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PRAGMATISM AND PRACTICE THEORY: CONVERGENCES OR COLLISIONS

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ABSTRACT
Proponents of the 'practice turn' in the social sciences rarely mention American pragmatism as a source of inspiration or refer to pragmatist philosophy. This strikes us as not only odd, but also a disadvantage since the pragmatist legacy has much to offer practice theory in the study of organizations. In this paper we want to spell out the theoretical similarities and divergences between practice theory and pragmatism to consider whether the two traditions can find common ground when gazing upon organization studies. We suggest that pragmatism should be included in the 'tool-kit' of practice-based studies of organizations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Have you noticed that social science has made a turn, a 'practice turn', and that the notion 'practice theory' has made its way into the field of organization studies? Have you also noticed that proponents of this turn and theory rarely mention American pragmatism as a source of inspiration or refer to pragmatist philosophy? For example in Davide Nicolini's new book, "Practice Theory, Work and Organization" (2012), he does not devote a chapter to pragmatism in spite of his claim for it to be 'an introduction' to practice theory and in spite of his acknowledgement that practice theory is influenced by a broad range of philosophical perspectives. It is not that we do not *like* the book because we do, and we recommend it to our students and use it in our classes when we teach. But when we read what Nicolini claims that a practice theoretical approach provides, it reminds us of pragmatism. We quote:

"The appeal [of practice theory, aus] lies in its capacity to describe important features of the world we inhabit as something that is routinely made and re-made in practice using tools, discourse, and our bodies. From this perspective the social world appears as a vast array or assemblage of performances made durable by being inscribed in human bodies and minds, objects and texts, and knotted together in such a way that the results of one performance become the resource for another. As such, practice theories potentially offer a new vista on all things organizational (and social)" (Nicolini, 2012: 2).

Compare this to the following quote from John Dewey's "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy" (1917 [1980]):

"(...) experiencing means living; and that living goes on in and because of an environing medium, not in a vacuum. (...) Experience is primarily a process of undergoing: a process of standing something; of suffering and passion, of affection, in the literal sense of these words. (...) Experience is no slipping along in a path fixed by inner consciousness. (...) Since we live forward; since we live in a world where changes are going on whose issues means our weal or woe; since every act of ours modifies these changes and hence is fraught with promise, or charged with hostile energies – what should experience be but a future implicated in the present!" (Dewey, 1917 [1980]: 7-9, Dewey's punctuation).

In our reading, both Nicolini and Dewey are trying to say that practice/experience is a concept that situates humans in the social and material world in an entwined way (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). Both are also seeing the potential of practice/experience for understanding human activity and controlling the future. Thus, in our understanding, Nicolini's characterization of the practice theoretical vista seems to come very close to positions occupied by classical American pragmatists. Similarly, Schatzki's introductory chapter in the anthology "The Practice Turn" (2001), that outlines the intellectual heritage of contemporary practice theoretical positions only mentions the works of G. H. Mead and John Dewey in passim, and not as a major source of affiliation or inspiration. Not only does Schatzki not reference pragmatist authors as an inspiration for his practice theoretical approach, he in a later publication presents his approach as *"a new type of social ontology that has emerged in the last three decades"* (2005: 465). Also, Reckwitz (2002) only in a footnote mentions *"the tradition of classical American pragmatism in the work of Dewey, James and Mead"* as having a *"rather loose relation to practice theory"* (2002: 259).

In this paper, we invite you on a journey, which we have just begun, to find out *not why* contemporary scholars of practice theory as for example Nicolini, Schatzki and Reckwitz refrain from including the pragmatist legacy in their writings. This question would probably either be entirely speculative or maybe even not very interesting? Rather, we want to spell out the theoretical similarities and divergences between the theories to consider whether the two traditions can find common ground when gazing upon organization studies. It is impossible to cover all organization studies inspired by practice theory, and we probably have not found all the studies drawing on pragmatism. Instead, we will focus on the writings of central figures in pragmatism and practice theory, namely Dewey and Schatzki. It is in the spirit of both practice theory and pragmatism to reach out, to try to bridge ideas by talking to other traditions rather than shut themselves off in a closed closet (Bernstein, 1989; Nicolini, 2012; Sullivan, 2001), and as one of the contemporary pragmatist philosophers says with reference to Dewey's "Experience and Nature" (1925 [1981]): *"To be human is to be engaged in practices"* (Boisvert, 2012: 109).

To back up our argument, we will, firstly, compare and discuss the positions of proponents of practice theory and of pragmatism in order to establish the traditions' convergences and elicit their potential discrepancies. In relation to practice theory, we take our point of departure in Schatzki's work since we consider his writings the most explicitly theorized account of contemporary practice theory. Regarding pragmatism, we primarily present work by Dewey because this is what we are most familiar with and since Dewey's work can be considered to embody classical American pragmatism. Secondly, we will investigate the possible discrepancies. Are they fundamental and insurmountable or can they in fact be mediated? We conclude our discussion by reflecting on the possible benefits and advantages of establishing a closer dialogue between practice theory and pragmatism in the field of organization studies and thereby outlining new research prospects in relation to organizational learning.

2. PRAGMATISM AND PRACTICE THEORY

The lacking dialogue between practice theory and pragmatism can presumably be attributed to historical contingencies in academic disciplinarity. Pragmatism emerged as an intellectual and philosophical tradition in the USA in the mid-nineteenth century as a response to the 'metaphysical' climate of the time that was preoccupied with understanding and justifying how thought could represent, describe and mirror reality (Menand, 2002; Misak, 2013). Pragmatism rejected traditional accounts suggested by rationalist and empiricist philosophers and instead proposed that thought should be seen as a product of organism's interaction with the environment, essentially as 'action'. Practice theory, on the other hand, emerged as a synthesizing intellectual tradition approximately 30-40 years ago in the social sciences (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984; Ortner, 1984; Taylor, 1995) and was philosophically underpinned through references to the work of the young Heidegger and the late Wittgenstein. Later on sociologist like Andreas Reckwitz (2002) and philosophers like Joseph Rouse (1996, 2003) and Theodore Schatzki (2002, 2005; 2001) has thoroughly developed the approach into what has recently been labeled 'post-classical practice theory' (Turner, 2014). Like pragmatism, practice theory stresses a non-representationalist and non-dualist account of human activity. Pragmatism and practice theory thus springs from different philosophical and intellectual traditions and the literature only vaguely associates the traditions as having intellectual kinship.[1] We will, however, argue that not only do the two traditions share many perspectives and arguments, they also hold different resources that could potentially complement each other in accounting for activity and

promoting a practice-based approach to organizational studies. To reach this conclusion we will introduce Dewey's philosophy on human experience and Schatzki's theory on social practices and subsequently discuss the perspectives' convergences and potential points of collision.

2.1. John Dewey on experience

For the pragmatists and Dewey, meaning and meaning making derives from the lived experience where humans are at work with their environments in an entangled manner and on a continuous basis. Rather than to understand theory and action as two different activities and phenomena, pragmatism regards concepts as tools for actions and as such instrumental in coping with situations and events, which may lead to a (re-)constructing of meaning and action by working with concepts in an experimental way. All educational aspirations, however, begin with an emotional sense that 'something is not right'. We are as humans embedded in the world, and it is as participants (and not spectators) we have experiences, which are not just our own personal experiences, but experiences that come from being enmeshed in the world. Experiences provide us, through learning, with abilities to act in a mindful ('intelligent') way using the present and history to anticipate the future. Another Deweyan concept, inquiry, is a method for constructing knowledge in a systematic way from experience. Dewey also called his pragmatism 'experimentalism' and 'instrumentalism' in order to stress the playfulness between ideas and action, and his ideas of concepts and theories as tools that act as 'instruments' in our pursuit to understand and communicate with selves and others. This latter also reminds us that different ways of framing actions leads to different solutions and consequences.

Opposing the reflex arc sequence of stimuli-idea-response, Dewey prefers to talk about an 'organic unity' in which the organic refers to us as humans enmeshed in our environments (Dewey, 1896 [1972]). We do not stand outside and look into the world, we are a part hereof, and we act as parts of the world, and an example of this situatedness of stimulus is hearing a sound:

"If one is reading a book, if one is hunting, if one is watching in a dark place on a lonely night, if one is performing a chemical experiment, in each case, the noise has a very different psychical value; it is a different experience. In any case, what precedes the 'stimulus' is a whole act, a sensori-motor co-ordination. What is more to the point, the 'stimulus' emerges out of this co-ordination; it is born from it as its matrix; it represents as it were an escape from it" (Dewey, 1896 [1972]: 100).

A sound is not an independent stimulus, because the meaning of it depends upon the situation in which it is heard. Nor is the response an independent event that merely follows from a stimulus. The response is part of defining the stimulus, and a sound has to be classified as a specific kind of sound in order to be followed by a relevant response. This classification has to be sufficiently exact to hold throughout the response in order to maintain it. The response is therefore a re-action within the sound and not to the sound. The solution is in other words embedded in the definition of the problem. This is why Dewey prefers the term 'organic circle' rather than 'reflex arc' as a metaphor for the relation between being and knowing.

Dewey's notion of the organic circle contains the outline of his work with defining his notion of experience. Thus, experience is a series of connected organic circles, it is transaction, and it is the continuous relations between persons and worlds, the social and 'natural'. Experience is an understanding of the subject as being in the world, not

outside and looking into the world, as a spectator-theory of knowledge would imply. The person-in-world is the foundation for becoming knowledgeable of the world and of selves, because it rests upon a bond between action and thinking, being and knowing.

About 20 years after Dewey wrote his article on the reflex arc, he made a comparison between his conception of experience and the commonplace and contemporary meaning of experience. This led him to the following five differences between the latter interpretation of experience and his concept of experience (Dewey, 1917 [1980]).

First, experience is traditionally understood as an epistemological concept in which the purpose is production and acquisition of knowledge for example through reflection on action. In contrast to this, Dewey's concept of experience is ontological and based upon the transactional relation between person and world. The epistemological orientation of experience means that it is possible to overlook situations in which knowledge is not the primary content or purpose, and not be able to see that experience is also emotional and aesthetic. There is a difference between enjoying a painting because of its aesthetic value and studying the painting as an art reviewer (see also Bernstein, 1966 [1967]). There are no experiences without some form of knowing but the meaning of the concept of experience is distorted if the paradigm for all experience becomes an issue of conscious thinking. Most of human lives consist of non-cognitive experiences as we continuously act, enjoy and suffer, and this is experience.

It is not possible to understand the meaning of Dewey's concept of inquiry if the value of the aesthetic and emotional experiences in Dewey's concept of experience is not recognised, because inquiry is an answer to a felt ('emotional') encounter with a conflict in experience, for example a habit is no longer working or valid and needs to be changed. Inquiry begins with an emotionally felt difficulty, an uncertain situation, and inquiry is a method to resolve this conflict. When something is experienced with the 'stomach' or an emotional response is exhibited in a situation, inquiry is a way to help define experience in a cognitive sense and create meaning. To do so, it may be necessary to activate former similar experiences by experimenting with different possible ways of attributing meaning to the situation at hand and, through that, transform the emotional experience into something that can be comprehended as a cognitive and communicative experience. This is how an emotional experience becomes a reflective one; it becomes a learning experience, and may become knowledge, which in turn can be part of informing experience in the next similar experience of an emotionally difficult situation.

Secondly, experience is traditionally understood as an inner mental and subjective relation rather than a part of the objective conditions for human action that undergoes changes through human response. When experience is interpreted as subjective, then experience is trapped in the privacy of persons' action and thinking. There is no experience without a person experiencing but it does not mean that experiencing is solely subjective and private. Sharing experience is more than a metaphor, because the objective world is always weaved into the 'subjective' experience.

Third, experience is traditionally viewed in the past tense, the given rather than the experimental and future oriented. Dewey's concept of experience, on the contrary, is characterised by reaching forward towards the unknown. In Dewey's definition, experience is connected to the future because 'we live forward'. Anticipatory and forward thinking is more important for action and cognition than recollection. We are

not passive spectators who look into the world from the outside, but powerful and future-oriented participants in natural and social worlds.

Fourth, experience is traditionally viewed as isolated and specific rather than as continuous and connected. For Dewey, however, experience is a series of connected situations (organic circles) and even if all situations are connected to other situations, every situation has its own unique character. Experience, nevertheless, is so connected that it is possible to use experience as a foundation for knowledge and to guide future actions.

Finally, experience has traditionally been viewed as beyond logical reasoning. Dewey argued, however that there is no conscious experience without this kind of reasoning. Anticipatory thinking and reflection is always present in conscious experience by way of theories and concepts, ideas and hypotheses. This latter is the most important contrast to the traditional interpretation of experience. By on the one hand stressing that experience is not primarily an epistemological matter, and on the other hand claiming that the systematic process of knowledge is one form of experience, Dewey wanted to show how inquiry is the only method for having an experience. Inquiry is triggered by difficult situations, and inquiry is the means through which it is possible to transform these situations through the mediation of thinking and action. Further, experience and inquiry are not limited to what is mental and private. Situations always have both subjective and objective elements and through inquiry, it is possible to change the direction of experience. We are as humans living, acting and reacting in objective worlds, but these transactions are not automatic or blind. Experience is experimental and oriented towards the future, and use concepts and theories as instruments to guide the process. Dewey viewed education and teaching as a means to support, through inquiry, the direction of experience.

2.2. Theodore Schatzki on social practices and material arrangements
Schatzki (1996, chap. 4) broadly characterizes practices as sets of doings and sayings. Practices, thus, weave together bodily actions as well as linguistic utterances, gestures, etc., and subsume what in other theoretical traditions are labeled as behavior and discourse. What unites these actions and linguistic utterances into sets of doings and sayings are the specific tasks and projects that impose orderings of the actions. What makes us characterize chopping vegetables as part of cooking practices is by reference to the tasks (e.g. preparing the ingredients for a meal) and the project (e.g. preparing a meal) of which they are a part. Practices are thus composed as hierarchically ordered wholes that have certain duration in time and endure as integrative practices. Practice thus denotes *"(…) performing an action or carrying out a practice (…)"* (Schatzki, 1996, 90). In this sense individuals are carriers of practices because they perform specific patterns of actions and thus enact the practice. But practices can also be seen as coordinated. In this sense a practice is seen as a *"(…) temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings"* (Schatzki 1996, 89). Schatzki characterize practices further:

> *"Examples are cooking practices, voting practices, industrial practices, recreational practices, and correctional practices. To say that the doings and sayings forming a practice constitute a nexus is to say that they are linked in certain ways. Three major avenues of linkage are involved: 1) through understandings, for example, of what to say and do; 2) through explicit rules, principles, precepts and instructions; and 3) through what I will call*

> *'teleoaffective' structures embracing ends, projects, tasks, purposes, beliefs, emotions and moods."* (ibid.).

In this understanding of practices, it is an essential claim of practice theory that the performances of individuals are linked and interconnected in specific ways that forms durable nexuses of actions. The configurations of the actions, doings and sayings, can endure in time and space and thus 'carry' constellations of actions. It is important to notice that practices are not social structures that steer actions, on the contrary, individual actions contributes to the (de)stabilization of patterns of actions by enacting the patterns or deviating for the patterns of actions.

The regularity of the doings, sayings, tasks, and projects does not have to be constant over time in order to qualify as practice. Practices can change and innovate over time, and it is a matter of empirical investigation to trace these changes as they unfold. But for doings and sayings to qualify as part of a practice, it is essential that regularities can be detected and disruptions are outbalanced by continuities.

For Schatzki, practices thus indicate that human activities are linked through certain normative orderings. One essential ordering element is the practical understandings of the actors. Actions are considered competent and qualified according to standards and procedures, mostly implicit and tacit by nature. When chopping vegetables you must know how to handle a knife. You must be able to judge why and when it is appropriate to chop carrots. Practice theory emphasizes that these activities are founded in the practical skills and know-how that actors acquire through participation in practices and through drill. Practical understanding displays an ability of knowing 'how to go on' and having 'a feeling for the game', thus acting according to the prevailing standards of the practice. The acquisition of the skills is very much a matter of bodily incorporation and drill and training is important in learning how to follow rules and partake in 'a form of life' (Wittgenstein 1958 [2009], §218ff.).

Another ordering element is the explicit rules, regulations, instructions, standards, and procedures that are pertinent for specific practices. In cooking practices cooking books comprise recipes and algorithms for producing meals, there are enforced legal regulations for food preparation in restaurants and conventions for when to cook for breakfast, lunch and dinner. These explicit rules are very much based on conventions and bear huge regional and cultural differences. But they are essential in shaping the practices of cooking.

Schatzki sees teleoaffective structures as a third ordering element that links doings, sayings, tasks, and projects in practices:

> *"[…] teleoaffective structures establish, inter alia, a field of correct and acceptable ends, a selection of acceptable or correct projects to pursue for the sake of those ends, a variety of acceptable or correct tasks to carry out as part of those projects, a range of acceptable or correct ways of using objects, and a variety of acceptable and even correct emotions, feelings, and passions"* (Schatzki, 1996: 124).

The structures need not be explicitly conscious goals to, or ends in view for the actors, but should rather be seen as structural signifiers that give an overall sense to actions. Schatzki emphasizes that these structures are recurring effects of actions and should not be conflated with structuralist accounts. Teleoaffective structures emerge when there is general agreement about what is acceptable or unacceptable to do in situations. The

presence of teleoaffective structures does not exclude controversy or disagreement about specificities but provides an overall sense of purpose and direction for the activities. The structures both produce the practice and are produced by the practice. As an example teleoaffective structures are enacted in cooking practices when chefs are developing new tasty courses for restaurant visitors or when parents are preparing nutritious meals for their children, the actions are performed with a normativized end in view, for a purpose.

A final ordering element relates to the general understandings that are available to and shared by actors within a practice, though these general understandings, as the word indicates, are not proprietary of specific practices, but are generally shared norms and values. However, they are also active in structuring specific practices. Cooks often endorse certain religious, ethical, ideological, or maybe even political norms. Many of these might e.g. be codified in religious scriptures or ideological manifests, but they need not be explicitly stated to be conductive. These general understandings, thus, often span different practices and can make them overlap at specific junctures in history. These ordering elements of practices are not meant to be jointly exclusive or exhaustive characteristics. On the contrary, the elements are combined in the doings, sayings, tasks, and projects of the practice in complex and interwoven ways. Thus, the specific constellation of these, and maybe other elements compose the uniqueness of the practice. Furthermore, practices are always situated in specific orders or arrangements that comprise both practices and non-human/material objects. The arrangements and the social practices thus jointly constitute the overall site where things exist and events happen (Schatzki, 2002: 63). Sites are a special kind of contexts, namely the kind where practices unfold in activities and events. To put this point another way, sites are the kind of contexts where actors' ends and human intentions matters. Sites are, thus, not only locations in objective time and space or even activity-place space, but they are also significantly teleological located. Sites are part of 'wider scenes' of events and activities. The chopping of the carrots is an activity that is part of the event of preparing a meal. Likewise, the preparation of the meal is part of a project about supplying nutritious food for family members, and this project, in turn, a part of a wider project of living a healthy life, etc. Sites are nested. For an event or activity to occur within a site is tantamount to that event or activity being a constituent part of that context. Activities and events are both contained in the site, but also an integral part of the sites makeup. Finally, it is important not to regard the ordering elements as ontological entities. The ordering elements should rather be viewed as phenomenological constituents that render social phenomena intelligible and that helps us as social scientists better understand the dynamics and processes that lead to the emergence, persistence and dissolution of practices.

In his account of social practices, Schatzki sees practices as separate from, but intimately related to, material reality. He describes the relationship between material arrangements and social practices as one of prefiguration. For material arrangements to prefigure social practices means that material arrangements affects social practices by *"(...) the channeling of the physical causality that laces through the social site"* (Schatzki, 2002: 201). We can, thus, say that cooking practices, like any other social practices, are channeled by the physical occurrences that affect human activity and more specifically that cooking practices are affected by the interplay with physical objects in for example kitchens, when cooks heats ovens, when ingredients in meals do not 'conform' as initially predicted, when fruits are not fresh, etc. As cooking practices often try to engage with and change material arrangements cooking practices are thus also shaped by the interaction with physical objects, for example when micro ovens

became part of standard kitchen equipment. Materiality should thus play a significant role in our accounts of how practices evolve, transpire and change.

2.3. Convergences and potential points of collision
When we compare Dewey's conception of experience to Schatzki's notion of social practice, and disregard their different terminologies, quite a few similarities and agreements can be mentioned. Alas, space does not allow us go into a thorough textual comparison of Dewey's and Schatzki's writings, but let it suffice to just mention the most obvious points of convergence.

Dewey and Schatzki agree that experience/meaning and intelligibility in social practice is not primarily and originally propositional, interpretative and representational. Instead it should be construed through actors' practical and often habituated doings and engagements with the world. Schatzki's practice theory draws on Heidegger's phenomenological notion of 'being-in-the-world' (Schatzki, 2002) and Wittgenstein's concept of 'intelligibility' (Schatzki, 1996) in order to counter Cartesian representationalism. Dewey's concern is likewise to 'recover' philosophy from the subject-object split that has tormented Western thinking (Dewey, 1917 [1980]) as well as to depart from the sense empiricists because the world does not consist of qualities but of 'things' (Dewey, 1925 [1981]; 1939: 19). Thus, both strive to overcome epistemological dualisms and bifurcations and to reconstruct human activity on ontological terms. Both agree that human activity is misrepresented when construed as primarily a cognitive enterprise performed by isolated, albeit interacting individuals. Instead, activity is better understood as both a processual and relational phenomenon. Humans are according to Heidegger 'always already' engaged in social activity as actors driven by their passions, emotions, objectives, projects and ends in view. For Dewey the non-cognitive is also always before the cognitive experience, and he praises *"things experienced by way of love, desire, hope, fear and other traits characteristic of human individuality"* (Dewey, 1939 [1988]: 33). We relate to our environment through transactions (Dewey & Bentley, 1949 [1991]) and teleoaffective structures (Schatzki, 2002: 80). The way the world is made intelligible and the way we relate to our environment is through actions as they unfold in social sites, in time-space and teleoaffective locations (Schatzki, 2002: 63 ff.; 2010: 65 ff.) or as situations (Dewey, 1938 [1986]: 66 ff.). Humans' relation to the world is not one of the disengaged 'spectator' or a decoupled 'mind' that interprets reality from outside the world. Instead experience is organism's anxiously and hopefully 'undergoing and suffering' in their physical and social environment turned into meaning (knowledge or 'intelligence' as Dewey would term it) (Dewey, 1917 [1980]) and intelligibility and understanding should be conceived as actors' teleoaffectively structured doings as they transpire in constellations of social practices and material arrangements (Schatzki, 1996: 128).

Both Dewey and Schatzki agree that experience/intelligibility is produced by purposive socially mediated doings saturated with affects and emotions and tempered by the physical arrangements that embed bodily activity. The social ontology in Dewey's pragmatism and Schatzki's practice theory has in common the critique of Cartesian subject-object dualism, of mentalism and psychologism, and other dualisms. They both strive to develop their theorizing of experience/intelligibility according to a non-representationalist ontology. Furthermore, their ontologies do not naively stipulate a predefined inventory of 'reality' but they pay attention to the (social and 'natural'/material) events and phenomena that confront us as practice unfolds and we inquire more about the nature of the world. This sets of the ontologies on a processual and relational path, the knower and the known, (wo-)man and the world, are not set

apart, but intimately intertwined in action. Another point of convergence concerns the role Dewey gives to 'habit' in social conduct, and how Schatzki theorizes practical understandings according to tacit, routinized and drill induced patterns of behavior.

Now, these fundamental and general convergences must not delude us to overlook the potential points of collision between the perspectives. Schatzki's practice theory draws heavily on the later Wittgenstein and Heideggerian phenomenology whereas Dewey's pragmatism is fundamentally naturalist and to some extent claimed to be even scientist (Papenhausen 2002). More authors have pointed out that naturalism and phenomenological approaches do not sit comfortably together (Aikin, 2006) or at least diverge on some important issues (Okrent 1988 & 2013). As Schatzki's practice theory draws heavily on the phenomenology of Heidegger as developed in "Being and Time" (1927), we need, briefly, to discern the points where pragmatism and Heidegger's phenomenology part ways. Okrent (1988 & 2013) argues that Heidegger's phenomenology in many ways is in fact pragmatist. Heidegger shares with pragmatism the fundamental intuition that our relationship with the world is fundamentally and originally practical. We engage with the world not unmediated. Our engagement with the world is mediated by our constitution as organisms (pragmatism) or as 'Dasein' (Heidegger). These constitutions of ours disclose/brings forward the world in certain ways, *as* something or other. A lion discern the world as prey and non-eatable objects, birds discern trees as nesting places, and humans accordingly give meaning to their world directed by their practical endeavors. Both pragmatists and Heidegger agree that this '*as*-structure' is fundamentally practical and pre-reflective. But discrepancies between pragmatism and Heidegger can be found in relation to the normativity inherent in the '*as*-structure'.

What actually determine how we discern the world *as* something and not something else? Pragmatist's answer is straightforward: Organisms are biological systems (embodied experience) that discern their world in holistic ways according to what is useful for their perseverance and growth, this is the lesson learned from evolutionary biology. Dewey is clear that there is continuity between man and lower organisms and that organisms are in and of the world, and that organisms' (including humans) adapt to their environment by refining their '*as*-structure' to obtain adequacy. This is at the essence of Dewey's concept of 'inquiry' and his instrumentalism, and at the heart of this instrumentalism lie a naturalistic normativity and a biological teleology (cf. Nagel 1977).

Dewey, however, includes human action in his understanding as well as the experimental method pointing forward to solve social problems. This is a red thread for example in his work on democracy and his belief in education (Dewey, 1916 [1980]; Westbrook, 1991). Dewey talks about an *"individual who evolves and develops in a natural and human environment, an individual who can be educated"* (Dewey, 1925 [1984]: 20) and compares his pragmatism to the French philosophy of the Enlightenment (Dewey, 1925 [1984]). Also, Dewey talks about how human beings are subject to the influence of culture including means of communication, which is why Dewey talks about 'acculturated organisms' (Dewey, 1939 [1988]: 15).

Heidegger's notion of the 'as-structure' is different. He does not see Dasein as primarily directed by biological normativity. For Heidegger Dasein's intentionality differs from that of lower organisms in the sense that it occupies a different modality, namely that of possibility instead of actuality. For Heidegger Dasein is the only being that has the possibility to engage with being as being and this sets Dasein in a position to transcend

limited means-ends relations and engage with the world in new and different ways. These ways of engaging with the world are not primarily regulated by biological normativities. Okrent summarize the difference between Heidegger's version of pragmatism from the classical pragmatist stance as follows:

"Because Dasein's world is structured in terms of social rather than biological normativity, however, no for-the-sake-of, no way of Dasein's being is anything other than contingent, and that contingency is evident in the various social worlds that Dasein encounters in the course of being itself. Dasein thus always engages with itself as possibly not being as it is. By its very character as Dasein, Dasein's being is an issue for it, or problematic for it, because Dasein always engages with itself as possibly not being there. And, because the for-the-sake-of that Dasein is is also that in terms of which things have their significance, the problematic character of Dasein's being extends to the problematic character of the being of other entities. Things have their significance only in light of a for-the-sake-of, but any for-the-sake-of is engaged by Dasein as possibly not being, so the significance of every thing is engaged by Dasein as possibly not being. And these possibilities in turn allow for the possibility of engaging with the things that in fact <u>are</u>, as things that are, as <u>entities</u>, as <u>beings</u>." (Okrent 2013, pp. 153-4, emphasis in original)

In this rather convoluted Heideggerian terminology Okrent makes it clear that for Heidegger the normativity of the *as*-structure resides in Dasein's special mode of being as that kind of entity that considers its own being as problematic as opposed to other biological organisms that do not engage with themselves as possibility.

Now, this detour into Heidegger's phenomenology makes it apparent that there are potential points of collisions between naturalistic pragmatism and Heideggerian phenomenology in relation to how these approaches construe normativity as they account for organisms'/humans' engagement with the world. Does this also hold true for the relationship between pragmatism and practice theory? Does Heidegger's anti-naturalism make practice theory anti-naturalist?

2.4 Naturalism and social normativity

For one thing, Schatzki is very clear that his ontology, like Dewey's, does not separate the social from natural events. For Schatzki, social life is part and parcel of nature, the site of the social transpires in and amongst material arrangements and human beings are corporeal agents that are engaged with and affected by nature (Schatzki, 2002). But we need to discern what kind of naturalism we are considering when we ask if practice theory is in fact compatible with Dewey's naturalism and we need to consider what kind of normativity we are invoking to account for social activity.

To address these central questions we turn to Joseph Rouse (2002) who reclaim naturalism and thereby argue that practice theoretical accounts of the social is in fact compatible with naturalism. Rouse distinguishes between two kinds of naturalism: 1) meta-philosophical naturalism, a position that claims that we ought to seek continuity between the best empirical sciences and philosophy/social sciences, and 2) metaphysical naturalism, a position that holds that we ought to seek continuity between the natural facts and laws disclosed within the natural sciences (i.e. scientific phenomena) and philosophy/social sciences. Meta-philosophical naturalism understands scientific practices as endeavors that best represent our reality. It trusts science to produce the most truthful representations of natural, social and historical regularities of occurrences

and thereby posit normativity as dispositional regularities that scientist's hold, thus, reducing the social to natural dispositions. But another bread of naturalism, metaphysical naturalism, construes scientific practices differently. Metaphysical naturalism is non-representational. It concurs that engaging in scientific practices are in fact to date our best and most successful way of disclosing reality, but denies that the endeavor of scientific practices is aimed to represent reality. We quote Rouse (2002, 12): *"On my account, practices are not meaningful, socially and historically situated actions as opposed to inexorable natural processes; they are identifiable by their normative accountability rather than by any performative or dispositional regularity; and they allow us to understand the modality of causal processes on the basis of the normativity of scientific practices rather than the reverse."* Metaphysical naturalism holds that practices, including scientific practices, can be understood through the shared normative accountability of its constituent performances. Practices are thus not held together by regularities rooted in nature. Such an account would reproduce a representationalist metaphysics. Instead the regularities in social practices are constantly re-enacted by the normative accountability of the actors in processes of deontic scorekeeping (Brandom 1994) or intra-action (Barad 2007). Rouse, like Dewey, thus, dissolves the boundaries between fact and value and posit normativity as a fundamental element in our engagement with our environment.

Thus, the prima facie collision between Deweyian pragmatism and Heideggerian inspired practice theory on issues concerning naturalism can in fact be resolved by advancing metaphysical naturalism. We venture that Dewey's naturalism is in fact metaphysical and not meta-philosophical. The non-representationalist ambitions of pragmatism and practice theory draw both positions away from meta-philosophical naturalism and towards a metaphysical naturalism.

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS: INCLUDING PRAGMATISM IN THE 'TOOL-KIT' OF PRACTICE-BASED STUDIES OF ORGANIZATIONS

Both pragmatism and practice theory has contributed to the field of organizational studies. And, particularly the field of organizational learning has a long tradition for getting its inspiration from pragmatism (Brandi & Elkjaer, 2013; Elkjaer, 2003). This inspiration goes back to the works of Simon in his "Administrative Behaviour" (1947), and later also included his colleagues from the Carnegie School (i.e. Cyert and March) who began to see how habits by collective and organisational rules, procedures and routines were relevant and significant for organisational learning and change (Cohen, 2007). This understanding of routines or habits as 'dispositions to act' rather than mindless actions have been of interest to several organization scholars over the years (see e.g. Cohen, 2009; Feldman & Pentland, 2003). In defining habits and routines as dynamic and not merely repetitive we see a clear point of reference to Dewey's notion of habit.

Also, the notion of inquiry as an experimental method for generating experience and knowledge is the focal point in the works by Argyris and Schön who make explicit reference to pragmatism in their work on action theory, action science and organisational learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978, 1996). We quote: *"We use 'inquiry' here not in the colloquial sense of scientific or juridical investigation but in a more fundamental sense that originates in the work of John Dewey (1938): the intertwining of thought and action that proceeds from doubt to the resolution of doubt."* (Argyris & Schön, 1996: 11). For Argyris and Schön, however, the relation between thinking and action is sequential; first is mental modelling (cognition), and then action whereas for

Dewey thinking and action are intertwined and cannot be separated (Dewey, 1896 [1972]).

Further, in a recently published paper by Vo and Kelemen (2014), it is claimed that *"Dewey's philosophy has influenced different areas of organization studies"* (2014: 240), and we would like to add that pragmatist philosophy has influenced organization studies in different ways mirroring the many ways that pragmatism has been and continue to be interpreted. These interpretations are for example illustrated in a recent edited volume on "American Pragmatism and Organization. Issues and Controverses" (Kelemen & Rumens, 2013) in which the editors argue that although pragmatism has suffered marginalization for a number of years, *"American pragmatism has entered what we might dub a 'third phase' with new scholars reworking its concepts and ideals to maintain its contemporary vitality and relevance"* (Rumens & Kelemen, 2013: 4). Practice theory too is becoming an influential source of inspiration to organizational studies (e.g. Schatzki 2005 & 2006, Gherardi 2006, Nicolini 2013). Both theoretical frameworks bring to organizational studies attractive ontological perspectives that enable analysis of organizational activity to accommodate the social and material basis of organizational phenomena. Nicolini (2013, chap. 9) argue that organizational studies can benefit from an eclectic 'tool-kit' approach that brings in resources from different traditions such as discourse- and conversation analysis, cultural historical activity theory, ethnomethodolgy, social learning theory and more. We are of one mind with Nicolini's proposal to bring in different perspectives to elucidate organizational practices. However, we suggest that the pragmatist tradition is also brought into the plethora of available resources for practice-based studies of organizations.

Rumens and Kelemen show that pragmatism has much to offer organization studies. The point of their departure is that they see a polarization in current organizational scholarship between, on the one hand, structuralist positions and organizations understood as entities and, on the other hand, social constructivist perspectives in which ideas and meanings are central in a processual understanding of organizations. Other contributions in Kelemen' and Rumens' edited volume point to the ability of pragmatism to bridge for example critical realism and 'interpretivism' in its insistence upon a non-representational and action-oriented form of realism and to focus upon organizational practices (Watson, 2013 #3614, see also Simpson, 2009). We would add that Dewey first and foremost was an empiricist, and that this was reflected in his notion of experience, which is not only action but also undergoing and the creation of meaning (knowledge) when combining these phases in experience. Among the contributors to the edited book is also an interest in the issue of democracy, which was at the heart of particularly Dewey' pragmatism, and Jacobs (2013) argues that this focus may inspire a development of a democratization of institutions. Also, pragmatism is mentioned as a source of inspiration when coining a concept of power as coercion versus power as capacity, 'power over' versus 'power with' as the pragmatist inspired 'management guru', Mary Parker Follett, suggested in her work (Hafting, 2013 #3612, see also Ansell, 2009). Mary Parker Follett (1924) has indeed been brought to life in recent years, and not only regarding her work on power but also as offering a way for understanding creative practice as a dynamic social process (Arjaliés, Lorino, & Simpson, 2013). Practice theory has just recently begun to expand its focus from pure analytical and explanatory concerns to include issues concerning action research, intervention and governance (Strengers & Maller 2014, Kemmis & McTaggert 2013, Eikeland & Nicolini 2011). In pragmatism a long-standing tradition has dealt with organizational transformation and learning and we propose that further practice theoretical developments take account of these resources.

We see pragmatism and practice theory as companions on a journey in organizational studies that has just begun. We argue for increasing mutual recognition and exploration of the communalities and strengths of the two traditions, and we believe that this might be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

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[1] The literature that discusses the relationship between pragmatism and practice theory is sparse and mainly focus on the relationship between the works of pragmatists and Bourdieu (Bogusz, 2012; Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005; Shusterman, 1999), omitting references to more recent developments in practice theory.