Acknowledgements

Studying practitioners is not new in International Relations (IR). The field of IR has always focused on practitioners, especially for information and data. However, the arrival of the practice turn changed the focus, and made the practitioners the focus of analysis, rather than just mere information providers. This so-called practice turn originates from scholarly works that were done in different disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, and social psychology for decades now. They have inspired many IR scholars, but a more focused discussion on how to introduce practice theory to IR has only been done more recently. The literature on this topic is ever growing, which is a testament to our changing analytical interest in practitioners as well as the persuasive nature of the theory.

Yet, I found it intriguing that in this emergent literature the discussion on the methodologies that we ought to develop to study practitioners is rather limited. In the other disciplines, where practice theory was established, methodological discussions went hand in hand with theory development. While practice theorists in IR agreed to promote methodological pluralism, most scholars stuck to applying Bourdieu and his concept of *habitus*, and therefore focus exclusively on the conduct of practitioners, bar a few exceptions. Duvall and Chowdhury (2011) already drew attention to this, and critiqued the lack of application of discursive approaches among practice theory scholars.

My training in conversation analysis, discursive psychology, and ethnomethodology, plus my practitioner background led me to engage in this limited methodological discussion, and to develop a conceptual model that aims to bring those who merely focus on conduct and behaviour with those schools who focus on discourse and linguistic approaches. EU foreign policy and EU practitioners seemed an ideal option, and focusing on Russia and the other eastern neighbours is equally apt, considering the developments in Russian foreign policy.

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