ANALYTICAL ESSAY

Practice Approaches to the Digital Transformations of Diplomacy: Toward a New Research Agenda

ELSA HEDLING
Lund University, Sweden

AND

NIKLAS BREMBERG
Stockholm University, Sweden

As a growing number of diplomatic practices take new digital forms, research on digital diplomacy is rapidly expanding. Many of the changes linked to digitalization transform or challenge traditional ways of doing diplomacy. Analyses of new forms of "digital diplomacy" are therefore valuable for the advancement of practice approaches in international relations theory. That said, digital diplomacy poses a number of challenges for international relations scholarship that are only beginning to be addressed. Digitalization is both a process and a result, and provokes key questions regarding continuity, change, agency, space, and materiality in diplomacy. The overarching aim of this article is to advance a research agenda that seeks to address key questions in the study of digital diplomacy on the basis of various practice approaches. In particular, the article highlights three dimensions of change as being central to the research agenda and investigates how these can be explored in future analyses of digital diplomacy.

Keywords: digital diplomacy, practice theory, digitalization and international relations

Palabras clave: diplomacia digital, teoría de la práctica, digitalización y relaciones internacionales

Mots clés: diplomatie numérique, théorie pratique, numérisation et relations internationales

Introduction

The emergence and global spread of Internet technologies have fundamentally reshaped societies in just a few decades. In international politics, it is forcing diplomats to rethink core issues of governance, order, and international hierarchy (Seib 2016; Bjola and Manor 2018; Riordan 2019). The intersection of diplomacy and information technology has led to the emergence of new practices of "digital diplomacy." An intern posting a photograph on an embassy’s social media account,
high-level diplomats networking with tech companies in Silicon Valley, and state leaders using Twitter to comment on international negotiations are now examples of everyday diplomatic life. Digital diplomacy is a broad term that refers to how the Internet, digital tools, digital media, and the technology sector have influenced or even transformed diplomacy. Conceptually, digital diplomacy is seen as both a driver and a result of digitalization, and thus encompasses all the various ways in which digitalization interacts with diplomacy (Bjola and Holmes 2015). However, changes in processes and practices amount to more than adaptations of the taken-for-granted ways of doing diplomacy. New technology is bringing new actors into the field of diplomacy. It is also challenging established actors to change their ways of doing things and how they present and perceive themselves. Digital diplomacy can be said to have disrupted traditional diplomacy because it is in many ways a self-ascribed experimental practice. Diplomatic actors are often aware that digitalization involves taking risks and engaging with the unknown, which in turn is at odds with the perception that diplomacy should display foresight and be risk-averse.

As research on digital diplomacy expands rapidly, “practice theory” in international relations (IR) has become a point of departure for studies because of its supposed ability to account for both continuity and change in international politics (Holmes 2015; Adler-Nissen and Drieschova 2019; Cooper and Cornut 2019; see also Adler and Pouliot 2011). The practice idiom can be used to describe a range of concrete phenomena from mundane aspects of local e-mail protocol to ceremonial use of social media in state representation or increasingly structured activities of teleconferenced negotiations in international organizations. The swift shift to “zoom diplomacy” in early 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates how these practices can, at least temporarily, replace face-to-face diplomacy, alas not without its own attendant difficulties (Naylor 2020; Eggeling and Adler-Nissen 2021).

The study of the social practices of digital diplomacy is therefore assumed to offer opportunities to explore how processes, interactions, and habits are influenced by new technology, and how the interconnectedness of the Internet is unfolding on the ground. However, practice theory is not in itself a coherent set of theoretical propositions to be applied off-the-shelf to the study of digital diplomacy or any other field of social inquiry. Practice theory in IR is rather a pluralistic set of approaches that more or less coherently draws on insights from, inter alia, pragmatism, phenomenology, and critical theory (e.g., see Bicchi and Bremberg 2016; Kustermans 2016; Bueger and Gadinger 2018). As a pluralistic endeavor, it is open to different theorizations of social change. This plurality of approaches is only partly reflected in the research front on digital diplomacy; its character as a “moving target” tends to hamper theoretical advancements. Some research on digital diplomacy has already shown well-known symptoms of diplomacy being “particularly resistant to theory” (Der Derian 1987, 91), by focusing on evaluations or recommendations related to supposedly valuable skills in digital diplomacy rather than analyses of the social and political implications of digitalization in the field of diplomacy. Insights from different practice approaches in IR are sometimes used in an ad-hoc way to advance arguments that, for example, suggest that new technology in digital diplomacy can lead actors to the discovery of new ways of doing things, new goals, and new meanings. In his detailed account of how the emergence of digital communication and social media has affected the practice of public diplomacy, Manor (2019), for example, makes reference to “front stage” and “backstage” social interaction (using Erving Goffman’s terminology), but does not engage with microsociology in the analysis of interactionist change or insights from practice approaches on the performative aspects of diplomacy.

We believe that there is much more to be gained in the field of digital diplomacy from engagement with practice approaches. The changes derived from digitalization that influence the long-standing culture and practice of diplomacy are instructive in probing some of the big questions in IR, not least those centered on the
relationship between agents and their environment, in which practices can be analyzed as both signifiers of continuity and carriers of social and political change. We would therefore like to invite scholars in IR and related fields of inquiry to help advance a more reflective research agenda that can address key questions in digital diplomacy drawing on insights from various practice approaches. We propose an initial focus on three sets of interconnected questions that seem particularly fruitful. The first set of questions addresses diplomatic agency: How do encounters with digitalization reshape the diplomatic profession? How do digital diplomats challenge traditional diplomats? A second set of questions probes the spatial and material aspects of the “digital” in diplomacy: What is the relationship between online and offline practices of diplomacy? What practical difference does the absence of face-to-face interactions make? Finally, the third set of questions addresses the extent to which transparency in digital diplomacy creates and connects new kinds of audiences: How do online audiences contribute to enact diplomacy? What are the constitutive effects of online visibility?

This article has a three-fold aim as it seeks to (1) take stock of the research front in practice theory and digital diplomacy; (2) identify where more research is needed to understand the theoretical potential of this intersection; and (3) advance a new research agenda on practice approaches to digital diplomacy. We seek to achieve these aims through a conceptualizing and synthesizing discussion that addresses the risks and opportunities of practice approaches and digital diplomacy in two parts. The first part discusses the pitfalls and promises of practice approaches to digital diplomacy and how these are reflected in recent studies of the field. The second part addresses the methodological opportunities provided by digital observations and discusses the analytical tools offered by practice approaches to IR. We then take steps toward outlining a research agenda, which mainly draws on the pragmatist tradition of practice theory, which can inform analyses of digital diplomacy. We suggest three key dimensions of digital diplomacy in order to address the questions outlined above. We conclude by calling for more systematic interaction between practice approaches to map these practices and how they are transforming diplomacy.

**Practices of Digital Diplomacy**

*Pitfalls of Using the Practice Idiom without Theorizing Practices*

Thus far, research on digital diplomacy has been dominated by studies of the digitalization of public diplomacy, which is sometimes included in the definition of the term “new public diplomacy” (Melissen 2005; Seib 2010; Hayden 2012; Pamment 2013, 2016; Manor 2019). In this body of literature, approaches that use concepts such as “soft power”, “strategic communication”, and “nation branding” have led to an instrumental understanding of how such influence is best projected and how it can be measured. From this perspective, digital diplomacy is often reduced to a tool of soft power aimed at attracting and persuading foreign publics through the promotion of a country’s cultural attributes and values (Nye 1990, 2004). These studies have been well received by practitioners in the field, that is, the diplomats and civil servants who benefit from studies of digital diplomacy practice understood as practical knowledge that can easily be transferred and adopted in and through guidelines. This perspective is not problematic per se and such studies have contributed to an exploration of sites of digital diplomacy, but they have also created some confusion over the promises of a practice approach to digital diplomacy where practice is simply understood as “practical” in direct contrast to “theoretical” (cf. Kustermans 2016, 178).

We argue that this instrumental view of practice is not totally irrelevant as long as it is connected to social theory insights that can provide an analytical lens on this specific kind of rationality. Best practices on digital diplomacy can have
explanatory significance through engagement with logics of action that can isolate the “doing” from its actors and environment. That said, this is where the strictly instrumental and rationalist approach falls short, since the art of diplomacy is not a skillset that can be acquired from a textbook: it requires tacit knowledge. Part of the problem here is that the international spread of digital diplomacy has become a top-down process. The diplomatic corps was not dominated by digital natives but instructed to change and adopt by their governments. In order to capture the influence of change and continuity in international politics, research should focus on the agency of diplomats doing digital diplomacy rather than evaluating policy or communication campaigns. Essentially, we should not assume that anyone can do digital diplomacy after having read a manual of best practice. Moreover, it is also relevant to consider how these new patterns of digital diplomacy output may reproduce or disrupt patriarchal social structures (Standfield 2020).

The interesting practical knowledge of digital diplomacy is rather related to agency and the preconditions of logics of action. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed many challenges related to the constraints on converting diplomatic practices that depend on tacit knowledge to the use of digital tools. In April 2020, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, expressed the difficulty of building trust and finding compromise in EU diplomacy when all social interaction takes place by video conference (Borrell 2020). To distinguish them from policy briefs or think tank reports, studies into these processes should strive to better capture how diplomats balance their online and offline environment in practice, and the potential constraints or lack of them. The balancing of online and offline practices can reveal how diplomats overcome constraints in the absence of face-to-face diplomacy and more generally contribute to a mapping of the socialization of diplomatic conduct online and the emergence of digital norms in new habits.

The entanglement with strategic communication, public relations, and marketing in digital diplomacy is also problematic in relation to how practices are often understood as relying on unreflective, automatic, unconscious, and habitual actions. This could be reason enough to push digital diplomacy into strictly rationalist models of diplomacy that view diplomacy as strategic interactions. This, however, would be a lost opportunity for studying an area of diplomacy with patterns of meaningful action that are gradually being naturalized into contemporary diplomacy. In terms of communication strategies, more research is needed to understand why certain strategies are becoming commonsensical while others are being abandoned in favor of stable routines. This is an area where practice approaches could contribute by situating digital diplomacy practice as a process of knowledge construction in which its practitioners are both leading and shaping their practice. The results of practices are therefore found not only in the impact of digital diplomacy, but also in the way that these practices themselves evolve. These patterns of output should be distinguished from strict understandings of the effects or impact of strategic communication on diplomacy. For instance, diplomats’ use of social media can be considered a practice that leads not only to effects of increased visibility and transparency, but also to more contention in diplomacy. To leave the analysis here would in our view be a major pitfall because the aim of practice approaches is to move away from the view of practices only as outcomes in need of an explanation. The relationship between visibility, transparency, and contention in diplomacy is related to the interplay of different levels of diplomatic interaction, different material aspects of communication, and different levels of participation by spectators. The added value of studying practices as they unfold on the ground is therefore that they can and should be studied as both processes and the outcomes of these processes (e.g., see Adler and Pouliot 2011).

The materiality of digital diplomacy practice deserves more attention as it poses additional challenges to the value of practice approaches in this field. While one
promise of the “practice turn” in IR was to open up new ways of studying the interplay between discourse and behavior, the materiality of practices is often studied in ways that favor one over the other. Digital diplomacy covers the visual practices of diplomacy not only because they are visible as they take place in the open, but also because social media are intrinsically visual (Manor and Crilley 2018). Practice approaches to digital diplomacy have therefore also drawn attention to visual and affective power in IR. The assumption that we live in a “visual age” suggests that visual elements such as images are shaping politics (Hansen 2011, 2017; Bleiker 2018; Adler-Nissen, Andersen and Hansen 2019). This is a promising route by which to study the interplay between behavior and discourse in analytically alike routines and ceremonial uses of social media. Once again, however, we foresee some troubling entanglement with strategic communication and practical knowledge when visuality is studied in digital diplomacy. For instance, are we speaking of strategies to generate emotion through visual representation or can we speak of visual or emotional practices of digital diplomacy? Visual representation and emotive storytelling are undoubtedly central to the opportunities presented by the digitalization of public diplomacy (Manor 2019). Social media favors intimacy and personalized communication over information, often through the use of images as cognitive shortcuts to emotions. In addition, Duncombe (2019) has highlighted the emotional dynamics of Twitter as a social media platform that can play a role in the escalation or de-escalation of international conflict. Nonetheless, we still need to further explore what it means when diplomatic actors are producing emotional content. What is the role of the social media platforms in such actors’ ability to communicate emotions and how do their material conditions differ? What practices are visual media reflecting and how are they changing diplomacy?

While highly relevant, attention to the visual elements of digital diplomacy is a potential pitfall for practice approaches when they risk being treated only as techniques or outcomes of digitalization. Framing theory, for instance, tends to overstate the reach and speed of social media instead of paying more attention to how the format itself transforms the practice beyond the traditional frames of mass media. When considered as a trending practice of strategic communication, visual representations are often bundled together with textual communication but fail to recognize that the nonverbal character is often ambiguous. Moreover, visual political communication plays a central role in populist rhetoric. The way that visuals are engaged in digital diplomacy should therefore also be contextualized within a broader societal setting, both as the means and an outcome of adaptation to populist challenges (see Cooper 2019; Duncombe 2019). Visual analysis should be engaged with the promise of contextualizing the role of visuals to show that videos or images themselves as material objects are not necessarily contentious but may become so when considered as contextual practices (Hansen 2011, 2017). To treat visuals as merely an effective format of communication is to ignore the fact that the material and symbolic aspects and affordances of social media may also perform authority and knowledge.

Finally, digital diplomacy is simultaneously a front stage for diplomacy as a result of the digitalization of diplomatic practice, a window into a backstage area previously out of public reach, a journal or cumulative record of everyday practices of diplomacy, and a set of tools that facilitate ways of doing diplomacy. All of these forms and functions in which digital diplomacy serves to manifest diplomatic practice depend on interactions between leaders, between diplomats, with civil servants, with news media or with the public. While interaction between the first three groups of actors is a continuation of traditional forms and functions of diplomacy, the visibility, visuality, and interactivity grants a more prominent role to audiences. Thus far, attempts to theorize the role of audiences in IR have often fallen short and analyses tend to stop at elite perceptions of public and emotional engagement. Practice approaches in IR offer no easy remedy for this problem but the digitalization of
everyday activities in combination with the accessibility (and normalization) of statements by international leaders such as former US President Donald J. Trump are key aspects of the understanding of audiences in diplomacy. These audiences matter greatly to our understanding of how Twitter might facilitate daily interaction and produce routines, specialized language and ceremonial uses of social media, for instance by creating expectations in which loaded silence and the absence of expected tweets become equally important. Thus, practice approaches offer many, albeit hitherto mainly unexplored, ways to theorize the role of audiences in digital diplomacy.

The Promises of Practice Theory

It has been argued that the main aim of practice theory in IR is to bridge dualist positions primarily within constructivist scholarship on ideational versus material, agency versus structure, and continuity versus change (McCourt 2016). Even though the ongoing revindication of the “practice turn in social theory” (cf. Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina and von Savigny 2001) seems to have resonated most strongly with constructivist scholars thus far, we adhere to the notion that practice theory in IR is, and needs to be, a pluralist endeavor. Bueger and Gadinger (2018) suggest that “international practice theory” currently cover a wide range of theoretical approaches, including Bourdieusian praxeology (e.g., see Kuus 2014), Foucauldian governmentality (e.g., see Merlingen 2006), Wenger’s notion of communities of practice (e.g., see Bicchi 2011), Schatzki’s view on situated practical understandings (e.g., see Bremberg 2016), and varieties of actor–network theory (ANT) (e.g., see Best and Walters 2013). This allows for quite different understandings of social practice, and it is hard to argue that certain understandings are necessarily more useful or valuable than others. This also means that “practice theory” cannot easily be applied to any field of inquiry (such as digital diplomacy) without specifying in some detail what notion(s) of practice the researcher wants to engage with and how to do so.

In general, we think that it is useful to define practices as patterns of meaningful action stemming from emerging nexuses of saying and doing. Practices are both agential and structural, since they are performed through agency but upheld by structure, which in turn ranges from standards of competence to technology. Moreover, some practice approaches emphasize the struggle for recognition as a key driver of political change (Pouliot 2016). Others stress that change is instead an outcome of collective learning processes (Adler 2019). These theoretical positions need not be mutually exclusive but can be combined in different ways (Adler and Pouliot 2011). For example, Adler-Nissen (2016) suggests that we should distinguish between “ordering” and “disordering” practices as a means of understanding how social practices relate to change as well as continuity. Others suggest that in order to analytically capture social and political change, we need to theorize in much more detail how improvisation and creativity can work to reshape practices, and thus specify the conditions under which habitual action is replaced by conscious reflection (Cornut 2018; Hopf 2018).

We agree with Pouliot (2014, 237) that insights from different practice approaches suggest that social causality is limited to specific contexts. At the same time, however, if we assume that practices are patterned meaningful actions, it seems possible that certain practices might travel to other social contexts within the same interpretive boundaries. Practice approaches in IR have for instance proved valuable for better understanding the dynamics of international security, where security practices tend to privilege stability over change but are disrupted and evolving in and through social relations and material conditions in various settings (e.g., see Pouliot 2010a; Bremberg 2015; Bueger 2016; Græger 2016; Ekengren 2018).
We, like many others, argue that diplomacy, as a social field and an object of academic inquiry, is especially well-suited to be explored by practice approaches because it combines path-dependent rituals of communication and representation with adaptive responses to societal change, not least linked to technological developments (Pouliot and Cornut 2015; Bicchi and Bremberg 2016). Diplomacy is traditionally defined as the “tactful” conduct of official relations among independent states (e.g., see Satow 1979 [1917]), although contemporary conceptualizations tend to emphasize that diplomacy is not necessarily only performed by accredited diplomatic agents and that it needs to be understood as an “evolving configuration of social relations” (Sending, Pouliot, and Neumann 2011, 528; see also Barston 1997; Constantinou and Der Derian 2010). Advancing on this understanding, we suggest that diplomacy involves a set of practices that are concerned with both upholding the political status quo and managing social change in IR. For example, Neumann (2012, 307) suggests that the modern diplomatic practice of permanent representation is spread across Europe from Italian city-states partly as a result of the further weakening of the myth of Christian unity in the wake of the Protestant Reformation, i.e., a process of social transformation facilitated by new technology in the shape of the printing press. Moreover, Guzzini (2013, 524) argues that modern diplomacy has been heavily influenced by the behavioral repertoire of Court Aristocracy because even as new social groups entered European diplomatic corps by the early twentieth century, they essentially adopted the pre-revolutionary diplomatic habitus, albeit with “some adaptations due to the ‘nationalization’ of politics.”

Among the practices most commonly studied in diplomacy studies, those which result from digitalization and increased interaction with digital media are new in comparison to more established ways of doing diplomacy through bilateral negotiations, multilateral meetings, cultural exchanges, peace mediation, and so on. Digital diplomacy practice, however, consists of transformed traditional practices (digitalization as structural change) and new practices that are emerging as a result of new opportunities and improvisation on the ground (digitalization through participatory culture). This dual process of change seem to resonate with transformations of diplomatic practice in the past and thus makes digital diplomacy a fertile ground on which to explore and develop practice approaches to IR (for a similar suggestion, see Cooper and Cornut 2019).

While it is becoming more common to adopt a macro understanding of the digitalization of politics (and its opportunities and challenges), the changes brought about by the Internet, and social media in particular, were noticeable first “on the ground”. The field of digital politics emerged rapidly but IR scholars were relative latecomers, in part because of the challenges of bringing the structural aspects of new media into theory (Jackson 2018). Holmes (2015) was one of the first proponents of a practice approach to digital diplomacy. He argued that the potential lay in the ability to explain the role of digital diplomacy in the management of international change. Rather than departing from digitalization as a process of change, he considered the role that digital diplomacy could play in two types of changes in the international system: top-down exogenous shocks and bottom-up incremental endogenous shifts. Diplomacy constitutes the international practices of managing these two types of change through mentoring or responses such as adaptation or reaction. In his view, digital diplomacy resulted from the bottom-up incremental endogenous shift where practices such as gathering and analyzing information online, negotiating using video-conference tools or listening to the public discourse on the ground, constituted types of diplomatic response.

This view of digital diplomacy as a set of international practices that develop on the ground represented the early understanding of the Internet as a facilitator of transparency, visibility, and connectedness in international politics. In fact, a decade ago, digital diplomacy was first and foremost synonymous with public diplomacy.
and understood as practices of listening and conversing online with foreign publics or the domestic public on the subject of foreign policy (Melissen 2005; Seib 2010). These practices were thought to facilitate the management of international change through the opportunities for connectedness and for speedy access to information brought about by the Internet. This bottom-up view of digitalization was associated with a notion of democratization of diplomacy, influenced by the increased inclusion of non-state actors, the rise of new virtual communities, and the growing relevance of freedom of information legislation brought about in the domain of IR by the Internet (Archetti 2012, 183).

Holmes (2015) sought to expand the understanding of practices influenced by digitalization to include negotiations and changes to face-to-face diplomacy, predicting that exogenous shocks such as international crises would increasingly be managed using digital tools. These predictions appear to reflect current developments. While face-to-face diplomacy remains the cornerstone of international politics, digital tools are increasingly being engaged to complement, assist or even substitute face-to-face diplomacy during unexpected events. Digital diplomacy was engaged during the nuclear negotiations with Iran in 2013–2015 (Seib 2016; Duncombe 2017) and in the aftermath of Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Bjola and Pamment 2016), and later, during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bramsen and Hagemann 2021). In the spring of 2020, a number of virtual high-level meetings were conducted using videoconferencing tools by the leaders of the G7, the G20, the United Nations, and the European Union (Perrett 2020). By April 2020, European diplomats were speaking out about the constraints of operating online, such as the inability to “read a room” or engage in corridor diplomacy in order to reach consensus on sensitive issues (Barigazzi, de la Baume, and Herszenhorn 2020; Heath 2020). These comments seem to reflect what have previously been identified as the problems of fostering relationships and signaling intentions when substituting digital tools for personal social interaction (Holmes 2015).

Today, ministries of foreign affairs and embassies have guidelines on how to use social media for crisis communication and public outreach in unforeseen circumstances, but these routines have evolved gradually and proved effective to varying degrees. In addition, social media outlets—mainly Twitter—are now commonly used in communications between states and have become at least to some extent accepted channels of representation. They might even facilitate interpersonal contact that would otherwise not be possible. Digitalization has thus greatly influenced and even transformed diplomatic practice in ways that often challenge traditional protocol. Duncombe (2017, 555–60) for instance has shown how social media are employed in the practice of interstate dialogue. Twitter is a new technological platform for dialogue but its structure and formatting logic constrains and transforms practices such as the digital form of diplomatic signaling. When interstate dialogue is practiced on Twitter, the presence of an international audience changes the expectations of the performances of state actors. Using the case of Iran–US relations during the negotiations on the Iran nuclear agreement, Duncombe showed how Twitter provided Iran with new ways to signal support for the negotiations. Her study demonstrates how Twitter can shape, carry, and reflect states’ struggles for recognition, and thereby legitimize political opportunities for change. Digital diplomacy practice, in this case interstate dialogue on Twitter, can thus lead to new conditions for, and new means and forms of interaction and outcomes in diplomacy, which are to a large extent visible to the public. As Iran–US relations became tense again under the Trump administration, it is therefore understandable that analysts turned to Twitter to observe signs of change, in particular following the Soleimani strike and the subsequent accidental shooting down of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 in Teheran in January 2020. This time, social media was used to reduce tensions between the United States and Iran. While the hashtag #worldwar3 was trending in public discourse on Twitter, state officials and world leaders primarily used the
channel to signal de-escalation. Another similar example is provided in Cooper and Cornut’s analysis of US Ambassador Michael McFaul’s use of Twitter as a means to reach out to Russian citizens in the midst of deteriorating Russia–US relations (Cooper and Cornut 2019, 314). Thus far, some of these actions appear to have been sporadic, but they can be said to constitute emerging practices in the sense that they illustrate what can be done (Pouliot 2010a).

Exogenous shock in the diplomatic community has also led to an increased need to understand the structural aspects of new media; how digitalization has not just led to new tools and political artifacts, but also influenced power relations in international politics. The rise of digital disinformation and cybersecurity threats has forced states and international organizations to rethink the role of digital diplomacy (Bjola and Pamment 2016; Duncombe 2018; Ördén 2018; Hedling 2021). Disinformation, or the deliberate use of false information to deceive, mislead, and confuse, is now a well-known aspect of planning and executing a state’s digital communication strategy. While the digitalization of public diplomacy has meant a greater emphasis on diplomatic relationships with the public, both foreign and domestic, digital disinformation has emerged as the “dark side of digital diplomacy” (Bjola and Pamment 2018). The threat of digital disinformation in addition to other areas of cybersecurity threat effectively ended the “age of innocence” in digital diplomacy debates. In addition to sophisticated and creative communication strategies, diplomacy is now being increasingly transformed by its adaptation to technological advances, using algorithms and machine learning to balance the positive aspects of digitalization with its vulnerabilities (Riordan 2019). The realization that digital tools are not just available for promotional purposes has increased levels of competition in digital diplomacy. States and even individual diplomats that fare poorly in the online world of diplomacy can suffer consequences in the offline world. In addition, global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic enhance the practicality of using digital tools in diplomacy. While online negotiations may be less than optimal, a crisis of such magnitude can often spur the emergence of alternative practices. For all these reasons, digital diplomacy can no longer be seen as optional in the diplomatic repertoire.

Consequently, digitalization has both enabled a more participatory culture of diplomacy and restructured patterns of communication and representation. The state of digital diplomacy practices, such as Twitter messaging or information gathering online, generally reflects both these characteristics. They are adaptations of ways of doing things but have to some degree also developed in their local context, depending on the actors that engage with digital media and the opportunities and challenges they encounter. Despite the fact that digital diplomacy is becoming a set of recognizable practices, it is still to a large extent an explorative and experimental area of diplomatic practice. Thus, its normative and behavioral underpinnings are shaped by the interplay between the host diplomatic institution and the opportunities and constraints offered by digital society in a specific political context. The new norms and behaviors that have emerged through the establishment of digital diplomacy must therefore be understood in the light of how political practices converge with digital society. This is why we argue that practice approaches are well-suited to furthering the conceptual understanding of digital diplomacy. The challenge to this field of inquiry is therefore to carefully and systematically map the practices of digital diplomacy alongside traditional practices of face-to-face diplomacy while acknowledging that both dimensions will continue to evolve.

1 President Trump initially responded to the Soleimani strike with hostile tweets aimed at Iran but was met by Iranian signals of sincerity and transparency. The exchange between Trump and Iran’s Foreign Minister Jawad Zarif was later described as “real time discaesalory twitter” that may even have stopped a war (Suciu 2020).
Diplomacy studies that draw on practice approaches often seek inspiration from the methodological tradition in social science of using inductive insights into lived experiences. Such insights also carry weight for studies of digital diplomacy. When departing from insights from various practice approaches, it is often assumed that the analytical process involves tracing the background knowledge and tacit understandings of those who are “doing diplomacy”. This includes the intersubjective rules and resources that are considered imperative for the performance of diplomatic practices such as negotiation and representation (e.g., see Pouliot 2008; Adler-Nissen 2014; Bueger 2014). Practice approaches favor publicly accessible performances over private mental states, which in effect treats practices as “raw data” (Andersen and Neumann 2012). In many ways, digital diplomacy is therefore an area of diplomatic practice that is especially well-suited to practice approaches, because it departs from the notion of subtle change (digital transformation) where practices are to some extent visible and observable. When diplomats use social media to signal or report during negotiations, the interactions that follow, or at least those which take place online, can be observed. Other practices in this group that do not take place in public, such as WhatsApp conversations, videoconferencing or using word processing to negotiate agreements, may still be observable because they are often assumed to be less sensitive than habits of mediation or decision-making, and are therefore more likely to be studied through practice-favored methodologies.

The view of digital diplomacy as experimental and thus characterized by high degrees of risk-taking has mostly been explored in relation to the specific logic of social media, where speed and reach are sometimes favored over accuracy, and mistakes are increasingly perceived as short-lived (Manor 2019, 33). However, digital diplomacy is also an experimental practice in broader terms. When in 2017, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the world’s first “tech ambassador” with a global mandate and physical presence in three time zones (Silicon Valley, Beijing, and Copenhagen), they said that they did not know exactly what the goal was or what they were going to do. The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that it was facing the future and was openly prepared to experiment in the development of diplomacy (Jacobsen 2017). Since then, the Danish ambassador and his team have been learning by doing, very much in line with the pragmatist view of a “hands on” approach to learning through creative experiment (cf. Dewey 1929). Diplomatic representation to the tech industry also illustrates the shifting power relations in a digital society where tech companies rather than state actors are acknowledged partners in diplomatic crises. In addition, this illustrates an acceptance of the need to learn by doing in order to keep up with societal developments. The fact that the Danish ambassador’s presence in Silicon Valley can and has been used in unanticipated situations reflects how improvisation in specific cases is constitutive of the “big picture” in international politics (Cornut 2018).² While diplomatic representation to the tech industry appears to be spreading (Australia and France now also have “cyber ambassadors”), we do not know to what extent this practice reflects a fundamental shift in diplomacy. Adding this capacity to diplomatic institutions could, eventually, enhance the role of technology in diplomatic practice. However, tech ambassadors could also remain a rare breed of tech savvy individuals operating on the margins of conventional diplomacy. Here, studying practices of digital diplomacy holds the promise of helping us better understand if and how new practices go from being self-ascribed as experimental to becoming self-evident, normal ways of doing things (cf. Hopf 2018).

² When a Danish citizen was killed by an Islamic terrorist while travelling in Morocco in 2017, a video of the attack was posted online. Denmark’s tech ambassador quickly used his connections in Silicon Valley to get Facebook and Google to remove the video (Satariano 2019).
Thus, practices can and should be studied through multiple methods of data collection. They can be seen, talked about or read, which in turn encourages a combination or mix of methods of collecting empirical material. The favored method thus far for IR researchers who adhere to practice approaches has been qualitative interviewing (Pouliot and Cornut 2015; Adler-Nissen 2016; Bicchi and Bremberg 2016). Such interviews are often unstructured or semi-structured to account for the informants’ descriptions of how they go about their business. While elite interviews appear to be the most common approach, Pouliot (2014, 245) considers ethnographic participant observation to be the best method for embedding practices in their social context. Indeed, ethnography is conceived as the holy grail of studying practices of diplomacy (Neumann 2012; Kuus 2014; Marsden, Ibañez-Tirado, and Henig 2016). The assumption is that observations of how practitioners do politics, preferably in combination with direct and unfiltered accounts, ideally enable the researcher to understand how and why agents act, behave, think, and feel (see Pouliot 2010a). In reality, however, such access is rarely possible.

We argue that digital diplomacy is particularly interesting to practice approaches in IR because it involves practices that can be observed to a better extent than many other diplomatic practices. This is linked to the transparency of the Internet, where for instance communication practices are highly visible, as well as the relative or perceived neutrality of technology compared to other elements of diplomacy. It is arguably less likely that a researcher would be allowed to observe a high-stakes negotiation than the less secretive ways of updating a social media account. While the content of online group discussions may be subject to secrecy regulations, it is not impossible for researchers to gain access to the ways in which such communication technologies are being used. For instance, in their empirically rich account of track-change diplomacy, Adler-Nissen and Drieschova (2019) draw on participant observations made through access to a large number of documents on draft legislation circulated for the Committee of Permanent Representatives (Coreper), which negotiates in preparation for the meetings of the EU Council of Ministers. Access to these documents enabled the researchers to see how word processing software (specifically the track-change function) plays an instrumental part in the negotiation of political agreements. While these practices were contentious and reflected struggles for power, the fact that they could be “seen” rather than “talked about” was a probable factor in the successful methodology of the study.

The visibility of digital diplomacy also opens up avenues for promising research designs where interviews can be combined with observation. In addition to gaining access to otherwise sensitive negotiation documents, some digital diplomacy practice can be seen online and therefore scraped to enable large-N investigations and network analyses. The field also offers numerous opportunities for visual analysis that can reveal new dimensions of negotiations and signaling in diplomacy (Duncombe 2017). To date, there have been no known studies of digital diplomacy using netnography, in the strict sense of the term. Netnography or “virtual ethnography” is the adaptation of ethnography to the digital world. It has been argued that netnography offers unobtrusive and non-influencing monitoring of the communication and interaction of online usage behavior, which is to some extent a contradiction of its ethnographic roots (Kozinets 2010). However, social movement and youth studies have produced interesting results on online/offline relationships using netnographic approaches (Wilson 2016; Barisone, Michailidou, and Airoldi 2019). While diplomacy is a formal practice and therefore less inclined to the type of mobilizing behavior that might be expected from social movements, netnography holds the promise of reaching otherwise elusive audiences for digital diplomacy. The increased role of the public in international politics is a common point of departure in studies of new media in IR, but most studies have been limited to including the perceptions of audiences. Social media is believed to emotionally engage and its impact is measured in terms of likes, reposts, and viewing time. This
perceived audience is a source of legitimacy that has increased the stakes when it comes to digitalizing diplomacy. Here, practice approaches have a central role to play in theorizing the role of the audience as both spectator and participant in the practice of digital diplomacy. Studying audiences is methodologically challenging but methods such as netnography offer opportunities to overcome the focus on perception or the quantification of audiences’ engagement to understand their relational role in new practices of international politics.

While we think that the opportunities outweigh the methodological problems, there are many questions to keep in mind in taking a practice approach to digital diplomacy. These questions invoke the urgency of including theorizations of the microdynamics of social life (Goffman 1959). For instance, technology enables stage management, in the sense that diplomatic actors can project a persona online. At the same time, managing a role is more difficult in a real-time drama where there is no equivalent to the backstage sphere and still an offline persona to manage at the same time. While at the outset new media opportunities might be assumed to foster impression management, a role must resonate with the expectations of an audience. It is therefore possible that the online/offline dimension might lead to more unfiltered accounts. The risk of not resonating with the offline persona endangers the accumulation of support from the following audience. Furthermore, a “tech ambassador” is a persona and a diplomatic signal of engagement that challenges previous role conceptions in diplomatic practice. For one, the fact that the ambassador has a global mandate differs from the traditional role of ambassadors as local envoys (even though it follows the state practice of appointing ambassadors-at-large or special envoys). This signals that the acknowledgement of co-presence with tech companies has led to changes in both the role and the script that future ambassadors will perform. To think of sector ambassadors with global mandates only in terms of change, however, would be to miss how this development also signals continuity. For example, corporate diplomacy is a phenomenon that has its roots in the early modern world (van Meersbergen 2017). There are plenty of opportunities to explore how change and continuity in the social interactions of diplomacy are currently unfolding and practice approaches offer ways to think about relevant methods for doing so.

Toward a Research Agenda for Digital Diplomacy Practice

Against the backdrop of the promises and opportunities of practice approaches to digital diplomacy, we suggest ways to develop a research agenda. Efforts to understand digital diplomacy have sometimes emphasized change at the expense of continuity. However, we would like to stress the need to consider digital diplomatic practice as an interplay between continuity and change in this field. This is particularly important if digital diplomacy is viewed as more than a subset of diplomacy. If anything, previous research demonstrates that digital diplomacy practices are increasingly emerging alongside other practices in multiple sites of diplomacy. The breadth of digitalization highlights how digital diplomacy contains more than changes in diplomatic communication. It has led to transformations in both the structural conditions for diplomacy and the agency and working routines of diplomacy on the ground. Therefore, digital diplomacy should be understood as an emergent political practice in increasingly digitalizing societies.

In our view, a particularly useful way of theorizing change and continuity in digital diplomatic practice draws on pragmatist notions of human action (Whitford 2002; Kratochwil 2011; Frankel Pratt 2016). The pragmatist view on practice is well in line with the practice approaches developed by Wenger and Schatzki, but that does not mean that we do not find insights from for instance Bourdieu to be useful as well (see above). The key insight here, however, is that there is an alternation between habitual and creative actions because social practices do not completely specify the
appropriate or “natural” code of conduct. There is always some “room for manoeuvre”, meaning that there might be more than one course of action that is perceived to be naturally appropriate in a given situation; and that in situations that do not correspond to what actors are normally faced with, they are often forced to come up with their new ways of doing things (Gross 2009). In line with this pragmatist-inspired understanding of social practices, political change can be thought of in both incremental and more radical terms.

It is in a local context that we can observe the interaction between elements of change and the practices that they reproduce. Since practices are both general and contextually embedded, conceptualizations that do not take account of the social context and the political prerequisites of diplomacy will fall short in analytical terms and remain centered on instrumental migration to the digital sphere. A contextual understanding of diplomacy as political practice, however, does not mean that more general conceptualizations are ruled out. Rather, it is through social causality in a local context that we can hope to generate analytically general insights (Pouliot 2014). In our view, the aim of research that draws on practice approaches must therefore be to strike a balance between thick description and conceptual abstraction.

In the table below, we suggest three areas where practice approaches can collectively contribute to furthering our understanding of digital diplomacy and where we see opportunities for theoretical advancement. First, we identify the questions of diplomatic agency at stake in digital diplomacy and discuss the evolving “habitus” of diplomats in the digital age. Second, we discuss the issue of space and the materiality of new technology where the interrelations between saying and doing become visible online. Finally, we consider the new role of audiences for digital diplomacy and how to theorize their role in the practices they observe, expect, react to, engage with or ignore. The practice approaches that we engage with here are not meant to be understood as exhaustive, and the main purpose of this agenda is to encourage more collective reflection as we imagine that the categories in the table could be complemented with more avenues for future research (Table 1).

**Diplomatic Agency**

Digital diplomacy depends on new communication and technical skills. While communication is a cornerstone of diplomacy, the codes, habits, and norms of communication online differ from both the formal and the informal diplomatic communications that take place behind closed doors. Mastering the formatting logic of software, the navigation of big data and management of relationships with tech companies have become new tasks of diplomacy (Riordan 2019). This has led to a need for diplomatic organizations not only to learn new skills, but also to recruit new competences. In general terms, diplomatic organizations have internalized strategic communication to a greater extent than before, leading to an increased number of professional communicators in diplomatic organizations—a different professional role to diplomats as communicators. This is partly a result of the embrace of social media, but it also reflects the shift toward more proactive news media relations that began before the emergence of social networks online (Pamment 2016). Yet, a majority of these practices reflect a mere migration of the conventional broadcast mode of communication. For example, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ use of social media may not be indicative of substantial change. Thus far, the need for communicators and training resources does not appear to have had an impact on the selection of new diplomats, but it is likely that this development will eventually challenge longstanding criteria for “good candidates” for diplomatic training.3 As

---

3To our knowledge, no study has as yet found significant changes in the recruitment of diplomats as a result of digitalization. Nonetheless, generational development could still reflect such a change in skillsets as new diplomats today are “digital natives”, and research into the digitalization of ministries of foreign affairs highlights the effects
### Table 1. A research agenda for digital diplomacy practice

| Overarching research questions | Key objectives | Practice approaches |
|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| **Agency**                     |                |                     |
| How do encounters with digitalization reshape the diplomatic profession? | To map, explain, and understand evolution and learning from digital change in the diplomatic profession, how this change is reflected in dispositions and differs from the traditional “habitus” of the good diplomat. To assess the consequences of the expansion of diplomatic agency. | Bourdieusian praxeology |
| How do digital diplomats challenge traditional diplomats? | To uncover, understand, and explain how digital transformation of diplomatic practices has been possible and how these practices reproduce or challenge offline modes of diplomacy. | Symbolic interactionism (Goffman) |
| **Space and materiality of new technology** | | |
| What is the relationship between online and offline practices of diplomacy? | To explore and assess the empowered role of audiences, spectators, and publics in diplomacy. To uncover how acts of “seeing”, increased visibility, and emotional engagement in diplomacy reproduce or alter the trajectory of diplomatic processes. | The public as a political actor (Dewey) |
| What practical difference does the absence of face-to-face interactions make? | To uncover, understand, and explain how digital transformation of diplomatic practices has been possible and how these practices reproduce or challenge offline modes of diplomacy. | Symbolic interactionism (Goffman) |
| **Audiences**                  |                |                     |
| How do online audiences contribute to enact diplomacy? | To explore and assess the empowered role of audiences, spectators, and publics in diplomacy. To uncover how acts of “seeing”, increased visibility, and emotional engagement in diplomacy reproduce or alter the trajectory of diplomatic processes. | Symbolic interactionism (Goffman) |
| What are the constitutive effects of online visibility? | | Actor-network theory |

Technology gradually takes over the role of rational analysis, future diplomats may be shaped by the dependence on machines and artificial intelligence. Embassies are now expected to perform local online data analysis, and digital disinformation is both a domestic and an international problem for the public diplomacy of states and organizations. Diplomatic organizations today are undergoing a process of professionalization of these skills, and digital diplomacy is therefore concerned with changes in diplomatic agency.

In Bourdieu’s (1990) practice approach to agency, habitus corresponds to agents’ dispositions as a result of lived experiences and socialization. According to Bourdieu, practices change because of improvisations that come naturally to the actors that perform them. Hence, digitalization changes the habitus of diplomats because they naturally adapt to new conditions and new tools. Bourdieu’s approach to practice has been criticized because it tends to exclude the role of reflection and learning (e.g., see Adler 2019). While the absence of reflection has sometimes been notable in practices of digital diplomacy (see below), we argue that learning (or lack thereof) is central to understanding the changes in diplomatic agency brought about by digitalization. Indeed, other practice approaches, such as increased digital training, allocation of resources and recruitment of communicators (Pamment 2016; Manor and Grilley 2020),
as building on pragmatism, have developed the role of reflection and learning and connected these dimensions to the process through which actions become patterned (Kustermans 2016; Bueger and Gadinger 2018). In the context of digital diplomacy, the fact that habitus is changed not only through new practices, but also through the influx of new agents and new situations stress the need to pay more attention to diplomatic agency (cf. Bicchi and Bremberg 2016). Changes in agency therefore also refer to the diversification of social background in diplomacy, for instance through the increase of women, and digitalization may intersect with gradual change in gendered practices (cf. Standfield 2020).

We imagine that these encounters with digitalization shape and will continue to reshape the diplomatic profession and we encourage studies that can map and offer analyses across different sites of transformation. The influx of communicators are only one aspect of how new demands for digital skills are changing diplomacy from within (Hedling 2021). Other fertile grounds for exploration can for instance be located in new attempts to shape digital strategies, practices of cyber security, and experimentation with artificial intelligence. These sites involve a multitude of actors that engage in processes of shared learning by gradually establishing ways of doing things through their everyday interactions. Practice approaches inspired by the work of Wenger could offer insights into how digital transformation shapes and reshapes communities of practice around these sites (cf. Bremberg 2016).

Even though diplomacy is commonly understood as first and foremost about negotiation and representation among state officials (e.g., Satow 1917/1979; Barston 1997; Berridge 2010), the scope of diplomatic practices cannot be limited to actions that are performed by national diplomats. To study digital diplomacy is also to consider diplomatic practices conducted by agents from outside the field of accredited diplomatic organizations. Conveying a diplomatic message through visibility and reach is increasingly considered an act of diplomacy. An abundance of new media opportunities has allowed famous and highly visible individuals to gain access to large international audiences in order to conduct celebrity diplomacy (Wheeler 2013; Bergman Rosamond 2016). As noted above, corporate diplomacy is a longstanding practice, but in the digital age it has come to include tech companies whose concentration of power in international politics is still relatively under-researched and poorly understood. Diplomatic agency is also expanded through the new role of audiences as both spectators of and participants in diplomacy. For instance, Golovschenko, Hartmann, and Adler-Nissen (2018) have studied citizens as curators of digital disinformation. Digital disinformation and efforts aimed at countering it are now commonly considered practices of digital diplomacy. In some ways, when citizens become interlocutors and curators of digital information online, they challenge conceptions of diplomatic agency by participating and shaping social exchanges rather than merely acting as audiences of communication. Diplomacy is then involved in a process that links performers and audiences in ways that should be of interest to interventions from both the sociology of networks, by forming “actants”—the relational source of action in ANT (Latour 1996/1990), and the sociology of action by linking agency and structural conditions.

Discussions on media diplomacy have debated the role of the news media. News media actors are rarely understood as diplomatic actors precisely because they are still often seen as a medium of communication. Social media instead enables diplomatic actors to bypass the news media and engage directly with audiences. When these audiences actively participate in the activities that define a practice of digital diplomacy, such as digital disinformation, it could be argued that they do so with agency, that is, they actively participate in the making of diplomatic practices. We envision that engagement with ANT could produce innovative ways of approaching the general expansion of agency in diplomacy through in-depth analysis of the local unfolding of actants, for instance, in relation to the role of algorithms and networks in diplomatic use of social media.
The value of practice approaches in relation to digital diplomacy is to keep role conceptions as open questions and seek to understand how “traditional” and “non-traditional” diplomatic agents become part of an evolving configuration of social relations (Constantinou and Der Derian 2010; Sending, Pouliot, and Neumann 2011). It is in this interplay between traditional and non-traditional diplomatic agents that digital diplomacy has emerged as a practice that can be distinguished from online behavior or digital action through the material aspect of doing diplomacy. The struggle for recognition as competent diplomatic performers is a key element in this process, and as such the emergence of digital diplomacy can be seen as part of the larger processes of reconfiguring diplomacy as a social institution currently being explored by IR scholars (e.g., see Benson-Rea and Shore 2012; Cooper, Heine, and Thakur 2013; Kuus 2014; Pouliot 2016). This research agenda also stresses the need to explore agency as an empirical phenomenon in IR (Braun, Schindler, and Wille 2018). Digitalization also highlights the difference and possible tensions between the analytical focus on organizational agency and individual agency in the field of diplomacy. In order to make insightful contributions to this agenda, we argue that studies of digital diplomacy should further the understanding of different types of diplomatic agency at stake and strive to pinpoint the transformations of diplomatic agency in practices of digital diplomacy.

Space and Materiality of New Technology

The “digital” in digital diplomacy refers to both space—virtual space online or sectorial space such as the tech industry—and materiality, as conditions or objects of communication. In addition, the social science research on digital media now often ascribes agency through performativity to new technology, or at least to algorithms and their ability to shape social, political, and economic life (Kitchin 2017; Wilcox 2017).

This presents conceptual challenges, as studies often engage several of these dimensions at the same time. A common approach is to consider the digital as a structural process and digitalization as enabling and constraining diplomatic practice. However, the materiality of technology may also confine the digital to “materials of practice”, tools of automation or dissemination (Pouliot 2010b), affordances (Adler-Nissen and Drieschova 2019) or even props used to perform or enhance the presentation of the self (Goffman 1959; Aggestam and Hedling 2020). This multitude of dimensions and levels, however, also offer opportunities for studying practices of digital diplomacy, where the spatial and material aspects always interact to some degree. For instance, studies following the tradition of symbolic interactionism can explore social media as a stage on which interesting performances of diplomacy take place but still maintain the materiality of Twitter in such a performance, by emphasizing the personal or intimate tone it allows. For instance, the processes in which social media reshapes expectations of diplomatic rituals are instrumental to grasp changes to “interaction orders” (Goffman 1959). Such processes of connection and engagement also highlight the ways in which technology assists the embodiment of diplomatic roles and practices, such as ambassadorship or negotiation through emotions such as trust or esteem. However, social media platforms lend themselves to emotional engagement in different ways through their specific affordances, that is, what they allow their users to do (Bucher and Helmond 2018). Twitter, Weibo, Facebook, and Instagram are, for instance, different socio-technological environments and may therefore afford their users different kinds of practice. The way that these affordances allow for new practices to transgress the boundaries between the private and the public may also change expectations of (gendered) intimacy in diplomacy (Standfield 2020). Digital media therefore have both embodied and embodying effects on everyday practices of diplomacy and we suggest that more
research is aimed toward capturing how spatial and material aspects condition new possibilities for practical change in diplomacy.

Furthermore, the Internet enables both material connections (new communication channels) and the connection of materials (technologies as political artifacts) that can be circulated with increasing ease, speed, and reach. In our view, this multidimensionality belongs at the center of practice approaches to digital diplomacy because it relates to how saying and doing interrelate in these practices; that is, how verbal, scripted and told, and non-verbal, shown and performed acts are enmeshed within each other. In addition, using social media for the purpose of diplomatic signaling or a word processing program for the purpose of negotiating agreements are patterns of meaningful action that use technologies (both as space of communication and as material artifacts) to produce material outcomes while at the same time leading to changes in behavior and practical dispositions. It is therefore relevant to maintain an analytical distinction between space and materiality of new technology in order to explore their functions in practices of digital diplomacy.

For these reasons, the process of digitalization requires careful contextual understanding that accounts not only for how the process unfolds locally, but also for the hierarchical order of different levels of entanglement with new technology. The hierarchy of dimensions of change matters because it reflects directions of power. For instance, the way that the Internet facilitates communication through speed, reach, and representation often leads to a top-down view of how digitalization structures diplomatic communication through its opportunities for cognitive shortcuts or visual elements that reproduce power relations and hegemonic norms (e.g., United States’ soft power diffusion). The way in which technological affordances through algorithms, software or applications change the ways in which information is shared, exchanged or negotiated, however, instead suggests a bottom-up direction of how practices produce and reproduce power. Adaption to these practices can be a result of exogenous shocks such as pandemics, cyberattacks or digital disinformation campaigns. The digitalization of diplomacy means that these processes of change in diplomatic contexts take place simultaneously. Attention to local context might tell us whether adaptation from above or exploration on the ground are driving digitalization processes at different moments in time, which is often a reflection of the offline dimensions of local diplomatic practice. For instance, in a recent contribution, Bramsen and Hagemann (2021) offer a micro-sociological analysis of the effects of virtual peace mediation during the Covid-19 pandemic. The changing conditions for face-to-face diplomacy during the pandemic offer ample opportunity to conduct similar studies across diplomatic contexts.

This discussion becomes even more relevant when studies on digital diplomacy bring in assumptions from ANT (e.g., Archetti 2012; Adler-Nissen and Drieschova 2019). The added value of ANT appears to be the ability to extend the relational approach of practice approaches to non-human entities such as technology, while opening up the possibility of symmetry between human and non-human actors in social practices. Hence, agency is conceived as a relational effect (Braun, Schindler, and Wille 2018). It is therefore central to connect agency to practices in ways that the relationship with technology leads to practices that would otherwise not exist in any meaningful way. This does not necessarily imply that we need to adhere to post-humanist ideas, because in our view it is not the agency of technology per se that is of interest but rather how technology embeds, conditions, and embodies diplomatic agency. However, we believe that this is a debate to which studies of digital diplomacy, explicitly drawing on insights from ANT and other practice approaches, might be able to make useful contributions.

For these reasons, we encourage studies that engage with key questions of online and offline practices of diplomacy and confront the practical differences between spaces and materials of diplomacy. While we imagine that many directions of inquiry
can result from these questions, we suggest that a common objective will be to offer analyses of how digital transformations become possible in their local contexts and how they reproduce or challenge traditional (offline) modes of diplomacy. As we have noted, several practice approaches could offer pathways for such analyses, we point to Schatzki’s understanding of situated practical understandings as a point of departure to capture local changes in “good practice”. Furthermore, Schatzki’s engagement with materiality may offer pathways to consider how and to what effect the material properties of the digital world are implicated in the digitalization of diplomacy (e.g., see Schatzki 2019).

Audiences

Audiences have thus far not been studied to any large extent in research on digital diplomacy. This is probably a reflection of both theoretical and methodological challenges. IR scholars are not used to conceptualizing the audiences for international politics because their empowered role is a relatively new development. In the broader research field of new media in IR, audiences are increasingly being included in the theorization of, for instance, the role of media in war and conflict (Der Derian 2009; Hoskins and O’Loughlin 2015; Pantti 2016; Jackson 2018; Merrin 2018; Miskimmon, O’Loughlin, and Roselle 2018). The point of departure here is that digital media have both expanded and diversified the audiences for war and conflict. There is a similar assumption in studies on digital diplomacy that diplomats and diplomatic organizations do digital diplomacy to a large extent because of the expansion and diversification of international audiences. Audiences have expanded in terms of both reach and speed, which has led to new opportunities for and constraints on diplomacy, not least when it comes to generating and upholding public legitimacy. Audiences have become more fragmented and must therefore be engaged with differently, depending on the diplomatic goals at stake. At the same time, the traditional boundaries between national audiences have eroded in the online sphere, making it more difficult to appropriate messages. In addition, there is growing competition for audiences online as a growing number of actors look to shape online discussions. The trending topic of digital disinformation further illustrates how audiences are susceptible to such influences.

The relative neglect of the role of audiences in studies on digital diplomacy calls for relational approaches because traditional communication theories fail to grasp the “newness” of digital media due to their inability to conceptualize the changing role of audiences. The common view of the communication process as unidirectional leads to difficulties in accounting for the agency of audiences beyond two-way communication attempts at “listening.” Audiences for digital diplomacy do more than produce public discourse for diplomats to listen to; however, they are both objects and subjects in the practices of digital diplomacy. In less obvious ways, audiences also condition the use of emotional cues and images in social media through their perceived and actual engagement. The affordances offered by social media platforms condition the ways in which audiences can be reached and engaged by such elements. The power and authority that these elements perform depend on their resonance with an audience. Therefore, knowing whether, how, or why audiences respond to images (and whether or not the response was intended by its disseminator) is an essential practical understanding to grasp the influence of visual and affective artifacts. Furthermore, the focus on the perceived roles of the audience has seemingly led to an overstatement of public interest in digital diplomacy. While live videos and curated content are increasingly valued practices of digital diplomacy among states’ ministries and embassies as well as international organizations, the number of viewers and their level of engagement is often modest, at best (Hedling 2020). It would therefore also be valuable to include the influence of lack of interest or even ignorance among audiences in the understanding of how these practices evolve.
At first glance, practice approaches may seem ill-suited to address this challenge, but all social performances, relationships or processes of emancipation depend on receivers, listeners, spectators, publics or “others”—all audiences in some sense. This is perhaps most explicit not only in analyses of social interaction that use stage-related metaphors (Goffman 1959), but also in attempts to theorize democracy, for instance in Dewey’s seminal work on the political public (Dewey 1927). The role of audiences as a site of tension between practice approaches that tend to disregard, underestimate or neglect audiences is challenged by the digital sphere in which social resonance is expanded in terms of scale and speed. Audiences are at the same time both closer (e.g., the intimacy of social media) and more distant (e.g., big data as raw material) (Couldry and Yu 2018). Apart from early anticipation of digital diplomacy as a process that might lead to increased democratization of diplomacy, the importance of studying public participation in the construction of both knowledge and everyday habits remains central to the challenges facing global governance today. We envision that both Goffman’s symbolic interactionism and Dewey’s work on the political role of the public are instructive to analyzing key changes in the information environment. For instance, how do digital audiences contribute to negotiate the success or failure of diplomacy? More attention to the active role of spectatorship in both of these traditions could contribute to enhance the theorizing of audiences in IR.

The methodological challenge for students of IR is of course how to study audiences, how to collect meaningful samples, and how to analyze digital behavior. We think that much would be gained if scholars drawing on insights from practice approaches in the study of digital diplomacy should further explore the opportunities for conducting observations of audiences online. In order to do so successfully, however, audiences will need to be brought into the understanding of what constitutes digital diplomacy practice more systematically. In this mission, we believe scholars drawing on practice approaches to study digital diplomacy can push their insights in other directions and explore new ways of conceptualizing audiences in comparison to what has been accomplished up until this point.

Conclusions

In this article, we have suggested that practice approaches offer opportunities for theoretical and methodological advancement in the field of digital diplomacy. We argue that digital diplomacy provides opportunities to study the interplay between continuity and change in international politics, and that recent studies in this field have demonstrated the promise of using practice-oriented approaches. As digital diplomacy becomes an established international practice, we also argue that it is important to resist conceptualizing it merely as a subfield of diplomacy and instead favor integrating its premises with theories of IR. Digital diplomacy today is much more than world leaders’ use of Twitter. It is a fundamental dimension of contemporary international politics. The article has sought to demonstrate the opportunities that digital diplomacy opens up for the further development of practice approaches in IR. The visibility, transparency, and visuality of digital media provide ways to observe new practices as they unfold. In order to make meaningful contributions to the intersection of digital diplomacy and practice theory in IR, we call for a more systematic research agenda. By taking stock of the promises, opportunities, and pitfalls of existing digital diplomacy research, we highlight three central areas for fruitful cross-fertilization with different versions of practice approaches that are already being explored by IR scholars.

First, digitalization has already led to changes in diplomatic agency in the sense of changing expectations of both what counts as diplomatic action and who counts as a diplomatic actor. These changes highlight the evolving interaction between “traditional” and “non-traditional” diplomatic agents and that digital diplomacy...
has emerged as a practice that is distinguished from online behavior or digital action through the material aspect of doing diplomacy. Digital diplomacy can thus be seen as part of the larger process of reconfiguring diplomacy as a social institution. Several recent studies draw on insights from practice theory in IR to make important contributions to our understanding of how digitalization changes diplomatic agency. In order to advance the research agenda, however, we stress the need to further specify how different types of agency are made possible in and through the emerging practice of digital diplomacy, and in so doing to get a better grasp of the stakes involved for those who are actually doing that digital diplomacy. The different understandings of what constitutes agency and the relationship to structural conditions can assist in exploring the multiplicity of agency change.

Second, there is complexity in the spatial and material aspects of “the digital” that requires careful distinction and more research in order to fully grasp how digitalization influences diplomatic practices. Technologies assist the embodiment and enacting of diplomacy in different ways. They may also constrain its effectiveness. Attempts to carry on diplomacy “as usual” during the COVID-19 pandemic have illustrated how digital tools can overcome spatial obstacles but still fall short of delivering the expected outcomes in the absence of physical, interpersonal, and situated rituals. Lessons from digital adaptation at moments of disruption are therefore valuable to advance our understanding of which digital diplomatic practices eventually become commonsensical while others are gradually abandoned. In addition, the different affordances of social media platforms and the varying outcomes produced by digital diplomacy practice suggest that we have more to learn from the socio-technological environments in which diplomacy now also takes place. We therefore call for the careful treatment of the digital as a space, material resource, and means of agency.

Finally, practice approaches are challenged by the empowered role of audiences in international politics and how they increasingly affect and constitute aspects of the everyday practice of diplomacy. While practice approaches may not offer sufficient explanatory grounds on which to further our understanding of audiences in IR, we have argued that theorizing the role of audiences matters to our understanding of digital diplomacy practices. The way in which interactions with and among audiences have intensified the public nature of diplomatic practices must be taken into account. This development has changed the role of the public in diplomatic social interaction, and audiences may therefore have more influence on the logics of action in diplomatic practice than before the rise of social media.

In addition to these three central areas, we imagine that other developments in the wider field of IR can reinvigorate this research agenda further. More engagement with feminist and post-Western theories or the micro-sociology of emotions and affect could, for instance, open for new avenues of exploring relationships between the institutional legacies of overarching power relations and digital change in diplomacy.

We believe that there is great potential for theoretical, methodological, and empirical advances to be made through further study of the digital transformation of diplomacy, building on various insights from practice approaches. We invite scholars interested in diplomatic practices and the processes of digitalization to think in terms of how to contribute to such a research agenda, even though they might not think of themselves as primarily involved in practice-based research. We are aware that this article is only a first step and we welcome fellow scholars in IR and beyond to challenge our proposals in the spirit of critical engagement.

**Funding**

Elsa Hedling gratefully acknowledges funding from the Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation (project number 2018.0090).
Acknowledgements

We are grateful to August Danielson and Constance Duncombe for comments on a previous draft, as well as the participants and audience of the panel “Digital diplomacy in world politics: peace, gender, emotion and popular culture” during the ISA Annual Convention, Toronto, 2019. We would also like to thank the journal editor and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions.

References

ADLER, Emanual. 2019. *World Ordering: A Social Theory of Cognitive Evolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ADLER, Emanual, and Vincent Pouliot, eds. 2011. *International Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ADLER-NISSEN, Rebecca. 2014. “Symbolic Power in European Diplomacy: The Struggle between National Foreign Services and the EU’s External Action Service.” *Review of International Studies* 40 (4): 657–81.

———. 2016. “Towards a Practice Turn in EU Studies: The Everyday of European Integration.” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 54 (1): 87–103.

ADLER-NISSEN, Rebecca, Katrine Emelie Andersen, and Lene Hansen. 2019. “Images, Emotions, and International Politics: The Death of Alan Kurdi.” *Review of International Studies* 46 (1): 75–95.

ADLER-NISSEN, Rebecca, and Alena Drieschova. 2019. “Track-Change Diplomacy: Technology, Affordances and the Practice of International Negotiations.” *International Studies Quarterly* 63 (3): 531–45.

AGGESTAM, Lisbeth, and Elsa Hedling. 2020. “Leaderisation in Foreign Policy: Performing the Role of EU High Representative.” *European Security* 29 (3): 301–19.

ANDERSEN, Morten Skumsrud, and Iver B. Neumann. 2012. “Practices as Models: A Methodology with an Illustration Concerning Wampum Diplomacy.” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 40 (3): 457–81.

ARCHETTI, Cristina. 2012. “The Impact of New Media on Diplomatic Practice: An Evolutionary Model of Change.” *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 7 (2): 181–206.

BARRIGAZZI, Jacopo, Maïa de la Baume, and David M. Herszenhorn. 2020. “Coronavirus Crisis Hastens Remote-Control Europe.” Politico, April 18. Accessed June 10, 2021. https://www.politico.eu/article/outbreak-forces-eu-to-innovate-on-virtual-meetings-and-decision-making/.

BASISTONE, Mauro, Asimina Michailidou, and Massimo Airoldi. 2019. “Understanding a Digital Movement of Opinion: The Case of #RefugeesWelcome.” *Information, Communication & Society* 22 (8): 1145–64.

BJOLA, Corneliu, and Ilan Manor. 2018. “Revisiting Putnam’s Two-Level Game Theory in the Digital Age: Domestic Digital Diplomacy and the Iran Nuclear Deal.” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 31 (1): 3–32.

BJOLA, Corneliu, and James Pamment. 2016. “Digital Containment: Revisiting Containment Strategy in the Digital Age.” *Global Affairs* 2 (2): 131–42.

BLEIKER, Roland. 2018. *Visual Global Politics*. New York: Routledge.

Borrell, Josep. 2020. “The EU’s Corona Marathon: Moving on All Tracks” April 19. Accessed June 10, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/7754/eur%20%20%99-corona-marathon-moving-all-tracks_en.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Bramsén, Isabel, and Anne Hagemann. 2021. “The Missing Sense of Peace: Diplomatic Approach and Virtualization during the COVID-19 Lockdown.” *International Affairs* 97 (2): 539–56.

Braun, Benjamin, Sebastian Schindler, and Tobias Wille. 2018. “Rethinking Agency in International Relations: Performativity, Performances and Actor-networks.” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 22: 787–807.

Bremerg, Niklas. 2015. “The European Union as Security Community-Building Institution: Venues, Networks and Co-operative Security Practices.” *fCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 33 (3): 674–92.

———. 2016. “Making Sense of the EU’s Response to the Arab Uprisings: Foreign Policy Practice at Times of Crisis.” *European Security* 25 (4): 423–41.

Bucher, Taina, and Anne Helmond. 2018. “The Affordances of Social Media Platforms” In The SAGE Handbook of Social Media, edited by Jean Burgess, Alice Marwick and Thomas Poell. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Bueger, Christian. 2014. “Pathways to Practice: Praxiography and International Politics.” *European Political Science Review* 6 (3): 385–406.

———. 2016. “Doing Europe: Agency and the European Union in the Field of Counter-Piracy Practice.” *European Security* 25 (4): 407–22.

Bueger, Christian, and Frank Gadinger. 2018. *International Practice Theory: New Perspectives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Constantinou, Costas M., and James Der Derian. 2010. *Sustainable Diplomacies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cooper, Andrew F. 2019. “Adapting Public Diplomacy to the Populist Challenge.” *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 14 (1–2): 36–50.

Cooper, Andrew F., and Jérémie Cornut. 2019. “The Changing Practices of Frontline Diplomacy: New Directions for Inquiry.” *Review of International Studies* 45 (2): 300–19.

Cooper, Andrew F., Jorge Heine, and Ramesh Thakur. 2013. “Introduction: The Challenges of 21st Century Diplomacy” In *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, edited by Andrew F. Cooper, Jorge Heine and Ramesh Thakur. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cornut, Jérémie. 2018. “Diplomacy, Agency, and Logic of Improvisation and Virtuosity in Practice.” *European Journal of International Relations* 24 (3): 712–36.

Coulby, Nick, and Jin Yu. 2018. “Deconstructing Datafication’s Brave New World.” *New Media & Society* 20 (12): 4473–91.

Der Derian, James. 1987. “Mediating Estrangement: A Theory for Diplomacy.” *Review of International Studies* 13 (2): 91–110.

———. 2009. *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment-Network*. New York: Routledge.

Dewey, John. 1927. *The Public and its Problems*. Athens, OH: Swallow Press.

———. 1929. *Experience and Nature*. New York: Norton.

Duncombe, Constance. 2017. “Twitter and Transformative Diplomacy: Social Media and Iran–US Relations.” *International Affairs* 3 (3): 545–62.

———. 2018. “Twitter and the Challenges of Digital Diplomacy.” *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 38 (2): 91–100.

———. 2019. “The Politics of Twitter: Emotions and the Power of Social Media.” *International Political Sociology* 13 (4): 409–29.

Eggerling, Kristin Anabel, and Rebecca Adler-Nissen. 2021. “The Synthetic Situation in Diplomacy: Scopic Media and the Digital Mediation of Estrangement.” *Global Studies Quarterly* 1 (2): https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksab005.

Ekengren, Magnus. 2018. *Explaining the European Union’s Foreign Policy: A Practice Theory of Translocal Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Frankel Pratt, Simon. 2016. “Pragmatism as Ontology, Not (Just) Epistemology: Exploring the Full Horizon of Pragmatism as an Approach to IR Theory.” *International Studies Review* 18 (3): 508–27.

Gregg, Nina. 2016. “European Security as Practice: EU–NATO Communities of Practice in the Making?” *European Security* 25 (4): 478–501.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, NY: Anchor.

Golovchenko, Yevgeny, Mareike Hartmann, and Rebecca Adler-Nissen. 2018. “State, Media and Civil Society in the Information Warfare over Ukraine: Citizen Curators of Digital Disinformation.” *International Affairs* 94 (3): 975–94.

Gross, Neil. 2009. “A Pragmatist Theory of Social Mechanisms.” *American Sociological Review* 74 (3): 358–79.

Guzzini, Stefano. 2013. “The Ends of International Relations Theory: Stages of Reflexivity and Modes of Theorizing.” *European Journal of International Relations* 19 (3): 521–41.
Hansen, Lene. 2011. “Theorizing the Image for Security Studies: Visual Securitization and the Muhammad Cartoons.” European Journal of International Relations 17 (1): 51–74.
———. 2017. “Reading Comics for the Field of International Relations: Theory, Method and the Bosnian War.” European Journal of International Relations 23 (3): 581–608.
Hayden, Craig. 2012. “Social Media at State: Power, Practice, and Conceptual Limits for US Public Diplomacy.” Global Media Journal 11 (21): 1–21.
Heath, Ryan. 2020. “For Global Diplomats, Zoom Is Not Like Being in the Room.” Politico, April 16. Accessed June 10, 2021. https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/16/zoom-diplomacy-coronavirus-1888111.
Hedling, Elsa. 2020. “Storytelling in EU Public Diplomacy: Reputation Management and Recognition of Success.” Place Branding and Public Diplomacy 16: 687–711.
Hedling, Elsa. 2021. “Transforming Practices of Diplomacy: The European External Action Service and Digital Disinformation.” International Affairs 97 (3): 841–59.
Holmes, Marcus. 2015. “Digital Diplomacy and International Change Management” In Digital Diplomacy Theory and Practice, edited by Corneliu Bjola and Marcus Holmes. London: Routledge.
Hopp, Ted. 2018. “Change in International Practices.” European Journal of International Relations 24 (3): 687–711.
Hoskins, Andrew, and Ben O’Loughlin. 2015. “Arrested War: The Third Phase of Mediatization.” Information, Communication and Society 18 (11): 1320–38.
Jackson, Susan T. 2018. “A Turning IR Landscape in a Shifting Media Ecology: The State of IR Literature on New Media.” International Studies Review 21 (3): 518–34.
Jacobsen, Stine. 2017. “Silicon Valley Giants Outrank Many Nations, Says First ‘Techplomat.’” Reuters, June 19. Accessed June 10, 2021. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-denmark-tech/silicon-valley-giants-outrank-many-nations-says-first-techplomat-idUSKBN19A17A
Kitchin, Rob. 2017. “Thinking Critically about and Researching Algorithms.” Information, Communication & Society 20 (1): 14–29.
Kozinetz, Robert V. 2010. Netnography: Doing Ethnographic Research Online. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
Kratochwil, Friedrich. 2011. “Making Sense of ‘International Practices’.” In International Practices, edited by Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kustermans, Jorg. 2016. “Parsing the Practice Turn: Practice, Practical Knowledge, Practices.” Millennium 44 (2): 175–96.
Kuus, Merje. 2014. Geopolitics and Expertise: Knowledge and Authority in European Diplomacy. West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell.
Lateur, Bruno. 1996/1990. “On Actor Network Theory: A Few Clarifications Plus More Than a Few Complications.” Finn Olsen, Philosophia, 25 (3–4): 47–64.
Manor, Ilan. 2019. The Digitalization of Public Diplomacy. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Manor, Ilan, and Rhys Crilley. 2018. “Visually Framing the Gaza War of 2014: The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Twitter.” Media, War and Conflict 11 (3): 369–391.
———. 2020. “The Mediatisation of MFAS: Diplomacy in the New Media Ecology.” Hague Journal of Diplomacy 15 (1–2): 66–92.
Marsden, Magnus, Diana Irañez-Tirado, and David Heng. 2016. “Everyday Diplomacy: Insights from Ethnography.” Cambridge journal of Anthropology 34 (2): 2–22.
McCourt, D.M. 2016. “Practice Theory and Relationalism as the New Constructivism.” International Studies Quarterly 60 (3): 475–85.
Melissen, J. 2005. The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Merrifield, Michael. 2006. “Foucault and World Politics: Promises and Challenges of Extending Governmentality Theory to the European and Beyond.” Millennium 35 (1): 181–96.
Merrin, William. 2018. #Digital War. London: Routledge.
Miskimmon, Alister, Ben O’Loughlin, and Laura Roselle. 2018. “Strategic Narratives: 21st Century Diplomatic Statecraft.” Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior 113: 1–19.
Naylor, Tristen. 2020. “All That’s Lost: The Hollowing of Summit Diplomacy in a Socially Distanced World.” The Hague Journal of Diplomacy 15: 585–98.
Neumann, Iver. 2012. “Euro-centric Diplomacy: Challenging but Manageable.” European Journal of International Relations 18 (2): 299–321.
Nye, Joseph S. 1990. “Soft Power.” Foreign Policy 80: 153–71.
———. 2004. Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics. New York: Public Affairs.
Ördön, Hedvig. 2018. “Instilling Judgement: Counter-Narratives of Humour, Fact and Logic.” Critical Studies on Security 6 (1): 15–32.
Practice Approaches to the Digital Transformations of Diplomacy

Pamment, James. 2013. “West European Public Diplomacy.” In European Public Diplomacy: Soft Power at Work. edited by M’aia K. Davis Cross and Jan Melissen, 13–38. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
———. 2016. British Public Diplomacy & Soft Power: Diplomatic Influence and the Digital Revolution. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Pantti, Merry. 2016. Media and the Ukraine Crisis: Hybrid Media Practices and Narratives of Conflict. Oxford: Peter Lang.
Perrett, Connor. 2020. “A Photo of the G7 Members Meeting Online Shows How the Coronavirus Pandemic Is Even Impacting World Leaders’ Workflow.” Business Insider, March 16. Accessed June 10, 2021. https://www.businessinsider.com/photo-of-g7-meetings-shows-coronavirus-impacting-world-leaders-2020-3?r=US&IR=T
Pouliot, Vincent. 2008. “The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities.” International Organization 62 (2): 257–88.
———. 2010a. International Security in Practice: The Politics of NATO–Russia Diplomacy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
———. 2010b. “The Materials of Practice: Nuclear Warheads, Rhetorical Commonplaces and Committee Meetings in Russian–Atlantic Relations.” Cooperation and Conflict 45 (5): 1–17.
———. 2014. “Practice Tracing.” In Process Tracing in the Social Sciences: From Metaphor to Analytical Tool, edited by Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey Checkel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Pouliot, Vincent, and Jérémie Cornut. 2015. “Practice Theory and the Study of Diplomacy: A Research Agenda.” Cooperation and Conflict 50 (3): 297–315.
Pouliot, Vincent. 2016. International Pecking Orders: The Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Riordan, Shaun. 2019. Cyberdiplomacy: Managing Security and Governance Online. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Satirano, Adam. 2019. “The World’s First Ambassador to the Tech Industry.” New York Times, September 3. Accessed June 10, 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/03/technology/denmark-tech-ambassador.html
Satow, Ernest. 1917/1979. A Guide to Diplomatic Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Schatzki, Theodore. 2019. Social Change in a Material World: How Activity and Material Processes Dynamize Practices. London: Routledge.
Schatzki, Theodore, Karin Knorr-Cetina, and Eike von Savign, eds. 2001. The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory. London: Routledge.
Seib, Phillip. 2010. Real-Time Diplomacy Politics and Power in the Social Media Era. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
———. 2016. The Future of Diplomacy. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Sending, Ole Jacob, Vincent Pouliot, and Iver B. Neumann. 2011. “The Future of Diplomacy: Changing Practices, Evolving Relationships.” International Journal 66 (3): 527–42.
Standfield, Catriona. 2020. “Gendering the Practice Turn in Diplomacy.” European Journal of International Relations 26 (S1): 140–65.
Succi, Peter. 2020. “Twitter Has Changed How World Leaders Can Communicate and May Have Stopped a War.” Forbes, January 9. Accessed June 10, 2021. https://www.forbes.com/sites/peterrucci/2020/01/09/twitter-has-changed-how-world-leaders-can-communicate-and-may-have-stopped-a-war/#45f028478391.
Van Meersbergen, Guido. 2017. “The Dutch Merchant-diplomat in Comparative Perspective: Embassies to the Court of Aurangzeb, 1660–1666” In Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World, c.1410–1800, edited by Jan Hennings and Tracey A. Sowerby. New York: Routledge.
Wheeler, Mark. 2013. Celebrity Politics. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Whitford, Josh. 2002. “Pragmatism and the Untenable Dualism of Means and Ends: Why Rational Choice Does Not Deserve Paradigmatic Privilege.” Theory and Society 31 (3): 325–63.
Wilcox, Lauren. 2017. “Embodying Algorithmic War: Gender, Race, and the Posthuman in Drone.” Security Dialogue 48(1): 11–28.
Wilson, Brian. 2016. “Ethnography, the Internet, and Youth Culture: Strategies for Examining Social Resistance and ‘Online-Offline’ Relationships.” Canadian Journal of Education/Revue Canadienne De L’éducation 29 (1): 307–28.