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978-0-521-12203-0 - International Security in Practice: The Politics of NATO-Russia Diplomacy

Vincent Pouliot

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## *International Security in Practice*

How do once bitter enemies move beyond entrenched rivalry at the diplomatic level? In one of the first attempts to apply practice theory to the study of International Relations, Vincent Pouliot builds on Pierre Bourdieu's sociology to devise a theory of practice of security communities and applies it to post-Cold War security relations between NATO and Russia. Based on dozens of interviews and a thorough analysis of recent history, Pouliot demonstrates that diplomacy has become a normal, though not a self-evident, practice between the two former enemies. He argues that this limited pacification is due to the intense symbolic power struggles that have plagued the relationship ever since NATO began its process of enlargement at the geographical and functional levels. So long as Russia and NATO do not cast each other in the roles that they actually play together, security community development is bound to remain limited.

VINCENT POULIOT is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at McGill University. His PhD, on which this book is based, was awarded the 2009 Vincent Lemieux Prize by the Canadian Political Science Association.

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*Diplomacy is letting someone else have your way.*

*Lester B. Pearson, Nobel Peace Prize (1957)*

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## *Preface*

I have long been convinced that the practice of diplomacy is just as necessary to International Relations (IR) theory as the latter is to the former. While I am far from the first to put forward such an argument, in this book I try to substantiate it with a new perspective on international politics largely inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's sociology. As powerful as theory may be to explain the origins and structure of contemporary practices, abstract models and concepts generally are unable, in and of themselves, to account for the practical logics that make everyday action possible and meaningful. Hence my recourse to *practice theory*, an oxymoron that aptly captures the particular bent of this book.

One generation after the end of the Cold War, continuing tensions in security relations between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Russia constitute something of a tragedy in international politics. Despite some progress, both sides have missed a rare opportunity to genuinely pacify and finally move beyond self-fulfilling security dilemmas. Things obviously did not have to go that way; if this book can help explain what went wrong and why in the post-Cold War Russian-Atlantic relationship, it will have achieved more than I can hope. In a pragmatic spirit, my analysis starts with the world as its actors have (erratically) shaped it. I am not normatively attached to current forms of interstate diplomacy and I do hope that better alternatives are in the making. In the meantime, however, I believe that IR scholarship should try to illuminate, in a rigorous and thorough fashion, the political and social dynamics that too often produce self-defeating outcomes on the international stage. The task I set myself in this book is thus primarily analytical. Its critical implications are in showing, first, how things could have been otherwise in NATO–Russia diplomacy and, second, what prevented both sides from taking a direction more favorable to peace.

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An impressive number of people have helped with the completion of this book. It started as a PhD dissertation at the University of Toronto, where I was blessed with the mentorship, supervision and now friendship of Emanuel Adler. Emanuel will have a deep and lasting influence on my thinking and I learned a great deal from his constant stimulation and intellectual exchange. As well as being a first-rate mind, he is also a very kind and supportive human being who will inspire my own professorship for long years to come. I am also grateful to David Welch and Stefano Guzzini, the other two dissertation committee members, who provided very useful advice along the way.

During my PhD years and later, a number of scholars were kind enough to read my works and comment on them extensively, demonstrating in and through practice that debate and critique are the real engines of social scientific refinement. Among them I am especially indebted to Alexander Wendt, who generously encouraged me and shared his thoughts with me on my theoretical works very early on; to Michael Williams, who was a tremendous source of intellectual and personal inspiration in using Bourdieu in the study of international security; as well as to Iver Neumann, who enthusiastically communicated his passion for social theory and Russian politics at a later stage of writing. Other members of the academic community who generously helped along the way include, with apologies to those inadvertently omitted: Amar Athwal, Steven Bernstein, Janice Bially Mattern, Christian Büger, Jeffrey Checkel, James Der Derian, Raymond Duvall, Henry Farrell, Karin Fierke, William Flanik, Frank Gadinger, Catherine Goetze, Patricia Greve, Lene Hansen, Matthew Hoffman, Ted Hopf, Jef Huysmans, Patrick Jackson, Markus Kornprobst, Érick Lachapelle, Niels Lachmann, Anna Leander, Halvard Leira (and other NUPI staff), Catherine Lu, Gale Mattox, Frédéric Mérand, Jennifer Mitzen, Daniel Nexon, T. V. Paul, Liliana Pop, Edward Schatz, William Schlickemaier, Nisha Shah, Ole Jacob Sending, Jean-Philippe Thérien, Trine Villumsen, Antje Wiener and Ruben Zaiotti. Many thanks to each of them for their valued contribution to my thinking.

John Haslam, Carrie Parkinson and the rest of the team at Cambridge University Press provided timely guidance in the final stages of production. I am also grateful to my research assistants Virginia DiGaetano and Séverine Koen, who not only helped with copyediting but also pushed me to clarify important parts of my argument. In addition,

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I want to thank the editors and publishers of the *Journal of Peace Research* (Sage), *International Organization* (Cambridge University Press) and *International Studies Quarterly* (Wiley Blackwell) for allowing me to reuse and build upon already published materials. Chapter 1 contains a summary of my “Pacification Without Collective Identification: Russia and the Transatlantic Security Community in the Post-Cold War Era,” *Journal of Peace Research* 44(5): 603–20; Chapter 2 is a revised and expanded version of “The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities,” *International Organization* 62(2): 257–88; and Chapter 3 draws on and further develops “‘Subjectivism’: Toward a Constructivist Methodology,” *International Studies Quarterly* 51(2): 359–84.

A number of institutions provided invaluable practical support, in particular by making possible the many trips abroad that my methodology required. Many thanks to the Trudeau Foundation (including Lloyd Axworthy), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Fonds québécois pour la recherche sur la société et la culture (FQRSC) and the University of Toronto’s School of Graduate Studies, Centre for International Studies and Department of Political Science. I also want to thank Jocelyne Mathieu and Tanya Mogilevskaya who helped organize my stay in Moscow through the Université Laval’s Centre Moscou–Québec. I finally want to acknowledge my many interviewees who spared some of their precious time to meet with me and made the whole project much more interesting.

My deepest debt of gratitude goes to my partner Magdaline Boutros, who staunchly stayed on my side throughout the PhD’s hardships and beyond. I discussed many of the ideas below with her first, and she turned out to be at once my toughest critic and my strongest supporter. My most sincere thanks for all the happiness – past, present and future.

I dedicate the book to my parents, Lorraine and Claude, whose delicate care and stimulating upbringing lie behind much of what follows.

Abbreviations

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile (treaty)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CFE	Conventional Forces in Europe (treaty)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
EU	European Union
G8	Group of Eight
IFOR	Implementation Force
IR	International Relations
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KFOR	Kosovo Force
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NRC	NATO–Russia Council
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PJC	Permanent Joint Council
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SFOR	Stabilization Force
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SORT	Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty
START	Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty
UN	United Nations

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UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization