Social Practice Theory and the Historical Production of Persons[1]

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Abstract. *Working collaboratively we and others have developed a historical, material theory of social practice that integrates the study of persons, local practice, and long term historically institutionalized struggles. We have drawn on the work of Vygotsky, Bakhtin, and Mead to develop this approach to "history in person." Social Practice Theory, like Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) takes activity as a central focus. But, in contrast to CHAT, social practice theory emphasizes the historical production of persons in practice, and pays particular attention to differences among participants, and to the ongoing struggles that develop across activities around those differences. Through Holland's ethnographic work on environmental groups in the Southeastern United States we show the integration of emotion, motivation and agency into cultural-historical activity theory by means of Vygotskian and Bakhtinian inspired ideas concerning "history in person." Lave's research focuses on tension, conflict and difference in participation in cultural activities in an old port wine merchant community in Porto, and looks to both local and trans-local institutional arrangements and practices for explanations.*

Keywords: *Social practice theory, activity theory, history in person, Vygotsky, Bakhtin, Mead, social movements, environmentalism, British enclaves*

Introduction

As social anthropologists we have been working on issues related to activity theory, Vygotsky's work, and developments in theories of praxis for many years. Together we recently edited a book entitled *History in Person: Enduring Struggles,*

Contentious Practice and Intimate Identities (2001). The title suggests several questions: If we wish to inquire into the production of persons, why would we need to include discussions of "enduring struggles" and "contested local practice"? How are persons, broad political economic struggles and contested local practice related? How are they relevant to each other? Where do you begin to study them? How do answers to these questions affect the kind of ethnographic field studies and analyses that are characteristic of our field? And for that matter, why would any of this be relevant to someone like Vygotsky, or Davydov, or more recently, Cole, Engeström, or Hedegaard & Chaiklin who are *psychologists* working in the tradition of activity theory?

To answer these questions we will give examples from our ethnographic work and then try to put them in theoretical context. But let us begin with a very brief sketch of our theoretical perspective.

A Theoretical Sketch

Like activity theorists and students of Vygotsky, we share strong commitments to the historical, material character of social life. That in turn requires that we begin our inquiries about persons in practice with the ongoing, historically constituted everyday world as people both help to make it what it is by their participation in it, while they are being shaped by the world of which they are a part. There are both spatial and temporal implications of this perspective. If we study persons in the world, those persons are always material and embodied. Minds do not act separately from bodies, nor does knowledge act separately from engagement in practice. Two persons, or two minds, are never the same; they cannot occupy the same place with the same point of view.

Persons move about through the world in different institutional and other, less formal configurations, pointing towards the need to attend to spatial/institutional characteristics of persons-in-practice. That also points us towards questions about social process: how are persons participating in the production of their lives, work, and relationships? Part of the answer depends on the changing historical circumstances that have shaped and do shape the ongoing social world they inhabit.

There are, of course, other important assumptions that guide our work. For instance, we try always to begin with questions of social ontology, questions concerning the configuration of social existence rather than more familiar questions that assume the world is configured of knowledge, its domains, distribution and circulation. We assume the relational character of everything. And we view the process of engaging in critical ethnographic research as an open-ended continuing struggle to bring theory and empirical material dialectically to work on changing each other. This brief account of our approach may help make clearer how we understand relations between "enduring struggles" "contentious local practice" and intimate identities: Our studies begin with ongoing, everyday life, and its differently located participants. If we recog-

nize that the participants are historically related, partially united, partially divided, and surely always in conflict and tension through different political stances and relations of power, then a reasonable designation for this would be "contentious local practice." We're certainly arguing that taking part in contentious local practice shapes intimate identities in complex ways—Vygotsky and Bakhtin have much to contribute to analyzing these relations. But it is also the case that contentious practice is not only a matter of local practice, local institutions, and local history. Local struggles are also always part of larger historical, cultural, and political-economic struggles but in particular local ways worked out in practice. This approach "demands relentless attention to how material economic practices, power relations, and the production of meaning and difference constantly play upon one another," as our colleague Gillian Hart puts it (Hart, 2002).

Finally, we would say that enduring struggles and intimate identities are mediated through contentious local practice. We can put these ideas together in a figure and perhaps this will make it clearer how we bring enduring struggles, contentious practice and intimate identities together, and what we mean by history in person. Consider the following figure.
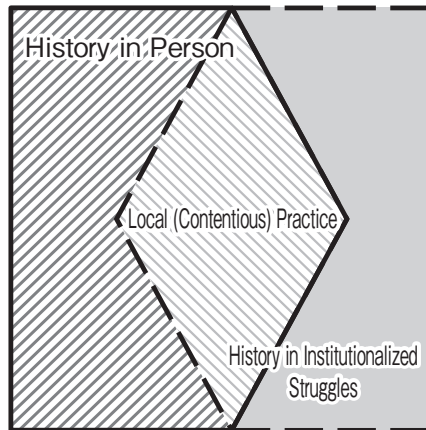

FIGURE 1   Relations between history in person and history in institutionalized struggles (Adapted from Holland & Lave, 2001, p. 7)

Local contentious practice lies at the heart. Local practice comes about in the encounters between people as they address and respond to each other while enacting cultural activities under conditions of political-economic and cultural-historical conjuncture. Bourdieu expresses much the same idea when he describes such moments of practice as bringing together two forms of history.
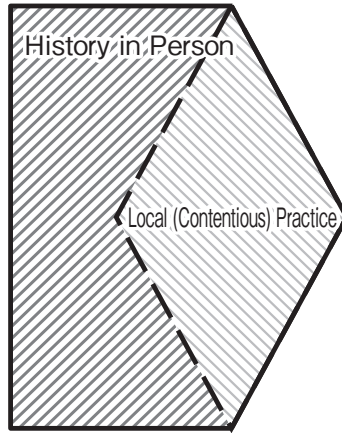
FIGURE 2   Relations between history in person and local contentious practice (Adapted from Holland & Lave, 2001, p. 7)

On the one hand, history is brought to the present moment of local time/ space in the body/minds of actors. We call this set of relations between intimate, embodied subjectivities and local practice, "history-in-person." Here, think of Bakhtin's basic idea of practice. The person—the actor—is addressed by people and forces and institutions external to himself or herself and responds using the words, genres, actions and practices of others. In time, the person is forming in practice and so are the cultural resources that the person adapts to author himself or herself in the moment.

FIGURE 3   Relations between local contentious practice and historically institutionalized struggles (Adapted from Holland & Lave, 2001, p. 7)

On the other hand, history is brought to the present through political and economic forces and cultural imaginaries that shape conflictual practices in and between institutions and collective activities. This we refer to as "historically institutionalized struggles," but sometimes more succinctly as "enduring struggles." Trans-local institutions are always being addressed under local conditions and on the basis of local actors' subjectivities. Thus, local practice is significant for the continuing formation of institutional arrangements in sociohistoric time/space.

In some respects our way of theorizing of these relations is common to activity theory—no surprise as we have been influenced by it. But in other ways, mostly in emphasis, sometimes in more sharply substantive ways, we have moved in different directions than activity theory. Specifically: Social Practice Theory, like Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) takes activity as a central focus. Like CHAT, social practice theory assumes that people typically act in relation to collective cultural activities rather than in direct response to internal or environmental events (stimuli). But in contrast to CHAT, social practice theory emphasizes the historical production of persons in practice, and pays particular attention to differences among participants, and to the ongoing struggles that develop across activities around those differences.[2] Through the simultaneous foregrounding of the subjects or actors–persons–in activities and the historical struggles that engage them, Social Practice Theory extends activity theory in directions we believe are valuable.

The ethnographic examples that follow are intended to illustrate three of these directions. First, we hope to show by means of Vygotskian and Bakhtinian inspired ideas concerning "history in person," that social practice theory attends to the integration of emotion, motivation and agency into cultural-historical activity theory. Second, examples from our research will help to demonstrate the emphasis social practice theory places on tension, conflict and difference in participation in cultural activities. And finally, we will illustrate the focus of social practice theory on relations of cultural activities to both local and trans-local institutional arrangements and practices.

A Vygotskian / Bakhtinian / Meadian Theory of History in Person[3]

The first ethnographic examples are concerned with history-in-person, conceived in Vygotskian/Bakhtinian/Meadian terms. Building on activity theory, social practice theory emphasizes the importance of cultural activities in framing human cognition and social activity, but goes on to inquire into how persons develop in practice. More precisely, it focuses on how history-in-person takes shape in local practice interpreted according to cultural activities. We draw upon Vygotsky, Bakhtin, and the social psychologist George Herbert Mead to elaborate our theory that persons are historically produced in practice in relation to the identities, cultural genres and artifacts that are central to the cultural activities in which persons engage.

To illustrate the ideas, we take examples from a large study of the environmental movement in the United States in the late 1990s. Holland and her colleagues researched twenty-one local environmental groups in two different regions of the United States.[4] Although some of the groups were chapters of large national organizations such as the Sierra Club, many were relatively newly formed local or grassroots groups. A significant number of the members were neophytes; they were first time participants in the environmental movement. They were learning/developing new orientations toward the environment as well as learning how to be activists in the environmental movement.

We would like for you to imagine these people engaging in the cultural activities of the different groups: some of the activities brought them into contact with nature; others involved participating in actions to protect the environment. The members were gaining familiarity with environmental practices such as bird watching in a chapter of the Audubon Society, for example; protesting against air pollution at a public meeting in an organization called Citizens Unite!; learning how to talk about toxic landfills as environmental racism in an African-American group; and, in another case, reporting on the garbage they produced in their households.

Vygotsky's concept of "semiotic mediation" is useful for thinking about how the participants formed as they participated in bird watching and these other cultural activities. Vygotsky was fascinated by the idea that people could free themselves from the tyranny of environmental stimuli and achieve some control over their own actions. His explanation rested upon the idea of "semiotic mediation." With semiotic mediation people are able to modulate their own behavior with the aid of cultural symbols. Put in simple terms: people place cultural artifacts in the environment to stimulate their memory, to guide their problem solving, to shape their feelings, to remember their goals, to remind themselves who they are, or to otherwise affect their thoughts and emotions. Members new to the environmental groups became acquainted with the artifacts and activities that their group had for thinking and feeling and acting toward the environment. Over time, they became able to use the cultural symbols to modify the way they acted with respect to the earth.

Consider, for example, the group that met to discuss how to reduce wasteful consumption. This group, called the Global Action Plan or GAP, held a series of weekly meetings. The members met and discussed practices for simplifying their lives, consuming less, and producing less waste. Especially at the time of the study, most Americans were unaware of the amounts of waste they were producing. Most of the newcomers to GAP had little exact knowledge about their rates of consumption or about the problems that their discarded items were creating. When newcomers joined GAP, they learned how to weigh and keep records on their garbage. When they met each week, they compared how much waste they had produced that week, and they talked about why they felt bad about the negative effects of Americans' high consumption lifestyles.

Participating in the group offered a new set of meanings and emotional

evaluations for such things as flushing the toilet, buying objects with lots of packaging, and otherwise acting without regard for the earth. Moreover, these meanings were being worked into peoples' "history-in-person." According to Vygotskian tenets of semiotic mediation, symbols are enacted first on an inter-personal plane and secondly, when the person begins to apply them to him or herself, on an intrapersonal plane (Vygotsky, 1978, 1989). GAP members were forming in local practice as environmentally aware persons. They were learn-ing to see and feel connections between such things as their production of gar-bage to the health of the planet. They were learning to use the records on their garbage to motivate themselves to buy less and recycle more and to evalu-ate whether they were living up to their representation of themselves as environmentalists.

There is great diversity in the US environmental movement especially among grassroots groups. Not all of the environmental groups we studied fo-cused on consumption. As a matter of fact, at the time we did the study, anti-consumption groups were few in number. Although people did talk about re-cycling, GAP was only one group out of the twenty-one that had over-consumption as a primary focus. Our study found that the different groups promoted a variety of environmental identities and actions, and, as might be expected in light of social practice theory, participants formed different histo-ries-in-person in relation to the practices and cultural symbols of their particu-lar group. Their environmental subjectivities — the identities they formed, the sort of sensitivities they developed toward nature, and the kind of actions they embraced, were reflective of the kind of group in which they participated (Kitchell et al., 2000). We see these groups and the activities they organized as important sites for the historically contingent, group specific, production of persons as environmentalists.

Let us look more deeply at how history-in-person develops with respect to the self. Both Vygotsky, as we have seen, and, for that matter, Bakhtin, offer useful ideas. As conceptualized in the tradition of G. H. Mead, the person, in the conduct of social life, forms senses of himself or herself to which he or she is emotionally attached. As was the case in the research just described, these senses of self — these personal identities — commonly form in relation to roles and positions that are important in cultural activities (Holland et al., 1998). Although most of the people in the study had formed other identities as well, they were investing at least a part of themselves in participating in environmen-tal activities and in living up to claims that they were environmentalists. GAP members, for example, formed identities — that is, they understood and evalu-ated themselves — in relation to their patterns of consumption.

In addition to the ethnographic observation of the twenty-one groups, Holland and her colleagues conducted in-depth "identity trajectory interviews" with over 150 different members of these groups. We asked them to describe their memories of environmental damage from the earliest to the most recent. They told us how they felt about the incidents and about how they had re-

sponded in each case. When we analyzed their stories and their answers to our questions, we noted when they identified themselves as "someone who cares about the earth", "an environmentalist," "an anarchist," "a conservationist" or some other label for the self that indicated a concern for the environment.

Vygotsky did not write much about the self or about identity, at least not in the material that is translated into English. However, as argued in Holland et al. (1998) and in Holland and Lachicotte (2007), what he did write is compatible with his more general concepts of "higher psychological formations" and semiotic mediation. Thus, thinking again about the historical formation of persons in environmental activities, we conceptualize environmental identities as constructs of the self that a person develops and uses to organize him or herself emotionally and otherwise to act. Building on Vygotsky, we conceptualize personal identities as psychological formations, in this case, as complexes of memories, sentiments, knowledge and ideas of environmental action that one can evoke via cultural symbols of identity in order to organize oneself for environmental action. Viewed in this way, one's identities, once they become entrenched in history-in-person, provide a ground for agency both in guiding one's behavior in cultural activities and in avoiding behaviors that are not compatible with the self-assigned identity. In our study, for example, environmentalists talked about their feelings of disgust about big cars and their hatred of the hundreds of advertisements they constantly encountered. Recalling their stances toward these symbols of anti-environmentalism and remembering their commitment to being a person "who cares about the earth" helped them organize themselves to resist buying more consumer goods.

Earlier we said that social practice theory extends CHAT in some useful ways. This section has laid out some ways that social practice theory's treatment of identity incorporates emotion, motivation and agency into its theory of history-in-person. Now, let us turn to the second point about tension, conflict & difference in the performance of cultural activities.

Bakhtin paid more attention than Vygotsky or Mead to the differences and tensions among people. While Vygotsky offers a means to see how somewhat durable senses of self may form in relation to cultural activities, Bakhtin gives aid in understanding how peoples' identities are often in flux and unsettled. His work is especially vivid for understanding how these differences and tensions occupy people and come into play in the formation of "history in person." In the identity trajectory interviews described in the previous section, there was frequent evidence of our interviewees' personal struggles over identifying themselves as environmentalists. Holland et al. found, for example, that around a third of the interviewees struggled over whether their behavior was too extreme. Some were worried about whether people thought that they were "radicals;" others were upset because they weren't radical enough. It was clear that many of the interviewees were in the process of authoring themselves, as Bakhtin would put it, in the words of the groups that they were participating in. When they felt demoralized and discouraged, they sometimes fell back on

terms such as "tree-hugger," "granola head" or "radical," terms they themselves or their parents had used to communicate the disdain that many Americans express about environmentalists.

These inner debates of participants in environmental groups portray Bakhtinian notions of the dialogic aspects of identity (Holland et al., 1998; Satterfield, 2002). Identity development can often be characterized as forming around dialogues over difference between self and internalized version(s) of "the other." A particularly acute case comes from a land dispute involving the Blue Ridge Gamelands Group, another of the twenty-one environmental groups. This group was made up of people, most of whom were hunters, from families with long histories of hunting deer, wild ducks, bear and other native game in one of the mountainous areas of the Southern United States. Hunting in that area has long been an important cultural activity that marks a person as belonging to the families and communities of the region. It mediates the way in which the long-time inhabitants relate to the environment.

At issue was the fate of lands that local people were accustomed to hunting. Members of the group were against the state park that was planned for the area because hunting would not be permitted. The media interpreted the disagreement as an environmental conflict and positioned the hunters as anti-environmentalists. In answering this charge, the hunters began to emphasize their environmental sentiments and point to their history as conservationists.

In interviews, several of them recounted contentious exchanges between themselves and members of the Sierra Club. The hunters were angry that respect for their position as environmentalists was being denied by others. They had begun to form a sense of themselves as environmentalists and, indeed, some of their positions and sentiments with regard to environmental degradation were similar to those of the Sierra Club members. Nonetheless, as was evident in their interviews, they experienced themselves as disdained by the "real" environmentalists, the Sierra Club members, and they had difficulty in fully embracing the environmentalist identity. They did not fit the widely circulating image of an environmentalist. They were of the wrong class and regional ethnicity. (For a fuller account of this argument, see Holland, 2003.)

With this example, we begin to see how historically institutionalized struggles and the widely circulating imaginaries that accompany them intervene in local cultural activities. At the time of the study in the mid 1990s, the typical environmentalist was imagined as a male Sierra Club member who was white, well educated, and wealthier than average. Thus, to use a term from Bakhtin, the "social image" of environmentalism was marked by race, class and gender. In the study, we found that the hunters as well as African-American groups were struggling with how to be recognized as environmentalists. This widely circulating social image complicated the possibilities for those who failed to fit the image and created conditions that affected the sort of environmental activities in which they engaged.

In the next section we concentrate on the portion of Figure 1 that depicts

relations between historically institutionalized struggles and local contentious practice.

Contentious Practice as It Mediates Long Term Political-Economic Struggles and Intimate Identities

In the mid-1990s Lave engaged with two colleagues in an ethnographic and historical research project in Porto, Portugal, on the history and future of the transnational trade in port wine. British merchants had been engaged in what might be called an informal colonial project in Porto and the Douro River Valley from the mid 18th century, regulating Portuguese vineyards and grape production, fermenting and blending port wines, bottling and branding and selling them in England, France and other countries, principally in Europe.

During much of the 19th century these British wine merchants dominated commerce in the city of Porto and were influential in the city's planning, governance, and architecture. Since the mid 20th century, accelerating after the Portuguese revolution in 1974 which opened the country to outside capitalist investment, the role of the old British port wine merchants has diminished. Yet in the mid 1990s the families descended from the old port merchant houses still dominated collective cultural identity, insisting on a certain self-glorifying history as a basis for justifying their own position as founders and their right to lead the British colony—2000 strong—in Porto. They still spent Sunday mornings at the St. James Anglican Church, sent their children to the Oporto British School, and conducted their social lives at the very exclusive Port wine merchants' private club, The Factory House, and at the somewhat less exclusive Oporto Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club.

Peculiar intimate identities emerged in dialogic relations between members of the elite old families, and between these families and many others whom they excluded in different ways. The Portuguese were drastically excluded even when they were wealthy elites themselves. The Port merchant families also distinguished between themselves and other, long term British residents of Porto who, no matter how upstanding, were not Port Merchant family members. And families considered "visitors" to Porto, though they might be there for periods of three-five years on assignment from British corporations in England, were not viewed as entitled to have an opinion or to press changes of any kind on the colony.

Lave (2001) lays out these relations in more detail, and discusses the different, conflicting ways different British families were struggling over changes in their identities as they felt their way into their own changing futures, with special concern for the fate of their children in years to come. Some were trying to hold tightly to the status quo—and their privileged position—in Porto. Others, especially young people, were leaving for a new life in England where they would face new difficulties, since "ordinary Brits" saw them as peculiar outsiders from the "colonies." Yet others were beginning to melt into the

Portuguese population, and stop being British altogether.

These very different trajectories were not soley a matter of voluntary, individual decisions. They were deeply informed by collective local practice—in which the working out of economic relations of power and meaning affected everyone through their relations with each other. Further, the persons involved could not choose what kinds of economic and political relations they would employ—or seek to escape—as they participated in local practice. For participants, those relations were mediated through local practice. But their futures further depended on trans-local economic, political and cultural forces working through local practice. All, together, were implicated in changes in participants' collective- and self-authoring trajectories. (That is why ethnographic work is so important in our view.)

In Porto then, the Anglican Church and British Clubs—but above all the Oporto British School—were the focus of contention at the time of the ethnographic field research. Schools must often be key places in which struggles that inform all aspects of social existence surface as active debates over the imperatives of children's life trajectories.[5] Some of these may be glimpsed in two events in the spring of 1994. The first was a painful, unexpected fight, according to the new headmaster, at the school's Annual General Meeting. Parents of students in the school and the school governing committee argued over, then voted down, the headmaster's appeal to change the name of the school from the Oporto British School to the Oporto British International School. He was surprised at the controversy generated by such a small, obviously appropriate, change that would reflect the changing student composition and new school priorities. For the OBS recently, after a decade of debate, had initiated the International Baccalaureate (IB) degree. The disagreement was not simple, nor could it be adequately explained within the terms of its own narrow-appearing terms. Rather, it was generated in intersecting, deeply related conflicts (as we will see better in the examples that follow).

The second controversy begins to show how the school was caught up in broader ongoing struggles. This took place at the Annual General Meeting of the Anglican Church congregation. At the meeting, there was tense debate between elderly members of old port families and the newly arrived manager of a British manufacturing plant in Portugal. He and his wife were energetic, responsible, and eager to take part in community activities. Both sang in the choir, and their children attended church with them. The debate was about moving the altar and changing the church service to make it less formal and more welcoming to children. The most vociferous opponent, the widow of the head of an influential family port firm, finally said, "I don't want it to change; I remember how church services have been all my life and I want them to stay that way."

At the club on Sunday two weeks later, Lave joined the elderly woman for lunch. In between greeting other churchgoers who were dining at the club, this woman described wrathfully a disagreement she had had with this same

man, the British plant manager, during the hospitality hour at church that morning. The discussion was about whether children should be sent to boarding schools in England. The man had said he wouldn't dream of it. The woman exclaimed with indignation, "I asked him if he knew of X, (a famous public school in England), and he hadn't even heard of it!" (She made it very clear that she dismissed his argument, and with it his prospects for future participation in community leadership.)

These conflicts within and about the school reflected the political-economic, and cultural crosscurrents in which the British enclave in Porto was caught up in all aspects of its daily existence. The OBS, at its founding in 1894, was both made by and helped to make relations of British imperialism just as surely as the mercantile practices of the port traders. Even in 1994 it was the intentions of parents to send their children to boarding schools in England that principally expressed the peculiar concerns over life trajectories of old port family members. The "old port" families' viewed the OBS as a preparatory school for their children who would attend public schools in England from the age of 13. The IB degree was not a proper degree for attending schools in England.

By contrast, managers in multinational firms with branches in Portugal who came to Porto for three years on contract (like the one who proposed changes in the church service) anticipated a peripatetic existence. These families favored a full international school with an International Baccalaureate curriculum available all over the world. The International Baccalaureate (a curriculum for a high-school diploma under international supervision and certification) had its origins not in England but in that center of capitalist neutrality, Switzerland. It is intended to make possible a continuous curriculum, at a coordinated pace, across international secondary schools, thus enabling transnationally migrating managerial families to secure a single standard educational trajectory for their children without sending them to metropolitan boarding schools.

The headmaster at the OBS argued that the IB offered a high-standard educational plan from which students at the OBS could benefit greatly. The manager families sided with him. Old port families argued that putting resources into this project would take them away from the junior preparatory school.

In short: Changing relations between multinational corporate capitalism and perhaps the last gasp of an empire-based mercantile capitalism met in day to day local conflict in Porto. The families caught up in the conflict from their different economic, political, and social locations needed and wanted different kinds of preparation for their children's futures in the interest of forging both durable and new identities and life-possibilities. The point here is that the puzzles and contradictions encountered through close attention to lively local conflicts implicate broader historical forces at work, locally, in multiple ways. Attending to their articulation with, and to pressures on, local cultural activities offered essential clues to questions about *which* history, in *which* historically

institutionalized structures was central to understanding history in different persons in the British Colony in Porto.

Conclusions

In closing let us point to relations between our ethnographic research and the brief account of social practice theory presented earlier. Whether discussing environmental struggles or tensions in an old British community in Portugal we began by exploring contentious, local everyday practice and what this meant for the different persons taking part in it. We have emphasized different facets of the analytic practice we are proposing. Holland emphasized processes of history in person, for example, while Lave emphasized historically institutionalized struggles. Nonetheless, we have both indicated the intersection of these different relations in practice. Long term class, gender and regional histories were clearly important to Holland's account of changing, conflicting identities among environmentalists. In Lave's research several different trajectories of identity-formation—responding to and creating new motives and action-possibilities—were emerging in the British community. To understand why it was these *trajectories,* for those *different participants,* in the particular institutional spaces of the British colony required exploring the articulation in local practice of trans-local, historical forces and struggles.

To sum up, we hope we have demonstrated that social practice theory attends to the integration of emotion, motivation and agency into cultural-historical activity theory by means of Vygotskian and Bakhtinian inspired ideas concerning "history in person." Social practice theory incorporates careful attention to tension, conflict and difference in participation in cultural activities. And finally, social practice theory calls for the close study of the relations of cultural activities to both local and trans-local institutional arrangements and practices.

Notes

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2. There is no space for anything but a broad-brush comparison. A more nuanced comparison would require presentation of different lines within CHAT, such as ideas of personality and descriptions of cultural psychology. Also necessary would be accounts of "stages" in the development of activity theory (e.g., Lompscher, 2006) that bring it more in line with social practice theory. A comparison of Engeström's (1999) chapter

in *Perspectives on Activity Theory* with Lompscher's account of his subsequent five principles, for example, shows more explicit attention to person-centered concepts (e.g., multi-voicedness) and to conflict (in addition to contradictions) among activity participants.

3. Holland and Lachicotte (2007) discuss the intellectual genealogies of Vygotsky, Bakhtin and Mead, all of whom are relevant to the theory of the person described here.

4. The research, funded primarily by a grant from the National Science Foundation (SRB# 9615505) included a number of collaborators, especially Willett Kempton, who carried out a companion project in another part of the USA, and several researchers. Regarding those collaborators, please consult the co-authors of Kempton et al. (2001) and Kitchell et al. (2000). Cheryl D. McClary and, before her, Elizabeth Taylor, were central to researching the particular case presented in the paper. The participants also deserve gratitude. They agreed to be interviewed in spite of their worries over negative experiences with the press.

5. See work by Lave's former student Dr. Yuko Okubo on struggles in Japanese schools over the appropriate future identities of Vietnamese and recent Chinese immigrants, in relation to earlier struggles over Burakumin and Korean education (2008). Lave's former student Mary Crabb conducted research on elite urban primary and secondary private schools in Beijing, arguing that these schools are "key sites where shifting patterns of social distinction making" and new logics of class difference are emerging in Chinese society.

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