

**An Inquiry into theories of practice:
Rethinking actors, materiality and organisations.**

On September 24th and 25th 2014 the Graduate School of the University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht, the Netherlands will present a two-day conference on Practice Theories. During this conference central issues raised by practice theories will be explored and discussed. Subjects of debate are *the relation between human actors and material 'objects', technologies and meaning emerging from practices.*

The conference will also be a joint effort to reflect on our own practices as researchers in order to develop a stronger methodological awareness about knowledge creation as social practice. Practice theories conceive actions of people as part of a practice, a larger set of activities. This means, for instance, that organisations are not regarded as entities but as an assembly of practices. In interaction, people 'carry' different practices.

Practice theory gives us an alternative view on practitioners as well. Not only people, but also material 'objects' are interacting, and therefore not 'just objects'. Knowledge emerges from within interactive practices and theories of practice concentrate on the ethos of these practices. Practice theories offer another view on the social, valuing differences.

Two leading key note speakers accepted our invitation to present their thoughts and views on Practice Theories. The key note speakers both acknowledge the game changing capacity of a practice theory approach and they invite us to reflect on its central issues and the approach as such.

Prof. Dr. Davide Nicolini from the University of Warwick, GB, will discuss practice theories in plural and the idea that practice theory is not a (new) school. The 'family resemblances' in the theories of practice however do offer explanatory power that other approaches were not able to offer.

Prof. Robert Schmidt from Eichstatt University, Germany will explain what praxeology is about, drawing on Bourdieu and taking praxeology as a research strategy. Praxeology is a game changer with regard to several ethical and sociological approaches.

Both share a vivid interest with researchers at the University of Humanistic Studies in complex organisations, and thorough qualitative and conceptual research.

The interactive design of the conference implies that next to four key notes we will have debates as means of inquiry. The four inquiries are about:

Bodyliness in theories of practice

The nexus between conceptual and empirical research

Practice Theory and Complexity in organizations

Meaning and normativity in practice theories

We have designed the conference program as an **inquiry**: what does the reframing by theories of practice offer, in what way are they game changing? **Participation** is another important characteristic: you are invited to bring the best you have to offer: questions that concern you, your insights, and constructive comments on research.

More information and registration: www.uvh.nl/conferencepracticetheories

The two day conference takes place in the city centre of Utrecht that is characterized by late medieval and many 18th and 19th century buildings. The venue itself is in a 19th century former church, which is now a beautiful congress centre. For more information and an impression of the venue see: <http://www.zaalverhuur7.nl/>

The costs of the two-day conference will be **€ 150,-** including coffee, tea and lunch. Subscription only via Paydro, an easy way to arrange your participation.

We strongly recommend buying and reading two recent books prior to the conference. You can buy the books following the links below:

R. Schmidt, [Soziologie der Praktiken. Konzeptionelle Studien und empirische Analysen](#), Suhrkamp Berlin 2012, 2013

D. Nicolini, [Practice Theory, Work, and Organization: An Introduction](#), Oxford University Press, Oxford etc. 2012

We welcome scholars from universities as well as from societal organisations. A special welcome to PhD students from all universities who would like to present a poster on Thursday to get direct feedback from other scholars. You can register for a poster presentation on the website. Your poster should be pre-printed and about 65 x 100 cm. (flip chart size)

Your registration is welcome asap. Those withdrawing from the conference (for whatever reason) after Sept. 10 are accountable of full payment.

Responsible for the organisation:

Prof. Frans Vosman f.vosman@uvh.nl

Martijn Simons MA m.simons@uvh.nl