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# The Practice Turn in International Relations

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An INTERNATIONAL STUDIES QUARTERLY ONLINE symposium

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# INTRODUCTION

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The relationship between theory and practice has been a traditional concern, not to say obsession, of International Relations ever since it became a discrete field of study. In the traditional neopositivist framing, theory frames and disciplines practice, such that scholarly experts can provide valid advice for policymakers to follow -- as long as the "gap" between the academy and the world of practical politics is effectively "bridged." Alternative methodologies suggest a more complex relationship, either deriving theory from political practice, or otherwise advocating a mode of theorizing that is closer to the practical world.

Into this morass wades "practice theory," or perhaps better, a practice *sensibility*. This "practice turn" reformulates the meaning of "theory" such that the distinction between theory and practice is, so to speak, dis-solved: theorizing is a practical activity, and practice is shot through with theoretical import. Understood as a methodological move, the "practice turn" in International Relations thus goes far beyond a mere alteration of independent or dependent variable, and far beyond a change in the level of analysis. Because the epistemic status of theory is different for a scholar committed to a practice sensibility, explanations that such scholars generate are distinctive from explanations produced through a covering-law model of explanation or through qualitative-comparative case study techniques. Practice-sensibility explanations handle agent-structure issues differently, treat the relationship between stability and change as a more internal relation, and emphasize creativity and contingency in ways that go well beyond identifying a causal "role of ideas."

The challenge, then, is to develop an adequate conceptual vocabulary for practice-sensibility scholarship. [Christian Bueger and Frank Gadinger's ISQ article](#) (2015) suggests that International Relations scholarship in a practice mode would be enhanced by a broader examination of the philosophical and social-theoretical roots of practice accounts, particularly by an expansion of our conceptual vocabulary beyond the admittedly useful language provided by Pierre Bourdieu. The participants in this Symposium take up the challenge of providing that more adequate conceptual vocabulary by exploring the relationship between the various strains and threads of the "practice turn," proposing alternatives that nonetheless remain within the "family" of practice approaches. We are pleased to present this conversation among family members, and to invite others to join in -- the table, as it were, is not an exclusive one, and other guests are welcome to drop by for dinner.

# FULFILLING THE PROMISES OF PRACTICE THEORY IN IR

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In 2008, we organized a workshop at the University of Toronto to which we convened a variety of researchers coming from different scholarly perspectives. One of our objectives was to have a rare cross-theoretical conversation, organized around the concept of practice. We were quite successful on that count, as poststructuralist, realist, constructivist, rationalist, and English School scholars managed to find ways to engage with one another. Subsequently, we proposed that the concept of practice provides a *theoretical intersection*—not a “big tent,” as per Bueger and Gadinger’s (2015) or Ringmar’s (2014) rendition. For us “the objective is for a variety of perspectives to meet around a conceptual focal point while keeping their distinctiveness.” (Adler and Pouliot 2011:28).

As both Bueger and Gadinger and we insisted, practice theory is indeed a “diverse family” (Bueger and Gadinger 2015:2). It embraces, among others, Bourdieu-related approaches, pragmatist approaches, and doubtless a combination of these approaches, which are characterized by affinities and convergence. And yet, while we agree with the six “core commitments” of practice theory that Bueger and Gadinger outline (which happen to follow quite closely the framework we laid out in 2011), we do not feel entitled to impose one singular vision. Thus, we cannot subscribe to their (2015:2) remedy to the so-called “overcrowded circus,” which could easily turn into an objectionable politics of gate-keeping.

In any event, having an interparadigmatic conversation was never meant to be the only, or even the most important contribution of practice theory to IR. In this blog post, we would like to emphasize the key *substantive* promises that we think the framework holds, which have so far often flown under the radar of our critics. Building on four years of hindsight as well as the rich contributions by various colleagues in the meantime, we boil down the contributions of practice theory to three.

(1) A Distinctive Explanatory Logic: While it is certainly true that social scientists have been studying practices for decades, most of the time the stuff that people do is conceived as a *dependent variable*, that is to say, as an outcome in need of an explanation. A key added value of practice theory is that it flips the explanatory arrow on its head. Practices are not simply explanandum, but also explanan. Practices *do* things in and on the world; they produce social effects and generate macro phenomena of interest. International practices, in other words, are *constitutive* of world politics. Examples of such claims already abound in IR: to name but a few, peacebuilding practices constitute international intervention (Autesserre 2014); diplomacy constitutes North-South cleavages, international law, humanitarianism, and collective intentionality (Barkawi 2015; Hurd 2015; Sending 2015; Mitzen 2015); liberal practices constitute international orders (Dunne and Flockart 2013; Adler 2013); and opt-outs and cultural practices constitute European Union authority (Adler-Nissen 2014; McNamara 2015).

(2) A Broader Ontology: We must respectfully disagree with Bially Mattern, who contrary to us argues that practice theory actually provides a *narrower* ontology than its main alternatives (Bially Mattern 2011). In our original statement, we suggested that “as soon as one looks into practices, it becomes difficult, and even impossible, to ignore structures (or agency),

ideas (or matter), rationality (or practicality), and stability (or change)” ([Adler and Pouliot 2011:4](#)). Perhaps back then we should have stressed more the processual nature of practice ontology. This might have helped to better explain why ontological dichotomies are not separate and separable. Take, for example, stability and change: according to Ringmar ([2014:18](#)), practices cannot simultaneously be associated with change and its opposite, namely stability. From a processual perspective, however, stability is not the opposite of change but an orderly pattern within a process of flux ([Jackson and Nexon 1999](#)).

(3) A Unit of Analysis and Methodology: For graduate students looking for the right framework to guide their research, the best selling point for practice theory is a simple one: it tells you exactly what to look for among messy empirical materials—practices! While there is no denial that identifying practices in the empirical world presents daunting challenges ([Andersen and Neumann 2012](#); [Frost and Lechner 2015](#); [Pouliot 2014](#)), the fact remains that, at least at the level of action, it is generally possible to identify what counts as the competent performance of X-ing. Practices differ from mere behaviors and actions precisely because they are socially organized and recognizable by the communities that coalesce around them. As such, IR practice researchers start with a pretty clear notion of what they are looking for: patterned ways of doing things internationally. In his textbook on practice theory, Nicolini ([2012:219](#)) conceives of the approach as a “theory-methods package.” We think this is a very apt metaphor. Practice theory is not just meta- or social theory; it is a very hands-on framework whose value rests precisely on empirical operationalization. The contribution of practice theory to IR, in other words, may only be judged in terms of how it is put in practice in the course of empirical research.

Practice theory is still a relatively new phenomenon in IR. While some have already hailed it as a productive theoretical development in the field ([Jackson and Nexon 2013](#)), at this stage the jury is still out. For that reason, it seems to us that Ringmar ([2014:1](#)) displays considerable hubris when he asserts—only a couple of years into it—that “this project will fail.” We do not think this is a productive way of getting at the matter. Social science is a collective enterprise and as such, fulfilling the promises of practice theory will depend on the contribution of the many.

Still at this early stage of development, we can already observe a number of impressive works that extend, amend, apply and refine the research agenda. Practice theory has already shed new light on critical IR phenomena, including global governance ([Best and Gheciu 2014](#); [Neumann and Sending 2010](#)), international law ([Brunnée and Toope 2010](#)), international organizations ([Bueger, forthcoming](#); [Eagleton-Pierce 2013](#)), security politics ([Abrahamsen and Williams 2011](#); [Pouliot 2010](#); [Villumsen 2015](#)), political economy ([Seabrooke 2014](#)), human rights ([Karp 2013](#); [Ainley 2011](#)), and transnational corporations ([Hönke and Müller 2012](#)). Meanwhile, each of us is also elaborating his own take on practice theory— related but still distinct—in two separate books ([Adler 2015](#); [Pouliot forthcoming](#)). Seeing all of this exciting new research coming out, we take a much more optimistic view than Ringmar ([2014](#)). It seems like the promises of practice theory in IR are, indeed, in the process of being fulfilled.

Regardless of the practice approach one chooses to follow, however, fulfilling the promise will require both sustained theoretical development and empirical work, and scholarly cooperation. We need, for instance, knowing more about the relationship between practices and norms, as well as about the normativity of practices, which can be an entry point to political theory ([Wiener 2008](#)). Moreover, we need to learn more about the institutionalization of practices and how the latter help constitute the former; the constitutive processes linking practices to social orders; and the organizing processes that

connect institutions and social orders. These are but a few of the many possible directions that practice theory's future research may take in IR and beyond.

# WHAT'S THE THEORY IN INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE THEORY?

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Is there a theory in practice theory? Responding to [Bueger and Gadinger's excellent article](#), I agree that practice theory is indeed a theory – or a rather a bundle of theories – that can help explain world politics. Bueger and Gadinger distinguish between critical theory and pragmatism as practice theory's intellectual roots, but as I will argue below, this distinction has drawbacks. I therefore propose a different categorization – between what I call the 'ordering' (how practices stabilize the world) and the 'disordering' (how practices destabilize the world) perspectives on practices. This distinction is crucial to determining where we look for practices in international relations and how we study them. I will also argue that symbolic interactionism should be included in the practice theory landscape, as it can help us understand the making and unmaking of international orders.

Bueger and Gadinger's distinction between pragmatism and critical theory may be meaningful in the abstract, but it creates the problem that many practice theorists combine insights from both traditions. Take for instance Pierre Bourdieu, Erving Goffman, Michel de Certeau or James C. Scott. Are they pragmatist or critical when they help us find the political, hidden in the everyday? When they identify contradictions and tensions in how people experience education, cities, wars or asylums, which tradition do they build on? In practice, it is difficult to distinguish the pragmatist from the critical theorist.

I therefore propose an alternative distinction: between the 'ordering' and the 'disordering' perspectives on practices. The distinction is grossly simplifying, but it emphasizes that international relations appear differently to us depending on whether we are most interested in how they stabilize or how they destabilize the world ([Adler-Nissen 2016](#)).

The 'ordering' version of practices focuses on how practices become organizing of social life, it is interested in how people and groups of people become recognized as more or less competent or entitled than others through particular classifications, distinctions and categories of understanding. This happens for instance in social fields ([Bourdieu 1977](#)) and in 'communities of practices' ([Wenger 1998](#)).<sup>1</sup> For Etienne Wenger the question is how communities of practice may foster learning processes and collaboration ([Wenger 1998](#)). Inspired by Wenger, Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot ([2011](#)) have developed their version of practice theory, seeing practices as 'socially meaningful patterns of action which, in being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, act out and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world' ([Adler and Pouliot 2011: 6](#)). From this perspective, practices can be anything from UN Security Council negotiations ([Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014](#)) to playing hockey or smuggling drugs. Such activities involve skills and techniques and can be performed better or worse in the eyes of other practitioners.

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<sup>1</sup> Bourdieu acknowledges the agent's capacity for invention and improvisation ([Adler-Nissen 2012: 5](#)). Shifts are not as 'rare' and 'revolutionary' as Bueger and Gadinger ([2015: 8](#)) would have it. This is clear in Bourdieu's elaboration of improvisations involved in everyday strategies of for instance gift-giving ([Bourdieu 1977](#)). Bourdieu shares the wish to liberate agency from structuralist models while avoiding the trap of methodological individualism.

One important aspect missing from Wenger's practice concept is exclusion, stigmatization and discrimination. I have argued, drawing on Goffman, that stigmatization may be just as important for the construction of international order as socialization and learning processes ([Adler-Nissen 2014](#)). It is indeed unfortunate that symbolic interactionism and dramaturgy are written out of Bueger and Gadinger's account of practice theory. For example, symbolic interactionist-inspired practice theory can contribute to current debates within IR theory about emotions, the self and the body. Mead's fundamental insight (picked up by Goffman) was that the self is social not biological ([Goffman 1967](#)) and that the 'looking glass self' generates emotions, such as embarrassment, pride and anger. From this perspective, emotions in world politics are not just psychologically or discursively constituted as affect or trauma, they emerge and are performed through everyday interaction.

The problem of exclusion and discrimination is central to the 'disordering' practice perspective. It differs from the 'ordering' perspective in that it does not require recognition of competent behavior or social capital. This gives it a more explicit emancipatory potential. This perspective, which is close to the so-called everyday approach to practice, is not mentioned much by Bueger and Gadinger, but it focuses on subordinate and ordinary people and their experiences of broader power relationships (for a great overview of everyday approaches to IPE, see [Hobson and Seabrooke 2009](#)). One example is Henri Lefebvre's 'everyday life' concern with disciplinary logics of capitalism and how everyday life manifests itself in bodies, urban landscapes, consumption and even boredom. Michel de Certeau and James C. Scott are more interested in subtle form of subaltern agency and defiance, at the local level. Here, tactics are creative and opportunistic, seized momentarily by subjugated ordinary people ([Neumann 2002](#)). Within IR theory, the 'disordering' approach focuses on seemingly ordinary or subordinate people, non-elite groups, including lower-middle and middle classes, migrant laborers and diasporas whose lives are shaped by and shape the world politics 'from below', exploring their capacity to change their political, economic and social environment.

At the most fundamental level, both 'ordering' and 'disordering' practices are concerned with the ontological question of social order. For practice theorists, social order is a collective achievement to which we all contribute; this means there is always the possibility of a collapse of the social/society (disordering) if its norms and values are not constantly reaffirmed (ordering) ([Adler-Nissen 2014](#)). The anomie lurking behind practice theory (yes, anomie differs radically from anarchy) holds a great promise for IR theory.

# BEYOND THE 'HERE AND NOW' OF PRACTICE THEORY

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Christian Bueger and Frank Gadinger make three key claims in their “[The Play of International Practices](#).” The first is that practice theory constitutes a distinctive set of theoretical tools to understand the social world, the contents of which has to be specified and differentiated from other types of theories in order to deliver on its promise. The second is that practice theory has been primarily associated with the works of Pierre Bourdieu, whose works is best able to account for reproduction and hierarchies, but less so for agency and contingency. This sets the stage for the third key point, namely that pragmatism is a distinct type of practice theory that highlights reflexivity, contingency and “order as process”, thereby offering a better take on change. I want to discuss the implications of this position in some detail, and i) suggest that their privileging of ethnomethodology is problematic for an account of change, and ii) raise questions about their argument against the autonomy of academic knowledge production and the importance of “solving problems.”

Bueger and Gadinger’s theoretical and methodological foregrounding of the “life world” of actors, and of the reflexivity and meanings actors attach to particular situations, comes with certain costs. A key question is how to account for the structures within which any practice assumes its meaning and significance. The practice of voting, for example, is central to the constitution of corporate agency in world politics, either at the level of the state or in international organizations. One may produce a range of important insights about the “how” of voting within different polities, paying attention, for example, to the artifacts at play, the efforts to produce certainty about the results, etc. But such an analysis, following Bueger and Gadinger’s recipe, cannot grasp how voting is placed in a larger system that accords it meaning as a means to produce unity out of a heterogeneous mix of interests. In other words, the *structural* position of particular practices – they are related to other practices and there is a hierarchy of practices – is lost if we only zoom in on what ethnomethodology is best at, which is to identify how actors engage in, attach meaning to and may change practices.

This brings us to the question of the historicity of practices. If practice theorists want to produce accounts not only of the meaning and reproduction/transformation of particular practices, but how their evolution over time may impact and shape their environment, it is necessary to add a temporal dimension. To return to the example of voting: Olivier Christin (2005) has shown not only that the practice of voting was prevalent long before the democratic age, but that it has varied historically over time due to the competing visions of how to use voting to constitute political unity and corporate agency out of a heterogenous mix of actors. During the Absolutist age, voting helped reproduce an “organic-collegial” mode of producing a representative, but it increasingly co-existed with an individual-majoritarian one, where voting - through statistical aggregation of individual opinion – produces a majority as a foundation for representation. The practice of diplomatic representation can be given a similar interpretation: ever more non-state actors engage in the (diplomatic) practice of representation as they partake in global governance ([Sending](#),

[Pouliot, and Neumann 2015](#)). If we draw on ethnographic material, we can produce rich empirical detail about how representation is done, paying attention to what diplomats and others do and say in the present. But this account will lose a lot of its critical bite, inasmuch as it does not take into account what is at stake in this practice: we will not see that the practice of diplomatic representation has evolved over time, in no small part due to competition between different social groups over just what this practice should entail.

This privileging of the here and now of practices is compounded by Bueger and Gadinier's argument "against autonomy" and for "academia as part of a broader community of inquiry which constructs matters of concern." I am all for producing knowledge that is seen as relevant and important "beyond a community of peers." But the generic call against autonomy is problematic since it makes it all the more likely that academics simply end up reproducing conventional understandings and participants' self-description. Their rationale for this position hails in part from the "symmetrical perspective" which treats scientific knowledge production as a practice. The symmetrical perspective has purchase in science studies precisely because it gives analytical distance from scientific practitioners' self-description and presentation of their work. But it is an analytical fallacy to make the symmetrical perspective into a generic principle for social-scientific inquiry. If we make this the guiding principle for knowledge production in general and combine it with the ideal of "problem solving," I have trouble seeing how we would be able to generate knowledge that differs from conventional understandings and that are critical of established practices and institutions.

My concern, then, is not so much with pragmatism – key elements of which should certainly be brought to bear on the study of world politics. Rather, my concern is with the privileging of participant-observation and the demotion of historical analysis, and with the claim that scholars should strive to *not* establish analytical distance. In a time when there is increasing pressure for social scientists to deliver "useful" and policy relevant knowledge, what is needed is an old-fashioned commitment to academic autonomy.

# FAMILY ISSUES: PLURALITY AND METHODOLOGY IN INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE THEORY

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Practice theory is not a unified perspective. It is, as most now agree, a diverse family. But what kind of family are we talking about? In a recent practice-theoretical analysis, Wendy Bottero (2015) has argued that family identity should be seen as an effect of practices such as genealogy, or perhaps even practices like organizing a family feast or a wedding. With this in mind, we might think of much of the current discussion on international practice theory as really being about who gets invited to the table. And sometimes, as Rebecca Adler-Nissen argues, an uncle such as symbolic interactionism should have been invited to the gathering. Still, although this debate over family identity will continue, it should not be our primary goal. If we require a better sense of who the practice family and its ancestors are, we must look for the meaning of the concepts of practice theory in their *usage*.

Talk of practices has become widespread in IR and elsewhere. Practice theorists continue to be a diverse group; one that has already alerted the discipline to phenomena often out of reach of other forms of theorizing, such as the mundane practices of international cooperation and negotiations, or the role of things in world politics. Still, the fate of practice theory and the contours of its family tree remain in question. In our recent book (Bueger and Gadinger 2014: 101-104), we outlined three possible scenarios for the future of practice theory in IR. First, we might think of ‘practice talk’ as a fashion. This is perhaps what Eric Ringmar (2014) had in mind with his critique that there is nothing new about the practice turn and interest in it will soon fade away. We might interpret this positively to mean that the theory’s core insights have been mainstreamed into the discipline to a degree that there is no need to flag them in any particular way. Alternatively, it could mean that practice theory was *just* a fashion that we have happily overcome and have now replaced with a new one.

In a second scenario, practice theory is on its way to becoming a Kuhnian paradigm, much as we now think of realism or constructivism. At that point, we would have agreed upon definitions, the boundary of the paradigm, and what its core puzzles are. Handbooks and textbooks would socialize students into what the classics and the core premises of practice theory are. Moving towards homogeneity has advantages: less friction implies more attention to empirical research; having clear concepts makes it easier for newcomers to contribute to the agenda. There is, however, the genuine risk that practice theories lose their inherent strength, namely their adaptability and flexibility across research situations.

The third scenario, which we outlined in our ISQ article, is our favorite: Practice theory turns into an ever more heterogeneous and creative melting pot, characterized by cross-disciplinary dialogues with other communities puzzled about practice, such as those in organization studies, science and technology studies, or policy studies. Disagreements, controversies and tensions between different conceptual approaches and methodological

devices will then ensure the creativity and innovativeness of the debate, but will also allow for eclectic combinations of ideas to address a range of challenges. If we want to live up to this scenario, then this symposium is a step in the right direction.

In our article, we argue for appreciating the plurality of concepts and approaches. In particular, this means recognizing that the play of international practices is best grasped by paying attention to both the erratic as well as the stabilizing routine sites of practice. Jorg Kustermans (2015) succinctly described this challenge for practice turn scholars: “theory is tidy, whereas practice is messy;” that is, “theory can never do justice to practice.” We need different theoretical accounts to grasp practices between their ‘ordering’ and ‘disordering’ nature. We agree with Adler-Nissen on this point. However, Bourdieusian approaches have come to dominate the international practice theory discussion to a degree, and this vocabulary is better at explaining reproduction and stability rather than change. As Sebastian Schindler and Tobias Wille (2015: 331) argue, “like every theory, Bourdieu’s theory of practice sheds lights on some aspects of reality at the price of casting shadows elsewhere.” In contrast, pragmatist approaches, such as actor-network theory or pragmatic sociology, foreground uncertainty and the perpetually unfolding character of practice. These vital contributions widen the scope of practice theory by incorporating non-structuralist aspects of politics such as agency, uncertainty and change in a more substantial manner (Leander 2011). Thus, the analytical richness of the concept of practice lies in its consideration of the creative and improvisational character of practical action as well (Jackson 2009).

One issue that requires more consideration, as Adler and Pouliot rightly suggest, is how we deal with the normativity of practice. Much research on norms in IR still suffers from methodological individualism and rather static assumptions about norms, values, and rules. From a practice theoretical perspective, obeying a rule is a social practice rooted in everyday activities, mutual practical understandings, and moral judgements under conditions of contestation (see Wiener 2014). Such an understanding of rule-following goes back to the work of Dewey, Wittgenstein and Heidegger, who argued that meaning and language have to be understood *in use*. But this move also implies considering the ‘dark side’ of international practices more actively, such as the practices of terrorists, financial speculators, soldiers, street workers, surveillance experts or political dissidents. How do terrorists make sense of their lives through everyday activities? What are similarities and differences between financial analysts and surveillance experts in operating with technology? On which normative principles do soldiers justify their actions in modern warfare?

Such questions are challenging for IR scholars, and, of course, there are legitimate concerns on how to capture such practices. The debate on adequate research strategies and techniques is still in its infancy. Adler and Pouliot as well as Sending rightfully point out that methodological questions will be one of the drivers of the practice theory debate; namely, how do we find practices and describe them? Centering research on practice therefore presents us with a significant opportunity to explore new avenues and broaden the spectrum of how we study and write about the international. It allows us to go beyond the conventional case study and interview designs used in qualitative IR research. We might want to ask other disciplines such as history and anthropology for their historiographic and ethnographic tools, but studying international practices will also require methodological innovation. Experimenting with new ways of learning about practice is important to foster the debate. Poking, probing, tinkering, participating, co-producing are some of the methodological practices we will want to try out.

Ultimately our methodological choices will be informed by the actual practices we are studying, some of which will undoubtedly be better understood through tools of proximity,

real-time studies, ethnomethodology or even action research. Others, such as historical practices or broader configurations of practices, will require very different tools, such as genealogies, or the interpretation of artifacts ranging from documents to architecture and paintings. The increasing adoption of ethnographic research and writing modes ([Vrasti 2008](#); [Neumann 2012](#); [Bueger 2015](#)) as well as visual, film, and narrative research techniques (e.g. [Heck and Schlag 2013](#); [van Munster and Sylvest 2015](#)) are good signs that the practice turn in IR goes the next step; that is, from reflecting and elaborating on concepts to careful and intense empirical work reflectively using practice-oriented research methods. This will also spur proposals on which ‘concept-methods packages’ are better suited to understand different kinds of practices.

We do not share Sending’s concern that an ethnomethodological necessarily implies a loss of scientific autonomy. There are different possibilities to guarantee reflexivity and independency. Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology provides one valuable tool of self-awareness when doing research ([Hamati-Ataya 2013](#)). Other forms of reflexivity, such as the subversive style induced by pragmatists or the experimental style of ethnomethodology, open up access to the enactment of other practices. Recent research into war as practice and everyday experience on the ground ([Sylvester 2012](#); [Dauphinee 2015](#)) is a good example that ethnographic methods and narrative techniques generate legitimate knowledge in their own right. Such perspectives, as Adler-Nissen legitimately demands, also introduce emotions and affect to IR theory. Understanding the close relationship between memory and emotion on the one hand, and practice and experience on the other, is not only a future challenge for practice theory, it also opens up the dialogue with social psychology, potentially leading to new controversies and ‘family issues’.

The practice debate will not only thrive on how research is able to illuminate recognized world political phenomena, but also on how it brings new phenomena to the fore, including insight on the relationship between order and change. Yet challenges remain. These concern how to conceptualize the temporality, size and scale of practices, how to let materiality, technology and contingency into our narratives, and identifying what work distinct ‘concept-methods packages’ can do. Tackling these challenges through productive engagement will ensure that the family of practice theorists is not on the way to becoming normal science but continues to demonstrate to the broader discipline how innovative research can be carried out in uncharted waters.

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