina:*** *Okay! That on the 3rd of April Mom died.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Did she? Mm..*
> ***Nina:*** *It was in 2007, so it was not…*
> ***Interviewer:*** *So that was what you were thinking about? Mm.. And how does that make you feel, thinking about that?*
> ***Nina:*** *A bit sad.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Yes… and Mom, is that your Grandmother or?*
> ***Nina:*** *No, my Great-grandmother. She died at the hospital.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Did you go to the Church afterward?*
> ***Nina:*** *Yes, not this one, but the other one.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Ok.*
> ***Nina:*** *But you know that woman who…*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Yes*
> ***Nina:*** *She was the one who talked at Moms funeral*

[52] Bakhtin uses the concepts of architecture and scaffolding to explain this. I examine this more fully in a forthcoming anthology chapter, "Preaching at the Threshold," where I discuss how materiality, Bible texts and dramatizations are used in two preaching events employing Bakhtin's concepts of scaffolding and architecture, and of dialogical or monological.

[53] Andreas Reckwitz, "Affective Spaces: A Praxeological Outlook," *The Journal of Theory and Practice* 16, no. 2 (2012): 253.

[54] Ibid., 255.

The woman Nina is talking about is the pastor in St. Nicholas, Natalie. Natalie was present but did not preach at all during the CE-event or in the worship service. It seems like it is enough for Nina to meet Natalie and see her in the church to start thinking about her great-grandmother's funeral. The fact that she has met the pastor before affects how preaching matters to Nina. This could have been classified under the pastor's ethos.[55] However, I believe that for Nina, it is not the ethos of Natalie that is important. Natalie is more like an artifact in the affective space of Church. To Nina, it does not matter that she is now in a different church than the one the funeral was in; it matters that what she sees and experiences classifies under the affective space of church.

In St. Mary I overheard some children talking about the creation of God.

> ***Interviewer:*** *So yesterday I heard you talking about whom it was that created God. I think you were there? Weren't you?*
> ***Michael:*** *Yes (laughs)… well, it's like this: The one who created God is air. Or God created air and air created God.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Ah… is this something you often talk about?*
> ***Michael and Max:*** *No, no, no!!*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Or do you just talk about it when you're at church?*
> ***Michael:*** *This was the first time!*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Was it the first time? But do you talk more about such things when you're at church than when you are at other places?*
> ***Both:*** *Yes!*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Does this happen when it is just you children talking to each other and not when the pastor is talking?*
> ***Michael:*** *Yes…*

Being in the church also make children talk to each other about different topics than they usually do. These two boys do not often talk to each other about how God came into being. However, being at church provides a space where they can discuss such subjects. When the children appropriate the affective space of the church, their affects seem to orient towards existential issues. These sometimes seem to speak louder than the preacher.

6. Discussion

In the introduction, I argued that homiletics needs to do another turn, not just asking how listeners listen to preaching, but what they do with preaching. Through analyzing interviews with children by using a practice theoretical approach, we have seen that these children do many different things with preaching. They listen, or not. They struggle to interpret preaching. They play Pokémon Go. They think about existential questions. In the discussion, I want to address what the findings from the analysis imply for homiletics. In this, there may also be implications for how preachers might revise their preaching practice. However, this article does not have a prescriptive aim, and as such, this will not be salient in the discussion.

[55] I agree with the many homiletical contributions who highlight the role of the preacher's ethos. See: However, in this particular case I believe that it was not Natalie's ethos, but rather the affective space of church that affected Nina's preaching event.

6.1. Homiletical definitions take too much of listeners interaction for granted

The most salient discovery in the analysis is that the children are not a part of the understanding of the practice and do not know what to do with preaching. This is particularly visible in the lack of a process to hand down what *knowing-how-to-x* is of the practice of preaching. Most of the time, it is simply presupposed that everyone who listens to preaching knows what to do with it. In this regard, my empirical findings contradict the work of Theo Pleizier, who claims that something religious always happens in the act of listening to preaching.[56] Theologically, I do not disagree with him. However, the children's ends point to preaching functioning as learning or escape for the large majority of them. And, as I have argued before, the children are capable of expressing religious experiences and feelings.[57] They also do this during the interviews. There are several instances where the children talk about something they have done during these CE-events as "*special*," "*very interesting*" or when they show that they are clearly moved by something, but cannot put it into words. However, these experiences and instances are seldom related to the preaching event.

The turn to listeners has already started a discussion where the pastor is not taken for granted as the main actor in preaching and it is no longer taken for granted that what the pastor says is what is heard by the listeners.[58] However, the analysis of the children's responses through a practice theoretical lens shows that we cannot even take for granted that listeners listen or know how to listen. We also cannot take for granted that they know the rules of the practice of preaching, or that they have the same ends as preachers for preaching

Through the analysis of the ends, I have shown that the children and the adults have diverging ends for the practice of preaching. In other words, preachers cannot take for granted that they have the same ends as the listeners (for those who preach every Sunday, this might be stating the obvious). The children's main end is to make the time of the preaching event pass a quickly as possible, while the adults want the preaching events to help the children reflect on their lives and faith, and they want to teach the children the basics of Christianity.

The difference in ends highlights something that I claim to be a central problem with preaching to children. The fusion of preaching and teaching, of wanting the preaching events to be both informative and transformative, is confusing. The children, therefore, seem to revert into a practice they know, teaching. Preaching thus becomes mainly information that they can learn from and not something that is relevant to them and can affect their lives.[59] I believe that the competing ends make it more difficult for the children to participate in the practice of preaching. It is simply difficult to understand which practice they are asked to participate in. Several children then choose to regard preaching as similar to a practice they already know, teaching and relate to preaching like it is teaching. Others, like Michael, struggle to negotiate how preaching is, to the practice of the "bible-gatherings" that he already knows. Either way, most of the children end up not participating in the practice the adult preacher wants them to participate in.

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[56]. Theo Pleizier, *Religious Involvement in Hearing Sermons : A Grounded Theory Study in Empirical Theology and Homiletics* (Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2010).

[57] Faix, "Semantics of Faith. Methodology and Results Regarding Young People's Ability to Speak About Their Beliefs."

[58] See i.e. Hans Austnaberg, *Improving Preaching by Listening to Listeners: Sunday Service Preaching in the Malagasy Lutheran Church*, Bible and Theology in Africa (New York: New York : Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2012); Gaarden, *The Third Room of Preaching*; McClure, *Listening to Listeners : Homiletical Case Studies*; Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*.

[59] The terms of information and transformation is inspired by Bruno Latour, ""Thou Shall Not Freeze-Frame," or, How Not to Misunderstand the Science and Religion Debate," in *Science, Religion, and the Human Experience*, ed. James D. Proctor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). By saying this, I do not claim that preaching never should contain information (or logos as it is often named in the homiletical literature), or that teaching is just information and never transformation.

6.2 If preaching is a practice it can be taught

Many practical theologians subscribe to the notion of practice as *phronesis,* or practical wisdom.[60] Especially in the practical theological literature from the US, this notion is prevalent.[61] In this vein, practical wisdom is imparted through learning from experienced practitioners over time. Besides, practical theological definitions of practice often presuppose that those who take part in a practice do it with a specific motivation and direction. Christian practices are seen to be done *"in response to and in the light of God as known in Jesus Christ*."[62] Most of the children I have interviewed do not participate in the practice as a deliberate response to God. They mostly do what they do because they are told to do it. That does not mean that they do not enjoy it or can have religious experiences when doing it, but it does mean that, at least in the Norwegian context, the motivation presupposed in several practical theological definitions of practice cannot be presupposed.[63]

In the analysis, I have shown that most children do listen but do not know how to interpret what they are hearing, or understand that this is what they are supposed to do at all. A few children show that they do *know-how-to-x*, mainly in St. Emmanuel. It does not seem like merely doing the practice is enough for the children to participate in the practice. Although they have several experience practitioners they can learn from, the learning does not occur. Interestingly, the children do seem to have a certain grasp of the rules they perceive to be in place for the practice of preaching. However, in the interviews, they reveal that they are not always genuinely following the rules. Maybe the outward following of rules can be attributed to the children watching experienced practitioners and following suit. Yet, it is very difficult to see someone's interpretation process. In other words, for the children to learn how to genuinely follow the rules, it is not enough for them to observe expert practitioners. As David Bloor argues, to genuinely follow a rule, you need to know that you are following a rule.[64] The rules of the practice of preaching are not explicit but implicit. By not taking the rules of the practice of preaching for granted, but making them more explicit, it might make it easier to understand why these are part of this practice and why they should be followed.

The CE-events that the children have attended occur once every year. The events are punctual.[65] Both the notion of practice as *phronesis* and other practice theory argues that mastering a practice, or becoming a member of a practice, takes time. [66] The punctuality of the CE-events makes the US contributions not wholly compatible with helping Norwegian theologians describe and understand such practice. Looking at the *phronesis*-approach to practice did highlight how punctual the CE-events in the Church of Norway is and the need for a different or additional understanding of practice. Attending one CE-event every year (maybe) in addition to maybe going to church whenever "something special happens" is clearly not enough immersion and time for the children to be socialized into the practice of preaching. This is especially interesting because the Plan for Christian Education in the

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[60] See Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, *For Life Abundant : Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2008); Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass, *Practicing Theology : Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2002).

[61] Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology : Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

[62] Volf and Bass, *Practicing Theology : Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, 3.

[63] For a very detailed and interesting discussion of the differences between a Lutheran and an US approach to practice within theology (focusing especially on Dykstra, Bass and Dean) see Bård Eirik Hallesby Norheim, *Practicing Baptism : Christian Practices and the Presence of Christ* (Eugene, Or: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

[64] See the discussion of rules in this article under sub-heading: 5.2 Rules

[65] Some places, there are other activities that are continuous, like in St. Mary where the pastor had started a group for some of the boys.

[66]"Mastery of a practice cannot be gained from books or other inanimate sources, but can sometimes, though not always, be gained by prolonged social interaction with members of the culture that embeds the practice." Karin Knorr Cetina et al., The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory, (New York: Routledge, 2001). 107.

Church of Norway highlights that one of the main goals of CE is to socialize children into the community of the church. The plan advocates for a combination of punctual events and activities that have a long time-span.[67] However, out of the four congregations I visited, only one mentioned a non-punctual activity. Thus, the primary source of socialization into the community of the congregation for the children I have interviewed is the punctual CE-events. So, if the children do not learn from experiencing expert practitioners over time, do they have a chance of learning the practice at all?

Since preaching is not recognized as a practice in a practice-theoretical way, by church-staff and churchgoers alike, it is not taught. The adult leaders are very aware that the children might not know or understand other parts of the worship service, like walking in a procession, reading aloud, praying aloud, or singing in a choir. They rehearse these aspects of the worship service with the children. The children are given specific instruction or rules. However, they do not receive any instruction on what to do during the preaching events. James Nieman in "Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice" argues that looking at preaching as a practice is helpful when teaching pastors how to preach.[68] I here argue for an extension of this argument. Viewing preaching as a practice, it becomes possible not only to teach pastors how to preach but also to teach listeners what to do when listening to preaching. Especially in the Norwegian context of punctual CE-events, teaching the practice of preaching may help the children to more quickly become full and active participants.

In the above, I claim that the children have not become members of the practice and that they are not taught how to listen to preaching. Following this argument, one could expect that the children did not learn anything, did not listen genuinely and did not interpret at all. However, this is not the case. In all three congregations, some genuine listening and interpretation have taken place.

6.3. The transcendence of Affectivity

Though the children are mostly not part of the shared understanding, struggle to genuinely follow the rules and have diverging ends from the adults and the definition of the practice of preaching, these difficulties are sometimes overcome. This happens through materiality and affective spaces.

The analysis of materiality shows that introducing materiality into the preaching event is not a quick fix if the aim is to further the children's ability to listen and interpret preaching. The question is how the preacher's use materiality. Even though all the congregations deliberately use materiality with the intent of making the preaching event easier to listen to and more relevant to the children, it is only in St. Emmanuel that the materiality has this function. This calls for a different approach on how to use materiality when preaching to children. Some of the preachers expressed a "gadget fatigue" – they knew they had to figure out some symbol to bring or make a drama when preaching to children. Others loved preaching to children because of the possibility these preaching events offered for using their creativity. Either way, all the preachers expressed the need to do something other than they usually would do when preaching to children. This way of thinking probably originates from

[67] the Church Council The Church of Norway, "Plan for Christian Education "God Gives - We Share"," (2010). The Norwegian theologian Knut Tveitereid discusses if the concept of punctual/continuous and wide/deep needs to be dichotomies in the CE-events in the Church of Norway. My findings support his claim even though these dichotomies were never intended to occur, they do occur in the practice field and that future CE-events would benefit from exploring if it is possible to create events that are both punctual *and* deep or continuous *and* capture a wide audience. Kristin Graff-Kallevåg and Tone Stangeland Kaufman, *Byggekloss-Spiritualitet? : En Studie Av Spiritualitet I Den Norske Kirkes Trosopplæring*, vol. 13, Institutt for Kristen Oppseding (Oslo: IKO-forl., 2018), 205.

[68] Long and Tisdale, *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice : A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy*, 19.

learning that children cannot process abstract thoughts like adults can, which is true. However, this, unfortunately, can result in preachers putting too much confidence in the materiality and forgetting that words and materials need to work together. The children in these interviews also show that they reflect on complex and existential issues. The way the *PoL-bracelet* is used in St. Emmanuel shows that it is possible to be both concrete and existential.

In the analysis, I also argued that the space of the church room mattered to the children. They viewed the church as a different place where you do other things than you usually do and talk about other subjects than usually talk about. When appropriating the space of church, the children make it existential and special. The affective space of the church is determined not by the walls of the church, but the feeling of being at church. Church, therefore, equals a place where "special things happen" and is closely tied to life and death rituals and experiences by the children. This means that simply being in church does something to these children. This is a powerful tool and invites reflections on power relations and how to use the affective space of the church. It means that adult volunteers and church staff need to both cultivate the opportunity for existential conversations that open up when the children enter into the affective space of church, but also that they do not abuse this trust. Another aspect of this is that all the adult volunteers and the pastors wanted the children to feel at home at church, and to a certain extent downplayed the "churchiness" of church. This might be the wrong strategy. Though the children play, run and sleepover at the church, they still do not view the church as home. If the church is home, the affective space of the church that the children experienced now, could disappear. This does not mean that I believe that the children should not sleepover at church, but that church staff and volunteers have to acknowledge that the space they are in is different.

7. Conclusion

Through this article, I have argued for a new turn in the field of homiletics. A turn towards treating preaching as a practice that does not stop with the tasks of the preacher, but also includes examining what listeners do with preaching. By analyzing the empirical material from fieldwork done in CE-events in the Church of Norway, I have shown that the children I have interviewed struggle to participate in the practice of preaching. The reasons why they struggle are that they mostly do not *know-how-to-x* (listen and interpret), that they do not know all the rules of the practice and that they most of the time have different ends for the practice than they should have. However, I also underline that there are instances where the struggle is overcome. This happens through the use of materiality and the church as affective space. In the discussion, I argue that to view preaching as a practice has some consequences. Firstly, the analysis shows that we cannot take for granted that listeners listen, interpret and reflect when they listen to preaching. They might do entirely different things, like playing Pokémon Go. Secondly, if preaching is viewed as a practice it can be taught. Not just to preachers, but also to listeners. However, I do believe that if homileticians and preachers alike acknowledge these consequences, and start reflecting on how to tackle them, it can lead to exciting new possibilities for the field of homiletics and the practice of preaching at large.

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Article 3

Linn Sæbø Rystad, “Keeping it Age-Appropriate – Preachers’ Negotiation of Timespaces in Their Practice of Children-Preaching,” under review in *International Journal of Practical Theology*

Keeping it Age-Appropriate - Preachers' Negotiation of Timespaces in Their Practice of Preaching for Children

1. Introduction

The turn toward a focus on listeners in the field of homiletics shifted the perspective from preachers and their manuscripts to listeners' responses. This was a necessary change of attitude and has stimulated much valuable research.[1] However, in this article, I examine preachers' utterances and actions concerning their practice of preaching for children[2] by employing the concept of timespace. According to Theodore Schatzki, this concept can be used to explore the dimensionality of practices and how dimensionality configures practices.[3]

The article aims to explore which timespaces are produced in the preacher's practice of preaching for children, how they interweave, and how they configure the preachers' preaching practice. An additional aim of this article is addressing the normative assumptions in the practice.

The main research question in this article is as follows: *How do timespaces configure preachers' practice of preaching for children?* To answer this, I developed three research sub-questions:

- Which timespaces do the preachers produce in their practice of preaching for children?
- How do these timespaces interweave?
- Which normative assumptions do preachers express and enact, and how do these normative assumptions contribute to configuring their practice of preaching for children?

I employ empirical material from preaching events conducted in Christian education events in the Church of Norway. As these Christian education events and the reform preceding them are distinctively Norwegian, I offer a short introduction to Christian education in the Church of Norway below.

[1] Among others, see John S. McClure, *Listening to Listeners: Homiletical Case Studies* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004); Theo Pleizier, *Religious Involvement in Hearing Sermons: A Grounded Theory Study in Empirical Theology and Homiletics* (Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2010); David Rietveld, "A Survey of the Phenomenological Research of Listening to Preaching," *Homiletic* 38, no. 2 (2013); Marianne Gaarden, *The Third Room of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017).

[2] I use the term preaching for children to show that the emphasis of the article is on preaching in a setting where children are the primary listeners. I have chosen this over the often-used term 'preaching to children' as the use of directional prepositions, such as 'to', strongly suggest that preaching involves a transfer of meaning from the preacher to the listeners. Moreover, it is too cumbersome to refer to 'preaching in worship services where a Christian Education event is embedded' or 'preaching with children as primary listeners'; thus, I use the term preaching for children.

[3] Theodore R. Schatzki, *The Timespace of Human Activity: On Performance, Society, and History as Indeterminate Teleological Events* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), 60.

2. Christian Education Reform in the Church of Norway

The Church of Norway is a Lutheran majority church that was the state church of Norway until 2017.[4] Whereas 71% of the Norwegian population are members of the Church of Norway,[5] only a small percentage attend church monthly. The Norwegian government launched an extensive Christian education reform in the Church of Norway ten years ago[6] that significantly influenced ministry to children and young people in the Church of Norway, including funding many new positions for Christian educators and considerable research on the reform itself.

The 2010 curriculum for Christian education in the Church of Norway '*Gud gir – Vi dele*r'[7] [God gives – We share] is a result of this reform. Its goal is to offer every baptised child in the Church of Norway one Christian education event annually from the ages 0–18 years. Also, every congregation in the Church of Norway is required to design a local Christian education plan based on the national plan. Figure 1 shows a model event structure from one of the congregations studied, St Nicholas.

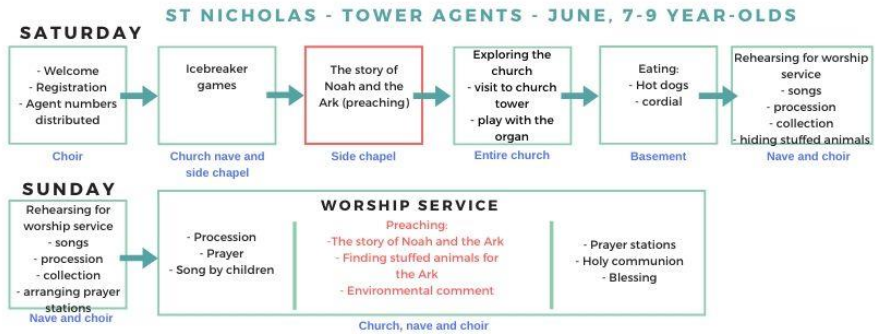

Figure 1

Although the congregations hold different Christian education events, those included in the empirical material were usually organised similarly to this model. The events typically last only a day or two.

3. Methods

This study was part of the larger research project *Forkynnelse for små og store* ['Preaching for Young and Old' or 'FoSS']. The empirical material consists of interviews with thirteen preachers from six congregations, participant observations of worship services, field notes and video recordings of the

[4] "Tro og livssyn,"(Faith and Views of Life) white paper, the Norwegian Government, accessed April 3, 2020, https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/tro-og-livssyn/den-norske-kirke/innsiktsartik.ler/fra-statskirke-til-stat-og-kirke/fra-tidslinjen-historikk-om-forholdet-stat-og-kirke/id2426318/.

[5] "Den norske kirke – Medlemsstatisikk," (Church of Norway – membership statistics) the Church of Norway, accessed April 3, 2020, https://kirken.no/nb-NO/om-kirken/bakgrunn/om-kirkestatistikk/medlemsstatistikk/.

[6] "Stortingsmelding – Trusopplæring i ei ny tid," (White paper – Christian education in a new era) white paper, the Norwegian Government, accessed April 3, 2020, https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/stmeld-nr-7-2002-2003-/id196490/sec1.

[7] The Church Council of the Church of Norway, "Plan for Christian Education 'God Gives - We Share'," (2010).

worship services. The study is designed as an instrumental case study where the aim is to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, in this case, preaching for children.[8]

I conducted participant observation, field notes, video recordings and interviews at four congregations, St Nicholas, St Mary, St Sophie and St Emmanuel; colleagues from FoSS gathered the field notes, video recordings and interviews from St John and St Michael. The interviews with the preachers were conducted individually using a semi-structured approach.[9] Additionally, having video recordings of the worship services allowed studying the preachers' actions and utterances in detail.[10] The interviewed preachers were all interviewed after the events concluded. All adults who participated in preaching events throughout the Christian education events were classified as preachers. Most interviewees served as pastors and catechists; however, the interviewees included two volunteers who were teachers by profession.

4. Review of literature on the topic of children and preaching

Peer-reviewed research on preaching for children is scarce; I located only three peer-reviewed articles on the subject, all on Children's sermons.[11] A large body of literature exists, however, on 'how to preach (effectively) to children'. Such contributions are often written from the perspective of Christian education, not homiletics,[12] and almost without exception include lists of 'best practice'.[13]

The books and articles reviewed were published before the empirical turn in practical theology and therefore precede crucial contributions in homiletics in recent decades, such as dialogical, carnivalistic, empirical, Other-Wise and conversational approaches.[14] While roundtable preaching and

[8]Sarah Crowe et al., "The Case Study Approach," *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 11, no. 1 (2011); Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 1995).
[9] Svend Brinkmann and Steinar Kvale, *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2015). Except the interview from St Michael that, for pragmatic reasons, was a group interview.
[10] Christian Heath, "Embodied Action: Video and the Analysis of Social Interaction," in *Qualitative Reserach - Issues of Theory, Method and Practice*, ed. David Silverman (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011), 252.
[11] James A. Carr, "The Children's Sermon: An Act of Worship for the Community of Faith," *Perkins Journal*, no. Spring (1983); James Nieman, "Three Thuds, Four D's, and a Rubik's Cube of Children's Sermons," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 22, no. 4 (1995); Wilbert M. Van Dyk, "Preach the Word! To Children," *Calvin Theological Journal* 32, no. 2 (1997). I am aware of the difference between children's sermons and worship services such as the ones I studied; however, I believe findings from research on preaching for children in such worship services and Children's Sermons can be mutually relevant.
[12] See, for instance, Sara Covin Juengst, *Sharing Faith with Children: Rethinking the Children's Sermon* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994).
[13] Ann M. Garrido, "Preaching among Children," *Liturgical Ministry* 15, no. Winter (2006); Richard Robert Osmer, "Teaching the Catechism in the Children's Sermon: A New Possibility for Biblical and Theological Literacy," *Journal for Preachers* 4, no. 22 (1999).
[14] Charles L. Campbell and Johan H. Cilliers, *Preaching Fools: The Gospel as a Rhetoric of Folly* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012); John S. McClure, *Other-Wise Preaching: A Postmodern Ethic for Homiletics* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001); Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen, *Dialogical Preaching: Bakhtin, Otherness and Homiletics* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); Sivert Angel, "Talerens troverdighet i prekener for konfirmanter," The Preacher's Ethos in Sermons for Confirmands) in *Gudstjenester Med Konfirmanter*, ed. Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen (Oslo: IKO-forlaget, 2017).

congregational exegesis[15] emerged pre-2000, these theories are not present in the books and articles on preaching for children.[16]

It is the three peer-reviewed articles on preaching for children that mostly approach homiletics as an academic field. These articles do not argue against preaching for children; their main concern is the content of such preaching.[17] Their authors fear that children are not hearing 'the Gospel' and that preachers are not taking Children's sermons seriously enough, a statement which seems like a code for the lack of exegesis.[18] In other words, these homiletical contributions argue that preachers' approaches to preaching for children should be more *similar* to adult sermons than *different* and advocate employing homiletical and hermeneutical tools when engaging in preaching for children.

The non-peer-reviewed contributions, however, argue that preaching for children needs adaptation to the target audience, meaning preachers should approach preaching for children *differently*.[19] Both in Christian education and developmental psychology, stage theories of development have been influential in much of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.[20] According to stage developmental theories, children become increasingly religious as they age and move from thinking concretely about religion to thinking abstractly.[21] Employing theories similar to the above, the authors claim that children need shorter sermons and more straightforward language, and they encourage using visual and material objects.

5. Theory – Practice and timespace

In the field of homiletics, many scholars agree that preaching is a practice; however, what this entails for preaching is seldom discussed.[22] Practice theory, however, provides a way to discuss and research what is done and said in the practice of preaching. The theoretical foundation for the concept of 'practice' used in this article is Theodore Schatzki's definition: 'a set of doings and sayings that is organised by a pool of understandings, rules, and something I call a "teleoaffective structure"'.[23]

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[15] Lucy Atkinson Rose, *Sharing the Word: Preaching in the Roundtable Church* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997); Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).
[16] Except Nieman, who argues for understanding children as active listeners. Nieman, "Three Thuds."
[17] Ibid.; Van Dyk, "Preach!"
[18] Ibid., "Preach!," 438-39.
[19] Garrido,"Preaching."; Osmer, "Catechism".
[20] Chris Boyatzis, "Agency, Voice, and Maturity in Children's Religious and Spiritual Development," in *The Study of Children in Religions: A Methods Handbook*, ed. Susan B. Ridgely (New York: NYU Press, 2011), 25.
[21] James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).; Boyatzis, "Agency."
[22] See, for instance, Paul Scott Wilson, *The Practice of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995). An exception is Thomas G. Long and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice: A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008).
[23] Theodore R. Schatzki, "Practice Mind-Ed Orders," in *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, ed. Karin Knorr Cetina (New York: Routledge, 2001), 50.

In this article, I understand preaching as a practice in a Schatzkian manner, attempting to understand why preachers 'do what they do'[24] by employing the concept of timespace analytically, and also by analysing the preachers' normative assumptions.

5.1 Timespace

Timespaces can be described as the dimensionalities of practices and, thus, can be used to analyse how practices are stretched out in time and space, and how this configures practices. Schatzki defines timespace as 'acting towards ends departing from what motivates at arrays of places and paths anchored at entities'.[25]

However, timespace is something other than 'objective time and space'.[26] Whereas objective time is usually conceptualised as a succession as seen in our clocks and calendars, objective space is usually employed to refer to 'real' space, like a building.[27] Additionally, timespace is also not subjective time or space or time and space as experienced time and space. Fundamental to the concept of timespace is the notion that past, present and future occur at once. This simultaneousness means that the practice of preaching is not a present practice succeeding the past and followed by the future. Instead, in the practice of preaching, the past, present and future exist together at once.[28]

Although timespaces incorporate past, present and future, Schatzki argues that timespaces and practices are always indeterminate.[29] Normativity is produced in practices and upheld or not by how the practitioners act in practices. However, Schatzki points out that norms and customs can override teleology and, as a result, pre-empt the future. Thus, norms and customs of a practice, rather than the practitioners, can specify what 'makes sense for people to do'.[30]

Moreover, interwoven timespaces can be coordinated and harmonised but can also be in conflict. Coordination occurs when variants of common or shared pasts, presents or futures are coordinated in human action.[31] Harmonisation occurs when actions fit smoothly and adjust to each other.[32] When timespaces are harmonised, their adjustment has no result except for the absence of conflict. Conflict within timespaces can arise; however, this analysis concentrates on the conflict between incompatible

[24] Ibid.
[25] Schatzki, *Timespace*, 60.
[26] Theodore R. Schatzki, "Timespace and the Organization of Social Life," in *Time, Consumption and Everyday Life : Practice, Materiality and Culture*, ed. Elizabeth Shove, Frank Trentmann, and Richard R. Wilk (Oxford: Berg, 2009), 1.
[27] Schatzki, *Timespace*, 1–64.
[28] Schatzki, *Timespace*, 49.
[29] Ibid., 175.
[30] Ibid., 145.
[31] Schatzki, "Timespace" 42.
[32] Schatzki, "Timespace," 44.

timespaces, that is, when people act in spatialities that are partly shared and conflicted or follow futures that are incompatible or fuelled by contrary pasts.[33]

5.2 Operationalising timespace

While Schatzki's account of timespaces is highly theoretical, he wishes for his theories to be operationalised and used in empirical research.[34] Even though Schatzki mainly uses the concepts of coordination, harmonisation and conflict to describe individual action, I use the same concepts as a way of analysing the relationship amongst different timespaces in a practice, not necessarily tied to individual action.

Additionally, Schatzki never isolates or names specific timespaces, which this article does. To operationalise the concept of timespace in the practice of preaching for children, I first sorted the empirical material into categories of motivations/ideals (past), what the preachers do and say in the preaching events (present) and teleos/ends (future). This sorting was done for analytical purposes only, keeping in mind that in timespaces past, present and future occur simultaneously.

6. Analysis – Coordinated, conflicting and harmonising timespaces

From the initial analysis, four timespaces emerged as essential for the organisation of the practice of preaching for children: (1) school, (2) age-appropriateness, (3) the Bible and (4) 'ordinary preaching' (as opposed to preaching for children). To more closely analyse how these timespaces configure practice, I used the last two research sub-questions: examining whether the identified timespaces are negotiated in coordination, conflict or harmonisation with each other, which normative assumptions were upheld or produced in the preachers' practice of preaching for children and how these configured the practice.

6.1 The timespace of school – Coordination and conflict

In the Christian education events a typical material arrangement of a room is one where the children are seated in chairs and addressed by an adult standing in front of them. This adult is talking to them, preaching or teaching.[35] When this happens, the children need to raise their hand if they want to speak. Therefore, the material arrangement of the space is similar to that of a school. Also, just as in a school, Christian education events are designed to teach something to those who attend.

At St Nicholas, Nicole reflects on the relationship between school curriculum and preaching.

[33] Ibid., 42–44.
[34] Schatzki, *Timespace*, xvii.
[35] In this article, I refer to teaching in the vernacular meaning of the word and do not engage in discussions on learning and learning theories. Most of the preachers seem to use the term 'teaching' to mean conveying information about something they know to someone who does not know it. The exception is one of the volunteers from St Emmanuel who discusses Gardner's educational theories in the interview. Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

> ***Nicole:*** *What I have experienced these last years is that this is the only Bible story I know that the children have heard before [. . .] the only story I am absolutely sure that they know is the Noah story.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Because they teach it at school? And in kindergarten?*
> ***Nicole:*** *Yes, so that one. [. . .] Well, so that is the one that I know that they have heard. [. . .] So, one of the children said: 'We have just had this at school', and then I thought, 'Of course, they're in third grade, so they are the right age for this story'. [. . .] But I thought [. . .] oi, have I thought enough about this, that they already know the story? Because I like to, well, present it a little differently, so that it is the same story, but this time we can see something new in it.*

In referring to the school year and the age of the children invited to Christian education events, Nicole reaches out of her place and time to organise her preaching. She uses her experience with the school and its curriculum to choose which Bible stories she employs in preaching events and does so in coordination with the curriculum at school. Nicole thus draws on the children's past experiences with the text. She hopes that, by using the same stories and telling them in different ways, adapted to the age of the children, this will promote her aim of communicating and passing on the joy she had while reading Bible stories as a child. Hence, Nicole also stretches her preaching practice into her own past.

Moreover, she employs theories of child development. In her reasoning, the children are 'the right age' for the story. In doing so, Nicole adapts her preaching accordingly, bringing these experiences and theories into the practice of preaching. Hence, she organises the preaching event in *coordination* with the school curriculum and the timespace of age-appropriateness.

Comparatively, Eva, from St Emmanuel uses the timespace of school to configure her preaching and her concept of 'good' preaching.

> ***Interviewer:*** *One of the children asked you, 'What is prayer?'*
> ***Eva:*** *Yes!*
> ***Interviewer:*** *So, you cannot assume that they know what prayer is?*
> ***Eva:*** *They know very little, and then I think: they have had almost five years of KRLE [knowledge of Christianity, religion, philosophies of life and ethics] education, but [. . .] eh [. . .] that is another business! Here, I am, going off on another subject [...] Yes, but I really question this. We are not to preach at school, that's fine, but we really need to question [. . .] have they really learned enough? Have they learned what's in the curriculum? Have they been taught it? Maybe that is the most pressing question, have they actually been taught what's in the curriculum? But, well [. . .] that is not what you're writing about.*

Eva does not object to the curriculum or the ban against teachers preaching in public school; instead, she questions whether the children are taught what is in the religion curriculum at school.[36] Thus, Eva's past experience with and knowledge of school configures how she believes preaching should be performed.

> ***Eva****: And like, I feel that [. . .] Edward, the way he does it [. . .] it's not like 'sugar-coated Christianity'. Because I feel like that's often the case [. . .] in Confirmation training, and not to talk about the baptism school for the 6-year-olds. There, it's sugar-coated that we should be good people and friendly to each other and such. They come here for this baptism-school and will only attend it a couple of times, and they use a lot of time to talk about how we need to be kind to each other. [...]I don't think it is the right use of time! When they are there for such a short time, we need to talk about what really matters to us!*

[36] "Læreplanverket – fagplaner," (Curriculum) The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, accessed April 3, 2020, https://www.udir.no/kl06/RLE0023.

We need to [. . .]
Interviewer: *Do you mean like talk so that they know they are at church and not kindergarten?*
Eva: *Yes! Because of that thing of being nice to each other and not bully others [. . .] maybe they've heard it enough times already?*
Interviewer: *Hehe [. . .] so you're like 'never mind that'?*
Eva: *That we use the time [. . .] to preach, to say it plainly. And Edward, he does that all the time.*

However, Eva not only criticises teaching in the Norwegian public school but also argues that the church fails to preach about 'what really matters' to children. Eva praises the Wide Awake event and the leaders there for not 'sugar-coating' their preaching, something she believes is happening in other church activities. Thus, she implies that children attending other Christian education events are not subjected to 'good' teaching or preaching. The place, or objective space, of teaching and preaching, is therefore not the defining factor for Eva; it is the quality. Hence, she creates a dichotomy between 'bad' preaching and preaching about 'what really matters'. In doing so, she combines teaching at school with some preaching in church within the timespace of school.

Eva seems to hope that, if the children are exclusively exposed to preaching about 'what really matters', this preaching will matter to the children as well. At the same time, teaching in school should 'actually teach' the curriculum, and hence provide the children with sufficient knowledge about Christian faith and practices.

Thus, both Nicole and Eva's negotiations show that the space they produce is not restricted to the Church building. Curriculums, stories and materiality shape a space that is stretched out beyond the Church itself. The same happens with time: the preacher and the children are there in the present, but activities and experiences from the past are also there. Nicole and Eva's past experiences and emotions about school are brought into the present. At the same time, the activity is also directed toward the future: toward the following educational years for the children in school, in other Christian education events and Church more generally.

6.2 The conflicting timespaces of 'ordinary' preaching and age-appropriateness

A central normative assumption the preachers hold is that preaching for children is different from ordinary preaching. In their enactment and discussion of preaching for children, the preachers argue that such preaching should be targeted at the children, provide an opportunity for direct involvement (drama or answering questions), have accessible language, include something visual and concrete and be short, and that the preacher should not use the pulpit.

Hence, they produce what I call the timespace of age-appropriateness. In producing this timespace, the preachers draw on past experience, different child developmental theories the curriculum of the Christian education reform and a future goal of making church relevant for the children and produce a common way of practising preaching for children across the congregations.

Comparatively, the preachers produce ordinary preaching as a timespace which takes place in the worship service in the church nave, with the preacher standing in the pulpit and addressing an attentive adult audience sitting in the pews. In ordinary preaching, it is not as vital to preach age-appropriately or provide opportunities for the audience to be directly involved. The preachers use the timespace of ordinary preaching as a neutral point of departure, from which the preachers adjust their practice of preaching for children. This demonstrates that the timespace of ordinary preaching permeates the preachers' configuration of their practice of preaching for children.

Mark and Marlon from St Mary addresses age-appropriateness in preaching for children:

> ***Marlon:*** *Well, I am mostly used to preaching to the children's choir, and they are between five and ten, and then you often have to use some concrete things.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *You need to bring something concrete into it?*
> ***Marlon:*** *Yes, more than words, and drama, like, so they can be involved.*
> ***Mark:*** *It is obvious that the visual is an essential part [. . .] and that people are allowed to participate in what happens so that they feel like it's theirs like they also own it*.

Here, Marlon brings in his past experiences from preaching to the children's choir, where he has experienced that he needs to have 'some concrete things'. The reason he gives for this is that using concrete things or drama in the preaching event helps the children be involved. Mark also points out that involvement is key. Hence, they both agree that preaching for children needs to employ age-appropriate methods. Neither Marlon nor Mark said why this is so 'obvious'. Thus, although it is unlikely that the preachers have read the literature surveyed in this article, they adopt and uphold a normativity remarkably similar to the normativity described there.

Chris Boyatzis, in his critique of developmental theories, argues that there has been a tendency to make such theories about child development into the truth about children;[37] instead of using the theories as possible explanations, people believe that children *are* how the theories describe then. Such an inference might lead to strong prescriptive and normative assumptions about how to approach a particular age group of children.

Here it is vital to note that, although the individual preachers reproduce such normativity, it is difficult to go against normativities that have long traditions of being upheld. Especially the obviousness which Marlon and Mark refer to demonstrate that they do not seem to entertain the possibility of questioning whether they should uphold this normativity or not. Therefore, the timespace of age-appropriateness greatly configures Marlon and Mark's preaching practice in providing normativity which decides what 'makes sense for them to do'.[38]

Relating to the above, an essential observation is that while homileticians have long argued that form and content cannot be separated in preaching, the preachers interviewed in this study often make this

[37] Boyatzis, "Agency," 27.
[38] Schatzki, *Timespace*, 184.

separation.[39] The timespace of age-appropriateness leads to the preachers being more occupied with *how* (form) one should preach than *what* (content) one should preach. This division between form and content perhaps reveals a view of communication which is close to a transfer model,[40] which is widely criticised by both homileticians and practice theoreticians.[41] Moreover, this separation of form and content demonstrates that the timespace of ordinary preaching and the timespace of age-appropriateness are produced as conflicting timespaces in the practice of preaching for children.

6.2.1. Target audience

When asked whom they considered the target audience of preaching events in Sunday worship services, most preachers in the study stated that children were their target audience, yet some articulated intentions to include the whole congregation. One way this conflict is visible is in how preachers use manuscripts. Most preachers refer to the importance of connecting with the children and looking them in the eye, aiming to preach without manuscripts.

> ***Interviewer:*** *I noticed it [the manuscript], because yesterday you did not have one, and today you did and used it. It seems like you chose to have two different approaches. Can you reflect on that?*
> ***Nicole:*** *Yes, well, I need to look the children in the eyes. Like, yesterday, when we were five children in the little side chapel, and they sat there in the first row, well then, I needed to look them in the eyes. Today there were many adults present, and I thought, 'I have to remember the name of those islands in the Pacific'. Then I needed the manuscript. I used a lot of the same sermon as yesterday, and I do not think I remembered what the islands were called then. I just said, 'some islands', and that's fine. But when the adults are there, well then it needs to be in order. I have to know the names of those islands. So, therefore [. . .] the manuscript helped me remember them.*

As this statement shows, Nicole has different ideals for children and adults. In preaching for children, she needs to look them in the eye; for adults, she needs to remember her facts and be precise. This reveals another version of the central assumption of difference: ordinary preaching needs to be more intricate and precise. In the enactment of preaching for children, this ambivalence and negotiation results either in preaching events that target children, not adults, or that target both, yet in separate sections. As Mark says in his sermon, 'You adults are not getting off this easily, there's something for you too'.

Moreover, none of the preachers in the study use the pulpit. In the interviews, the preachers do not reflect on this. Although I do not know whether the preachers use the pulpit normally, it does seem like an element of defining preaching for children as different than ordinary preaching. Stepping down from the pulpit allows the preacher to be closer to the children, who usually sit at the front pews at

[39] Fred Brenning Craddock, *As One without Authority*, 3rd ed., ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979).
[40] The transfer model of communication represents an understanding of communication where it is possible to transfer information from a sender to a receiver. See Marianne Gaarden and Marlene Ringgaard Lorensen, "Listeners as Authors in Preaching - Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives," *Homiletic* vol 38, 1 (2013): 31–32.
[41] Gaarden, *The Third Room*; James V. Wertsch, *Voices of the Mind: A Sociocultural Approach to Mediated Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 73.

these events. As such, this stepping down might be part of the preachers' efforts to have eye contact with the children and make themselves more available for them.

The pulpit is one of those places that has become what Schatzki calls 'standardised'[42] – preaching happens at a pulpit. Hence, this stepping down is another way that the dominance of the timespace of age-appropriateness in the practice of preaching for children is demonstrated. Despite the long history and tradition of preaching taking place at the pulpit, the assumed advantage of being closer to the children encourages a break with tradition.

Furthermore, Nicole mentions that the change in space, from a side chapel with five children on Saturday to the worship service with adults and more people present, configures how she preaches. The preaching which happens in the side chapel on Saturday produces a time and space where direct communication between Nicole and the children is possible.

However, not all preaching on Saturday in the different congregations takes place in a side chapel; some of it takes place in the church nave. Therefore, the deciding factor for whether preaching events are different or not is not place but timespace. While the Christian education events produce a time and space where the children are allowed to be concretely and directly involved in the preaching events, worship services seem to add a spatiality and atmosphere that reduce flexibility and room for the direct verbal involvement from the children.

Nevertheless, the preachers still argue that preaching events in worship services should also be age-appropriate and directed at the children to further their involvement in the preaching event. At the same time, the preachers state that they wish to provide worship services for the whole congregation. Thus, the preachers, particularly the pastors, seem to believe that worship services should be 'age-less' but preaching for children should always be 'age-specific' and thus produce a tension between worship services and the timespace of age-appropriateness.

These negotiations show that timespaces are both interwoven and conflicting.[43] It seems that the normativity described in developmental theories and the tradition of considering preaching for children as different are strong enough to determine what makes sense for the preachers to do. As such, both the ordinary preaching and age-appropriateness timespaces configure the practice of preaching for children – the former by introducing a contrasting, perhaps perceived neutral way of preaching, and the latter by providing theories and methods that maintain the difference.

6.3 The timespace of biblical texts – Harmonisation

[42] Schatzki, *Timespace*, 75

[43] The worship service itself could also be described as yet another timespace that needs to be negotiated in preaching events. However, for the purpose of narrowing the scope of the article, the collisions and negotiations in the worship service as a whole will not be discussed.

Every preaching event in the empirical material also revolves around a narrative, maybe because they are easy to dramatise. Hence, a fascinating aspect of the preachers' practice of preaching for children is how they approach the timespace of Bible texts. The biblical texts have many connections to the past, as historical, religious, cultural and liturgical text. Because biblical texts are used as religious texts, they are also connected to the intentions and hopes for the future by those who read and interpret them.

Consequently, the biblical texts stretch out beyond the practice of preaching for children in time and space and are part of its dimensionality. In all preaching events, the dynamic of using old texts filled with intention and tradition to interpret the present situation and provide hope or purpose for the future is present. However, in the practice of preaching for children, the temporal, historical, cultural and liturgical aspects of the biblical texts are seldom explored during the preaching events.

The primary marker of the biblical texts existing in a different objective time and space is to dress up in clothes that look similar to those with which Jesus and his disciples are portrayed in Western art, often with kitchen towels as headscarves. While the preachers seem to put this dressing up in the category of being fun and conveying that this story happened in a different objective time and space, in the interviews, the children asked why they always had to dress in 'funny and ugly' clothes when doing dramas in the church. Hence, in retelling biblical stories, dressing up does not communicate the change in time and place that the preachers aim to convey.

The preachers act in ways which harmonise this timespace with the other timespaces in the practice: the biblical texts fit seamlessly into the preaching events, even if you have a kitchen towel on your head while you tell it. Where one might expect tension and conflict, no tension exists. The preachers present biblical and personal stories as well as stories from yesterday's newspaper as existing within the same timespace and, hence, produce a timespace where the past, present and future do not exist simultaneously but are conflated into one. As a result, this harmonious use of biblical texts might obscure how foreign parts of the Bible are to modern readers and presuppose a biblical literacy that transcends unchurched children or even churched adults.[44]

Merete at St Michael also reflects on telling stories in preaching but has a different approach:

> ***Merete:*** *Well [. . .] when preaching to children, I am a very creative preacher. I really like to work together with others and always come up with dramas and fun things. I love doing this together with other people! But I am occupied with the preaching containing some theology. It is not just a retelling of the texts. It is so much more. I am sure you noticed. And, I am sure you have heard those retellings many times. They make me so discouraged.*

Merete claims that preaching for children needs to be more than retelling stories, it also has to contain some theology. However, she does not specify what she means by theology. The preaching event at St

[44] For the purposes of anonymity in the review process, this reference is omitted.

Michael is organised as a dramatic conversation between Merete and the church educationer. This conversation presents several dogmatic statements, such as 'Jesus is our redeemer' and 'Jesus opened the way to heaven', which might be what Merete refers to as theology. If so, Merete produces a timespace where 'dramas and fun things' are separate from theology, all the while arguing that the practice of preaching for children needs to include theology. Hence, theology becomes an entity which she can insert into or remove from preaching. In this way, Merete displays the conflict between the age-appropriateness and ordinary preaching timespaces by wanting to involve the children and have drama while not sacrificing theological content.

Sam in St Emmanuel is concerned that worship services and preaching events should be for the whole congregation, yet this particular Sunday, the children 'ended up' becoming his target group. He contributes to the shift of the children toward the text 'he got' that Sunday (from the lectionary), which concerned the Annunciation of Mary.

> ***Sam:*** *When I got that text about Mary, right? I could link them together.*
> ***Interviewer:*** *Mmm.*
> ***Sam:*** *So I felt like [. . .] that I could remain in that Tower Agent theme and that the Bible story, or Bible text, became an element of the Tower Agent theme, although not a big element. But what I intended, at least, was that the theme and the text would become part of the whole, so to speak.*

Linking the text of the Annunciation to the concept of Tower Agents, the Christian education event and the timespace of age-appropriateness control how Sam interprets the biblical text. Hence, it seems that compared with the timespace of ordinary preaching, the Bible loses its influence in preaching for children.

The preachers emphasise making the preaching concrete, short and compatible with the event theme rather than exegeting the text, again showing that the age-appropriateness timespace is exceptionally dominant in configuring the practice of preaching to children. Therefore, the timespace of biblical texts is conflated with a harmonised 'message' which the preachers wish to convey, questions of historicity and critique not being raised.

7. The dominant timespace of age-appropriateness

In the analysis, I show that when the preachers produce time and space in the practice of preaching for children, they give primacy to the timespace of age-appropriateness. Other timespaces are mostly coordinated and subordinated in relation to it, and if conflicts arise the age-appropriateness timespace 'wins' the conflict.

The preachers are remarkably uniform in their concerns about target audience, materiality, visuality, involvement and brevity. I believe that Boyatzis makes a compelling argument concerning how theories can be used as blueprints for practice, dissolving nuanced theory into normative assumptions. In the analysis, I show that reliance on theories and tradition can create norms that determine what

'makes sense for people to do'. Therefore, the lack of scientific research into preaching for children from a homiletical perspective has also contributed to the dominance of the timespace of age-appropriateness in the practice of preaching for children. Whenever the timespaces of ordinary preaching and the timespace of age-appropriateness conflict, the preachers do not have homiletical literature and theory available to use in their decision-making.

Moreover, the ordinary preaching timespace which is produced, remarkably, does not include the same attention to psychology and pedagogics. This raises the question whether the critique of the New Homiletics, claiming that it is impossible for the preacher and listeners to entirely identify with each other or for the preacher to access a shared experience with adult listeners,[45] has not been expanded to include preaching for children. The age-appropriateness timespace in preaching for children seems to provide a way around this critique and creates a timespace where it is possible to know one's audience and tailor preaching accordingly.

This article does *not* argue against considering the age of most listeners, nor for dismissing theories and insights from educational studies and developmental psychology. Children do grow in understanding as they mature. Nevertheless, children are more than simply their age. All seven-year-olds are not the same, just as all forty-five-year-olds are not the same. Just as one would advocate for an intersectional perspective on women and race, children should be approached as complex individuals with intersecting identities. Thus, the practice of preaching for children could benefit from including insights from the last decades of homiletical research: like the critique against New Homiletics, or newer empirical and theoretical contributions, such as Other-Wise preaching and dialogical approaches to preaching. Doing so might complexify preaching for children and thus give children's intersectional identities more space.

This nuancing might also contribute to questioning the separation of form and content with which preachers operate. In the separation of form and content, preachers express an operant understanding of theology and communication in which theology is a static entity that can be inserted or removed and communication is merely transferring a message from one person to another. This understanding diverges from the views of theology and communication that they express in the interviews, however, in which most preachers discuss theology and communication as more dynamic and dialogical. Consequently, I claim that this article shows that becoming aware of how one's normative assumptions about preaching, communication and theology affects how one preaches is beneficial for preaching for children.

[45] Lorensen, *Dialogical*; Gaarden, *The Third Room.*; McClure, *Other-Wise*, 51.

8. Conclusion

Timespaces configure the practice of preaching to children in several ways; the most important is through conflict. When a conflict arises, the timespace of age-appropriateness almost always prevails. This conflict leads to a separation of form and content and an emphasis on how to preach instead of what to preach.

Considering recent homiletical theory and theoretical critique of stage theories of development, I criticise the emphasis on creating preaching that 'fits' an age group. The assumption that preachers will gain access to the children's experience, emotions, thoughts and reflections in narrowing the target age group is flawed. Hence, I claim that the preachers' practice of preaching for children can benefit from lessening the influence of the timespace of age-appropriateness on the practice and allowing preachers to employ homiletical resources in preaching for children.

Finally, I propose that the above demonstrates that preaching for children is both similar to and different from ordinary preaching. Hopefully, this article can function as a spark for engaging debates in the homiletical community concerning the practice of preaching for children in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 **Translations of terminology**
Appendix 2 **Request for consent to participate in the research project - children**
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Appendix 4 **Interview guide children**
Appendix 5 **Interview guide preachers**
Appendix 6 **Declaration of Independent Research**
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Appendix 1 Translations of terminology

The Norwegian terminology on Christian education is quite context specific, therefore, I have employed the same terms as the English translation of the national plan "God Gives – We Share", although I believe a better translation of the Norwegian word "plan" would be "curriculum" and not "plan".

On advice from my supervisor, Tone Stangeland Kaufman, I have deviated from this in my translation of "gudstjeneste" to "worship service" and not "worship," as the term "worship service" is what is mostly employed in the academic context.

Norwegian terms	**English translations**
Trosopplæringsplan	Plan for Christian education
Trosopplæringstiltak	Christian education event
Gudstjeneste	Worship service
Prest	Pastor, preacher
Kateket	Catechist, preacher
Trosopplærer/ trosopplæringsmedarbeider	Religious educator, preacher
Frivillig	Volunteer, preacher

Appendix 2 Request for consent to participate in the research project - children:

DET TEOLOGISKE MENIGHETSFAKULTET

Til barn og foresatte

Februar 2016

Mitt navn er Linn Sæbø Rystad og arbeider som doktorgradsstipendiat ved Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet.

Jeg arbeider nå med et forskningsprosjekt rundt barns meningsdannelse i forkynnelse. Prosjektet er en del av en større studie om forkynnelse for små og store i menigheter i Norge og kalles FoSS.
Med denne undersøkelsen ønsker jeg å finne mer ut av hvordan barn skaper mening når de lytter til forkynnelse. I den forbindelse gjør jeg feltarbeid der jeg både observerer og filmer gudstjenesten, samt intervjuer barn og predikant.

Temaene som jeg gjerne vil snakke med din sønn/datter er:

- Deres opplevelse av prekenen og gudstjenesten
- Opplevelsen av å delta på trosopplæringstiltaket
- Betydningen av kirkerommet og eventuelle andre objekter som brukes i gudstjenesten og forkynnelsen

Det er frivillig å være med og samtykket kan trekkes tilbake uten å måtte begrunne dette. Intervjuet vil ta ca 20-30 minutter og svarene blir tatt opp på båndopptaker. I forbindelse med publisering av resultater fra undersøkelsen blir alle utsagn anonymisert. Vi som arbeider med denne undersøkelsen har taushetsplikt. Når prosjektet er avsluttet, ved utgangen av 2019 vil opplysningene som er samlet inn bli anonymisert eller slettes slik at det ikke kan spores tilbake til vedkommende.

Prosjektet Forkynnelse for små og store er finansiert av Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet og Kirkerådet.
Resultatene av det vil danne grunnlag for vitenskapelige artikler og en bok.
Min stipendiatstilling er knyttet til Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet og resultatene av undersøkelsene vil brukes i min avhandling.
Intervjuundersøkelsen er tilrådd av Personvernombudet for forskning ved Norsksamfunnsvitenskaplig datatjeneste.

Hvis du har noen spørsmål om undersøkelsen er du hjertelig velkommen til å kontakte undertegnende på telefon 22 59 06 27 eller mail: linn.s.rystad@mf.no

Vennlig hilsen
Linn Sæbø Rystad
Stipendiat i homiletikk, praktisk teologi, Det Teologiske Menighetsfakultet

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Samtykkeerklæring.

Erklæringen leveres til meg i forkant eller etterkant av gudstjenesten eller sendes til Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet v/Linn Sæbø Rystad. Adr: Postboks 5144 Majorstuen, 0302 OSLO

Som foresatt for:.....

Godkjenner jeg at han/hun er med på intervjuet til prosjektet om barns meningsskaping i forkynnelsen, og dermed utgjør en del av datagrunnlaget for denne undersøkelsen.

Appendix 3 Request for consent to participate in the research project – preachers:

Til predikant

Februar 2016

Mitt navn er Linn Sæbø Rystad og arbeider som doktorgradsstipendiat ved Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet.

Jeg arbeider nå med et forskningsprosjekt rundt barns meningsdannelse i forkynnelse. Prosjektet er en del av en større studie om forkynnelse for små og store i menigheter i Norge og kalles FoSS.
Med denne undersøkelsen ønsker jeg å finne mer ut av hvordan barn skaper mening når de lytter til forkynnelse. I den forbindelse gjør jeg feltarbeid der jeg både observerer og filmer gudstjenesten, samt intervjuer barn og predikant.

Temaene som jeg gjerne vil snakke med deg om er:

- Din opplevelse av prekenen og gudstjenesten
- Dine tanker rundt forkynnelse. Din forberedelse og hvordan du tenker andre oppfatter den.
- Forkynnelsens sammenheng med resten av gudstjenesten.
- Bruk av annet enn ord i forkynnelsen.

Det er frivillig å være med og samtykket kan trekkes tilbake uten å måtte begrunne dette. Intervjuet vil ta ca 20-30 minutter og svarene blir tatt opp på båndopptaker. I forbindelse med publisering av resultater fra undersøkelsen blir alle utsagn anonymisert. Vi som arbeider med denne undersøkelsen har taushetsplikt. Når prosjektet er avsluttet, ved utgangen av 2019 vil opplysningene som er samlet inn bli anonymisert eller slettes slik at det ikke kan spores tilbake til vedkommende.

Prosjektet Forkynnelse for små og store er finansiert av Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet og Kirkerådet. Resultatene av det vil danne grunnlag for vitenskapelige artikler og en bok.
Min stipendiatstilling er knyttet til Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet og resultatene av undersøkelsene vil brukes i min avhandling.
Intervjuundersøkelsen er tilrådd av Personvernombudet for forskning ved Norsksamfunnsvitenskaplig datatjeneste.

Hvis du har noen spørsmål om undersøkelsen er du hjertelig velkommen til å kontakte undertegnende på telefon 22 59 06 27 eller mail: linn.s.rystad@mf.no

Vennlig hilsen
Linn Sæbø Rystad
Stipendiat i homiletikk, praktisk teologi, Det Teologiske Menighetsfakultet

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Samtykkeerklæring.

Erklæringen leveres til meg i forkant eller etterkant av gudstjenesten eller sendes til Det teologiske Menighetsfakultet v/Linn Sæbø Rystad. Adr: Postboks 5144 Majorstuen, 0302 OSLO

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Godkjenner at intervju med meg er med som datagrunnlag for prosjektet om barns meningsskaping i forkynnelsen.

Appendix 4 **Interview guide children**

Intervjuguide barn

Spørsmål	Fagbegreper
1. Hele tiltaket 1.1. Hvordan var det å være på Tårnagent/Lys Våken helg? 1.2. Hvordan syntes du det var å være med på Tårnagent/Lys Våkenhelg? Noe du husker spesielt godt?	
2. Opplevelse og inntrykk av gudstjenesten, med særlig fokus på forkynnelsen 2.1. Kan du fortelle hva som skjedde i gudstjenesten (hvis du skulle fortelle det til noen som ikke var der)? Er det noe som var spesielt morsomt? Eller spesielt kjedelig? 2.2. Kan du fortelle hva presten snakket om? 2.3. Hva tenkte DU på da du hørte dette (evt si noe om at tankene kan begynne å gå sine egne veier, hva blir DU opptatt av?) 2.4. Hva følte du mens presten/predikanten snakket? 2.5. Hvordan opplevde du det presten sa (fortellingen eller prekenen)? 2.6. Har det noe å si hvem den som preker/forkynner er for hvordan du lyttet til prekenen?	Meningsskaping Meningsskaping Dialogisk/monologisk ethos

2.7. Kjente du deg igjen i det presten snakket om? Hvorfor? Hvordan? Hvorfor ikke? Er det noe som handler om deg? 2.8. Er det noe du syntes var rart av det presten snakket om? 2.9. Hvordan synes du det er når presten spør deg/dere om noe i preken?	Dialogisk/monologisk
3. Fortellingene 3.1. Hadde du hørte denne fortellingen/det presten snakket om før? Hvor da? 3.2. Hva synes du om fortellingen?	Narrativer
4. Kirkerommet og deltakelse 4.1. Er det noen ting i kirkerommet som du la spesielt merke til, eller har lyst til å fortelle meg om? 4.2. Når du ser dette bildet, hva tenker du på da? 4.3. Husker du om presten/predikanten brukte noe annet enn ord i prekenen? 4.4. Likte du at presten brukte en …. (fill in the blanks, eksepelvis skattekiste, penger, musikk, kappe osv). Hvorfor /hvorfor ikke? 4.5. Dere ble bedt om å … (ulike former for deltakelse). Hvordan opplevde	Sosiokulturell/materiell - mediering

du det? Hva gjorde det med fortellingen? 4.6. Hva gjorde du under gudstjenesten i dag? Var du inne i kirkerommet hele tida? 4.7. Har du sunget noen av salmene/sangene fra gudstjenesten før? Hvordan opplevde du det å synge i dag?	

Appendix 5 **Interview guide preachers**

Intervjuguide predikant

Spørsmål	**Fagbegreper**
Første respons Hvordan opplevde du forkynnersituasjonen og gudstjenesten? Hvordan opplevde du kontakten med barna? Hvordan opplevde du kontakten med de voksne?	
Forberedelser Hvordan har du forberedt denne prekenen/fortellingen? Hvordan ble tekst og tema valgt ut? Av hvem? Hvis fortelling: Kan du beskrive veien fra tekst til fortelling? Hvordan har forberedelsene til denne gudstjenesten foregått? Var du med på noe i trosopplæringstiltaket Tårnagent? Var du med på å velge ut salmer, og hvorfor ble disse valgt? Hvem har valgt ut salmene til denne gudstjenesten? Vet du hvorfor disse ble plukket ut?	Teologi, narrativer, sammenheng mellom tiltak og gudstjeneste
Forkynnelsessituasjonen Hvem var din målgruppe når du preket i dag? Hvem taler du til? Mange som ikke kommer på gudstjeneste så ofte. Trosopplæringstiltakets målgruppe Dåpsfølget De mange som er i kirka nesten hver søndag?	Homiletisk teori, lytterens betydning, forkynnerens innstilling til tilhørerne (dialogisk/monologisk) Forkynnelsens tema/mål

Hva var det viktig for deg å formidle i dag? Og hvorfor? Er det noen sammenheng mellom det du ønsket å si i dag og tilhørernes hverdagsliv? Hvilken rolle ser du for deg at lytteren spiller i selve forkynnelseshendelsen/prosessen? Hvordan tenker du Tårnagenthelgen ble inkludert i: gudstjenesten? forkynnelsen? Hvilken sammenheng var det mellom forkynnelsen og resten av gudstjenesten? Hva synes du om Tårnagent som trosopplæringstiltak? Tenkte du på å bruke noe bestemt i kirkerommet? Tenkte du på å bruke andre ting enn ord i prekenen? Om du gjorde det – hvorfor? Om du ikke gjorde det – hvorfor ikke?	Sosiokulturelt
Tanker om forkynnelse Hva skal forkynnelsen være? Hva skal forkynnelsen gjøre?	Normativt
Noe du vil si som du ikke har fått sagt?	

Appendix 6 Declaration of Independent Research

Required enclosure when requesting that a dissertation be considered for a doctors degree

NORWEGIAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Declaration describing the independent research contribution of the candidate

In addition to the dissertation, there should be enclosed a declaration describing the independent research contribution of the candidate for each paper constituting the dissertation.

The declaration should be filled in and signed by candidate and co-authors. Use the following pages to the extent necessary.

The declaration will show the contribution to conception and design, or development and analysis of a theoretical model, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data, contribution to drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content etc.

The Research Committee
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Article no. 1

Title: Preaching at the Thresholds - Bakhtinian polyphony in preaching for children

The independent contribution of the candidate:

Linn Sæbø Rystad .....

Signature of candidate Signature of co-authors

Article no. 2

Title: "I Wish We Could Fast-Forward it" - Negotiating the Practice of Preaching

The independent contribution of the candidate:

Linn Sæbø Rystad .....

Signature of candidate Signature of co-authors

Article no. 3

Title: Keeping it Age-Appropriate - Preacher's Negotiation of Timespaces in Their Practice of Children-Preaching

The independent contribution of the candidate:

Linn Sæbø Rystad .....

Signature of candidate Signature of co-authors

Appendix 7 NSD approval

Linn Sæbø Rystad
Det teologiske menighetsfakultet
Postboks 5144 Majorstua
0302 OSLO

Vår dato: 19.04.2016 Vår ref: 47797 / 3 / HIT Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 04.03.2016. All nødvendig informasjon om prosjektet forelå i sin helhet 18.04.2016. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

47797	*Meningsdannelse i forkynnelse - en dialogisk tilnærming. En empirisk studie av forkynnelse i gudstjenester som inngår i trosopplæringstiltak*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Det teologiske menighetsfakultet, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Linn Sæbø Rystad*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 30.09.2020, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Kjersti Haugstvedt

Hildur Thorarensen

Kontaktperson: Hildur Thorarensen tlf: 55 58 26 54
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.