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### **From the philosophy of praxis to the sociology of practice**

My paper seeks to clarify the relationship between the recent practical turn in sociology and the earlier Neo-Marxian tradition of the philosophy of praxis. In one sense, the philosophy of praxis represented a series of loosely affiliated strands of heterodox Marxism and it was its opposition to the predominant quasi-scientific and objectivist version of Marxism that formed this tradition's common denominator. The philosophy of praxis sought to develop Marx's intuitions concerning the practical constitution of society and to critique those sources of domination and heteronomy that limited the autonomy of subjects. Although it was never developed into a coherent model, I argue that the philosophy of praxis considered that the social is constituted by the intersection between the subject and history. Given its concern with the problem of social constitution, praxis philosophy often drew on aspects of phenomenology and it tended to accentuate the capacity human subjects for objectification. In this sense, praxis philosophy was based on a social ontology and its normative aspiration was that of altering the conditioning of practices by institutions and structures that appeared external to them. It instead sought to reveal how institutions and structures depend on practices for their reproduction and it aimed to thereby determine the scope and limits of human freedom. Despite the significant criticisms to which the philosophy of praxis has been subjected and the distancing of social theorists that were previously identified with this strand of thought, it is clear, in my opinion, that many initiatives that shaped the sociology of practice were originally influenced by the philosophy of praxis. These would include those initiatives of Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu and even Jürgen Habermas's early derivation of epistemology from a philosophical anthropology of practices. In order to clarify some of the outstanding issues facing the practical turn in sociology and the potential construction of a 'praxeological mainstream', I will review and assess how sociological frameworks concerned with practice critically diverged from the philosophy of praxis and sought to incorporate elements from other theoretical traditions, particularly linguistics. I will then consider whether the sociology of practice contains the conceptual resources

necessary to address what had been a major question for the philosophy of praxis, that is, the relationship between large-scale historical processes and subjective experiences. This will additionally enable me to comment on the differences between the historical contexts of the philosophy of praxis and the current developments in the sociology of practice. Finally, I will remark on how the normative concern of the philosophy of praxis with autonomy and creativity is germane to the sociology of practice and the recent initiatives influenced by pragmatism to extend and consolidate this approach.