

Who Practises Practice Theory (and How)? (Meta-)theorists, Scholar-practitioners, (Bourdieuian) Researchers, and Social Prestige in Academia

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Leonie Holthaus 
TU Darmstadt, Germany

Abstract

Practice theory has become a popular and avowedly pluralistic research programme in European and Canadian international relations (IR). It promises the end of monolithic grand theorising and armchair analysis. Yet, taken together, practice theory's pluralist character and methodological promises raise the question: who practises practice theory (and how)? I deal with this question through a discussion of three different, representative, and sociologically important books. On this basis, I depict three (ideal-)types of authorship. They include the (meta-)theorist, the scholar-practitioner, and the Bourdieusian researcher. I show that authors remake practice theory's theoretical claims by relating practice to theory in different manners, such as deep theorising, reworking of experience in inductive theorising, and reflexive conceptualisation. I focus less on the enduring position of (meta-)theorists. I rather argue that the different academic practices indicate that the authors seek prestige within practice theory and neighboring scientific communities. For this purpose, I approach prestige as durable esteem due to occupational achievements. Finally, I ask how the new scientific demands of practice theory might impact young, less established academics.

Keywords

practice theory, prestige, methodology

Corresponding author:

Leonie Holthaus, TU Darmstadt, Doliviostr 15, Darmstadt, 64283, Germany.
Email: holthaus@pg.tu-darmstadt.de

Introduction¹

Practice theory has become a popular and avowedly pluralistic research programme in European and Canadian international relations (IR). Two conditions enabled its success story.² First, there is much appreciation of qualitative and interpretative research in European and Canadian IR.³ Second, in IR, in general, there is an ongoing reorientation away from paradigms or theoretical arguments to empirical research.⁴ Practice theory's emphasis on methodology⁵ and the end of 'armchair analysis'⁶ go along with this reorientation. Yet, taken together, practice theory's pluralist character and methodological promise raise the question: who practises practice theory (and how)? The question allows for an inspection of practice theory with its own terminology,⁷ and may be of particular interest to (other) young researchers who are interested in practice theory in their pursuit of academic knowledge and capital.

I approach the aforementioned questions through a discussion of different, representative, and sociologically important books. The differences between them reflect the pluralism that characterises IR practice theory, they represent groups of authors or ways

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1. I would like to thank the editors and the three anonymous reviewers for their highly constructive comments. I would also like to thank Marc Fischer and Nadine Benedix for their editorial assistance.
 2. Ido Oren, 'A Sociological Analysis of the Decline of American IR Theory', *International Studies Review* 18, no. 4 (2016): 575–7.
 3. Ole Wæver, 'The Sociology of a Not so International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations', *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 687–727. In distinction to Wæver, I distinguish between Canadian and North American IR. Canadian IR is more sympathetic to qualitative inquiries. I also base my observations on a simple search. Accordingly, the programme of the ISA 2020 has listed three entries tagged practice theory. The EISA 2020 (or 2021), in contrast, will again host a full section on practice theory. See isa.org; eisa-net.org.
 4. Ido Oren, 'A Sociological Analysis of the Decline of American IR Theory', 571–96; Gunther Hellmann and Harald Müller, 'Editing (I)nternational (R)elations: A Changing World', *Journal of International Relations and Development* 6, no. 4 (2004): 372–89.
 5. Christian Bueger and Frank Gadinger, *International Practice Theory. New Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Leonie Holthaus, 'Pierre Bourdieu und die Möglichkeiten der Kritik in der Praxistheorie', *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 26, no. 2 (2019): 67–87.
 6. Iver B. Neumann, 'Returning Practice to the Linguistic Turn: The Case of Diplomacy', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 31, no. 3 (2002): 628.
 7. Pierre Bourdieu, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Pierre Bourdieu, *Sketch for a Self-Analysis* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007); Anna Leander, 'Thinking Tools', in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, eds. Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008), 11–27. For Bourdieusian inquiries into the sociology of IR, see Inanna Hamati-Ataya, 'IR Theory as International Practice/Agency: A Clinical-Synical Bourdieusian Perspective', *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 40, no. 3 (2012): 625–46.

to conduct practice theory, and they qualify as important because all monographs have been published with leading publishers. Concretely, I review Friedrich Kratochwil's (2018) 'Praxis: On Acting and Knowing', Magnus Ekengren's (2018) 'Explaining the European Union's Foreign Policy: A Practice Theory of Translocal Action', and Catherine Goetze's (2017) 'The Distinction of Peace'.⁸ Taken together, the books – or rather their authors – show that (meta-)theorists, scholar-practitioners, and Bourdieusian researchers practise theory,⁹ and that the authors relate practice to theory through thick and inductive theorising and reflexivity, perhaps in their search for disciplinary prestige.

On the basis of my Bourdieusian beliefs, I assume that we are all capital-, esteem-, or prestige-seeking agents.¹⁰ However, as the list of the sociological terms rightly indicates, it is difficult to distinguish between them and to define prestige, as even sociologists admit.¹¹ For the purpose of this article, however, I understand achieved prestige as the steady assignment of esteem due to occupational or, in this case, academic accomplishments. In that sense, it is different from social status or highly visible positions in academic hierarchies. But it presupposes social and even symbolic capital in the form of

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8. Friedrich Kratochwil, *Praxis: On Acting and Knowing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Magnus Ekengren, *Explaining the European Union's Foreign Policy: A Practice Theory of Translocal Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2018); Catherine Goetze, *The Distinction of Peace: A Social Analysis of Peacebuilding* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2017).
 9. Critics might issue two objections. First, they might argue that I present only my image of the authors. I do not disagree completely. The concept of the implied author, as used in literary studies, allows for differences between the implied and 'real' empirical author. The former is created through performances of writing and reading. However, I do provide biographical and methodological data to substantiate my typology, and to approach the authors as social theorists, scholar-practitioners, and Bourdieusian researchers. Second, a critic might point out that some figures (such as Rebecca Adler-Nissen) qualify as practice theorists, scholar-practitioners, and field researchers. Again, I do not disagree completely. However, I still believe that seeing different authorships and their prestige tells us something about the logics within practice theory.
 10. I am no exception to the claim and my observations of dynamics practice theory motivated me to write this piece. For examples of how familiarity with academic and other practices can be turned into a source of analytical strength, see Trine Villumsen Berling, 'Stabilising Crises: Assembling NATO Defense College Expertise about Libya and Ukraine', in *Assembling Exclusive Expertise: Knowledge, Ignorance, and Conflict Resolution in the Global South*, eds. Anna Leander and Ole Wæver (New York: Routledge, 2018), 93–109; Carol Cohn, 'Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals', *Signs* 12, no. 4 (1987): 687–718.
 11. Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (New York, Greenwood 1986), 241–58.

recurring positive acknowledgments in social networks.¹² As indicated, prestige is the possession of durable esteem. It can also become visible in formal awards or prizes. Yet, I would like to state clearly that I am not interested in ‘measuring’ the actually gained prestige when I discuss and interpret the works in greater detail in what follows.

Who practises practice theory (and how)? (Meta-)Theorists, scholar-practitioners, (Bourdieuian) researchers

For many, Friedrich Kratochwil, the author of the first book under discussion, prepared and accompanied the practice turn due to interests in knowledge, pragmatic philosophy and abductive, problem-focused theorising.¹³ Kratochwil made a career in the United States before he accepted chairs at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich, and later at the prestigious European University Institute in Florence (2003–2011). He wrote mainly as a theorist but cooperated with highly influential scholar-practitioners (I will later define the term) such as John Ruggie, a regime theorist, civil servant to the UN, and frequent contributor to the most influential journal *International Organization*. Yet, the cooperation developed before Ruggie worked for the UN, and Kratochwil always and deliberately kept a distance from policy-makers, or academics who sought to advise them.

Kratochwil, as well as Emanuel Adler, can be approached as an example for theorists who provide philosophical or (meta-)theoretical engagements with practice theory.¹⁴ He offers no direct engagements with practices and shows little interest in practice theorists who have turned towards ethnographic research methods. Kratochwil rather revisits the themes of acting and knowing on the basis of re-readings of the philosophies of Aristotle and Hume.¹⁵ Hence Kratochwil discusses classical and disciplinary contributions to theory to enrich our understanding of post-Cold War international relations, and relations between theory and praxis/practice in practice theory.

Before turning to Kratochwil’s considerations of theory, we need to see that he sticks to the term praxis instead of practice. Therewith Kratochwil makes a case for the virtues of practical judgment, in distinction to foci on practices, or unconscious cognitive or bodily performances based on tacit knowledge.¹⁶ In other words, any actor has reflexive

12. Social capital in academia is documented in central network positions, influence on research, citations, see Trine Villumsen Berling and Christian Bueger, ‘Security Expertise: An Introduction’, in *Security Expertise: Practice, Power, Responsibility*, eds. Trine Villumsen Berling and Christian Bueger (New York: Routledge, 2015), 1–18, 10.

13. Jörg Friedrichs and Friedrich Kratochwil, ‘On Acting and Knowing: How Pragmatism Can Advance International Relations Research and Methodology’, *International Organization* 63, no. 4 (2009): 701–31.

14. Others include Emmanuel Adler, *World Ordering: A Social Theory of Cognitive Evolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Silviya Lerchner and Mervyn Frost, *Practice Theory and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

15. Kavi Joseph Abraham and Yehonatan Abramson, ‘A Pragmatist Vocation for International Relations: The (Global) Public and its Problems’, *European Journal of International Relations* 23, no. 1 (2017): 31.

16. Friedrich Kratochwil, ‘Making Sense of “International Practices”’, in *International Practices*, eds. Emmanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 36–61.

capacities and uses them in action. Still, in elaborations on practical and theoretical thinking, and in view of the idea of academic practices as just one variation of any practice, he maintains a special status for theorising. 'Is it not' he asks 'the task of the scholar to play the devil's advocate rather than affirming what has been said?'¹⁷

Yet, and even though Kratochwil accuses others of remaining vague on this point, his answer to the question as to whether theorising forms an ontological part of international practices or not remains equally vague. Should we as students of IR maintain a distance because theorising is different, or rescue the critical capacities of theorising? I think that the question is critical, not only because it touches on widely debated praxis-theory relations,¹⁸ but also because it relates to another puzzle that remains from Kratochwil's book. Eventually, and reformulating his pragmatist concerns, Kratochwil joins the chorus of those who oppose scholastic reasoning in our discipline. Yet, he does so in a highly scholastic way.

Hence, Kratochwil's (meta-)theoretical argument may be seen as an attempt to relate praxis to theory through deep theorising. He addresses primarily theory-leaning practice theorists or established IR theorists with different affiliations, and I assume that he also seeks prestige in these circles (he creates a language barrier that holds off others). The burgeoning discussion of his book¹⁹ indicates that his effort might be successful, and that our discipline (or at least parts of it) still values (meta-)theoretical arguments. Apparently, it makes a difference how well they are done and who develops them; when they are developed by controversial but well-connected figures such as Kratochwil, discussion if not earning of disciplinary prestige is likely.

The author of the second book under discussion served as a Swedish diplomat and Deputy Director at the Policy Planning Unit of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs before he turned to academia. This progression is evident in his use of practical experiences and appreciation of micro-sociological dynamics in his explanations of the European Union's foreign policy.

Ekengren can thus be approached as a scholar-practitioner, or 'practitioner-scholar'²⁰ and member of a highly influential group within practice theory and IR at large.²¹ For

17. Friedrich Kratochwil, 'Rules, Norms, and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning', in *International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 425.

18. Kavi Joseph Abraham and Yehonatan Abramson, 'A Pragmatist Vocation for International Relations', 26–48; Raymond Duvall and Arjun Chowdhury, 'Practices of Theory', in *International Practices*, eds. Vincent Pouliot and Emanuel Adler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 335–54.

19. Christian Reus-Smit, 'Praxis: On Acting and Knowing. By Friedrich Kratochwil. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 552p. \$135.00 cloth', *Perspectives on Politics* 17, no. 3 (2019): 828–30.

20. Their presence and influence questions dichotomous, academic practice theory talk (academics/practice theorists vs. 'the practitioners').

21. The critical IR theorist Robert Cox, may be included in the list of scholar-practitioners, see Leonie Holthaus and Jens Steffek, 'Ideologies of International Organization: Exploring the Trading Zones between Theory and Practice', in *Theory as Ideology: The Politics of Knowledge in International Relations*, eds. Sebastian Schindler and Benjamin Martill (New York: Routledge, 2020).

example, consider Iver Neumann and Rebecca Adler-Nissen (former Scandinavian diplomats and influential practice theorists), Severine Autesserre (a widely read and cited peace-building practitioner and scholar)²² or Christian Bueger (a practice theorist who turned himself into an expert on maritime security).²³ They all hold degrees in the social sciences, publish in journals that discuss international politics, and possess considerable insider knowledge due to diplomatic experience, policy advice, or work for civil society or intergovernmental organisations.²⁴ They also possess epistemic power,²⁵ as they often influence research questions.²⁶ Scholar-practitioners are thus in a unique position. They hardly face problems of field access and are approached by publishers in unusually friendly ways.²⁷

Ekengren relates theory to practice by reworking (his) experience, and he does so – in methodological terms – in a highly sophisticated and transparent manner. He sides with students of Bourdieu, who all value ethnographic approaches, inductive theorising, and emergent ‘bottom-up’ studies of the EU.²⁸ Ekengren’s account builds on an historical case study, and a case study developed through personal involvement and interviews. In the footnotes and appendix, Ekengren tells about his research journey, the methods used, and even his questionnaire. Still, he argues that the study of practices can provide explanations and theories, even in the case of European Union (EU) foreign policy, which has so far been studied in a ‘top-down’ manner. Based on his inductive studies, Ekengren identifies different versions of European translocal action, depending on the EU representatives’ social recognition in the humanitarian or development field, and creativity in the use of available tools. According to his rather positive narrative, the EU moved from

22. Severine Autesserre, *Peaceland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

23. Christian Bueger, ‘Experts in an Adventure with Pirates: A Story of Somali Piracy Expertise’, in *Assembling Exclusive Expertise: Knowledge, Ignorance and Conflict Resolution in the Global South*, eds. Anna Leander and Ole Wæver (New York: Routledge, 2019), 40–56.

24. Bradley Parks and Alena Stern, ‘In-And-Outers and Moonlighters: An Evaluation of the Impact of Policy-Making Exposure on IR Scholarship’, *International Studies Perspectives* 15, no. 1 (2014): 90.

25. Joseph Nye, ‘Bridging the Gap between Theory and Policy’, *Political Psychology* 29, no. 4 (2008): 600.

26. Thomas Biersteker, ‘Connecting Scholarly Expertise to International Policy Practice at the United Nations’, in *The Politics of Expertise in International Organizations: How International Bureaucracies Produce and Mobilize Knowledge*, ed. Annabelle Littoz-Monnet (New York: Routledge, 2017), 111–27.

27. Iver B. Neumann, for instance, was invited to submit a conference paper to an ISA journal, see Iver B. Neumann, ‘To Be a Diplomat’, *International Studies Perspectives* 6, no. 1 (2015), Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229727064_To_be_a_Diplomat. Last accessed December 16, 2019. The prevalence of scholar-practitioners also indicated that IR, as other disciplines, is perhaps much closer to the practices it seeks to analyse than is often assumed. For a conceptual elaboration, see Gil Eyal, ‘Spaces between Fields’, in *Bourdieu and Historical Analysis*, ed. Phillip S. Gorski (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013), 158–82.

28. Ekengren, *Explaining the European Union's Foreign Policy*, 29.

taking no action on the ground to being a standard-setter for translocal practices. Ekengren re-describes practices in ways that are presumably insightful for both academics and practitioners.

Ekengren's search for prestige is a complex one, because he also speaks to different scientific communities and practitioners. Within practice theory, his argument may be seen as an attempt to seek prestige through emphasis of his (former) connection to policy. With the help of a Bourdieusian vocabulary, he reflects about his different social roles (or split habitus, as Bourdieu would say) and boundary-crossings. At the edge of practice theory and the specialised literature on the EU, he develops the theory in practice theory when he claims explaining EU foreign policy. Finally, Ekengren develops messages for academics and non-academic communities, and continues the well-known critique of scholastic thinking about the EU. Yet, the fact that he does not issue much criticism of the analysed practices²⁹ shows that he, in contrast to the implications raised by his methodology, hardly searches for prestige among critical scholars, much unlike the following author, who is acutely aware of scholar-practitioners' prestige and their ability to gain academic recognition because of prior practical experience (in Bourdieusian terms, conversions of capital).³⁰

Catherine Goetze, the author of the last book under discussion, studied IR in Europe and made a career in the UK before she accepted a post at the University of Tasmania. Goetze has been influenced by Bourdieu and practice theory for a long time.³¹ She may be approached as an example for female practice theorists who appreciate the critical sociology of Bourdieu, interpret him in a non-structuralist manner, and provide studies based on substantial empirical research.³² Indeed, even more than Ekengren, Goetze attempts to advance methodological (self-)reflexivity and concept-guided analysis of practices.

At the beginning, Goetze introduces her understanding of the humanitarian field but simultaneously reminds us that fields are never discovered; they are also constructed by researchers through field visits, readings, and desk work.³³ For Goetze, academic practices such as writing are similar to practices such as painting: they are exploratory and more often than not, intentions and assumptions need to be altered in the process.

29. Apparently, different people entertain different relations to practice, and this impacts their options for critique – there is no homogenous 'we'. See also Sebastian Schindler and Tobias Wille, 'How Can We Criticize International Practices?' *International Studies Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2019): 1014–24.

30. Goetze, *The Distinction of Peace*, 128.

31. Catherine Goetze and Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, 'The "Statebuilding Habitus": UN Staff and the Cultural Dimension of Liberal Intervention in Kosovo', in *State-building and State-Formation. The Political Sociology of Intervention*, ed. Berit Bliesemann de Guevara (London: Routledge, 2012), 198–213.

32. Other authors may include Anna Leander, Trine Villumsen Berling, and Monique Beerli (Leander, 'Thinking Tools,' 11–27; Berling, 'Stabilising crises', 93–109; Monique Beerli, 'Saving the Saviors: Security Practices and Professional Struggles in the Humanitarian Space', *International Political Sociology* 12, no. 1 (2018): 70–87). See also Holthaus, 'Pierre Bourdieu und die Möglichkeiten der Kritik', 67–87.

33. Goetze, *The Distinction of Peace*, 31.

However, weaving together data gained from historical and biographical analysis, surveys, etc., Goetze then provides much 'hard data' to specify the objective relations within the humanitarian field. According to her analysis, the humanitarian field is predominantly staffed by graduates of elite universities and shaped by upper-middle class and liberal values.³⁴ It reflects structures of global domination.³⁵

The presentation of the book implies that Goetze seeks prestige in IR practice theory by providing a classical Bourdieusian study. If one considers the Bourdieusian influence on the theoretical part of IR practice theory, the demonstration of the added value of Bourdieusian concepts for analysing practices appears to be a productive strategy in this regard. However, some observations caution against this assumption. First, and even if Bourdieu is constantly cited, the added value of his research programme, as compared to American pragmatism, remains contested. Second, a Bourdieusian research logic presupposes many resources, including theoretical fluency, time, and money for empirical studies, etc., and much work to weave the different insights together. In this sense, it appears to be a complicated and time-consuming strategy to gain prestige. Finally, the strategy is not free of risk. Bourdieusian research, as performed by Goetze, is empirical and presupposes certain recognition for this quality. But the re-evaluation of theoretical and empirical research is an ongoing process in IR at large and perhaps also in IR practice theory.

In addition, Goetze's emphasis on her own reflexivity implies that she also seeks to speak to critical scholars. Among them, the scientific virtue of reflexivity is defined as self-awareness about the author's own role as a knowledge-producer, and it is much appreciated.³⁶ It is seen as a means to control the social forces that impact academic knowledge production, and this view can be traced back to Bourdieu as well.³⁷ However, and even though I side with those who view reflexivity as a scientific virtue, I still find that demonstrations of reflexivity can be seen as prestige-seeking behaviour. Eventually, such demonstrations involve the accentuation of accomplishments according to the value-systems of academic (sub-)groups.

Conclusion

Practice theory is well known as a burgeoning and pluralistic research programme. Yet, if one explores IR practice theory with the help of its own vocabulary, one can observe

34. Ibid., 8.

35. In distinction to Christensen, Goetze does not recognise reflexivity as part of the professionalised practices in the humanitarian field. This may also be a result of her methodology. While Goetze uses a range of tools, she eschews methods (interviews, observation) that create proximity to practice. Michael Christensen, 'Interpreting the Organizational Practices of North American Democracy Assistance', *International Political Sociology* 11, no. 2 (2017): 148–65.

36. Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and its Implications for the Study of World Politics* (: Routledge, 2010), 157–9.

37. Pierre Bourdieu, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Karl Marlton, 'Pierre Bourdieu and the Epistemic Conditions of Social Scientific Research', *Space and Culture* 6, no. 1: 52–65.

some internal processes and dynamics. It becomes apparent that (meta-)theorists, scholar-practitioners, and Bourdieusian researchers all contribute to the remaking of practice theory. They all relate practice to theory but do so differently, through deep theorising, reworking of experience through inductive theorising, and reflexive conceptualisation. The different academic practices underline the observation of pluralism within practice theory and indicate that the authors seek prestige in practice theory and in other, neighbouring scientific communities. Prestige may be defined as durable esteem because of occupational accomplishments. I found that (meta-)theorists and scholar-practitioners have occupied special positions and enjoyed much disciplinary prestige so far. The recognition of Bourdieusian researchers appears less secure. Generally, Bourdieusian research depends on the availability and mastery of many academic resources and virtues. In IR, it additionally depends on the further appreciation of empirical research as compared to (grand) theorising.

PhD students and other academics may be attracted by practice theory's invitation to conduct substantial, micro-sociological research. Yet, depending on the research area and actors, but in contrast to scholar-practitioners, it is likely that they face difficulties when they try to gain field access. This implies a need to reconsider the financialisation and duration of dissertations, as well as what counts as 'data': no one can complete a PhD in three years if she, or he is expected to do field research and conduct and interpret interviews with persons who have more material and symbolic power than the interviewer. Furthermore, if field access cannot be organised because, for instance, an organisation does not respond to interview requests, this is 'data' as well, and tells a great deal about the organisation. These experiences and insights should be translatable in our disciplinary discourses as well.³⁸

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ORCID iD

Leonie Holthaus  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3771-7139>

38. For a creative example in ethnology see Tobias Denskus, 'Performing Peace-building – Conferences, Rituals and the Role of Ethnographic Research,' *IDS Bulletin* 45, no. 2–3 (2014): 18–28.

Type de manuscrit : Recension d'ouvrage

Qui pratique la théorie de la pratique (et comment)? (Méta-)théoriciens, praticiens-chercheurs, chercheurs (bourdieusiens) et prestige social à l'Université

Résumé

La théorie de la pratique est devenue un programme de recherche en vogue dans les Relations internationales (RI) européennes et canadiennes, où elle est présentée comme pluraliste. Elle promet la fin de la grande théorisation monolithique et de l'analyse déconnectée du réel. Mais le caractère pluraliste de la théorie de la pratique combinée à ses promesses méthodologiques soulève une question: qui pratique la théorie de la pratique (et comment) ? Je tente d'y répondre en évoquant trois ouvrages différents, représentatifs et ayant une portée sociologique majeure. Sur cette base, je définis trois (idéaux-)types d'auteurs: le (méta-)théoricien, le praticien-chercheur et le chercheur bourdieusien. Je démontre que les auteurs refondent les justifications théoriques de la théorie de la pratique en liant la pratique à la théorie de différentes manières, notamment au moyen de « la théorisation profonde », de la reformulation de l'expérience dans la théorisation inductive et de la conceptualisation réflexive. Je délaisse quelque peu la position immuable des (méta-)théoriciens et je soutiens que les différentes pratiques universitaires indiquent que les auteurs sont en quête de prestige au sein de la théorie de la pratique et des communautés scientifiques qui y sont associées. Dans cette optique, je conçois le prestige comme une estime durable acquise grâce à des réussites d'ordre professionnel. Enfin, je pose la question de l'impact que les nouvelles exigences scientifiques de la théorie de la pratique peuvent avoir sur les jeunes universitaires, moins bien établis.

Mots-clés

théorie de la pratique, prestige, méthodologie

Tipo de manuscrito: reseña

¿Quién emplea la teoría de la práctica (y cómo)? (Meta)teóricos, académicos-profesionales, investigadores bourdieusianos y prestigio social en la academia

Resumen

La teoría de la práctica se ha convertido en un programa de investigación habitual y claramente pluralista en las relaciones internacionales (RRII) de Europa y Canadá. Promete acabar con las grandes teorías monolíticas y el análisis de salón. Ahora bien, al combinar el carácter pluralista de la teoría de la práctica y las promesas metodológicas, emerge la cuestión siguiente: ¿quién trabaja con la teoría de la práctica (y cómo)? Este artículo aborda esta cuestión analizando tres libros diferentes, representativos e importantes desde el punto de vista sociológico. Basándose en ellos se describen tres tipos (ideales) de autoría: la (meta)teórica, la académica-profesional y la del investigador bourdieusiano. Se muestra que los autores reconstruyen las afirmaciones de la teoría de la práctica relacionando práctica y teoría de diferentes maneras, tales como la 'deep theorising', reelaborando la experiencia en la teoría inductiva y la conceptualización reflexiva. El artículo pone menos énfasis en la persistente posición de los (meta)teóricos y argumenta, en cambio, que las diferentes prácticas académicas indican que los autores buscan prestigio dentro de la teoría de la práctica y las comunidades científicas colindantes. Con este propósito, se aborda

el prestigio como estima duradera debida a logros ocupacionales. Finalmente, se cuestiona qué tipo de impacto pueden llegar a tener las nuevas exigencias científicas de la teoría de la práctica en los académicos jóvenes y menos consolidados.

Palabras clave

teoría de la práctica, prestigio, metodología