CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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Clickclickclick
Clocking everyday life
Clogging everyday life
Why do we cross the street at a green light?
Normative colours
Routinized walking
Routines watermarked
At what point do droplets start forming a sea?
At what point does practice tip into
… this?

Friederike Landau-Donnelly

Resulting from years of active debates among the contributors, and constructive dialogues with reviewers and the publisher, this book presents a bundle of essays advancing practice theory through doing it empirically, reflecting on it theoretically and engaging with it more poetically. Our dialogue was prompted, in particular, by our search for what practice theory could mean for our critical and often activist engagement with geography and planning. All chapters thus yield a message for practice theory, albeit with much diversity and intensity. Here, we present our problematization and synthesis.

In the past few decades, practice theory has garnered increased academic attention in disciplines such as organization studies (Whittington 2011; Nicolini 2012, 2016; Tsoukas 2017), anthropology/sociology (Rouse 2007), educational sciences (Kemmis *et al.* 2013), international relations (Cornut 2015) and the philosophy of science (Soler *et al.* 2014). In the discipline of geography, scholars such as Simonsen (2016), Everts, Lahr-Kurten and Watson (2011) and Jones and Murphy (2011) have productively engaged with practice theory. However, taken as a whole, the "practice turn" (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina & von Savigny 2001) is yet to take hold in

human geography and planning. Scholars working from relational and flat ontologies have more often found inspiration in the "gathering" (i.e. co-constitutive) perspective of assemblage theory and actor–network theory (ANT) (McFarlane 2011; Latour 2005) than in the "conjunctive" perspective of practice theory (Tsoukas 2017; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2019). In particular, the consideration of how circulating and transforming entities come together and differentiate within spatial phenomena has been influential in the "translocal" perspective that has undergirded much relational and flat thinking in geography (Cumbers, Routledge & Nativel 2008; McFarlane 2009). Although there is no scope for a detailed review and analysis in this chapter, we as the editors speculate that an important reason why this occurs is that former approaches are more attuned to questions of (spatial) inequality and difference.

Endowing practice approaches with a sensitivity for difference and inequality presents a key challenge. As pointed out by Schapendonk (Chapter 6 in this volume), practice approaches sometimes carry the unspoken assumption that activities such as cycling or boxing (Carlsson, Chapter 2 in this volume) are simply shared by those enrolled in it. However, as Schapendonk's example of cycling together with his friend in the university town of Nijmegen in the Netherlands highlights, such a view does not do justice to the differences in power and rights that people sharing the same space and the same activity can be subject to. Whereas cycling in the wrong direction down a one-way street for Schapendonk, a white Dutch citizen, merely entailed a small chance to get fined, for his friend Maggi, an asylum seeker of colour without papers, this offence could be a "one-way ticket to the migrant detention centre". Small differences in time, place and actors' positionality and embodiment may make a huge difference to how a practice unfolds and impacts (Tsoukas 2017).

Many of the chapters in this volume have resulted from exchanges in our departmental reading group on practice theories since 2019. This group brought together those of us already working with practice theories and those who were more sceptical of its usefulness, or new to the framework altogether. During our conservations, we have thus taken the opportunity to discuss what a turn to practice(s) has to offer geography and its related disciplines of urban studies and spatial planning. Although some of us still are sceptical, this book departs from the assumption that practice theories – to be considered in their conceptual, epistemological and practical polysemy – offer novel possibilities for engaged and societally relevant spatial theory and practice. The editors' and authors' disciplinary and theoretical backgrounds differ, including political scientists, sociologists, human geographers and planners. Against this background of scholarly diversity, the

collection of chapters is an itemization of what practice theories *can* "be". As such, the chapters in this book unpack diverse and potentially dissonant understandings of the scope and value of the term "practices". We give space to those tensions that might arise from different degrees of attunement to, or affiliations with, longer-standing traditions gathered under the term "practice theory".

What unites many of the chapters is a concern with the spatio-temporal dimensions of practices: the (re)making of past, current and future urban places and home spaces and the translocality and transnationality of university hierarchies, world sports, international development and the treatment of refugees. Other chapters raise the question of how to conduct research from epistemological and ontological perspectives that do these dimensions justice. In our approach to practices, we are careful not to reify them, and to ontologize them only with hesitance and care. In addition, although we acknowledge different strands of practice thinking, we do not consider them as schools or in opposition. Instead, we are committed to considering how practices – variably interpreted – articulate, in particular, political, social and spatial differences (Landau-Donnelly and Pohl, Chapter 5 in this volume; Landau, Pohl & Roskamm 2021). This allows us to provide novel insights into what practices mean, and how they emerge, institutionalize and thus structure socio-spatial life. From a critical perspective, we question how practices become challenged, unhinged and rebooted, thereby dislocating relationships between people and places.

To introduce the book, we first sketch the landscape of practice thinking. Thereafter, we discuss how the concept of practices thus far has been applied by selected geographers. We signal an overly instrumental way of conceptualizing practice, in which practices merely present circulating elements in the translocal "gathering" of spatial phenomena (McFarlane 2011). We suggest that instead a practice-ontological approach can bring new insights on place-making and the social ordering of space. Having discussed how the discipline of geography can benefit from a deeper engagement with practice approaches, we turn to the question of how practice approaches can benefit from an engagement with spatial theory. In this section, we point to a number of blind spots in practice approaches when it comes to the heterogeneity of place and how these matter for the situatedness, emergence and development of a "nexus of practices". We argue that spatial theory, particularly insight from relational geography, can help practice theorists to better grasp large phenomena and questions regarding inequality and power relations. Against this background, we first call for further dialogue between practice approaches and relational spatial theories, then introduce the individual chapters in that light.

GRASPING PRACTICE APPROACHES

The term "practice" has played an important role in academic thought and theory-building since Ludwig Wittgenstein and Martin Heidegger overhauled the Cartesian understanding of the world based on essentialized and separate notions of objects, forces and properties. As indicated, this book delves into a wide range of practices, including drinking wine in Zoom sessions, boxing in the Olympics, reforming university career paths, development aid and deportation activism. However, before doing so it is necessary to define what we consider practice approaches to "be".

In brief, practice approaches stand for a view, theory and method, in which the world is shaped through what entities *do* (with or to) each other in complex time/space constellations. That is, subjects and/or objects are mutually drawn into practices to form ways of doing and living, and where these forms gain a certain ontological autonomy (Sandberg & Tsoukas 2019; de Haan, Chapter 8 in this volume). This means that there is no essence to objects or practices other than their relational constitution and performance in the context of practice. For example, as shown by Landau-Donnelly and Pohl in this volume, offices, cafés and public squares reproduce urban life only insofar as they are part of everyday practices. Landau-Donnelly and Pohl discuss how practices in these sites were dislocated when the pandemic hit and restrictions on mobility were enforced, so that cities "no longer worked". In addition to this non-essentialist view on the world, practice approaches assume that it is in the fusing and gathering implied in such practices that objects are shaped and evolve. Objects thus gain capacities within the context of certain practices, which may then carry over to other contexts, practices and objects of different kinds. Such transitions and transformations are portrayed by de Haan (this volume), for example, regarding how navigation skills moved from bodies to GPS and accounting practices become inscribed in spreadsheets. Altogether, these assumptions amount to a processual perspective on the socio-spatial construction of reality, in which, fundamentally, nothing comes before practice. In Kirsten Simonsen's (2007: 168) words: "Nothing in the social world is prior to human practice: not consciousness, ideas or meaning; not structures or mechanisms; and not discourses, assemblages or networks."

In sum, practices – including skills, practical knowledge, capacities, embodied movements, gestures and behaviours – shape the world with their myriad of different objects and subjects. A practice view thus gives rise to multiplicity. There is no *one* world, no meta-practice and no overarching spatial imperative (see Landau, Pohl & Roskamm 2021). Rather, practices present worlds on their own (Law 2015). From an epistemological perspective, whatever one considers to be this "world" can be meaningfully interpreted only by becoming part of it, by co-practising *this* version of "world".

As a result, many practice theorists advocate that researchers make practices their central conceptual unit of enquiry and that the methodology applied be appropriate to capture the accomplishment of the practice in question (Shove 2017; Nicolini 2012).

Although practice theorists often begin their enquiry by uncovering the world of a specific practice (Nicolini 2012), they face practised worlds that are extending without end. As Kramsch discusses (Chapter 7 in this volume), there are only practical limits to practice research. Practices' limitless nature is illustrated by Wittgenstein's example of playing the flute (Nicolini, Gherardi & Yanow 2016). The constitution of objects and subjects involved in the practice of flute-playing builds on and draws in aspects of other worlds, such as the gravity involved in toolmaking and the physical and chemical characteristics of air and bodies in the construction of musical instruments. When entities mesh and evolve together in forming a practice, there are all kinds of concrete relations (or "nexuses") between practices through which worlds emerge, connect and temporarily solidify. For example, through the embodied act of playing the flute, the flute itself becomes a part of making music, just as the flute-playing body establishes the practice of music-making with the instrument. Although flute-playing comprises a world in itself, which can only ever be fully understood from within its own world (if that is even possible), it can exist only in connection to other practice worlds. This idea is captured by the practice-specific "site ontology" (Schatzki 2001). Site ontology provides a lens on reality by distinguishing sites (where practices are enacted), spaces (where practices are materially enabled and constituted) and landscapes (where connections, circulations and "nexuses" evolve fuelling spaces and sites; see Carlsson [2022]).

GEOGRAPHY'S INSTRUMENTAL AND GENERIC UNDERSTANDINGS OF PRACTICE

As our overview shows, practice approaches emphasize materiality in a concrete sense, and thereby underline the impact of place, space and the emplaced nature of social life. As Jonathan Everts (2016: 50) puts it: "[O]ne of the central tenets of practice theory is that social practices are always situated practices; they do not transpire in a void but are situated in time and space." In theory, the centrality of materiality, time and space chimes well with the focus in human geography on how places are constituted, experienced, sensed and contested. Arguably, the idiographic tradition in geography, with a keen interest in the development of tangible places and differentiated spaces, has pursued practice thinking before convention. Much geographical work on cities, regions and states has focused on how concrete activities

have been shaping local places and vice versa, in unique yet interconnected ways. Empirically, this has yielded an impressive amount of practical knowledge about places and their situatedness all over the world. Conceptually, this has contributed to a heterogeneous body of theory that discusses place and space based on processualism and relationality. Doreen Massey (2005), in her landmark publication *For Space*, explains how such a radical, processual understanding of space provides us with a contingent, political perspective on space as a sphere of possibilities and negotiation. The latter, in Massey's view, stems from worlds in which multiple "trajectories" come together in places, forming a "throwntogetherness" that gives rise to new developments and rearrangements in and of space.

This opens different pathways: on the one hand, an emphasis on contingency and possibility can interlink practice theories with a flat ontological outlook on the world (Schatzki 2016). On the other hand, the lack of essence to practices may draw on so-called negative ontologies, revolving around antagonism, the lack of foundations or grounds (Landau, Pohl & Roskamm 2021). Despite tensions between these ontological positions, what can be summarized along the lines of relational thought about practice and space is the theoretical rejection of "natural" forces of space- or place-making. Similar to practice approaches, relational geographies thus emphasize the radical contingency and potentiality of situated socio-spatial life. Moreover, the emphasis on practices' malleability is grounded and encountered in a practical, phenomenological understanding of the "world", which helps to consider the concrete and practical implications that practices have on everyday life and space.

As we have shown, practice approaches and geographical theory and research, particularly of the relational kind, have many common denominators. However, thus far, geographers are yet to develop a comprehensive theorization of how practices are relationally constituted and come to matter in geographical settings (Carlsson 2022). In geographical scholarship, the notion of practice tends to be used either in an instrumental way (i.e. as a circulating entity impacting a discreet place) or as a more generic, loosely defined term (i.e. informing a theoretical framework). The more instrumental use can be observed in geographical research on globalization/localization and in "translocal" approaches. For instance, in his work on globalization and place in Colombia, Arturo Escobar (2001) found that local groups were highly involved in shaping transnational development aid. Escobar (2001: 155), argues that researchers should therefore make "visible the dynamic encounter of practices originating in many cultural and temporal matrices". Although Escobar mentions practices, he did not take a practice-ontological view. Rather, he sees practices as one ingredient in the place-making of local groups, in addition to "constructing identities" and "social

relations". Colin McFarlane's translocal perspective also tends towards an instrumental use of practice – that is, as one element in translocal assemblages. The latter are defined as "composites of place-based social movements exchanging ideas, knowledge, practices, materials and resources across sites" (McFarlane 2009: 562). A similarly instrumental view can be seen in the tracing of mobile practices in trajectories shaping "relational places" (Anderson 2012) and contributions to "articulation" (Featherstone 2011) and work on place-based framing and development (Pierce, Martin & Murphy 2011).

What these works show, nevertheless, is that many geographical studies consider practices as constitutive of place-making. This rhymes with Massey's relational theorization of space. Massey (2005: 9) argues that space is a "product of relations-between: relations that are necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out". However, the understanding of practices applied is often instrumental and generic. One sees practices as "just" another element of place-making, alongside affect, knowledge, ideas and identities. In conceiving practices in this way, geographers do not truly make use of a practice ontology. In such an ontology, practices, rather than mobile entities, constitute the mode through which worlds/places are made and experienced.

Together with Everts, Lahr-Kurten and Watson (2011), we argue that the forgoing of a practice ontology is a missed opportunity, for various reasons. First, a geographically attuned practice theory helps to unravel practices to be co-constitutive of skills, meanings and materialities. This can shed light not only on what is happening in places but also on the generation of certain effects, such as social inequality, injustice and polarization. Second, a more geographically minded practice theory helps to nuance the site-ontological focus on "material arrangements", which helps us understand the temporal fixation of organization, as well as political and social order across space. Third, as Lamers, Van der Duim and Spaargaren (2017) point out, practice theory can contribute to a better understanding of the spatial embeddedness and trajectories of practices, which also requires an interest in the role of emotions and collective feelings.

Hence, in its search for a critical, political understanding of the world, we argue that geographers and other spatial scholars should delve more methodically into the question of how practices have come to perform, and continue to perform, as ensembles of skills, understandings, meanings, engagements, and so on in diverse and connected socio-material settings. Changing places and studying what changes happen within and between them in return means changing the understanding of how practices shape places and their activities. What we need to remember, indeed, is that practices do not take shape solely as entities that travel and land into places. Crucially, practices shape places, including their relations to other places. Practices, in short, are

utterly spatial, and thus political, too. In the next section, we discuss how practice approaches may benefit from taking the spatial and political dimensions of practices better into account if they are to further the enquiry into socio-spatial transformation, emancipation and equity.

THE POTENTIAL OF COMBINING SPATIAL THEORIES WITH PRACTICE APPROACHES

Our argument here is that geographers and other spatial scholars have much to gain from using practice theory. As spatial scholars ourselves, we are convinced that practice approaches will benefit from a deeper engagement with geographical understandings of place and space. Until recently, many practice scholars have been predominantly invested in conceptualizations of the socially internal composition of practices (or the insides of practices). The occupation with elements of practice is not surprising. If practices are the basic "unit of inquiry" (Nicolini 2012), the question of what practices are made of is an important one to answer. A focus on practices conceptualized as "scripted" and routinized through combinations of, for instance, meanings, materialities and competences has generated important insights into how patterns of consumption change (Shove, Pantzar & Watson 2012), how technological innovations take hold in medicine and how public health policies can change behaviour more effectively by taking better account of the meaning of a practice such as smoking (Blue *et al.* 2016). However, the focus on specific practices has also led to the critique that practice approaches are unable to account for large phenomena, such as climate change, border regimes and international systems of trade.

In the last few years, practice theorists have responded to this critique by expanding their conceptual and methodological frameworks. Theodore Schatzki's development of the notion of a site ontology, based on "sites of practice", "spaces" and "ecologies", with an emphasis on the key aspect of "socio-material arrangements" in shaping connections and order, is one example of such theoretical developments (Schatzki 2005). The notions of "suffusing" and "threading through" (Hui, Schatzki & Shove 2017) constitute another set of theoretical advances aimed at understanding the interconnection and dynamics between (constellations of) practices. In terms of methodology, Davide Nicolini (2012) has elaborated a reflexive lens of "zooming in" and "zooming out". Zooming in aims to unravel the local accomplishments of practices, examining the precise workings of all contributing elements and their connection to other, more distant activities (Nicolini 2012: 219). The goal of zooming out is to trail connections and sketch the nexus of which local practice bundles are part. Through an iterative process of zooming in

and out, the researcher becomes able to identify how that which is local contributes to the generation of broader effects (Nicolini 2012: 219).

These advances do allow practice theorists to gain a better grasp on large phenomena. However, as argued by Geiselhart, Runkel, Schäfer and Schmid (Chapter 9) and Ernste (Chapter 11) in this volume, practice approaches still lack attention to the spatio-temporal dimensions of practices and the places that they shape and are shaped by multiple practices. Site ontology has clearly added useful connectivity and interactivity to the understanding of (bundles of) practices. However, this largely holds on to a compositional scope, adding an external dimension to the internal one. What remains underexposed, hence, is the fundamentally ungrounded aspect of practices – that is, the "conjunctive" shaping of unique worlds that defy theoretical and methodological universality (Tsoukas 2017).

Put more concretely, by applying site ontology in this way, practice approaches may fail to account for the conflictual and heterogeneous situated processes through which practices are made and developed (see Carlsson [Chapter 2], and Munas and Smith [Chapter 4], in this volume). From a geographical perspective, such gathering is articulated from co-presence, encounters, clashes and differences (e.g. Valentine 2008; McFarlane 2011; Wilson 2017). As Massey (2005) explains so well in *For Space*, these gatherings build material, political and ethical connectivities and interdependences from "local" to "global" levels. "Smooth" practices come with spatio-temporal dimensions evened out, linearized, domesticated, with sparks of othering and clashing flickering from the beyond. To summarize, the nexus that Hui, Schatzki and Shove (2017) refer to emerges through *geographically situated* sites, spaces, landscapes and their interconnections. The spatio-temporal conjunctions of practice warrant more attention if we are to understand the power dynamics and the social and spatial inequalities that occur through and within the nexus of practice; these are the questions that come to form when studying large phenomena.

A GEOGRAPHICAL-PROCESSUAL APPROACH TO PRACTICE

How, then, does one better grasp the geographical – that is, spatio-temporal – dimension of practices? We suggest that practice theorists make site ontology more concrete, as a way to trace conjunctions within and across worlds of practices, hence more in spatio-temporal terms. We label this as a geographical-processual approach to practice. In such a view, practice is neither a circulating entity nor a spaceless ontological starting point. The credo "There is nothing beyond practice" comes with the acknowledgement that, within practice, we find spatio-temporality, connectivity and agency always/

already emerging through practice. By approaching practice in this way, one can better understand the struggles towards, and rhythms of, stabilization and routinization (see Schapendonk, Kramsch and Munas and Smith, this volume) as well as the breaking, unmaking and changing of practices (see Carlsson and Landau-Donnelly and Pohl, this volume).

To exemplify what a geographical-processual approach to practice entails, we draw on our own work on aged care, museums and cycling practices. If one takes site ontology as the starting point, one begins with the site as the first unit of enquiry.[1] This is because the enactment of practices stems from the socio-material composition of entities gathered in one location (Lagendijk & Ploegmakers 2022). Crucial is the entanglement of human and non-human elements and how this constitutes social agency. For example, Carlsson's (2022) work on aged care provision shows how, in care provision, there is a joining of bodies, designed interiors, medicines, toiletries, etc., which together constitute a specific care, or caring, site (Carlsson, Pijpers & Van Melik 2022). Such gatherings of objects and subjects produce a socio-material "throwntogetherness". This entanglement induces various effects and possibilities, which can be experienced only on site.

Subsequently, at the "site" level, the bundling of practices depends on who influences and is influenced by the situatedness of a space, its functionality and its identity. Landau-Donnelly and Sethi's work on conflict-attuned museums foregrounds how spatio-temporal absence is constitutive of forging new relations of temporary presence (or emptiness) in space (Landau-Donnelly & Sethi 2022). Here, we may be reminded of Massey's notion of power as "stories-so-far", and places carrying layers of past, present and open futures within themselves. Spaces and place present, in Massey's words, "stories-so-far", a notion that can inspire practice theorists' attention for meaning, materialities and competences (Shove, Pantzar & Watson 2012) and teleo-affectivity and discourse (Schatzki 2019). "Stories-so-far" help us express and comprehend the significance of places as being shaped by, as well as shaping, worlds of practices in unique yet deeply connected ways. In one way or another, all chapters here convey "stories-so-far" for their topic, cases and contexts. Some chapters also embark on future stories, by engaging with utopian thinking. We now turn to these chapters.

CALLING FOR A MULTILOGUE

We can summarize this introductory overview as follows: although geographers certainly cite practice scholars referring to the spread and circulation of practices, and practice literature occasionally refers to the conceptualizations

1. This is similar to the methodological approach of zooming in and out (Nicolini 2012).

of space, a more substantive dialogue is lacking. More specifically, for geographers, practice theories often engage too little with concrete conceptualizations of place. Although practice theories do speak to the rootedness, situatedness or embeddedness of practices in social fabrics, or spatio-material arrangements (Schatzki 2019), and practice theories have highlighted how practices change through mobility as they travel (Shove & Pantzar 2005), the latter accounts have done little to theorize the history, the multiplicity or simply the placement and position of place in practices and their conjunctions. Relational geographies do highlight multiplicity, historicity and heterogeneity of place, but they may still be criticized for not paying enough attention or offering enough tools to understand how socio-material relations are made and come to matter in evolving worlds of practices (Carlsson 2022).

Our key message is that understanding and engaging with place from a perspective of change stands to benefit from more dialogue between relational geographies and practice theories in their respective plurality. On the one hand, relational geography has built much more on assemblage thinking than practice approaches. Put simply, this has fostered a notion of practice as a lens through which to understand how certain circulating entities help to shape places and spaces as spatial assemblages. On the other hand, practice theory has engaged relatively little with spatial theory and assemblage thinking. Turning practice theories towards more geographical-processual thinking, we argue, could help practice theories to broaden perspectives on practices, overcoming the pitfalls of essentializing and avoiding an instrumental view on site ontology that fails to account for conflict, heterogeneity, power difference and (spatial) inequality. Our plea for a geographical-processual practice perspective thus calls for a multilogue between practice theories, relational geographies and the other theoretical approaches of socio-spatiality mentioned so far, and beyond. We consider the subsequent chapters as the beginning of this multilogue.

The chapters are divided into three sections: change-oriented empirical studies; more conceptual accounts of everyday practices; and theorizing newness. The chapters in Part I, "Struggling Empirically Towards Transformation", apply and elaborate practice theory to shed light on the arrangements and struggles in which change of practice is sought. To begin with, **Hanna Carlsson** uses the case of women's inclusion in the global sport of boxing to articulate a spatial practice theory of change towards inclusion. Describing change as horizontal, circulatory and accumulative, the chapter challenges a structuralist approach, which assumes that "bottom-up" social change occurs through a unidirectional and vertical trajectory. Seeing change as occurring horizontally, and thus often as a spatially uneven process, the chapter invites the readers to see struggles as evidence that change is ongoing. The fact that female boxers experience tension as they move between

different spaces in the boxing nexus does not mean that there has been no change. Rather, the tension highlights that women boxers are negotiating oppression, in and out with themselves, because emancipation has already begun to take place.

Thereafter, **Arnoud Lagendijk and Mark Wiering** provide insight into the compelling initiative of "Recognition and Rewards" in Dutch academia ("Erkennen en Waarderen"), policies that set out to push back against the creeping neoliberalization, precarity and performance obsession in and of academic work. On the one hand, the authors point to the multiple faces of power articulating itself in episodic, dispositional, systemic ways, which reinforce why things do *not* change. On the other hand, they provide a hopeful outlook on how alternative measures of academic labour can (re)orient us towards practices of academia that are founded on intellectual curiosity, uniqueness and care.

The section is concluded with a chapter by **Mohamed Munas and Lothar Smith** on Sri Lankan diasporic communities' multi-sited practices of engagement with postwar development, ranging from providing quasi-state aid to informal and partially intangible resources such as knowledge, ideas, human capital and hope. Considering the seeds of new, postwar socio-spatial orders, the authors explore transboundary and translocal practices in Sri Lanka that challenge the existing distribution of power and resources. Via a series of empirical vignettes, they discuss settings of relocation, resettlement and distribution of micro-funding for postwar development as trajectories towards practising transformation.

Taking on more conceptual challenges, Part II, "Essays on Practising Contested Everyday Life", gathers studies zooming in on how practice thinking can yield a more politicized account of concretely localized, everyday practices.

Friederike Landau-Donnelly and Lucas Pohl develop a post-foundational account of practices, and practice ontologies, derived from radical lack or negativity, as well as conflict and contingency. Based on the assumption that practice "is" nothing but its practised articulations, the chapter tackles how practices play out both in routinized complexes of power and "politics" and, more subtly, in everyday forms of "the political". Their case entails everyday life and (lack of) encounter during the Covid-19 pandemic. The chapter, in short, exemplifies how practices not only contribute to the construction of hegemonic power but can also serve to unground the latter.

Next, **Joris Schapendonk** gives insight into his own embodied experience of shaping not just new practices of encounter among parents in his son's school but also how to gather to develop a new practice of anti-deportation protest in the face of classmates being displaced. Although Schapendonk conceptualizes this newly emerging practice as social infrastructure or platform,

he also emphasizes the fragile and transitory nature of socially infrastructured practices. In sum, the chapter impressively shows that practices are neither always shared nor should they be assumed to be shared by very differently positioned and privileged bodies.

Then, **Olivier Thomas Kramsch** takes us on a tour of his pandemic two-room apartment, offering reflections into new practices of everyday life throughout a global pandemic. With a kaleidoscopic view on his multi- and translocal life, the chapter straddles memories of childhood joy, long-ago friendships, encounters and daily practices of keeping one's body grounded via routinized movements, gestures and thought. The chapter thus recounts how memory is practised through repetition, but also through heartfelt memories of friendship, connection and loss.

Part III of the book, "Theorizing New Phenomena and Practices", discusses novel terminologies and perspectives to grapple with the multiple positions of subjectivity, agency and imagination that unfold via practice-oriented research. In unique ways, the chapters critique practice theories for conceptual shortcomings, and offer different ways of investigating the unfolding of the unknowable. First, **Freek de Haan** provides an assemblage-theoretical account of privacy politics via a practice-theoretical lens. Underlining the ethical and political implications of practices of privacy protection and surveillance, respectively, de Haan advances practice theories as an analytical device to empirically confront and theoretically conceptualize the multiplicity of privacy. He proposes privacy as an *effect* of practices of surveillance and unpacks different modes of "veillance" that capture their individually internalized and socially (re-)enforced, normative-affective and political appearances.

Second, **Klaus Geiselhart, Simon Runkel, Susann Schäfer and Benedikt Schmid** develop their own practice research vocabulary, including the range, supporting capacity, exigency and notability of social phenomena as categories in the empirical analysis of practices. Offering a radically relational and non-essentialist view on the co-construction of space and social practices, the authors not only broaden Schatzki's reifying notion of "large social phenomena" towards smaller issues but also propose a toolkit of transformative empirical research approaches, which shift the focus on phenomena as contextual "matters of concern" rather than objective "matters of fact".

Third, **Peter Ache** contends with the unknowable novelty and radical openness of planning practices. With the help of vision-making, Ache nudges towards thinking about ways in which to practise spatial planning for, and of, the future. Using an outlook on past, present and intended futures, Ache discusses various cases in which the seeds of utopian planning practice might already have taken shape. In his conclusion, he encourages us to think – and

to dream – about how to practise utopia as a nexus of practices that gives room for heterogeneity and physical encounters to shape a political project with a socially transformative ambition.

Also engaging with utopian thinking, **Huib Ernste** challenges some of the basic underpinnings of practice theories, especially in the version that tries to align itself with critical posthumanism, and suggests that their own proclamations of criticality do not go far enough. With the ambition of rereading this critical posthumanist practice-theoretical conception of agency in favour of a more radical critical agency-centred approach, he draws on Helmuth Plessner's philosophical anthropology, which tries to avoid the renewed essentialization of the human agent in social practices. Following Plessner, he assumes that the human agent is inherently critical and self-critical and in search of its position within social practices. Ernste is of the opinion that hitherto critical posthumanistic practice-theoretical conceptualizations of the agent have not been far-reaching enough, thus leading him to advocate the conceptualization of a more critical human agent in these social practices.

Where do we wiggle from here?
Your taste after defeat

Why is it then that we practise?
Thrown together in practice
Thrown into practiceness
How not to practise?
Thrown apart due to practice

Friederike Landau-Donnelly

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