1 *Introduction*

There is now a recognition that planetary history has entered a new age – the Anthropocene – where human activity is the dominant influence on the environment (Fraundorfer 2022; IPCC 2021, 4). With the articulation of a 'climate emergency', moreover, the failure to prevent a global pandemic and the renewed threat of nuclear atrocity, there is a strong sense that international society is not coping with this new age. Practices must change therefore. Failing to acknowledge this, and without intelligent change, human beings face what Ken Booth (2007, 2) called 'the Great Reckoning'. On the back of the extreme weather events at the end of 2019, the global lockdown caused by the spread of the Covid-19 virus certainly felt like a Reckoning. The virus itself was not, as far as we know, and despite some claims to the contrary, the outcome of malicious human intent.[1] The pandemic was, however, a reminder that nature is 'self-organizing' (Wendt 1999, 73). It has the power to overwhelm and change human society (Corry 2019; Davies, Kamradt-Scott and Rushton 2015). The global lockdown felt like the emergency that climate change is and relations between nuclear adversaries can be.

We have been able to pretend otherwise, but the natural world evolves – sometimes because of human practice but never with regard for human interest and feeling. In response, human interests and feelings must also evolve, and that requires intelligence, creativity, courage and faith. The quite remarkable aspect of the global lockdown was how human practices did change – radically, in a short space of time and with positive consequences. Without losing sight of the

[1] 'To date we have seen no new facts which contradict the conventional wisdom concerning likely origins, but we regret the lack of a transparently-established, global consensus on the origins' (Independent Panel 2021a); 'SARS-CoV-2 is … a virus of zoonotic origin whose emergence was highly likely. Current evidence suggests that a species of bat is the most likely reservoir host' (Independent Panel 2021b).

human cost of the pandemic, for instance, the former chair of the UK government's science advisory committee Paul Monks noted that as a consequence of the lockdown air quality had improved. That, he predicted, would have human health benefits. These were not the circumstances we would choose, but we were, he stated in March 2020, 'inadvertently, conducting the largest-scale experiment ever seen' on how lower-carbon societies operate (Watts and Kommenda 2020).[2]

Monks' focus was on air quality. Yet his characterization of the lockdown as an 'experiment' that could lead to intelligent change evokes a Pragmatist 'attitude' (Franke and Weber 2011), 'mood' (Posner 2003, 26), 'temperament' (Nicholson 2013), 'ethos' (Owen 2002, 654), 'frame of mind' (Rorty 1999, 24), 'intellectual stance' (Sil and Katzenstein 2010, 412) or 'disposition' (Dewey quoted in Nicholson 2013, 254) that has wider applicability. This book is about that 'temperament', and how it can help the discipline of International Relations (IR) help global society address its challenges before a Great Reckoning. I use the words 'Pragmatism', 'Pragmatic' and 'Pragmatist' to refer to the 'historically specific philosophical movement' (Seigfried 1996, 18) that emerged in the US at the turn of the twentieth century.[3] The roots of that movement are often traced to the discussions of a group of thinkers called the 'Metaphysical Club', which included the future Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr, the philosopher and psychologist William James and the mathematician and philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (Menand 2002). Jane Addams, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, Alain Locke, W.E.B. Du Bois, Sidney Hook and Josiah Royce are often cited as contributors to this 'classical' phase of Pragmatist thinking. As Charlene Haddock

[2] Others reported that global CO_2 emissions temporarily fell by 18 per cent, and emissions from aviation fell by a staggering 60 per cent compared with 2019 (Fraundorfer 2022, 295).

[3] I have chosen to follow Cochran (2012, 3) in the use of upper case to separate philosophical Pragmatism from everyday usage of that word. Nicholson (2013, 263–5) notes the 'enormous misunderstandings' that stem from 'confusing pragmatism as a philosophical movement with the variety of different ordinary language uses of the words "pragmatic" and "pragmatism"'. She identifies three such uses: to identify a sense of being practical, opportunistic and not dogmatic or ideological. She cites Bertrand Russell's confusion of philosophical Pragmatism with the opportunism of American commercialism, a view Dewey dismissed. Philosophical pragmatism 'is closest in meaning to the third sense, in which the pragmatist is the antithesis of a dogmatist or an ideologue'. On the European movement of that time, see Nicholson (2013, 250–2).

Seigfried (1996, 5–6) notes, however, Addams's contribution is often overlooked because of the sexism that influenced the writing of the academic canon. It is worth saying, in that context, that alongside Dewey's 'experimental' approach to knowledge construction, and the way that informed a democratic ethic, Addams's work on activism and how that constituted a Pragmatist 'vocation' (Abraham and Abramson 2015) has greatly influenced my thinking.

What links these people as philosophical Pragmatists is an understanding that social reality changes – or is in a constant state of becoming – and that the modernist 'quest for certainty' (Dewey 1929) is therefore futile.[4] This acknowledgement does not, however, lead to the paralysis of relativist uncertainty, or to an 'anything goes' nihilism (Friedrichs and Kratochwil 2009, 705). This is because the Pragmatist temperament accepts – pragmatically – that some ideas are better than others. Good ideas are those that resolve doubt because they ameliorate the lived experience by solving practical problems. Pragmatism does not rest there, however. Because the environment around us – its viruses, weapons and climate – is in a constant state of change, we must treat even good ideas with a sense of fallibilism. We should treat ideas as hypotheses, in other words. As hypotheses, ideas about appropriate practice (or norms) need to be empirically tested in context for their problem-solving capacity (Hildebrand 2013; Hookway 2013, 21–2). In its American version, which emerged from the Peircean commitment to 'science', this kind of 'experimentalism' is the only effective way of 'fixing' beliefs (or norms) in an ever-changing world (Peirce 1877). Believing that knowledge can be founded on uncontested truth claims risks reifying out-of-date ideas and maintaining unwarranted social hierarchies – hierarchies that impede intelligent inquiry into the kind of practical knowledge that could otherwise sustain and improve the lived experience.[5]

This commitment to 'experimentalism' evolved through the philosophy of Addams, Dewey and others into a humanistic commitment to

[4] After the ancient Greeks, Dewey argued, Western philosophies 'had one thing in common: they were used to designate something taken to be fixed, immutable, and therefore out of time; that is, eternal' (Dewey 1972 [1920], xii). For this reason, philosophy needed reconstructing. On Dewey's critique and positivist IR, see Cochran (2002b).

[5] This '[e]mpiricism runs from Democritus in antiquity to Dewey in the twentieth century, and … has developed in Western thought [as] a theory of the contribution of experience to problems of knowledge' (Allan 2021, 67).

deliberative democracy as an intelligent method of inquiry and social learning. Where problematic experiences give rise to doubt, and the sense that we collectively no longer know how to ameliorate the lived experience, the task of the philosopher and social scientist is to suggest practices that can restore epistemic authority to, and a sense of faith in, our practices. By epistemic authority I mean the sense that we know what we are doing when enacting a particular practice and that what we are doing is the best we can in particular circumstances.[6] Philosophical Pragmatism tells us that the way to achieve that authority is through inclusive deliberative inquiry. Cheryl Misak (2004, 15) helpfully captured this when she noted that for the Pragmatist 'deliberative

[6] Zürn (2018, 9) uses the term 'epistemic authority' in global governance to refer to the practices of organizations that assess the quality of different national policies in various fields, for instance the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). On the idea of 'active epistemic authority', which is exercised in ways 'unrelated to any legal instrument, and is exercised directly, unmediated, on the strength of the scientific evidence', see Klabbers (2019, 280). Zürn shows how contestation holds such knowledge to account before it can be considered authoritative. The difference here is that my use of the term 'epistemic authority' problematizes technocratic knowledge and requires an inclusive or democratic form of contestation and deliberation before expert knowledge can claim the label epistemic authority. For a discussion that problematizes the sources, mechanisms and implications of Zürn's argument, see Pouliot (2020). Similar to Zürn, Haas (2017, 221) writes that '[s]cientists enjoy epistemic authority for expertise', although he too recognizes that this is contingent on legitimacy, the nature of which is contested. Adler (2008, 203) uses 'cognitive authority', which 'renders competing practices less appealing'; and Adler (2019, 3) uses 'epistemic practical authority' to identify a form of 'deontic power – the structural and agential establishment of status functions, such as rights, obligations, duties …. It also involves "performative power" – the capacity "to present a dramatic and credible performance on the world state" (citing Alexander 2011, 8), thus bringing epistemic practical recognition to a variety of audiences and stakeholders'. Again, my use of the term is more normative to the extent epistemic authority can be claimed only when it rests on a democratic form of contestation and deliberation among stakeholders, which includes practitioners *and* those affected by practice (but see also Adler and Bernstein (2005, 303), on 'epistemic validity'). For a view that epistemic authority is 'always in flux, more or less embattled, and in need of constant reproduction', see Danielsson's (2020, 117) Bourdieusian-informed account. This resonates with my Pragmatist interpretation, but again I am interested in establishing why one would accept certain claims as more authoritative and the kind of contestation that facilitates that. Epistemic authority cannot be bestowed if those affected by a practice are excluded from processes that construct background knowledge, and in that sense participation in communities of inquiry is a broader issue than whether agents experience 'an attraction to the object' (Danielsson 2020, 123).

democracy in political philosophy is the right view, because deliberative democracy in epistemology is the right view'. The Pragmatist interest in the norms and practices of deliberative democracy emerged, therefore, not because these were ordained by abstract religious, moral or political theories but because they were useful for identifying lived social problems and learning how to mitigate them.

This book is not an intellectual history of Pragmatist thought, nor is it an attempt to identify and resolve subtle differences between Pragmatist thinkers. Rather, my purpose is to offer a reading of classical Pragmatism to answer questions pertinent to the discipline of IR in its current global context. My sense is that global security, climate and health challenges have created a deep-seated unease about international society's capacity to cope with change; that IR should be able to respond in ways that address that unease; and that IR would be better positioned to do that if it drew more explicitly on the insights of classical Pragmatism. More specifically, then, my purpose is to answer three questions: (1) What can classical Pragmatism bring to debates in IR, including those centred on the perennial question of how norms, practices and interests interact to influence international society and its practitioners? (2) How, if at all, should international practices and practitioners adapt in the face of pressing global security, climate and health challenges? (3) Given the Pragmatist answer to these first two questions, what normative conclusions can we come to about actual practice in contemporary international society?

Pragmatism and the 'New Constructivism'

My answer to the first question is that by drawing together IR norm theory and IR practice theory, while also addressing the IR Realist interest-based critique, a Pragmatist-informed approach fits with what David McCourt (2022) recently called the 'New Constructivism' in IR theory. The Pragmatist understanding of social reality as 'processural' (Hoffman 2009) fits with the 'anti-essentialism' of New Constructivism, for example.[7] More specifically, Pragmatism's

[7] See also Barkin and Sjoberg (2019) on the many IR constructivisms and their conclusion (2019, 59) that 'the common thread … lies in the use of methodologies to address an ontology of social construction in the context of specific research questions'.

'processural ontology' (Adler 2019) – the sense that the things we study are socially constructed and in a constant state of becoming – adds to the long-standing criticism of those (see, e.g. Wendt 1999; Weiner 2018) who argue that IR norm-, practice- and Realist-theory incorrectly take the subjects of their study to be fixed. These concepts, and their meanings, are instead socially constructed and thus contingent on practice. Pragmatism, I suggest, can help New Constructivists understand how norms, practices and interests interact in that process, which is important given the analytical risk of working on these concepts in intellectual silos.

Yet my purpose is to go beyond identifying the parallels between Pragmatist and New Constructivist thought. My purpose is to demonstrate that Pragmatist thought offers the New Constructivist research agenda something else. The Pragmatist understanding of practice as a lived experience offers *normative* reasons why norms (even those that are taken for granted) *should* change. The direction of normative critique, and the impulse for norm change, is in this sense bidirectional. Not only can a norm as a standard of appropriate behaviour condemn or justify practice, the experience of a practice can challenge or confirm a norm. That, as Bernstein and Laurence (2022, 79) note, is an empirical matter. The same applies to a consideration of interests. The argument that ideas or norms reconstitute interests is well known to the IR Constructivist research community (Klotz 1995; Katzenstein 1996; Wendt 1999), but what Pragmatism adds is a focus on how practice (and the experience of it) can also do that. For example, we might learn through experience that pursuing a particular practice was never in our interest, even if we thought so at the time. Through their interplay, in other words, norms, practices and interests can create *learning experiences*, which opens up the possibility that personal and social realities can change, problems mitigated and lived experiences improved.

The fact that Pragmatism can identify *normative* reasons for change, and reasons why change can be classed as *progress*, suggests Pragmatism also helps to answer my second research question, which asks whether, and if so how, international practices *should* change. This normative approach to assessing change (the need for it and the direction of it) has not been fully addressed by Constructivist IR, which tends to *explain* change rather than normatively *assess* it (Cochran 2009; Havercroft 2018). The normative approach is, however, implied

in the concept of 'learning'. In Pragmatist thought learning describes a process that sustains and improves experiences by changing practices so that lived problems are mitigated. When we learn to improve an experience, moreover, Pragmatism identifies that as progress. Progress is found not in the movement toward a fixed end but in working through a process that ameliorates experiences by mitigating problems as they emerge from practice.[8] In doing that, we can move from doubt to knowledge, albeit a knowledge that is contingent and therefore fallible.

Fallibilism is central to Pragmatist philosophy. We can claim progress by mitigating problems in the here and now. Any sense of resolution is contingent however, for even when a new practice manages to improve experiences, its normative value depends on circumstances remaining similar to those that made it useful, and because environmental change is constant, that cannot be assumed. Pragmatists find normative value at a deeper level therefore. It lies in the practices and *habits of learning*, for these enable two things: they enable us to cope with change when it is forced upon us and to initiate change when it is necessary. The habit of learning, in other words, enables the discovery of the kind of knowledge that mitigates social problems as and when they emerge. Furthermore, to the extent the global environment in its various guises (e.g. the balance of power, disease ecology and climate) is constantly changing, learning has to be at the global level too. This is what I mean by 'global learning'. It refers to the learning that takes place within those communities of international practice that have an impact on the global challenges to the lived experience. By sustaining and improving the lived experience, global learning helps to restore a sense of epistemic authority to, and therefore faith in, international practices as we 'go on' living.[9]

The focus on 'mitigating' a problem (as opposed to 'solving' it once and for all) is significant here. It again alludes to the sense that

[8] As Snyder (2022, 31) writes, this thinking underpinned the Progressive movement of the late nineteenth century: 'Progressives prided themselves on having solutions to problems that would actually work to make people's lives better. The test of Progressive proposals was not just that they conformed to underlying principles but that they were practical and would ban tainted meat, improve education, and pull the economy out of the Depression.'

[9] This term features heavily in Friedrich Kratochwil's work. See Kratochwil (2018); also Hellmann (2022, 79).

Pragmatism is anchored in an ontology of constant change and an anti-foundationalist epistemology. Ameliorating the lived experience by mitigating the problem that emerges from everyday practice is all we can hope for given that change is constant. That might be less than ideal, but it is the only worthwhile goal given that the search for uncontested, unchanging and absolute knowledge is futile. Pragmatism is less 'academic' in this respect. The problems to be addressed emerge from the processes and practices of societies rather than the inward-looking angst of academic elites concerned with 'disciplinary self-identification' (Barkin and Sjoberg 2019, 9, 11). For that reason, Pragmatism is considered a democratic philosophy. Rather than impose knowledge that is formulated by unaccountable elites who think abstractly (or theoretically), it tries to facilitate social learning in order to create practical knowledge that is useful to society.

These points are significant for my book because they allow me to answer my second question: how *should* we act? I suggest, however, that they also have implications for New Constructivism and IR theory more generally. The Pragmatist commitment to learning as a way of mitigating social problems means Pragmatism is a social *and* normative theory. I argue then that Pragmatism can not only complement Constructivist IR, it can extend it. Pragmatism is Constructivism's normative cousin. It identifies when norms, and the practices they enable, need to change; and it can pass normative judgement on arguments that deny that. Put together, Pragmatism and Constructivism can identify the learning processes that equip societies to ameliorate the lived experience; and in this way they can pass normative judgement on communities of inquiry and practice. McCourt's summary of New Constructivism does not do this. On his reading, New Constructivism draws on fresh ideas imported from other disciplines, notably practice theory, and links those ideas to the Old Constructivist research agenda on ideas and norms. It recognizes links between Constructivist theory and normative theory, but it does not embrace them. New Constructivism from McCourt's perspective instead remains focused on explaining social change. It need not get involved in justifying or condemning that change. In this respect, New Constructivism is the same as Old Constructivism: it is normatively and politically 'agnostic' (McCourt 2022). Pragmatic Constructivism is, as I suggest, different. It draws normative conclusions from its analytical findings and is politically engaged.

That the Old Constructivism has been normatively and politically agnostic – despite its focus on norms as standards of *appropriate* behaviour – was pointed out some time ago by Richard Price (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2008e; see also Price and Reus-Smit 1998; Weber 2014; Havercroft 2017, 2018). Price distinguished between the rich seam of Constructivist research on the social *influence* of norms and contrasted that with the lack of inquiry into the normative *value* (or normativity) of a norm. Of course, normative implications flowed from the Constructivist finding that norms influenced states. Demonstrating that states are not necessarily power-maximizing, rational, egoists 'may reveal new possibilities for change' (Wendt 1999, 314–5).[10] Without engaging normative theory, however, Constructivism could not assume that influential norms and new identities were indeed appropriate. Nor could it assume that norm change was the same as normative progress (i.e. change for the better). This gap in the Constructivist research agenda was further exposed by research demonstrating the influence of what many assumed to be 'bad' norms (Adler 2005; McKeown 2009; Sikkink 2013; Gadinger 2022). This reinforced the explanatory power of Constructivist-inspired norm theory but demonstrated that norm change could not necessarily be equated with normative progress. Some Constructivist norm-theorists took on the normative challenge (see the contributors to Price 2008a), but as critics pointed out (Barkin 2010, 63, 97, 139–43; Erskine 2012; Weber 2014; Havercroft 2018; Ralph 2018), they did not necessarily do this in a way that was consistent with the Constructivist's empirical finding that norms are socially constructed and historically contingent. This left unanswered the question of how norm theory should engage normative theory.

The 'New Constructivist' embrace of practice theory is not helpful here either, at least not in the way practice theory was introduced to IR, which essentially bracketed questions of normativity (see Ralph and Gifkins 2017). That may be changing because, as I explain in Chapter 3, IR practice theory is evolving. The initial wave of IR practice theory, however, defined practice as the 'competent performance' of

[10] Wendt (1999, 376) concluded his *Social Theory of International Politics* by noting the importance of dialogue between IR and the fields of political theory and normative IR if we were to realize the 'possibility of collective reflexivity at the international level'.

'patterned actions that are embedded in particular organized contexts'. Practical, or 'how to', knowledge is, from this perspective, not only inarticulate and tacit (known only to 'insiders'), it is 'pre-intentional' and 'pre-reflexive' (Adler and Pouliot 2011, 6). Furthermore, IR practice theory, it was argued, operated on 'a different analytical plane' to norms or normative reflection (Pouliot 2008; Neumann and Pouliot 2011, 114; Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014). That led critics to question whether practice theory could explain change (Hopf 2018). More specifically, it led to the criticism that an emphasis on pre-reflexive or tacit knowledge risked the unwarranted attribution of 'competence' (Duvall and Chowdhury 2011; Ralph and Gifkins 2017). This would not be appropriate in a normative sense if situations demanded critical reflection and creativity on the part of practitioners. Practice might be '*the* central' principle of Pragmatist thought (Putnam 1995, 52; cited in Hellmann 2009, 639; original emphasis), but for Pragmatists practice has a normative connotation that was not evident in IR practice theory.[11]

On their own then, the Old Constructivist research on norm change and the New Constructivist research that combines norm and practice theory cannot answer my second and third questions: how *should* international practices adapt to global challenges, and should we support or oppose existing practices? I suggest Pragmatism can help us answer these questions, and because it can help answer them I also suggest Pragmatism can extend the New Constructivist research agenda beyond what McCourt anticipates. Pragmatism's affinity with Constructivism suggests a form of 'Pragmatic Constructivism', but if New Constructivists disagree, then I suggest 'Pragmatist IR' will suffice.[12] Either way, I think classical Pragmatism can bring valuable resources to IR.

[11] In this respect, and like Grimmel and Hellmann (2019), I see IR's 'practice turn' as a step along the wider arc of a 'Pragmatic turn' (Bauer and Brighi 2009; Friedrichs and Kratochwil 2009; Kratochwil 2009, 2011; Adler and Pouliot 2011; Abraham and Abramson 2015; Adler 2019), which has been assisted by special issues of *Millennium* (2002), the *Journal of International Relations and Development* (2007) and *International Studies Review* (2009). See Hofius 2021 for an overview.

[12] The term 'pragmatic constructivism' was used by Haas and Haas (2002). There are obvious overlaps with my invocation of that term, but where their focus was on establishing an 'explanatory lens' for IR, I am also interested in the development of a pragmatist-informed normative position. Molly

Pragmatism and Global Learning

In terms of the three questions I have set in this book, the 'processural ontology' of Pragmatist thought is central to understanding the way norms, practices and interests interact. Pragmatism's theory of learning, or what has been referred to as its 'evolutionary epistemology' (Haas and Haas 2002, 590; see also Adler and Haas 1992, 372), is important to answering the normative question 'how should we act'. Past learning experiences give us a starting point for answering that question. They give us, in other words, an idea – or a hypothesis – of what might work to sustain and improve the lived experience as we go forward in time (Dewey 1998 [1925a], 8). We then subject that hypothesis to deliberative inquiry, which assesses the consequence of practice in its current and future context and judges its effectiveness against possible alternative practices. I think, however, Pragmatism tells us much more. It tells us how society should organize this kind of inquiry, the purpose of which is to find the ideas and practices that will in*deed* mitigate the problem. It is here that we find a normative and political commitment to democracy as a form of social inquiry and social learning.

As noted, Deweyan Pragmatism is associated with 'experimentalism', or a process that involves testing beliefs and habits for how well they improve the lived experience. Experimentalism is, in this sense, understood 'quite broadly to mean a self-conscious and purposeful approach to learning, rather than in the more restrictive sense of a randomized controlled experiment' (Ansell 2011, 12). Dewey called what emerged from the process a 'stock of learning' (Dewey 1998 [1915], 266). The normative implication for me is that those norms, practices and interests that are consistent with a stock of learning command a degree of epistemic authority. As such they are worth acting on and defending against contestation, at least until experience suggests otherwise. Like the concept of 'background knowledge' in IR practice theory (Adler 2008; Pouliot 2008), the stock of learning can inform the starting point for a community's approach to a particular problem.

Yet in contrast to the pre-reflexive character of certain iterations of IR practice theory, the Pragmatist adopts a more critical approach

Cochran (2009) used the term in a normative sense and in response to calls for a turn to political philosophy in the constructivist study of norms. See also Ralph (2018). Widmaier (2004) uses the 'pragmatic constructivist' term in his discussion of theorists as public intellectuals.

to the stock of learning – one that demands 'conscientious reflection' (Dewey 1998 [1932a], 334–5) on whether the findings of previous experiments are suitable to the specific problem in view. It may be that the stock of learning does inform practice in ways that usefully mitigate a current problem, but – crucially – the Pragmatist knows there is nothing certain about its value in the future, especially when future practices give rise to new experiences and the need to include them in an expanded problem-solving community. This commitment to epistemic fallibilism, inclusion, reflection, growth and deliberation is what distinguishes Pragmatism from dogmatism; and in this sense it is what attracts Pragmatism to democracy as a means of never-ending inquiry rather than an ideal endpoint.

If, then, Pragmatic Constructivism can help answer my first two questions in ways that Old and New Constructivism cannot, how can it answer my third question: what normative conclusions can we come to about actual practice in contemporary international society? My initial attempt at answering this question emphasized the importance of conscientious reflection and practical judgement to a normative assessment of a norm's meaning in use. In that article (Ralph 2018) I applied a Pragmatic Constructivist approach to argue that Constructivist-inspired norm theory should go beyond tracing the meaning of a norm (like the responsibility to protect) that is in discursive use. It should also assess whether those meanings are useful in practically mitigating the problem in view (like the humanitarian crisis in Syria). That article, however, left much unanswered about the Pragmatist contribution to Constructivism and IR more generally. For that reason, the scope of this book is much broader. The focus is on 'communities of practice' in contemporary international society and how well they function as the kind of inclusive, reflexive and deliberative communities of inquiry that Pragmatism values as sites of social learning.[13] My focus in this book, in other words, is on international

[13] Emanuel Adler (2005, 18–9) identifies two meanings of social learning. The first involves social-psychological changes as a result of people's interaction with other people. The second involves 'the evolution of background knowledge (intersubjective knowledge and discourse that adopt the form of human disposition or practices) or the substitution of one set of conceptual categories that people use to give meaning to reality for another such set'. The emphasis in this book is on the second meaning. It can refer to normative as well as causal knowledge (Sonderjee 2021, 310). Adler (2008, 202) later

practice and the related communities of practice, and I pass normative judgement on them by asking whether they are constituted in ways that realize improvements to lived experiences. My normative focus, in other words, is on how well existing communities of practice enable global learning.

The concept of a 'community of practice' is borrowed from Emanuel Adler (2005, 2008, 2019), who drew on the work of earlier practice theorists like Etienne Wenger (2005). Adler defines communities of practice as 'spatial-organizational platforms where practitioners interact, learn, and end up creating and diffusing practices and promoting their adoption by future practitioners' (Adler 2019, 41). My reading of Pragmatist thought adds a more explicitly normative element to that definition, a normative element that is encapsulated in the concept of learning. Learning from my Pragmatist-informed perspective is not simply the creation and diffusion of practices among practitioners; that I fear has elitist connotations that may not even diagnose the problem with current international practice (especially if practitioners are not shaken from their pre-reflexive mindsets). Rather, learning from my Pragmatist-informed perspective involves a 'sympathetic' (Dewey 1998 [1932a], 333) or inclusionary form of inquiry. This aims to understand the experiences not just of those who implement a practice. It aims to understand the experiences of those who are affected by a practice but are excluded from the community of inquiry that (notionally) establishes epistemic authority. An inclusionary and deliberative method of inquiry and learning is necessary to establish the epistemic authority of the background knowledge that enables practice, and epistemic authority – to repeat my previous point – gives

described this second meaning 'cognitive evolution', which he defines as 'an evolutionary collective-learning process that explains how communities of practice establish themselves, how their background knowledge diffuses and becomes institutionalized, how their members' expectations and dispositions become preferentially selected, and how social structure spreads …. By stressing the notion that, mediated by practice, the evolution of background knowledge at the macro level constitutes changes in expectations and dispositions at the micro level, this concept differs from those of individual learning, understood simply as changes in the beliefs held by individuals (Levy, 1994)'. Levy does offer a similar definition of learning at the collective level but adds that '[organizations] learn only through individuals who serve in those organizations, by encoding individually learned inferences from experience into organizational routines' (1994, 287).

a community of practice the sense that it knows what it is doing and what it is doing is the best it can in the circumstances.

Of course, this inclusionary mode of inquiry fits with the classical Pragmatist idea that democratic practice (even a democratic habit) is of value because it acts as an effective form of social inquiry and problem-solving. There are two important qualifications that help clarify that point when applying it to international communities of practice in the global context. The *first* is that Dewey (1927) called those that are affected by practice but excluded from communities of practice 'publics'. Publics have a particular role to play in the process of social (including global) learning: they alert communities of (international) practice to the existence of the indirect consequences of their practices, especially when those consequences harm the lived experience. This form of inclusivity is necessary if a practice (or more accurately the practitioner) is to claim epistemic authority and command normative support.[14] A practice that has emerged from an exclusionary community cannot claim epistemic authority because the practitioners simply do not know the consequences of that practice, nor can they be sure that what they are doing is the best they can do in the circumstances. By excluding publics, in other words, they do not know *the* public interest, and they cannot authoritatively claim to be pursuing it.

Now, it is at this point that a Realist critique troubles Pragmatist thought, and indeed it is one that Dewey's contemporaries, Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau, levelled at him. The idea that practitioners are first able to understand what is in *the* public interest and then adapt in ways that realize it betrays the 'prejudices of the middle class educator' (Niebuhr 2001 [1932], xxvi–xxvii). Their criticism, however, misunderstands Dewey's conception of learning, as I demonstrate in Chapters 4 and 5. While Dewey thought that formal education could play a role in nurturing the habits of democracy and inquiry, he saw *social* learning as something else. It is an intensely political enterprise that is not naïve to the role of power. Social learning is instead a political response to a changing material and social environment (Adler and Haas 1992, 370). It is a response that is necessary because existing practices no longer secure interests. Furthermore, social learning holds open the possibility that, in these new circumstances, the self-interest might be better advanced by practices that realize the public

[14] 'Praxis does not "speak", only practitioners do' (Hellmann 2022, 75).

interest. That at least requires recognition that self and other interests may be complementary, but – and this is the point – that disposition is no less political and no more naïve than a view that self-interests are secured through selfish (i.e. other-exploiting) strategies. Self-interest remains at the core of Pragmatism, but Pragmatism realizes that the meaning of 'self-interest' is indeterminate. The self can grow and interests can change so that they are realized through practices that secure the public good.

The Pragmatist idea of social learning (at whatever level) is thus based on an understanding that particular interests (including 'national' interests) can be reconstituted so that the clashes Realists see as inevitable can in practice be ameliorated by the constitution of a public (including global) interest. Dewey found evidence of this in the emergence of the state and the 'growth' – a concept that links his philosophy, pedagogy and politics – of larger communities. As noted, this is explored in detail throughout Part I of the book. The point here, however, is that the reader should not assume (as early Realists tended to) that the Pragmatist emphasis on learning is apolitical. Indeed, a Pragmatist approach to the study of practice involves not just an assessment of how inclusive communities of practices are. It involves a vocational commitment (Abraham and Abramson 2015) to support 'publics' so that they can enter processes that deliberate on, and constitute, the public interest. It involves a political commitment, in other words, to democracy as a means of social learning. That has to be nuanced at the international level, but the point remains: the Pragmatist commitment to global learning involves supporting transnational 'publics' so that they are included in the international communities of practice constituting the global public interest.

The *second* qualifying point is that the Pragmatist commitment to democratic inclusion involves a commitment to deliberation as a means of effective problem-solving. As a form of inquiry, democratic inclusion appeals to the Pragmatist as a means of discovering and mitigating social problems as they emerge in practice, but the problem-driven focus is important because it too should influence the constitution of a community of inquiry. A community of inquiry should include those that can influence a practice and those that are affected by it, but beyond that the emphasis on inclusion can become unhelpful. Deliberation does not mean it is necessary to treat all opinions as having equal value. Problem-solving involves making judgements about

what will work to sustain and improve the lived experience, and that might involve emphasizing the value of specialized (expert) knowledge. To ignore expert knowledge because one operates with a definition of inclusion that assumes all opinions have the same epistemic value contradicts the Pragmatist emphasis on problem-solving.

The recent rise of 'populist' politics reminds us of this. On the one hand, populist politics is consistent with Pragmatist philosophy. As a movement that builds 'popular power to break unjust concentrations of wealth and power … [populism] is a civic learning movement, developing people's civic identities, imaginations and skills' (Boyte 2007, 4). On the other hand, populist politics can damage the deliberative quality of democracy if its anti-elitism leads to an unwarranted dismissal of expert knowledge.[15] Expert knowledge, in this sense, is that which is derived from scientific methods (in its broadest sense). It can claim epistemic authority in a way that knowledge claims anchored in different methods cannot. To ignore that hierarchy is a pathway to what Adler (2019) calls 'epistemic insecurity' (see also Adler and Faubert 2022). Former US president Donald Trump's populist platform, which included climate change denial and what many see as an ineffective assessment of the Covid-19 pandemic, is perhaps the most high-profile example. That does not mean the everyday experiences of 'the people' are irrelevant; it means only that when communities of practice are constituted, they find the right balance between different forms of knowledge. As Boyte (2007, 10) concluded, how populism develops 'depends on who organizes its discontents'.

In Pragmatist thought then, the openness of communities of inquiry is crucial to establishing the epistemic authority of a practice, but that does not mean particular forms of knowledge – that held by experts, for instance – should be dismissed, especially if the problem in view demands specialized knowledge. Hilary Putnam (2004) captures this when recalling Dewey's 'epistemological justification for democracy' (see also Stevenson 2016 on 'epistemic democracy'). In a deliberative democracy, Putnam argues, 'learning how to think for oneself, to question, to criticize, is fundamental. But thinking for oneself does not exclude – indeed it requires –learning when and

[15] On the evolution of the post-1945 liberal international order and the politicization of global governance along these lines, see Zürn 2018. See also Spandler and Söderbaum (2021).

where we seek expert knowledge' (Putnam 2004, 104–5, quoted in Hilde 2012, 904). In fact, and as is often the way with Deweyan philosophy, democracy as a form of social inquiry persuades us to collapse the expert/everyday distinction in favour of norms that value good judgement in the face of uncertainty. 'Such intelligence', McAfee (2004, 148) writes, 'is not an attribute of experts nor of individual citizens but something possessed by a community'. The standards by which Pragmatists assess communities of practice therefore – and this is applied in Part II of the book, which answers my third question – include an examination of how reflexive and inclusive they are (inclusionary reflexivity). But they also include an assessment of how deliberative communities of practice are when judging the consequences of existing and alternative practices (deliberative practical judgement).

In from the Margins: Pragmatism and International Relations

It is in this way then that I think classical Pragmatism can answer the three questions I ask. In so doing I hope to demonstrate how Pragmatism can extend the New Constructivist research agenda. That may seem ambitious for an approach to IR that has been described as 'a sort of hidden paradigm in IR' (Drieschova and Bueger 2022, 10). But that only means we should take a closer look at how the discipline has been influenced by Pragmatism to date. I identify in this section three specific areas. The first area involves work that sees in classical Pragmatism a means of transcending various methodological and theoretical impasses within the discipline. The second body of work extrapolates from what Jane Addams, John Dewey and other Pragmatists said about international issues of their day to help us understand what a more fully developed Pragmatist approach to IR might look like. While these two literatures are important, the third body of work, which is perhaps the least developed, is most significant for my purpose. This is because it signposts ways of applying Pragmatism to make normative assessments. This third body of work, in other words, attempts to distil from philosophical Pragmatism and related social theory a normative approach to IR that can be applied to assess the appropriateness of current international practice.

The fact that the literature in this third area is underdeveloped has been noted by others. Frank Gadinger (2016, 188), for example, has noted a hesitancy within IR to use Pragmatism for empirical purposes. Where Gadinger aims to address this lacuna by introducing the 'French-styled' (Gadinger 2016, 188) Pragmatist sociology of Luc Boltanski to IR, my purpose in this book is to develop the application of classical 'American' Pragmatism.[16] That being the case, I cannot avoid the charge of western centrism. My mitigating plea at this stage of the book is that the recent moves toward post-Western and global IR (e.g. Acharya 2014, 2016; Acharya and Buzan 2019) will find an ally in my reading of American Pragmatism. Its emphasis on the value of fallibilism, sympathy, pluralism, inclusion, growth and deliberation can be applied to academic disciplinary practice as well as international practice. I elaborate on this point subsequently and more fully in the book's concluding chapter.

Beyond Paradigms and the Theoretical Impasse

Jörg Friedrichs and Friedrich Kratochwil (2009, 701) have drawn on philosophical Pragmatism to argue that IR has long known that 'the traditional epistemological quest for the incontrovertible foundations of scientific knowledge is futile'. An appropriate response they argue is for the discipline to cut the losses sustained during its positivist phase and look for Pragmatic alternatives that focus on the development of practical problem-solving knowledge. Similarly, Jonna Nyman (2016, 823) draws on classical Pragmatism to move beyond disciplinary debates on the value of security. The sub-discipline, she argues, 'should shift from defining what makes security practices positive or negative in the abstract, to studying actual situated security practice in context and using this to make conclusions about the value of security in a particular case'.

These insights usefully identify Pragmatism's value in focusing scholarly attention on solving real problems – that is those that emerge from actual social practice and the experiences of everyday (as opposed to 'academic') lives. They also propose a Pragmatist-inspired research method: 'abduction'. Instead of trying 'to impose an abstract

[16] See also Duncan Bell (2018) on the English-styled, if American influenced, Pragmatism of H. G. Wells.

theoretical template (deduction) or "simply" inferring propositions from facts (induction)', abduction offers 'a more conscious and systematic version of the way by which humans *have learned to solve problems and generate knowledge in their everyday lives*' (Friedrichs and Kratochwil 2009, 715, 710, emphasis added; see also Kaag and Kreps 2012, 194).

This use of Pragmatism to focus on 'what works' to ameliorate the lived experience, rather than to discover incontrovertible truths, has made an important contribution to the discussion on what (or who) IR is for. There is a risk, however, that the way in which Pragmatism is being interpreted in contemporary IR does not do justice to the normative positions of classical Pragmatist thinkers. This risk is immanent within Sil and Katzenstein's (2010) influential call for 'analytical eclecticism' and the way it invokes Pragmatism (see also Sil 2009, 2020; Blanchard 2020; Chernoff 2020; Chernoff, Cornut, and James 2020; Peet 2020). Sil and Katzenstein write, for instance, that analytical eclecticism is consistent with an 'ethos' of Pragmatism. It mirrors Pragmatism

> in seeking engagement with the world of policy and practice, downplaying unresolvable metaphysical divides and presumptions of incommensurability and encouraging a conception of inquiry marked by practical engagement, inclusive dialogue, and a spirit of fallibilism. Second, it formulates problems that are wider in scope than the more narrowly delimited problems posed by adherents of research traditions; as such, eclectic inquiry takes on problems that more closely approximate the messiness and complexity of concrete dilemmas facing 'real world' actors. Third, in exploring these problems, eclectic approaches offer complex causal stories that extricate, translate, and selectively recombine analytic components—most notably, causal mechanisms—from explanatory theories, models, and narratives embedded in competing research traditions. (Sil and Katzenstein 2010, 411)

These are themes that are consistent with my reading of classical Pragmatism.[17] Yet the emphasis on analytical eclecticism as a means of 'bypassing' inter-paradigm debates and solving research problems through the generation of middle-range explanatory theory (Sil and Katzenstein 2010, 415) should not, I suggest, hide the equally important

[17] See also Franke and Weber (2011, 671) and Lake (2013, 573) who respectively describe theories as 'tools' or 'bets' that help explain and resolve complex practical problems, rather than as abstracts truth statements.

normative character of classical Pragmatism (Cochran 2009, 2012; 2021); nor the democratic, meliorist and deliberative politics that it inspired (Bohman 1999, 603).[18] Indeed, Fred Chernoff hints at this when he writes that Sil and Katzenstein's criterion for 'successful practice' is undeveloped. 'Any attempt to clarify what "successful" means in this context and how it is identified in real cases, requires a much more precise and rigorous operationalization of the term – a project that American pragmatism can straightforwardly underpin' (Chernoff 2020, 419). Likewise, Christian Reus-Smit (2013) earlier argued that analytical eclecticism had to be integrated with normative forms of reasoning if it was to deliver on the promise of practical knowledge.[19]

To be sure, Sil and Katzenstein (2010, 418) do take on the normative question of how problems become the focus of inquiry, noting the Pragmatist push to open up academia 'to concrete dilemmas related to policy and practice'. They acknowledge the Pragmatist emphasis on the 'process of dialogue and reflection within a more open community in which participation and deliberation are counted upon to legitimize whatever consensus emerges in relation to specific problems' (Sil and Katzenstein 2010, 417). Likewise, the possibilities of including 'the public' in academic debate are referenced. Still, I agree with the criticism that the normative implications of Pragmatism are underexplored in their account, especially in comparison to their focus on causal mechanisms and sequences. Furthermore, the normative and intensely political quality of Dewey's definition of 'publics' (i.e. those indirectly

[18] Haas and Haas's (2002) 'pragmatic constructivism' centres on generating 'useful mid-level truths', and like Sil and Katzenstein, their focus was on establishing a new 'explanatory lens' rather than an ethic that could inform political practice. That relatively less attention is paid to the democratic and meliorist ethos is possibly a consequence of excluding Addams from the 'canonical trinity' of John Dewey, Charles Peirce, and William James (Sil and Katzenstein 2010, 417; quoting Festenstein 1997, 2). In this vein, Cochran (2009, 171) notes how 'Haas and Haas fail to take seriously in a way Deweyan pragmatism does, the notion that facts cannot be examined independently of human desires and purposes'. See also Nyman (2016, 835), who focuses only on the contextualism of Dewey and James, overlooks Addams, and goes outside the tradition for normative direction. On the exclusionary consequences of Sil and Katzenstein's representation of IR paradigms, see Blanchard (2020). For an argument that they overlook power dynamics within the discipline, and the need for a critical pragmatism that includes Addams, see Peet (2020). For a response that welcomes engagement with ethics, see Sil (2020).

[19] A more recent *International Studies Review* forum collectively affirms 'the value of pragmatist work beyond metatheory and methodology' (Pratt 2021, 1933).

affected by practice but excluded from communities of inquiry) risks being hidden by this approach to Pragmatic IR (Abraham 2017, 8).[20] Pragmatism was dismissed by twentieth-century IR Realists for being too academic and lacking a theory of politics and power (see Chapter 4), a charge also levelled by some feminists at Richard Rorty's neo-Pragmatism (Cochran 1999, loc.3093). It would be unfortunate if IR's recent turn to Pragmatism through Sil and Katzenstein was framed in a similar way because Pragmatist IR offers society something more than a useful approach to explanatory research.

Among the IR texts to address disputes in normative IR theory through a 'politically engaged' Pragmatist 'concern for social reconstruction' is Molly Cochran's book *Normative Theory in International Relations: A Pragmatic Approach* (Cochran 1999, loc.2263).[21] Classical American Pragmatism enables Cochran to break the 'impasse' within the cosmopolitan/communitarian debate, as well as the related foundational/antifoundational divide, and move beyond this 'narrow oppositional framing' (Cochran 1999, loc.117; see also Bellamy 2002; Owen 2002; Cochran 2012; Bray 2013).[22] Crucial to this argument is what Cochran describes as

> a will to universalization that seeks the growth of human capacities and the expansion of the 'we' feeling'. These ambitions are facilitated through its notion of 'fallibilism', which takes the absolutizing edge off its ethical claims, and through its use of "moral imagination" to project alternatives to problematic ethical/political situations. (Cochran 1999, loc.150)

[20] Addressing the abductive approach Franke and Weber (2011), following James (1907), draw on Papini's metaphor to distinguish theorists working (ISA-style) in separate hotel rooms, and practitioners (or Pragmatists) roaming corridors prepared draw on separate knowledge sources if they usefully solve a specific problem. For a similar metaphor but using 'separate gardens' instead of rooms, where scholars 'grow what they can best', see Lake (2013, 580). One might extend Papini's metaphor to say Dewey's 'public' includes those who cannot perhaps afford the hotel room, or even access to the corridors (of power), and are therefore dependent on knowledge producers leaving their hotel rooms, while trying to organize ways of making their own knowledge representations for a meeting in the lobby. See Abraham and Abramson (2015) for this reading of the pragmatist 'vocation', and Chapter 4 for further discussion.

[21] Other important classical Pragmatist-inspired contributions to normative IR theory include Hoffmann (2009).

[22] See also Talisse (2004) on the contribution Pragmatism makes to the deliberative turn in political theory, and its attempt to transcend the liberal/communitarian impasse.

This is an important insight for those who are focused on global challenges and who argue that the identification and realization of the global public interest requires high levels of trust and solidarity: the 'we' feeling of a global community. For Cochran, this possibility is latent within a Pragmatist approach to IR, which drops the mainstream view that communities are necessarily separate and occasionally opposed to each other. Instead, communities are recognized as socially constructed entities responding over time to practical challenges. Constructing a wider sense of community is difficult in practice given the habits of localism, nationalism and statism, but it is impossible if our theories fix our ontologies, bind us to foundationalist thinking and limit our imagination. A Deweyan focus on 'learning' and 'growth' – or an ontology of 'becoming' (Dewey 1998 [1925a], 8) – frees us from these bonds and gives human communities a chance of meeting new challenges. Solidarity is difficult to achieve if exclusionary practices dominate, and following Addams, Seigfried and others,[23] Cochran (1999, loc.2750) draws on feminist theory to supplement these Pragmatist themes. Her purpose is to make sure Pragmatism is 'sufficiently political, critical and imaginative to provide for moral inclusion and social reconstruction in international practice'. Likewise, Cochran's Pragmatism values a 'bottom-up' (Cochran 2002a, 2009, 2010, 330) approach of locally situated but globally oriented civil society actors. It is they that change the lived experience in ways that construct transnational and global solidarity.

More recently, Emanuel Adler's book *World Ordering: A Social Theory of Cognitive Evolution* develops the idea of human 'becoming' by drawing on what he calls the 'processural ontology' and 'evolutionary epistemology' of classical Pragmatism (Adler 2019, 45–108). As noted earlier, Adler, along with Vincent Pouliot, has been at the forefront of the 'practice turn' in IR (Adler and Pouliot 2011), but in *World Ordering*, Adler departs from the earlier Bourdieusian influence, in favour of a Pragmatist-inspired account of practice (Adler 2019, 109–22). This places new emphasis and value on the latent potential for collective learning and change (or 'cognitive evolution'). This happens as practitioners exercise understanding, interpretation, imagination, experimentation and

[23] See Miller (2013) and Whipps and Lake (2017) for summaries.

reflexivity when interacting with their material and social environments (Adler 2019, 19–24; 38).

This move, present also in Adler's earlier work on 'learning' (Adler 2005), has inspired themes that feature strongly in this book. For instance, Adler's emphasis on 'communities of practice' (Wenger 2005) as 'vehicles' (Adler 2019, 3) of learning and progressive change informs the analytical framework that is taken forward into Part II of the book. There I assess international practice in the fields of global security, climate change and health and how well they facilitate global learning. But by his own admission, Adler's social theory offers only 'a tentative venture into normative theorizing' (Adler 2019, 265), which is addressed in the final chapter of *World Ordering*. While I reach a similar position, my approach is avowedly normative from the beginning, moving relatively quickly through the philosophy of Pragmatism to discuss the approach to IR that it informs and the politics it commits to.[24] This allows more space for an empirical analysis of existing communities of practice, as well as the norms, habits and politics that sustain them.

Extrapolating from History

The second way classical Pragmatism has informed contemporary IR involves extrapolating from what Addams, Dewey and other Pragmatists said about international issues of their day.[25] Of course, much of this literature is dominated by the question that confronted (and divided) classical Pragmatists, which was whether the US should enter the First World War and what kind of foreign policy should follow (see Livingston 2003; Cochran 2010, 2017; Howlett 2017). The fact that Pragmatists had substantive disagreements about this question, central to constitutive debates in Western IR, is significant. Addams,

[24] Adler, for instance, proposes an approach he calls 'practical democracy' (2019, 290–4), which follows Dewey's radical conception of democracy 'as a way of life', to enable 'better practices and bounded progress [which] are more likely to be associated with horizontal systems of rule, [and] are anchored in interconnectedness' (2019, 40). For an earlier discussion of normative theory and the requirements of global governance, see Adler and Bernstein (2005).

[25] For analysis of the work of the Pragmatist Josiah Royce, who developed theories of international cooperation from Peirce's idea of communities of interpretation, see Kaag and Kreps (2012).

for instance, welcomed Woodrow Wilson's reelection in 1916, believing 'that the United States was committed not only to using its vast neutral power to extend democracy throughout the world, but also to the conviction that democratic ends could not be attained through the technique of war' (Addams 2019 [1922], loc.752). She expressed her disappointment in Pragmatist terms, questioning whether it was ever possible to achieve the level of certainty that was required to sacrifice the lives of thousands.[26] Dewey, on the other hand, supported the decision to enter the War. The crisis was not to be welcomed, but it presented an opportunity to reset the habits of 'old diplomacy' and learn from the American experience, which he saw as 'a laboratory generating the kind of instrumentalities that might contribute to the democratic management of international relations' (Cochran 2010, 318). It was important that Germany was defeated, and 'in Dewey's mind this could not have been done without US involvement'. Ideals, he concluded, 'sometimes require this kind of coercive power to have effect' (Cochran 2010, 320).

Dewey's disappointment with the Versailles peace – he thought the US had been 'coopted into assisting Europe with its Old World domains' (Cochran 2010, 320; see also Howlett 2017) – inspired his support for the Outlawry of War movement (Cochran 2012, 4). He later reflected on that too, noting that international legal instruments had very little influence if they were not backed up by moral sentiment. Yet Howlett (2017) argues that Dewey's commitment to the Outlawry of War project was not the example of interwar naiveté it is sometimes portrayed to be. Rather, the movement and the treaty represented in Dewey's mind 'an educational instrument designed … to inculcate further the habits of rational, critical, and reflective thinking necessary for change' (Howlett 2017, 130). The emphasis was on the process the treaty could inspire, not on the treaty as an end in itself. As an educational tool the treaty provided a focus 'for the expression of this community of moral thought and desire'. It would produce the 'crystallizing effect for morals with respect to international relations that law has supplied everywhere else in its historic development' (Howlett 2017, 133). The question for Dewey, therefore, was not whether to

[26] See also Cochran, who rejects force in cases of humanitarian intervention on the grounds that any sanction of such acts 'has to have *strong* incontrovertible foundations which … are not available to us' (Cochran 1999, loc.3273).

have faith in law, morality *or* politics; the question was how these practices could work together to facilitate the social learning that bettered IR and mitigated the problems that people experienced.

For her part, Addams supported the League of Nations, despite similar reservations about the postwar peace. The work to build moral sentiment would be done by convincing the League to meet the needs of war-torn societies, most notably the supply of food. She chose, as Cochran puts it, to steer 'new diplomacy' toward concern for human social relations rather than foreign relations between states. This was 'relational work which focused on sources of motivation – primitive, emotional, sentimental – to inspire compassion for distant others and see them worthy of social justice' (Cochran 2017, 145). Furthermore, for Cochran the 'idea that welfare provision required global cooperation and that functional cooperation would require new socially democratic institutional structures, putting individual human beings at their centre, anticipates the global politics of today' (Cochran 2017, 162).

These differences of emphasis and position, including the reversals, demonstrate how *the Pragmatist commits to a method of inquiry and a process of learning* rather than pre-cooked substantive policies. Such an approach values the exercise of deliberative judgement in situ rather than the absolute commitment to policies that are developed in the abstract and applied without consideration of social and historical contexts. Disagreements among the classical Pragmatists were 'part and parcel of what Pragmatic method generates …. [Its] epistemic openness is confirmed in the separate judgements each took' (Cochran 2017, 160). What united them was a commitment to the democratization of international practice as a response to the growing interconnectedness of the twentieth century. Internationalism was not an abstract aspiration but a material fact. It was not, as Dewey put it, 'a sentimental ideal but a force' (quoted in Cochran 2012, 6). The habits, doctrines and dogmas of exclusionary nationalism 'were the strongest barriers to the effective formation of an international mind'; and that kind of mind was best suited to the times.

To be sure, nationalism was not ignored by classical Pragmatists, either as a social fact or indeed as a value that facilitated growth. William James, who was one-time president of the Anti-Imperial League, opposed the assertive nationalism of Theodore Roosevelt but 'admired his robustness' (Kaag 2013, 70). The task for James was to 'appropriate and redeploy' (Kaag 2013, 70) nationalism toward civic

projects that encouraged public sentiment without, it was supposed, the downside of war (Marchetti 2015, 239–45). These projects could claim to be 'the moral equivalent of war' (James 2011 [1906]). The value of such a framing can be contested if one thinks of the difficulties that have followed the securitization of public problems – for example, the 'wars' on terror and drugs. Indeed, Dewey, who was suspicious of 'the anti-democratic nature of an educational program that sanctioned the martial spirit' (Howlett 1976, 49), later 'derided' (Kaag 2013, 78) this kind of approach. Again, the difference illustrates the point: classical Pragmatism commits to a method for social inquiry and a process of learning, not preconceived solutions or fixed substantive positions.

Pragmatism as an Analytical and Normative Framework

Pragmatism has informed IR in a third way: IR researchers have turned to Pragmatism for an analytical and normative framework. Their purpose is similar to mine. It is threefold. The frameworks they craft from Pragmatist thought are used, firstly, to focus on social problems (including in the areas I address in this book). Secondly, they assess the role practices play in the constitution of those problems; and finally they propose ameliorative ways forward. While the literature in this area is relatively sparse (confirming Pragmatism's marginal position in contemporary IR), it does signpost methods and themes that I develop in this book. In the security field for instance, Patricia Shields and Joseph Soeters (Shields and Soeters 2013) develop Kaag's (2013) focus on what Pragmatism says about militarism, especially the way it grounds particular habits in essentialist (and thus unwarranted) views of the friend/enemy distinction. Shields and Soeters then draw on the Pragmatist-inspired work of the military sociologist Morris Janowitz to show how the deconstruction of otherwise fixed binaries has facilitated the development of new security practices such as peacekeeping. More recently Jack Snyder (2022, 30–31) briefly references the classical Pragmatists to support his politics-based and 'outcome-oriented criteria for judging the appropriateness of tactics for advancing human rights' (Snyder 2022, 3).

Other more recent works drawing on classical Pragmatism to understand security practices include Deborah Avant's (2016) 'relational pragmatist' account of private military governance. Avant

focuses on how problems created by the emergence of private military actors were identified and how connections were made among those affected ('stakeholders'). She examines the attention that was given to the consequences or workability of proposed reforms and the relative openness of practitioners to possible solutions. In this way, Avant (2016, 340) traces how '[o]pen "thinking" among consequential stakeholders can yield creative, workable collective action in pursuit of general concerns, in other words, effective governance'. Similarly, Christian Bueger and Timothy Edmunds' (2021) account of maritime security governance describes processes of 'pragmatic ordering', which includes experimenting with new practices and developing new knowledge; and Pol Bargués (2020, 237) offers a critique of contemporary peacebuilding practices that encourage 'practitioners to experiment' without 'dreams of otherworldliness'.[27] While these works draw on Pragmatist concepts (e.g. experimentalism, inclusive deliberation) to analyse the ways in which practices were understood as being problematic, and the means by which those problems were mitigated, they do not explicitly draw normative conclusions or implications for wider IR theory. Still, when these findings are set in a wider reading of Pragmatist thought, they provide further evidence to suggest that this is possible.

With respect to Pragmatist-inspired IR research in the area of climate change there are even fewer examples to cite. Matthew Brown's (2013) contribution to Shane Ralston's (2013) edited book *Philosophical Pragmatism and International Relations* stands out in this regard. Brown shows how a Pragmatist conception of democracy as a form of social inquiry directs us to ask who is included, either directly or indirectly, in the 'community of inquiry' that first establishes climate change as a global problem. The epistemic authority of the findings and recommendations – our faith in them – is contingent on the way that the community is constituted. For Brown, Pragmatist IR encourages a more inclusive approach among communities of inquiry and greater involvement of affected publics as a means of reimagining what he saw as a policy impasse involving strategies of adaptation,

[27] See also Nance and Cottrell (2014, 278). While they do not relate their work on security governance to Pragmatism, they draw on the 'experimental turn' in EU legal studies, which focuses on 'an iterated standard-setting process, increased participation at multiple societal levels, and experimentation to generate new knowledge about the challenges stakeholders face'.

mitigation and geoengineering (see also Bray 2013, 465–9). To find further application of Pragmatism to this area of governance, however, we must go beyond IR sources.

The work of the environmental ethicist Ben Minteer (2012) is directly relevant here. He makes the case for a more experimental, interdisciplinary and democratic approach, one that stands as an alternative to what he saw as the dominant nature-centred outlook.[28] More recently, the philosopher Steven Fesmire draws on Deweyan Pragmatism to argue that we are suffering 'from a sort of "moral jetlag" due in part to "moral fundamentalist" habits'. This jetlag is an obstacle 'to fostering habits of moral and political inquiry better suited to dealing with predicaments rapidly transforming our warming planet'. What he calls Pragmatic pluralism is necessary if we are to 'speak more effectively to "wicked problems" in a way that aids public deliberation and social learning' (Fesmire 2020, online). Again, these works suggest Pragmatism can deliver significant insight into, as well as a normative assessment of, international practices, such as those operating under the banner of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. I speak directly to that in Chapter 7 of this book.

As with the issue of climate change one has to draw on the work of philosophers to find the application of Pragmatist ideas to the study and assessment of international practices in the global health field. James Bohman's (1999) study of the AIDS epidemic is particularly helpful in this respect. For Bohman, that epidemic raised difficult questions of epistemic hierarchy given the large asymmetries of knowledge and 'the ability to assess and employ it'. Those hierarchies might see an improvement in expert effectiveness, but it did not necessarily follow that the problems experienced by non-experts were being addressed. For Bohman, the Pragmatist commitment to

[28] As explained by Fesmire (2020): 'The most notable feature of environmental pragmatism … is rejection of the mainstream attempt to find a single defensible paradigm with which we must align ourselves. Specifically, whatever their own eco-ontologies, pragmatist environmental ethicists do not respond to anthropogenic climate disruption by prioritizing a revolutionary attempt to convince doubters that natural systems have intrinsic value. Instead, they tend to focus more than monists on ameliorative processes for resolving disagreements, on making workable, ecologically-informed decisions.'

democracy as a form of social inquiry, and to social inquiry as a democratic practice, helps us transcend this dilemma. This is because knowledge construction for the Pragmatist rests on what Bohman (1999, 592) called an 'epistemic division of labor'. On the one hand the expert brings a technical understanding of the issue – in this case the virus – and on the other hand publics affected by the virus bring an understanding of the problem and how it is experienced. Neither the expert nor the affected can claim epistemic authority without the input of the other.

Thus, Bohman (1999, 600) concludes that '[i]nclusion in the process of decision-making of all those involved in collective enterprises establishes and enhances critical scrutiny and the epistemic authority of the experts'. He demonstrates how the AIDS case confirmed the relevance of a key Pragmatist insight: intelligence is 'a genuinely social property' (Bohman 1999, 594). The normative implication of this argument is that progress toward resolving lived problems requires the establishment of a 'free and open interchange between experts and the lay public' because this helps to 'discover ways of resolving recurrent cooperative conflicts about the nature and distribution of social knowledge' (Bohman 1999, 592). Equally, Bohman's evidence confirms the classical Pragmatist argument that normative progress requires a commitment to *a politics of the public interest*. It was only when those affected by AIDS organized politically that a challenge to how experts defined theirs and the public's interest could be mounted. After this political campaign the supposed public interest in high standards of scientific validity (which was favoured by the technical expert) was rebalanced to one where drugs were more widely and quickly available (Bohman 1999, 600).[29] Again, there is sufficient evidence here to suggest that Pragmatism can deliver significant insight into, as well as a normative assessment of, international practices in the global health field. I speak directly to that in Chapter 8 of the book, which examines and assesses the practices of the World Health Organization (WHO) and how they have been challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic.

[29] See also Garrett Brown's work on international HIV/AIDS norms. While he does not frame his critique in Pragmatist terms, there are parallels to the extent it is based on a deliberative approach that makes 'public policy more efficient, effective and legitimate by including multisectoral input and creating a sense of policy ownership' (Brown 2010, 513).

Pragmatic Constructivism, IR and Global Learning: A Chapter Outline

I should restate my purpose. I am seeking to answer three questions: (1) what can classical Pragmatism bring to debates in IR, including those centred on the perennial question of how norms, practices and interests interact to influence international society and its practitioners? (2) How should international practices and practitioners adapt in the face of pressing global security, climate and health challenges? (3) Given the Pragmatist answer to these first two questions, what normative conclusion can we come to about actual practice in contemporary international society?

To answer these questions I divide the book into two parts. Part I speaks to my first two questions. While there is overlap, the chapters are organized to shed light on what classical Pragmatism brings to the Constructivist areas of norm studies (Chapter 2), practice theory (Chapter 3) and the interest-based critique of Realist IR theory (Chapter 4). As noted earlier, the inclusion of practice theory alongside norm studies has been described as a New Constructivist research agenda (McCourt 2022).[30] My interest in these chapters is to demonstrate how, by including the insights of classical Pragmatism, the New Constructivist research agenda can be further expanded to also answer my second question: how *should* international practices adapt in the face of global challenges? Answering that question enables IR to not only identify and understand international practices, it demonstrates how IR can normatively assess them. By adopting a more fully developed Pragmatic Constructivist approach, one that emphasises a normative commitment to global learning, I hope in other words to complement *and* extend New Constructivist research.

Chapter 5 consolidates the arguments advanced in Part I of the book to create an analytical and normative framework that can be identified as 'Pragmatic Constructivist IR' and then applied to assess communities of international practice. The chapter builds on the literature introduced in the previous section to focus on the way in which communities of practice and inquiry first identify problems and then try to solve them. In the absence of certainty about immutable truths

[30] Adler (2008, 219) identified this potential: 'Building on premises consistent with social-construction processes, a theory of communities of practice and cognitive evolution broadens constructivist IR theory.'

and ideal end points, a Pragmatic Constructivist approach focuses on the problems that are immanent within, and emerge from, actual international practice. A problem occurs when a practice fails to sustain or improve the lived experience of practitioners (those performing the practice) *and* publics (those affected by the consequences of practice). This of course is an empirical question, which requires a dual focus on the implementation *and* consequences of practice; and, crucially, that is important for interrogating the epistemic authority that practitioners claim. Without a holistic understanding of the consequences of a practice, practitioners cannot know that what they are doing is the most appropriate course of action. *This is the first normative test of a community of practice: how reflexive is it? In other words, how well does the community know the consequence of its practices, and how open is it to learning from affected publics*. To the extent international practices have global consequences, global learning requires a political mobilization by, or on behalf of, affected publics so that their experiences are included in the deliberations of the relevant community of practice.

The second test follows on from the previous point that reflexivity and inclusion are necessary but not sufficient for global learning defined as effective problem-solving. A practice need not be dismissed because it is either contested by practitioners or excluded publics. This is particularly the case if, as noted earlier, it draws authority from Dewey's 'stock of learning' or the lessons of the past. Moreover, while new information of lived experiences should be a cause for conscientious reflection on the value of an existing practice that again does not mean the practice should necessarily change. Effective problem-solving requires both backward-looking and forward-looking (Hildebrand 2013, 67) or 'counterfactual' (Sikkink 2008) inquiry. The wisdom of the past may not be applicable in the present or the future because things change. As another contemporary Pragmatist put it, effective inquiry requires an 'imaginative rehearsal' (Hoover 2016, 119) of what would follow if those practices were abandoned or changed; and given the basis for action is in part imagination, practice also involves what James (2005 [1896]) called the 'will to believe' (see Bray 2013). *The second normative test of a community of practice, therefore, is how well it exercises deliberative practical judgement, or, in the words of Kathryn Sikkink (2008), how well it 'weighs the consequences' of alternative courses of action*. To the extent international practices have

global consequences, global learning not only requires the communities of practice to be inclusionary and reflexive, it requires them to deliberate on how practical problems can be solved, and that requires the ability to judge between alternative pathways.

In Part II of the book (Chapters 6–8), I apply these two tests – what I call inclusionary reflexivity and deliberative practical judgement – to normatively assess the practices of contemporary international society in the context of global security, climate and health challenges. In this way, I answer my third question, and I summarize each chapter's contribution here. It is first necessary by way of introduction, however, to clarify something about the scope of the international practices I am interrogating.

The practices interrogated in Part II of the book tend toward the 'macro' level of analysis. The macro-micro conceptualization has emerged within IR practice theory research, and by working at the macro level I follow the approach of Silviya Lechner and Mervyn Frost (2018). In contrast to the wider tendency to go 'micro' (see Soloman and Steele 2017) – that is, to focus on practices in bureaucratic settings – Lechner and Frost's practice theory focuses on international society's 'institutions' (e.g. sovereignty) as sets of meaningful practices.[31] For Nora Stappert (2020b, 188), this move is 'squarely at odds' with an approach to practice theory that focuses on 'multiplicity' and rejects the idea of an all-encompassing global order. On my reading, however, Lechner and Frost do not reject multiplicity but argue that it can be brought together through the concept of the 'institution', or a 'practice of practices'.[32] International society, in this sense, is a

[31] Furthermore, by noting that norms make practices meaningful Lechner and Frost (2018) reject Pouliot's claim that the study of norms and practices operate on different analytical planes. The shared analytical plane is evident also in Bull's (1977, 69) definition of 'institutions', which recognizes that rules (or norms) are 'performed' (as practices). He adds: 'by institution we do not necessarily imply an organisation or administrative machinery, but rather a set of habits and practices shaped towards the realisation of common goals' (Bull 1977, 71). See also Ansell (2011, 15) for a Pragmatist interpretation and assessment of institutions as 'repositories of experience and knowledge as well as tools for collective action and problem solving'.

[32] Adler's (2019, 127) use of the concept of 'anchoring practices' has a similar implication. These are 'patterns of social activities that constitute social contexts and order by rendering possible and defining the criteria used in more specific practices. … [They] configure, organize, arrange, and stabilize social life around core constitutive rules'. He gives the example of the European

community of practice.[33] The idea of a 'practice of practices' is a helpful one. It offers research versatility. Indeed, while I tend toward the macro level, my analysis in this book switches between the macro and micro levels of analysis.

Chapter 6 begins the application of Pragmatic Constructivism by first interpreting and assessing how, as a community of practice at the macro level, contemporary international society has responded to instances of mass atrocity and the problem that created for the practices of state sovereignty. I demonstrate how political mobilization on behalf of once excluded publics (in this case vulnerable populations) contributed to a reimagining of sovereignty as a responsibility to protect, as well as a normative reassignment of that responsibility to international society when a state 'manifestly fails'. I apply the two tests – inclusionary reflexivity and deliberative practical judgement – to the micro level by assessing the working practices (e.g. penholding, veto reform) of the UN Security Council, which I see as a community of R2P practice. While greater inclusivity signposts ways in which the Council can better respond to the public interest, the impact of micro-adaptation is ultimately contingent on a deeper level of change in the identity of member states. Given the Pragmatist's interest in finding better alternatives, I also assess the practical judgement of R2P sceptics, which I conclude is lacking given that their prescription does not address their own criticism of R2P. I conclude that it is only through the kind of long-term political mobilization that reconstitutes state identity and interests that we will see international practice realize the global public interest but that the R2P norm acts as a useful pedagogic tool.

Chapter 6 also considers the particular threat of nuclear atrocity, which would in all likelihood follow the use of nuclear weapons in conflict. My argument here focuses on the lack of faith international

order constituted by the free movement of goods and peoples across borders. Cooper and Pouliot (2015, 348) also talk about a multilateral forum, like the G20, as 'a bundle of practices'; Morgan (2011, 150) describes Cold War deterrence as a 'cluster of practices'.

[33] Of course the concept of 'international society' is often associated with English School IR. For a discussion on the place of 'practice' in English School framings, see Navari (2011). One does not have to have that association to discuss macro-practices. See Cooper and Pouliot (2015, 337), who discuss deterrence, arms control and diplomacy as practices.

society has in deterrence as a means of preventing nuclear atrocity, which manifests itself in non-proliferation practices. These two contradictory practices may be reconciled by the hierarchical argument that only certain states are capable of 'nuclear learning' (Nye 1987), and only these states can be trusted to practice nuclear deterrence. I conclude that this argument also lacks epistemic authority, especially across post-colonial international society. This level of doubt, I further argue, is unsustainable to the extent its practical consequence is continuing proliferation, which increases the risk of nuclear atrocity. As with the R2P section, I criticize the impracticality of alternative proposals (e.g. the world state of the nuclear realists and the movement for complete nuclear disarmament) but I adopt Daniel Deudney's (2007, 2019) proposal for what he calls 'deep arms control'. This, I suggest, can be a focus for future learning. Based on Cold War evidence, it can be a focal point for a public that would, by explaining the reasons for deep arms control, constitute the other-regarding and publically oriented states that are necessary to prevent nuclear atrocity.

In Chapters 7 and 8, I apply the two tests of Pragmatic Constructivism to communities of practice in the respective fields of climate change and global health governance. With respect to climate change, I examine two communities of practice, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which in effect frames the problem, and the Conference of Parties (COP), which meets annually to discuss international society's response to the problem within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The question here is whether the COP deliberations are properly constituted in order to deliver changes to carbon-emitting practices and thus slow down and limit the increase in global temperatures. The analysis operates at a micro level – for instance, how physical space in the Conference is organized – and the macro-level – for instance, whether it would be better to organize deliberations on a 'minilateral' basis that is less inclusive but more likely reach an agreement on carbon emissions. The focus here is driven by the Pragmatic Constructivist interest in constituting the community of inquiry that is most appropriate for solving the problem. I note that for the most part this debate has been bypassed by the decision at the 2015 Paris COP to commit to Nationally Determined Targets (NDCs) for emissions reduction. Here I apply the second Pragmatic Constructivist test. I assess the consequences of that collective judgement in light of the progress made at the 2021 Glasgow

COP, which was the most recent meeting at the time of writing. From that analysis I conclude that the problem should now be framed in terms of states delivering on the commitments they have made and consider the usefulness of nationalist dispositions in that process.

Chapter 8 focuses on global health governance and specifically the problem of containing the spread of contagious diseases. This is one of the tasks of the WHO and its practice of declaring a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). Given the 'pervasive uncertainty' (Davies et al. 2015, 189) that surrounds the outbreak of a contagious disease and the costs of declaring a PHEIC, which includes the possible isolation of the effected state, the decision inevitably involves a judgement call rather than the pre-reflexive implementation of pre-planned steps. Applying the first Pragmatic Constructivist test to this practice leads me to ask if the community of practice charged with making that judgement is properly constituted and sufficiently inclusive. I ask if it fully understands the nature of the problem and is constituted to make the best possible judgement. The evidence suggests that it is not. More specifically, the evidence points to practice that has privileged technical (in this case epidemiological) expertise over social and political advice. This is problematic because of the importance of the latter. As Sara Davies and Clare Wenham put it, 'political solutions will also be required to achieve international cooperation and solidarity' (Davies and Wenham 2020, 1228).

A second application of the two Pragmatic Constructivist tests focuses on an inconsistency internal to global health practices as they relate to the worldwide distribution of vaccines. Practices that would arguably achieve this more effectively, such as the local manufacture of vaccines, are prevented by intellectual property practices. Applying a Pragmatic Constructivist approach to this problem would lead one to weigh the experiential consequences of such practices, which leads me to criticize it not simply because it fails to sufficiently protect populations in the developing world but because the Covid pandemic has again illustrated a global public interest in comprehensive and universal vaccination. This is an intensely political issue, but my conclusion is that a Pragmatic Constructivist can make a normative argument for changes to intellectual property practices based on its identification of a public interest. Such policy proposals, in this and other chapters, of course require a deeper consideration of the empirical evidence, and Pragmatists may reach a different judgement on the appropriateness of

these 'forward-looking' proposals. My more limited purpose here is to illustrate the approach, both academic and political, that is involved in Pragmatic Constructivist social inquiry.

In the concluding chapter, I go beyond a summary of my contribution to address the question of how an approach inspired by *American* Pragmatism can inform *Global* IR, which I understand to mean the construction of a discipline that is more inclusive of non-Western perspectives. To do this I draw parallels between my reading of Pragmatist thought and non-Western 'cosmologies' like Confucianism.[34] This has been introduced to a contemporary Western IR audience mainly through the works of Yaqing Qin (2016, 2018). I am, however, building on what others have identified as 'the many resonances between Deweyan pragmatism and Confucian philosophy' (Ames, Chen and Hershock 2021, 12).

As noted in this chapter, Pragmatism cannot be considered part of the rationalist IR 'mainstream', and it is not therefore subject to recent non-Western critiques (see, e.g. Qin 2016, 2018) of the discipline. Moreover, if the Pragmatist turn in Western IR continues then it can, I suggest, be more easily harmonized – contrapuntally (Bilgin 2016) – with the non-Western cosmologies I discuss in Chapter 9. This at least signposts a path 'toward' Global IR, even if it does not fix the path's end point. Indeed, I suggest we follow such signs *because* they do not fix the destination. Those end points are for practitioners and global publics to construct as they work collectively through communities of practice that are inclusive, reflexive, creative and deliberative.

[34] 'A cosmology seeks to explain the origins of the cosmos in which we find ourselves and our place within it. As such, it shares many similarities with ontology and epistemology but differs from both as it has a sacred dimension that is often, though at times erroneously, translated into the concept of 'religion'. Therefore, it cannot be reduced to 'ontology' or 'epistemology' without violating its sacred core' (Shani and Behera 2022, 838).