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# **Update of Leadership-as-Practice ‘Practice Theory’ Featuring Joe Raelin interviewed by Jenny Robinson**

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# Update of Leadership-as-Practice ‘Practice Theory’

Featuring Joe Raelin interviewed by Jenny Robinson

## ***Abstract***

This article constitutes an interview between a new researcher of the field of Leadership-as-Practice (L-A-P), Jenny Robinson, with one of the co-creators of the field, Joe Raelin. It is dedicated to providing an update and refinement of leadership-as-practice “practice theory,” which has gone through a fair degree of transformation since this journal’s first article on the subject in 2008. The call for such an update is precipitated by the need for emerging L-A-P researchers to appreciate the subject’s conceptual boundaries for more consistent and integrated exploration. Not only has the field differentiated from other plural traditions in leadership but from other “as-practice” approaches in the wider management field. Some of the distinctions covered in this article comprise the role of theory in L-A-P, its contribution to leadership research and leadership development, its connection to other related fields such as relational leadership and strategy-as-practice, and its phenomenological, ethical, democratic, and post-humanistic foundations.

The field of leadership-as-practice has been with us since 2008 when this journal published the article, “Leadership as Practice: Challenging the Competency Paradigm” by Carroll, Levy, and Richmond (2008). Since then, the field has expanded featuring numerous subsequent articles in this journal and others, in a score of presentations at professional conferences, many past and current dissertation theses, an edited book featuring a range of thematic elements characterizing the field (Raelin, 2016b), and recent workshops on L-A-P for new scholars attracting some hundreds of participants. The field is evolving toward a theory, as advised by Kempster (2016), provided that it encourage, enumerate, and appraise criticism of its principal inter-related concepts and continue to invite research on these concepts. At this stage of L-A-P’s development, new researchers of the field require a state-of-the-practice to assess some of its refinements so as to discern the field’s conceptual boundaries for more consistent and integrated study.

For readers new to this emerging field, L-A-P is seen as a contributor to the discipline of leadership within the social sciences that looks for leadership not in people, especially their traits and behaviors, but in everyday practice, and in particular, in emergent dynamic social and material interactions. Leadership occurs when social processes change the trajectory or turning points in the flow of practice. It is no coincidence that this update was specifically earmarked for this journal, which in L-A-P's early days was the only outlet that encouraged its development as a potential contribution to leadership theory and practice. The remainder of this article comprises an interview, conducted by one of L-A-P's new scholars and *Leadership* author, Jenny Robinson, with Joe Raelin, on some important developments in the field of leadership-as-practice.

### ***Theory Development in L-A-P***

Jenny: In my work in the field, I have found myself ambivalent toward theory. However, I recognize that if theory is not guiding our research enquiry, then how do we know when we are using L-A-P to shed new light on underlying forces and dynamics in leadership? Is there a risk that without theory to guide us, we are randomly researching just about anything? Most specifically how can we be sure to make a contribution to knowledge through the more active and exploratory type of research that L-A-P adopts?

Joe: With regard to the state-of-the-practice in terms of theory development, as I have written in these pages (Raelin, 2020), L-A-P has a complicated relationship to theory, so I understand your ambivalence. By using the quotes around practice theory in the title, I am suggesting different meanings, two in particular, to this expression. First, I wish to suggest that practice theory is a different kind of theory compared to widely used scientific theories which entail symbolic representations of observed or approximated empirical phenomena, exhibiting their underlying patterns and relationships (Bacharach, 1989). In contrast, "practice theory" is derived directly from the data of emerging experience or from

practice interventions rather than from a priori knowledge. It would emerge from an epistemology of practice (Raelin, 2007) in which concurrent reflection on experience not only expands knowledge but also improves practice. Theory would not be pre-established but constituted as a living construction to capture the useful ingredients of a performance. Ultimately, its purpose is to explain situational dynamics so that it can assist in effecting change in these dynamics (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011).

Consequently, those L-A-P researchers who adopt the phenomenological tradition tend to de-emphasize the use of scientific theory to guide their observations in the field. Nor are they interested in confirming existing theory but rather they seek to explore new possibilities and clarify the inter-subjective circumstances surrounding existing practices. They seek an opportunity to be a co-participant examining leadership dynamics from within. Since the practices under scrutiny are themselves often embodied and pre-theoretical, the dynamics are not easily subject to representation, which as opposed to material engagement refers to the acquisition of cognitive knowledge about an object. The task in research is to build out L-A-P studies to a point where authors can begin to compile synergistic accounts in practice, not so much in theory, to serve as guides to future researchers. Further, they seek to identify leadership emergence in specific situations, and though it may be difficult to isolate congruent themes, they can minimally start by comparing processes and outcomes within specific contextual frames, such as in individual roles, teams, organizations, sectors, and nations.

The second meaning of “practice theory” suggests that there is an emerging substantive theory about practice. This body of knowledge sees practice as a social activity that is constituted by shared practices that actors use to shape and interpret their own and others’ subsequent actions (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984). These practices, furthermore, represent a coordinated nexus of doings and sayings governing conduct within a particular context (Schatzki, 1996). Accordingly, practice becomes a core unit of social analysis being not a mere description of what people do but a set of activities that have meaning-making, identity-forming, and order-producing characteristics (Chia and Holt, 2006; Nicolini,

2009). To be kept in mind is that practice theory per se is not easily subject to scientific theorizing because practices are themselves conditioned by anomalous and highly contextualized variations, thus lending themselves far more to abduction than deduction and induction. In abduction one seeks plausible explanations for phenomena that are unique and thus often discrepant from identifiable patterns.

### ***Contribution of L-A-P to Leadership Research***

Jenny: I hear your reservations about the use of theory, but at the same time you are suggesting that L-A-P can shed new light on underlying forces and dynamics in leadership. Has the field narrowed its focus so that adherents know where L-A-P's potential contribution may lie?

Joe: Initially, there was generous disagreement in the field regarding the emphasis on leadership or practices. Some writers did not (and still do not) use the hyphens in the expression leadership-as-practice, whereas Brigid Carroll and I were keen to emphasize not only the inherent value of practice but leadership's unity with practice. The terms are interconnected because it is a dynamic within practice that may materialize in leadership. If we were to just talk about leadership practices, any activity of a person named leader could qualify. But we made it clear that we were not interested in such practices in which the focus is on what a designated person does. We're interested in what it is within all the associated elements constituting a practice – its artifacts, its setting, its time, its people, its voices, its dialogue, its gestures – that produce leadership.

Hence, we are studying leadership AS a practice and we're interested in changes occurring in the flow of such practice. If we are to improve our organizations and networks, we need to understand some of the micro and meso practices creating meaning (and potential leadership) among constellations of people as they do their work. We may ask: how might our interdependencies and their associated artifacts shape leadership outcomes? As other examples, why do we at times hum along like a single instrument in our

team and other times disagree so vehemently that we break off? What does it take to repair any ruptures? What's the meaning of having a dinner with a client across cultures? Why does a powerpoint presentation advance our leadership in one setting or time but not in another?

We have largely agreed to place our ontological emphasis within the processes of interaction (and intra-action, as I hope to explain later) rather than on the entities who are involved in that interaction. We are talking less and less about leaders. Those who are working on an endeavor collectively are participants or collaborators whose mutual activities may or may not change a trajectory in the flow of practice, thus leadership may or may not ensue. The intersubjective construction of meaning arises through social and material interaction. Hence, leadership is non-sequential and non-substantive (Robinson and Renshaw, 2021). In a L-A-P world leadership is not a position within a hierarchy that is filled by someone fulfilling their term of office until replaced by the next authority. Leadership is a collective performance tied to a range of activities and social arrangements. Nor is leadership imputed by the name "leader." Using the word in interviews, for example, brings to mind cultural norms and scripts regarding the behavior of "being in charge," leading to spurious attributions. The resulting commentary often incorporates a manner of discourse attending to this honorific role, turning our attention away from the actual leadership in practice. By focusing on what makes a practice effective or what changes a practice, we can delve more deeply into those discourses, feelings, events, activities, and material deployments – in other words, those sayings and doings – that create and shape leadership.

### ***Practice and Practices***

Jenny: You seem to be suggesting that practice and practices are not only not equivalent but suggest quite different dynamics in the activities of people in the workforce. Can you explain?

Joe: Yes, that's right, and in L-A-P we spend a fair amount of time thinking about the former because it refers to in-the-moment entwinements that extend or transform meaning and that can therefore change trajectories. Practices tend to refer to sequences of activities that may repeatedly recur. Simpson (2016) consequently associates practices with an inter-actional mode of action in which entities, such as people, direct their agency toward other entities through routinized activities. Although such interactions can redefine the entities, they largely remain independent of each other. She characterizes practice, however, as a trans-actional mode in which there is a continual flow of processes and engagements. In this mode there is little interest in reducing the dynamic movements to concrete elements other than the trans-actional situation itself. Further, unlike the inter-actional mode, practice engagements transform the "trans-actors" as they incorporate new and unfolding meanings in their ongoing trans-actions.

#### ***L-A-P and LaPD***

Jenny: With such a focus on studying practice, can you say more about the emphasis that the field should take in applying what we know, such as through the emerging application referred to as "LaPD," leadership-as-practice development?

Joe: First introduced by David Denyer and Kim Turnbull James (2016), LaPD has become an applied format of L-A-P. In advancing LaPD, we are able to say that we have reached a state in which we know enough about the practice tendencies that we have something to contribute about *improving* the practice not only for future applications but to support the leadership that may be already going on. So, for example, we may introduce dialogic techniques to improve the "sayings" and "relatings" of practice. Accordingly, participants might be invited to try out some new skills in collective reflexivity, such as developing a deep and peripheral awareness of one another or collaborating with a keen sense of humility, not necessarily looking for agreement or for truth among those participating but rather for



mutual understanding and consideration. As another example, LaPD practitioners can make participants aware of the importance of material objects to leadership and how they can enable or inhibit ongoing practices. Might an object, such as a critical white paper, be judiciously serving to direct what should be included in a project, warn of a critical absence of an element, display what should be prioritized, or define targets to be reached?

What is key for us as an emerging field is to point out to our readers when we're doing research/scholarship and when we're moving into applied territory and doing leadership development – in this case, LaPD. Although we vigorously need to continue our basic research into practice, we have arrived at a point in which L-A-P can bring a fresh perspective to leadership development. In particular, we support applications that place less emphasis on expertise and more on contested interaction as practitioners improvise to solve their own problems. They acquire a situated understanding of what works, what doesn't work, and what might work. Leadership learning, then, occurs less from a vertical transmission of instructions and more from collective horizontal reflection-in-practice among those connected to each other doing the work.

### ***Differences from Relational Model***

Jenny: Definitions really matter because they help us separate our phenomena of interest from other related accounts and may also show how we are choosing to extend the work of others. One such example, would be relational leadership. From what you have been saying about L-A-P theory and application, it seems that relational leadership shares some of the features of L-A-P but ultimately would be inconsistent with leadership AS A practice? Can you help the reader with some distinctions?

Joe: The relational approach to leadership tends to focus on interactions between people, be they through conversation or through other semiotic means, such as signs and symbols. Although these interactions explain a good deal of ontological experience, L-A-P looks at the totality of the practices,

including the material artifacts, the technologies, the rituals, not to mention, time and space. Thus, the focus is less on human entities, such as leaders talking with other leaders or with followers, than on processes whereby humans and their accompanying socio-material elements all co-constitute as an unfolding set of fluid emergent practices. as (2016), for example, found that material objects can significantly contribute to group practices through directing, shaping, and ordering effects. In the case of ordering, for example, a set of post-it notes might illustrate the priority and relationships among various identified components in orchestrating a project release.

So, where's the leadership, one might ask: in L-A-P, practice can be treated as an intra-action (rather than an inter-action) among parties that at times allow people at work to move from the relational to the transpersonal – thus transcending their own immediate embeddedness (Barad, 2003; Raelin, 2016a). The contexts thus can produce meaning beyond the people in relation and lead to changes in the liminal space between them. But it not just discourse which alters the practice but often new facets of each other's activities. Wittgenstein (1969) once noted that examples are needed to alter a practice. He said that "our practice leaves loop-holes, and the practice has to speak for itself" (p. 139). Shotter added that these amendments to practice establish a basic way of seeing so as to make sense of all the other objects we encounter in the practice sphere.

### ***L-A-P and SAP***

Jenny: Another example of a related field would be strategy-as-practice (SAP). At times, L-A-P is thought to be near-equivalent to SAP. What do you see as the main difference?

Joe: We owe much to SAP as we open up applications of practice theory to various management sub-fields (Golsorkhi, Rouleau, Seidl, and Vaara, 2015). There is emerging work, for example, in entrepreneurship, technology, and marketing. In the case of SAP, the focus is much more on stability, routines, and recursiveness as opposed to L-A-P's almost exclusive focus on change and adaptiveness.

Especially zeroing in on durable practices, SAP has devoted much attention to the structures, institutions, and habitus (in the words of practice theorists, in particular Bourdieu and Schatzki), which constrain attempts to deviate from routines or practices that contribute to strategic outcomes. SAP research has shed new light on how these practices take on an isomorphic quality that can shape strategic intent as much as or, at times, more than executive strategic plans (Jarzabkowski, 2004). What is of interest to L-A-P are those occasions when, through individual and collective reflexivity, flexible structuring, or improvisation (also referred to as “bricolage”), these routines are changed through adaptation of the trajectories of material-discursive practice (Pina e Cunha, Vieira Da Cunha, and Clegg, 2009). However, rather than concentrate on strategic practices, L-A-P is concerned with all such changes in trajectories or turning points within the group, organization, or network.

### ***Turning Points***

Jenny: For our readers, could you say more about the meaning of “turning points” in leadership and how they are treated in L-A-P? As an aside, I feel that these turning points are one of the defining features of L-A-P and help to differentiate our studies, for example, from fields such as groupwork. How do you use the term, turning points, and why do you see it as critical to the L-A-P field?

Joe: The term “turning points” has entered L-A-P parlance but the expression has not been clarified since it can refer to the extremes of a regular movement or passage in a decision made by a group to a significant shift in a longstanding cultural practice. If I had to choose among these extremes, I would point to the exercise of leadership as something akin to a “change in direction or trajectory,” thus rarer than, say, a decision to hold a meeting online (other than in the first instance). Rather, it occurs when the entity changes its course either dramatically or incrementally perhaps because of a new condition, a novel or better idea, a contextual event, or a unique solution. The source of the change in direction of the practice is not easily predictable and, in a L-A-P environment, is not often controlled by the official

manager in charge. It could be suggested, modeled, or triggered by anybody or by an internal or external event or artifact (such as a finding from an inquiry).

As a significant shift within the music field such as jazz, a practice, take fusion as an example, could be considered a major among subsequent turning points if it were to break the normative conventions of the category of jazz. Lounsbury and Rao (2005) further explain that a category is a fragile cognitive structure that can be broken down when participants engage in high performance variability and disturb the status quo. Further insight into turning points is provided by Innis (2022) who points out that they often lead to just incremental changes because gatekeepers in a field may alter or expand their criteria for assessing membership, quality, and value in order for the field to retain its identifying coherence.

### ***L-A-P's Apparent Post-Humanism***

Jenny: The deeper I probe into the foundations of leadership-as-practice, the more that I detect an ontology that privileges practices over human beings. Why is this important?

Joe: L-A-P can be said to embody a flat ontology in which the human being is no longer the center of things, thus it could be said that L-A-P is post-humanistic, or as David Knights (2021) prefers, "neo-humanistic." But "post" does not mean "anti," and, in fact, there are some principles of humanism that could be represented well by L-A-P, such as the endorsement and global commitment to human rights and human dignity. It is true that in L-A-P, agency emerges from material-discursive flows of practice so the subject does not precede the practice. A practice inquiry can further reveal a subject becoming fragmented and, in some cases, objectified within an existing power structure. Practice, on the other hand, in characterizing emergent entanglements can produce knowledge from a contested interaction among a community of inquirers rather than from a single source of expertise.

The benefit of the post-humanistic orientation, consequently, is that it can ward against blind reliance on autocratic leaders and their demagoguery and anti-democratic practices. At the same time, L-A-P

can be other than a lens of inquiry because of an acknowledgement and recognition that a reliance on practices can produce conflicted outcomes because ostensibly successful leadership practices inherently generate their own resistance and may hide overt or passive expressions of dissent. They are also subject to institutional pressures, especially from power elites, who may try to manipulate the discourse surrounding decisions and actions. Nevertheless, by joining together in community, practitioners in social critique may have a better chance to resist oppression and other forms of inequitable social conditions than attempting to intervene on their own to alter unjust social arrangements.

### ***Ethics in L-A-P***

Jenny: With all this focus on social interaction and critique which can shape ethical development, is there a place in L-A-P for universal moral values?

Joe: There is a good deal of contention around this question, but to those exponents of L-A-P who are guided by genealogical ethics, L-A-P resists external moral authority contending that moral acts are irreducible. Instead, parties rely upon diverse, changing, and even conflicting perspectives and co-construct and negotiate ethical meaning as they work together. You could say L-A-P relies, then, upon a kind of principled pragmatism, rather than a set of universal principles to direct people in their ethical decision making (Friedrichs and Kratochwil, 2009).

As per the oft-cited three rival versions of moral inquiry by Alasdair MacIntyre (1994), genealogy, as compared to encyclopaedia and tradition, rejects the acquiescence to transcendental truths or even to the idea of progress in history, rather conceiving the construction of traditions as both contingent and contestable (Bevir, 2010). L-A-P thus discounts the idea of traditional and universal moral authority and the discovery of a teleological reality. Rather, as Mensch and Barge (2019: 4) have asserted in their genealogical review: "...multiple, changing, and even conflicting perspectives and meanings related to leadership are co-constructed and negotiated in dynamic organizational relationships." Values

therefore emerge from material-social interactions and their contexts rather than from individuals and their virtues. Borrowing from the concept of “enchantment” formulated by Bennett (2001), writers Bell, Winchester, and Wray-Bliss (2012) concur that business ethics should be cultivated through deep cultural immersion in everyday experiences.

L-A-P thus engages in confrontation with moral practices, seeking to deeply explore them from a collective and concurrent reflection-in-action. Its genealogical roots suggest an ethics that is contingent on the particular practices from which it emerges. It arises from a base that recognizes an innate capacity for ethical agency unimpeded by rules and rather sustained by a profound respect for others and a commitment to one’s community (Raelin, 2022). In that sense, although L-A-P may operate in conditions of soft power in which internal debates proceed as a contest to decide who has the right to orchestrate or “author” one’s interest, it can also intervene in conditions of hard power. Hard power looms when particular forces seek to deprive impacted groups (via gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and the like) of their full participation in social systems. L-A-P’s response to these conditions can be emancipatory to the extent it entails and advocates critical dialogues to question any practices that bear the imprint of social domination (Spicer et al. 2009). In particular, one of its roles is to break down the discourses behind these practices to reveal the systems of intelligibility over which may govern any “regimes of truth.” Such regimes, according to Foucault (1977), are ordered procedures in any institution that are produced, sustained, and redirected by hard power.

### ***Social Change via L-A-P***

Jenny: So far, you’ve been talking mostly about L-A-P at the meso and micro levels. What about the macro level of a system? How does L-A-P engage with ideas of social change?

Joe: As far as I can tell so far, practice theory hasn’t contributed a great deal to our understanding of or, even more, to the promotion of social change movements. Yet, when it comes to leadership of such

movements, it has a lot to say about changing the conversation away from the single out-in-front actor to collective actions. Leadership-as-practice challenges the idea that agency appears separate from and outside of the social activity itself (Welch and Yates, 2018). Some movements may start out as dispersed social activities, be they around fashions, music genres, cultural commonalities, or especially political causes, but they can morph into more organized activities that in some cases give rise to aggregate effects, the civil rights movement in the U.S. being a good example.

Another powerful yet controversial example of a movement dispensing with familiar vertical leadership would be the Occupy Movements and its cousins and confederates, such as Arab Spring, the Gezi Park demonstrations in Turkey, and the Gilets Jaunes protests in France. These movements raise critical questions regarding whether there might be a middle ground between the extreme horizontalism of these assemblages and the need for representation without resorting to traditional state-centrism (Adamovsky, 2008). Ultimately, these street movements employing direct democracy appear to require a coalescence across practice architectures composing economic, cultural, and political considerations in order to ascend from a moment to a movement. In addition, democratic experiments in countries worldwide, referred to as direct, or otherwise participative or deliberative democracy - in which ordinary citizens are assembled to deliberate and decide on critical issues - constitute another domain in which L-A-P inquiry can make an important processual contribution.

### ***L-A-P and Democracy***

Jenny: I spy a contradiction that would be interesting to explore. You earlier set out a flat ontology for L-A-P based on process and not entities, yet here you are suggesting that L-A-P is consistent with democratic leadership. Surely the ontological stance of L-A-P negates the specification of a normative approach, especially one favoring a given ideology?

Joe: I can see where you could draw this conclusion, that those of us who subscribe to this approach are so focused on practices that we disregard their value or outcomes. But just the condition of having those entwined together in activity decide how to proceed in managing the activity suggests in its own right a particular process ideology. Accordingly, we are prepared to say that there are social and political conditions in which L-A-P may tend to progress. In particular, we point incessantly to horizontal discourse across a range of individuals connected with each other rather than to vertical discourse through the transmission of instructions. I have also referred to this ontological condition as a participant-directed praxis in which the manager in charge encourages the dispersion of control (Raelin, 2012).

There may be a philosophical question here whether practice is in its nature a collective endeavor. This question has perplexed philosophers in the form of a quandary regarding whether a practice must be located in the social or whether it merely exists within individual brains and bodies. In L-A-P, we think of practice as social because some of our guiding authors, such as Bourdieu, see dispositions within the habitus as constituted of or produced by collective processes. Further, Schatzki and Rouse argue that practice has a normative character, thus affording its collective orientation (Turner, 2007). When it comes to leadership, if practice is itself a social and normative endeavor, it would seem to require a participatory ethos leading to collective, if not pure democratic, action.

### ***Context in L-A-P***

Jenny: Context is so often seen as a separate variable in leadership studies. But in L-A-P, context is already entwined within the practice of leadership. This is a radical shift from other approaches. You have also suggested that there are particular contexts, democratic or otherwise, in which L-A-P may thrive. Could you say more?



Joe: Context is critical to any practice theory because it represents the sites of activities forming frames from which these activities gain their meaning. So context does not reside outside of leadership nor is it a condition for leadership, but rather it is embedded in leadership activity across multiple levels; context and practice are mutually constitutive. For example, at the individual level, practice is intertwined with the mind and body, shaping cognition and emotion. At the societal level, practices and material arrangements shape social sites, which cause the public to internalize social structures. According to Wenger (1998), practice is “doing, but not just doing in and of itself. It is doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what people do” (p. 47). As actors become participants of what Schatzki (2002) refers to as “practice arrangement bundles,” they learn which actions and goals are appropriate, expected, and allowed. Since these bundles occur within a wider social context, the researcher needs to spell out the relevant practices and arrangements of which the context is composed (Seidl and Whittington, 2016).

What these ideas from practice theory suggest is simply that objects and events are considered equivocal unless understood in their present context. Thus, it is not surprising that early L-A-P research has tended to focus on specific contexts and that researchers have gone to great lengths to characterize the practice-arrangement bundles underlying their depiction of leadership.

In an informal review of 20 of the most recent studies of L-A-P, including dissertations, books, and journal articles, I found that the most popular areas of inquiry so far were early childhood education, health care management, and school leadership. Perhaps this is an early indication of those contexts where research of L-A-P has been positively endorsed.

### ***Phenomenological Roots***

Jenny: In your 2020 paper in this journal (Raelin, 2020), you laid out a menu for future research in L-A-P. How has your thinking evolved in the last few years?

Joe: I would like to just say a word more about the phenomenological (especially Husserlian) base to the methodology that I described in that paper. Husserl, in contrast to the ontological realism of correspondence theorists, asserted that any reality observed by the observer can be constituted but not through the mind or through intellectualizing. It can only be processed through a prereflective description as given to consciousness in its immediacy. Whatever phenomenological method may be used (and I have urged researchers to take full advantage of multiple modalities), it is critical to capture how the actor sees it in their current immediate world. A good place to start in such social research, though not exclusively, is through the use of ethnography.

Pragmatic understanding of social reality is to be derived later through abduction with the help of knowing communities. This may entail interpretation, although any explanation should submit to double and triple hermeneutics, the latter entailing not just the subject's and researcher's interpretation but an extended review of each's interpretations. In this way, analysis of qualitative data needs to be, in Van Maanen's words "tested, retested and tested again in the field" (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 549). The work of the researcher thus needs to be likened to a detective not to a reporter (Mees-Buss, Welch, and Piekkari, 2022). We seek to probe abductively, meaning that we seek plausible explanations for those phenomena that are puzzling or discrepant from either intuitive or theoretical expectations. Ultimately, a phenomenological stance is a patient stance that in its endeavor not to impose order on subject matter is totally committed to reflection on "the things themselves."

### ***Closing***

Jenny: Joe, thank you for bringing *Leadership* readers up-to-date on recent developments in the L-A-P field. This should help new researchers gain further understanding of the potential for study in this field as well as their recognizing some of the friendly conceptual boundaries between our field and the other

emerging plural leadership theories that have surfaced in recent years, not to mention the other “as-practice” approaches in management studies.

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