

Practice Theory and Power: Politics, Conflict, Transformation

Centre for Practice Theory at Lancaster

Date and Times: 12pm, 24th – 12pm, 26th September 2025

Location: Lancaster University

One feature that sets practice theory apart from other traditions in the social sciences is the conviction that practices, extended across space and time, represent the fundamental 'site' of the social. Critics claim that this focus on practices can obscure classic issues of power, politics, hierarchy, domination, conflict, struggle, and difference.

The Centre for Practice Theory at Lancaster is organising a three-day in-person workshop for researchers interested in exploring the intersection of practice theory and power.

The aim of the workshop is to bring together disciplinary insights from geography, education, international relations, management/organisation studies, sociology, and more to attend to political, conflictual, and transformative aspects of society in terms that are commensurate with a practice theoretical conception of everyday social life.

Sessions will feature participants' work, group projects, collaborative discussions, and panels addressing the analysis of power in a practice-theoretical paradigm.

Special guest panellists will include: Silvia Gherardi, Matt Watson and Jan Selby.

We invite contributions that engage with any aspect of practice theory and power, including but not limited to the following themes:

- **Theories of Power and Practice:** What existing accounts of power are compatible or incompatible with practice theory? How might articulations of power relations and dynamics be incorporated into theories of practice?
- **Conceptualising Power within and between Practices:** How does power circulate as part of the everyday reproduction of practices, across different domains and registers, and through forms of governance, hierarchy, and social movements?
- **Transformation and Social Change:** What can practice theory reveal about the transformation, disruption, and stabilisation of social life, both in general and in specific conjunctions?
- **Historical and Structural Dimensions:** How do the histories of practices and of blocs of practices shape current forms and distributions of power, hierarchy, domination, conflict, and authority?
- **Practices and Inequality:** How do practices and their histories matter for social inequalities, including but not limited to those related to gender, race, sexuality, class, disability, and geography?
- **Politics and Practice:** What notions of politics work best with theories of practices? To what extent is the plenum of practice informed by the political economy of a given society? Are the dynamics of practice different, for example, in liberal democracies compared with authoritarian states?
- **Conflict:** What do theories of practices have to add to the analysis of conflict and its role in social life and social transformation?
- **The Role of Resources:** How do materials, infrastructures, and spaces become sources or means of power or transformation?

- **Boundaries and Access:** How is participation in practices regulated? Do inclusion and exclusion look different when analysed from a practice theoretical perspective??

This workshop will provide a collaborative space for developing new theoretical, empirical and methodological avenues and points of departure for practice theoretical understandings of politics, conflict, and transformation.

To Apply:

- Submit an abstract of your proposed contribution and a one-page CV by **12th May** to s.blue@lancaster.ac.uk
- Accepted participants will be notified by **26th May** and asked to submit a 3 – 4,000 word paper by **18th Aug 2025**.

Costs: £175 to be paid following acceptance and by **16th June**.