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Notes

Preface

- 1 Alain de Botton, *The News: A User's Manual*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 2014, pp. 99–100.
- 2 George Elliot, cited in de Botton, *The News*, p. 86.
- 3 For rewarding social-theoretical reflections on the things that people care about, and how the social sciences, to their detriment, have neglected these, see Andrew Sayer, *Why Things Matter to People: Social Science, Values and Ethical Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- 4 An argument that audiences not only might understand more, but also would be more interested, more engaged, if current affairs were to be conceived in a contextualized manner, receives support from recent empirical research. Work undertaken by Martin Scott, a Lecturer in Media and International Development at the University of East Anglia, found that audiences developed greater involvement and emotional identification with 'distant others' than was found in relation to news bulletins when they were exposed to longer documentaries and other non-news programming which embedded their subjects in socio-structural situations of greater depth and complexity. See Martin Scott, 'The Mediation of Distant Suffering: An Empirical Contribution beyond Television News Texts', *Media, Culture and Society* 36(1), January 2014, 3–19. Scott's research draws on innovative conceptual work on 'mediated encounters'. Prominent among these are Luc Boltanski, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; and Lilie Chouliaraki, *The Spectatorship of Suffering*. London: Sage, 2006. This work focuses more on issues around engagement, and normative questions related to this, than on any sustained in-depth exploration of the character of the socio-structural fields in which the subjects of media texts are embedded. It is not difficult, however, to envisage a fruitful synthesis of these approaches with the one offered here.
- 5 Rob Stones (ed.), *Key Sociological Thinkers*, 2nd edn. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. An expanded third edition will be published in 2015.

Chapter 1

- 1 For accounts of the 'hermeneutic' tradition in social theory see Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of*

Interpretative Sociologies. London: Hutchinson, 1976; and William Outhwaite, *Understanding Social Life: The Method Called Verstehen*, 2nd edn. Lewes: Jean Stroud, 1986.

- 2 On the pitfalls of leaving out of the picture what people care about, see Andrew Sayer, *Why Things Matter to People*.
- 3 See Rob Stones, *Structuration Theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 3–5.
- 4 Also see Postman's later book, co-authored with Steve Powers, *How to Watch TV News*, rev. edn. London: Penguin Books, 2007.
- 5 Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Showbusiness*. London: Methuen, 1987 (first published 1985).
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp. 149–52.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 152.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 G. Philo and M. Berry, *More Bad News from Israel*. London: Pluto Press, 2011, p. 187.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 394.
- 11 *Ibid.*; also see pp. 315–18.
- 12 Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991. Pages 17–25 provide details of Iyengar's methodology.
- 13 *Ibid.*, pp. 46–67.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 53–4; and Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Making Sense of Media and Politics: Five Principles in Political Communication*. New York: Routledge, 2011, p. 102.
- 15 See Chapter 3, 'The Phenomenological Input', of John Heritage's *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1984, pp. 37–74; and also see Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin Books, 1967[1966], pp. 45–8, 53–4; and John Heritage, 'Harold Garfinkel', in Rob Stones (ed.), *Key Sociological Thinkers*, 2nd edn. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 209–23.
- 16 See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge, 1984/79.
- 17 John Street, *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, p. 30.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 37, original emphasis.
- 19 Robert M. Entman, 'Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm', *Journal of Communication* 43(4), 1993, 51–8. See also, John Street, *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*, p. 37; and Jim Kuypers, 'Framing Analysis from a Rhetorical Perspective', in P. D'Angelo and J. Kuypers (eds), *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 2010, p. 301.

- 20 Kuypers, *ibid.*, p. 301; also see Street, *ibid.*, p. 37; and Robert M. Entman, 'Reporting Environmental Policy Debate: The Real Media Biases', *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 1, 1996, 77–8.
- 21 In some parts of the world of social theory there has been a move away from any concern with judgements about the adequacy of knowledge. This is in large part due to an ever-increasing recognition of the complex and entangled nature of social life, and hence of the obstacles involved in accurately representing aspects of it in authoritative statements. I regard this retreat as unfortunate, for notwithstanding the many difficulties of making judgements about the adequacy of knowledge, the ability to take on these difficulties with rigour and sophistication is one of the greatest strengths of social theory. This ability is at the root of the most important contributions that social theory can make to public life.
- 22 Thought about what *exists in* the social world falls into the category of ontology and the ontic in philosophy and social theory, whereas thinking about questions of *knowledge claims* about what exists falls into the category of epistemology and methodology.
- 23 Pierre Bourdieu, *On Television and Journalism*. London: Pluto Press, 1998 [1996], p. 2.
- 24 Bourdieu 1998[1996], pp. 6–7.
- 25 Bourdieu 1998[1996], pp. 6–7; also see David Morley, 'Finding Out about the World from Television News: Some Problems', in J. Gripsrud (ed.), *Television and Common Knowledge*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Chapter 2

- 1 I have in mind here the ideas developed by the critical realist philosopher Roy Bhaskar, around the term 'existential intransitivity', which denotes the objective reality of an entity, relation or state of affairs at a particular point in time. Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*. Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1979, p. 60; also see Andrew Sayer, *Realism and Social Science*. London: Sage, 2000, pp. 10–11.
- 2 See Alain de Botton, *The News: A User's Manual*, pp. 99–101, for the link between this supposed neutrality and the 'stifling boredom' produced by too many news accounts. There are, by now, many traditions in social theory, from the theoretical writings of the classical German sociologist, Max Weber – who believed it was inevitable that observers bring their values to the selection and interpretation of social phenomena (he called this *value-relevance*. See Max Weber, 'Science as a Vocation', in P. Lassman and I. Velody with H. Martins (eds), *Max Weber's 'Science as a Vocation'*. London: Unwin Hyman, 1989/19, p. 22.) – to feminist standpoint theory, and various strands of postmodernism that have persuasively challenged

the idea of objectivity as a view that somehow manages to divest itself of a situated, value perspective. The challenge is, rather, how to be objective from within a perspective, and then to ensure that objective accounts from disparate perspectives receive fair exposure. We shall see below that Djerf-Pierre and colleagues are, in effect, saying that the anti-marketization perspective on care homes for the elderly didn't receive fair and justifiable exposure in the Swedish press. Accepting these points does not place in jeopardy the ontological, methodological or epistemological notions of objectivity set out in **Box 1**, pp. 30–1.

- 3 See pages 5–6 in Chapter 1.
- 4 See Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*. New York: Anchor, 1967; and Erving Goffman, *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*. New York: Basic Books, 1971. Also see Philip Manning, *Erving Goffman and Modern Sociology*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1992; and Robin Williams, 'Erving Goffman', in Stones (ed.), *Key Sociological Thinkers*.
- 5 This is a paraphrase of the famous quotation from Karl Marx, who wrote 'Men make their own history, but they do not do so under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances already existing, given and transmitted from the past', 'Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', in David McLellan (ed.), *The Thought of Karl Marx: An Introduction*. London: Macmillan, 1971, p. 61. Also see Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Marx and Engels Selected Works*, vol. 1. Moscow, 1962, p. 247. See also, Bob Jessop, 'Karl Marx', in Stones (ed.), *Key Sociological Thinkers*.
- 6 See Barbara Adam and Chris Groves, *Future Matters: Action, Knowledge, Ethics*. Leiden: Brill Books, 2007; and Barbara Adam, 'Future Matters: Challenges for Social Theory and Social Inquiry', *Cultura e Comunicazione* 1: 47–55, online: www.pic-ais.it/upload/rte/Rivista_online_PicAis_aprile2010_N1.pdf.
- 7 C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination (Fortieth Anniversary Edition)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 (original publication 1959, Oxford University Press).
- 8 Ibid., ch. 1, 'The Promise', pp. 3–24.
- 9 On Filipina migration to Hong Kong, see Chapter 6, 'Domestic Labour Migration', in Karen O'Reilly, *International Migration and Social Theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- 10 Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- 11 On the implications of taking the viewpoint of situated actors see Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987; and see Karin Widerberg's chapter, 'Dorothy Smith', in Stones (ed.), *Key Sociological Thinkers*.
- 12 For a clear introductory account, see Ken Morrison, *Marx, Durkheim, Weber: Formations of Modern Social Thought*. London: Sage, 1995, pp. 273–6. For explanations aimed at a more specialist readership, see Stephen Kalberg, *Max Weber's Comparative Historical Sociology*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1994, pp. 24–6, 48–9; Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method*, 1976; Outhwaite, *Understanding Social Life*, 1986; and n. 1, ch. 1.

- 13 See Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1984, pp. 1–40; and see Rob Stones, *Sociological Reasoning*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996, pp. 52–8, which includes accounts of scenes taken from Peter Carey's 1989 novel, *Oscar and Lucinda*. London: Faber & Faber, and Kazue Ishiguro's novel of the same year *Remains of the Day*. London: Faber & Faber, in order to clarify some of the various ways in which internal and external worlds are intimately inter-linked. Also see the same concepts applied to documentary film in Rob Stones, 'Social Theory, Documentary Film and Distant Others: Simplicity and Subversion in "The Good Woman of Bangkok"', *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 5(2), 2002, 217–37.
- 14 Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, p. 43.
- 15 See Robert K. Merton, 'Manifest and Latent Functions', in R. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, enlarged edn. New York: Free Press, 1968, pp. 73–138; on unintended consequences of action, and Anthony Giddens, 'Functionalism: Après La Lutte', in A. Giddens, *In Defence of Sociology: Essays, Interpretations and Rejoinders*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1996, on connections to structure and agency, and on the link between unacknowledged conditions of action and unintended consequences of action. Also see Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*.
- 16 The detached, intellectual perspective is what the French theorist and sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, labels the 'scholastic point of view', which he distinguished from the practical point of view of those immersed in the interactions and logics of the social world. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2000/1997; also see Loic Wacquant, 'Pierre Bourdieu', in Stones (ed.), *Key Sociological Thinkers*, p. 273.
- 17 Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, p. 44.
- 18 Ibid., p. 50.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid., p. 56.
- 21 Ibid., p. 44.
- 22 Ibid., p. 57.
- 23 Kim Christian Schrøder and Louise Phillips, 'Complexifying Media Power: A Study of the Interplay between Media and Audience Discourses on Politics', *Media Culture & Society* 29(6), 2007, 890–915; Monika Djerf-Pierre, Mats Ekström and Bengt Johansson, 'Policy Failure or Moral Scandal? Political Accountability, Journalism and New Public Management', *Media Culture & Society* 35(8), 2013, 960–76.
- 24 Schrøder and Phillips, 'Complexifying Media Power'.
- 25 Schrøder and Phillips, 'Complexifying Media Power', p. 900. The authors write that their understanding of discourse is based on that of the radical French philosopher, Michel Foucault, who saw it as 'a limited set of possible utterances which set the limits for what we can say, and, therefore, do,' p. 894. For a brief overview of Foucault's social theory, see Lawrence Barth, 'Michel Foucault', in Stones (ed.), *Key Sociological Thinkers*. Schroeder and Phillips also draw on the critical discourse analysis developed by Norman Fairclough, referencing, among others, his 2003 book *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. New York: Routledge.

- 26** Schröder and Phillips, 'Complexifying Media Power', p. 913.
- 27** In referring to the ways in which orders of discourse are drawn upon as 'interpretive repertoires' (pp. 894, 900–1) the authors follow Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell, *Discourse Analysis and Social Psychology*. London: Sage, 1987.
- 28** The remaining category, not particularly emphasized by either party, is 'grassroots movements: growth versus the environment'.
- 29** Schröder and Phillips, 'Complexifying Media Power', p. 896.
- 30** *Ibid.*, p. 897.
- 31** *Ibid.*, p. 898.
- 32** The insistence that attention is paid by social analysts to the 'skilled and knowledgeable' characteristics of human actors is closely associated with the ethnomethodological tradition in social theory. See John Heritage, *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1984; and John Heritage, 'Harold Garfinkel', in Stones (ed.), *Key Sociological Thinkers*.
- 33** Schröder and Phillips note that when reference is made to the workings of *the system* within the text, the references employ distanced, dehumanizing terms and nominalizations, pp. 903–4.
- 34** Schröder and Phillips, p. 909.
- 35** *Ibid.*, p. 905.
- 36** *Ibid.*, p. 906.
- 37** Djerf-Pierre et al., 'Policy Failure or Moral scandal?', pp. 961–2.
- 38** *Ibid.*, p. 966.
- 39** *Ibid.*, p. 965.
- 40** *Ibid.*, p. 964.
- 41** *Ibid.*, p. 969.
- 42** *Ibid.*, p. 973.
- 43** *Ibid.*, p. 962.
- 44** *Ibid.*, p. 965.
- 45** *Ibid.*, p. 968.
- 46** *Ibid.*, p. 973.
- 47** *Ibid.*
- 48** *Ibid.*, p. 971.
- 49** *Ibid.*, pp. 960, 973.

Chapter 3

- 1** For more detail on a situated actor's *context analysis* see Rob Stones, *Sociological Reasoning*, pp. 98–102; and Stones, *Structuration Theory*, pp. 121–6. Also see R. Stones, 'Strategic Context Analysis: A New Research

Strategy for Structuration Theory', *Sociology* 25(3), 1991, 673–95. Over the years I've switched backwards and forwards between referring to this idea as 'agent's conduct analysis', when it's focusing on any kind of analysis by a situated actor of her or his context of action, and referring to it as 'strategic context analysis' when the actor-in-focus is surveying their context with a distinct strategic purpose in mind. Both are clearly useful, depending on the case in hand.

- 2 Some key references to the notion of habitus are Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977[1972], pp. 87–95; and *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1990[1980], pp. 66–79. Also see Andrew Sayer's systematic integration of emotional and ethical concerns into Bourdieu's earlier conception of habitus in A. Sayer, *The Moral Significance of Class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005; and A. Sayer, *Why Things Matter to People: Social Science, Values and Ethical Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. For secondary literature on habitus see Derek Robbins, *Bourdieu & Culture*. London: Sage, 2000, pp. 26–9; Karl Maton, 'Habitus', in Michael Grenfall (ed.), *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. Stocksfield: Acumen, 2008, pp. 49–66; Löic Wacquant, 'Pierre Bourdieu', in Stones (ed.), *Key Sociological Thinkers*, pp. 266–70; and R. Stones, 'Habitus', in John Scott (ed.), *Sociology: The Key Concepts*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, pp. 79–82.
- 3 The idea of the 'hermeneutic circle' indicates a movement between, on the one hand, what one already knows or assumes to be the case, as with a typification, and, on the other hand, exposure to some details of a particular case that may either confirm or confound one's pre-judgement (or initial 'prejudice'). For an advanced discussion of this see Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1987, pp. 75–6.
- 4 See Stones, *Structuration Theory*, on the difference between situational (or conjunctural) knowledge and more general dispositions and capacities of the kind that Bourdieu includes in his notion of habitus. Building a layered account of social actors, Stones differentiates both of these from the further, dynamic and creative, aspects (active agency) that actors bring to moments of action as they draw on and combine both kinds of capacity within their actions.
- 5 See endnote 2, above.
- 6 On actors' 'hierarchy of purposes' see Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1993[1976], pp. 84, 90–1. And on the parallel notion of the 'ordering of concerns' see Margaret Archer, *Being Human: The Problem of Agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 230–41; and *The internal Conversation: Mediating Between Structure and Agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- 7 See the references in endnote 19 in chapter 1 regarding the four key components of media frames.
- 8 Max Weber, 'The Profession and Vocation of Politics', in P. Lassman and R. Speirs (eds), *Max Weber: Political Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994/19.

- 9 In fact there is never such a thing as entirely 'single' causation, so by this we are simply indicating that it makes sense for certain purposes to focus primarily on a particularly powerful causal mechanism.
- 10 Jeffrey Alexander's cultural sociology, which has itself focused on current affairs, has done a great deal to illuminate the power of cultural ideas and processes to shift the course of social relations. His work has covered such current affairs processes as Watergate, Egypt's version of the 'Arab Spring', and the cultural performances and effects behind Barack Obama's electoral victories. See, for example, 'Three Models of Culture and Society Relations: Toward an Analysis of Watergate', in J. Alexander, *Action and its Environments: Towards a New Synthesis*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1988, pp. 153–74; J. Alexander, *The Performance of Politics: Obama's Victory and the Democratic Struggle for Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010; and J. Alexander, *Performative Revolution in Egypt: An Essay in Cultural Power*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011.
- 11 Nicos Mouzelis, emeritus professor at the London School of Economics, who has bequeathed a valuable legacy to social analysis through his sustained insistence that attention to hierarchies be brought back into sociological theory, makes a related distinction between ordinary, micro, actors and, less ordinary, *macro actors*. Macro actors, says Mouzelis, are those powerful, institutionally privileged, actors whose actions can have consequences for many people across time and space. He differentiates between collective macro actors, such as businesses or political parties, and what he calls mega-actors, who are individuals one can identify as possessing the kind of power that can lead to the broad consequences he indicates. See Nicos Mouzelis, *Back to Sociological Theory: The Construction of Social Orders*. London: Macmillan, 1991, pp. 34–41, 106–7.
- 12 See Ian Kershaw, 'Working Towards the Führer: Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship', in Christian Leitz (ed.), *The Third Reich*. London: Blackwell, 1999, pp. 231–52; and Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 5th edn. London: Edward Arnold, 1989.
- 13 On this and allied themes, see the recent volume, *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2011[2009], from the French sociologist and social theorist, Luc Boltanski, especially pages 33–7, 108. Also see Bryan Turner and Simon Susen, *The Spirit of Luc Boltanski*. London and New York: Anthem Press, 2014.
- 14 See Simon Head, *Mindless: Why Smarter Machines are Making Dumber Humans*. New York: Basic Books, 2014.
- 15 See, for example, James Meek's excellent article, 'It's the Moral Thing to Do' (Review of *Breaking Bad*), *London Review of Books* 35(1), 3 January 2013, 7–9.
- 16 The ideas in this section benefitted from a lecture given by the Austrian media scholar, Rainer Winter, 'The Formation of Transnational Serial Cultures: Research on Complex Television in the Digital Age of Global Culture Industries', at the Institute of Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney, 3 April 2014. Some of these ideas can be found in R. Winter, '"All Happy Families": The Sopranos und die Kultur des Fernsehens im 21. Jahrhundert', in

R. Blanchet, K. Köhler, T. Smid and J. Zutavern (eds), *Serielle Formen. Von den frühen Film-Seriels zu aktuellen Quality-TV- und Online-Serien*. Marburg, 2011, pp. 153–74. See also Meek, *ibid.*; and David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, 4th edn; international edn. New York: McGraw Hill, 1993, particularly ch. 3, 'Narrative as Formal System', pp. 64–101.

- 17 See the audience-based research of Martin Scott I mentioned in the Preface, 'The Mediation of Distant Suffering: An Empirical Contribution beyond Television News Texts', *Media, Culture and Society* 36(1), 2014, 3–19. Scott argues that documentaries and other forms of more extended factual programming manage to involve audiences in more complex emotional and action-oriented engagements with the material. While his specific argument is that priority should therefore be given to 'the appearance of distant others in programming outside of the news', his position has interesting overlaps with the kind of audience amalgamation of different sources that I am advocating.
- 18 See J. Alexander, 'Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance between Ritual and Strategy', in J. Alexander, B. Giesen and J. Mast (eds), *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 29–90.
- 19 In an influential article in the *American Journal of Sociology*, Mustafa Emirbayer, and Ann Mische, draw on phenomenology, pragmatism and a wide range of empirical sociological studies to conceptualize actors' subjective orientation to their social context in terms of three different temporalities. Actors, they say, can primarily be oriented to the past, the present or the future (they label these as the iterative, the practical-evaluative and the projective and provide a nuanced discussion of each), while in any particular instance the three 'chords' will co-exist and interweave within the consciousness of the actor, as they do in Birgitte's case in this example taken from *Borgen* (her knowledge of what has gone on in the past is indexed, not least, by the documents from Amnesty and Human Rights Watch). The addition of the idea of a contextual field allows us to think more precisely about the elements from each temporal sphere that enter into these subjective moments. See Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische, 'What Is Agency?' *American Journal of Sociology* 103(4), 1998, 962–1023.
- 20 Erving Goffman's theatrical or dramaturgical conception of the social world in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1959, makes a distinction between those public or semi-public moments when we are 'front stage', available for others to see, interact with and judge, and those more private moments when we are 'back stage', where the pressures on us to perform are relaxed. Examples of the management of these two types of moment, including the skills involved in keeping each in their appropriate place, and in making transitions between them during the course of a day, abound in this episode of *Borgen*, as they do in everyday life. The character of a political drama, which in this way parallels the political memoir written after retirement, is such that it draws attention to this intermingling of the two worlds in the lives of public figures. Access to private moments of interior reflection and uncertainty can often illuminate politicians' perceived relationship to contextual fields in much more revealing terms than their public performances.

- 21 William Booth, Abigail Hauslohner and Michael Birnbaum, 'Egypt Orders Arrests of Muslim Brotherhood Leaders as Interim President Takes Office', *Washington Post*, 4 July 2013.
- 22 See, for example, Liz Sly, 'Backing Egypt's Generals, Saudi Arabia Promises Financial Support', *Washington Post*, 20 August 2013.
- 23 Jason Koutsoukis, 'Army Stranglehold too Firm to be Dislodged by Change of Government', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 July 2013.
- 24 See endnote 6, above.
- 25 Such questions are usually referred to as *counter-factuals*, and asking them can be particularly revealing if one wants to consider what might have happened if one or two specific factors were removed from a causal sequence. The answer to these questions can shed a good deal of light on the relative significance or insignificance of those factors.
- 26 See for example, the work of the literary critic and academic, Matt McGuire, who is also the author of crime novels exploring the realities of post-conflict Northern Ireland. McGuire's insights into the distinctive contribution literature can make to an understanding of social and political issues have enriched my own thinking, most strikingly in a lecture given at the Centre for Writing and Society, University of Western Sydney, Friday 12 April 2013, 'The Thriller and Transitional Justice: David Park's *The Truth*'. See also Matt McGuire, 'Twenty-First Century Northern Irish Poetry', in Paddy Lyons and Alison Younger (eds), *No Country for Old Men: Fresh Perspectives on Irish Literature*, Berlin: Peter Lang, 2009, 87–102.
- 27 See the points made about 'macro actors' and 'mega actors' in endnote 11, above; and see the parallel substantive argument in George C. Edwards III, *The Strategic President: Persuasion and Opportunity in Presidential Leadership*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, and in his *Overreach: Leadership in the Obama Presidency*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- 28 As noted in endnote 32 in chapter 2, the phrase 'skilled and competent actor' is associated with the tradition of ethnomethodology in social theory. This school of thought and research is a reaction against the idea of the behaviour of social actors being entirely the result of their social circumstances, with the idea that their behaviour is somehow structurally determined in all its aspects. In order to counter such ideas, ethnomethodology – the study of the everyday life skills, or methodologies, of ordinary folk – shines a light on the deeply layered knowledgeability of actors and the complex, and often tacit, skills they deploy when drawing on just the right aspects of knowledge and applying them in just the right way when confronted by novel, unfolding situations. For the classic statement of ethnomethodology see Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hill, 1967; and also see Heritage, 'Harold Garfinkel', in Stones (ed.), *Key Sociological Thinkers*, pp. 209–23.
- 29 This is a distinction identified and developed in Stones, 2005.
- 30 Such internalization of ways of behaving typically involves a sophisticated awareness of social norms, of conceptions of what is and isn't appropriate behaviour. As such, it includes aspects of basic etiquette, and, more broadly, any aspect of what Erving Goffman characterized as 'situational

propriety'. See endnote 20, above, and see also Goffman, *Relations in Public*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972; Philip Manning, *Erving Goffman and Modern Sociology*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1992; and Greg Smith, *Erving Goffman*. London: Routledge, 2006.

- 31 See Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977/72; and also William Sewell Jr., 'A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency and Transformations', *American Journal of Sociology* 98, 1992, 1–29; and Stones, *Structuration Theory*, pp. 67–9, 87–9.
- 32 This is a point made strongly and lucidly by Sewell Jr., 'A Theory of Structure', pp. 7–8, although it is already there in Bourdieu's work. It provides a point of connection with the structuralist and post-structuralist traditions of social theory with its emphasis on the level of socio-cultural meaning that circulates within discourses that are produced and mediated by individuals and organizations, but which have a life that is much more powerful than these. Cultural discourses should be thought of as an aspect of the contextual field in which social actors exist, grow, think and act, and for many issues we will want to pay close attention to the points at which actors and such discursive external forces meet, and to what happens at such points. The structuralist and post-structuralist traditions are associated with writers such as Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe and Stuart Hall. Also see the reference to Foucault's understanding of discourses in the endnote 25 in chapter 2. For clear introductions to various aspects of this work, complementing the references provided in the endnote mentioned, see David Howarth, *Discourse*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000; Michèle Barrett, 'Stuart Hall', in Stones (ed.), *Key Sociological Thinkers*, pp. 293–310; and John Sturrock, *Structuralism*, 2nd edn. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2003.
- 33 This is to emphasize a point at the heart of Stones, *Structuration Theory*, (e.g. p. 5) which is that the moment of understanding what is going on in the interior worlds of actors – the moment of *verstehen* or hermeneutics (see n. 12, ch. 2) – needs to be combined with an awareness of how those worlds are linked to, embedded in, their structural context. I refer to this as the 'structural-hermeneutic' core at the heart of structuration theory.
- 34 For a magisterial account of such a process see Ewa Morawska, *Insecure Prosperity: Small Town Jews in Industrial America 1890-1940*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- 35 The reflections of the political theorist and historian of ideas, Quentin Skinner, are fascinating on this topic of 'reconstruction of context', not least because they are theoretically sophisticated at the same time as bearing the marks of sustained, impressive, practical engagements in interpretation. Skinner interprets the works of political theorists such as Hobbes and Machiavelli, through locating the intentions of these writers within the intellectual milieu of the political and historical context in which their writings would be read. See, for example, "'Social Meaning" and the Explanation of Social Action', in James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1988, pp. 79–96.
- 36 A variety of work influenced by the phenomenological tradition illuminates, in their slightly different ways, the significance of the shifts in the ways we

see things as we subtly change our focus from one set of tasks or concerns to another. The German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas has discussed this, in the second volume of his *Theory of Communicative Action: vol. 2. Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1987, pp. 122–3, in terms of shifting ‘contexts of relevance’, which are attendant upon the way we, or the group of people we are involved with, approach a topic. For illustrative examples and applications of Habermas’s argument on these points see Stones, *Sociological Reasoning*, pp. 49–55. The ethnomethodological tradition, which we’ve already mentioned, is informed by the phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schutz, who wrote about the generally unrecognized skills required for actors to align the ‘congruency of their systems of relevance’. On this see, John Heritage, *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1984, ch. 3, ‘The Phenomenological Input’, pp. 37–58. And, finally, the French theorists, Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, have shown in their book *On Justification*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006/1991, how actors, in a series of phenomenological gestalt shifts, can switch between different normative frameworks and principles of justice within different social settings, and often in the very same social setting, accompanying shifts in how a given situation is defined.

- 37 See Stones, *Structuration Theory*, on active agency, pp. 100–9.
- 38 The symbolic interactionist tradition of social theory provides incisive tools for the analysis of many aspects of interaction, or joint actions. For a comprehensive, chapter-long, introduction to this approach see Hans Joas and Wolfgang Knöbl, *Social Theory: Twenty Introductory Lectures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, ch. 6, ‘interpretive Approaches (1) Symbolic Interactionism’, pp. 123–49; and for an authoritative collection of statements and articles from this tradition, see Ken Plummer (ed.), *Symbolic Interactionism: Foundations and History*, vols 1 and 2. Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1991. See Susie Scott, *Making Sense of Everyday Life*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2009, which is strongly influenced by this approach, for a lively indication of how such micro-sociologies enable us to suddenly notice things that have long been part and parcel of our experience of social life.
- 39 This is what Luc Boltanski, *On Critique, A Sociology of Emancipation*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2011/2009, refers to as a ‘reality test’, in that Grozin’s presentation of himself as normatively committed to democracy and the rule of law (his ‘truth’ claim) is here subjected to scrutiny.

Chapter 4

- 1 On this point, see Chapter 2, including table 1 on the three different types of objectivity. The three meanings of the term ‘objective’ listed there refer to the categories of methodology, ontology and epistemology. The strategy I am discussing here is related to the *methodological* meaning of objectivity. I’m advocating a pragmatic methodological strategy – a strategy concerned

with how best to investigate the social world depending on one's goals. Such a strategy has no need to deny, and in our case would not want to deny, that the subjective dimension is just as real as the elements we've labelled objective. This point, that both are seen as having an objective reality, is an *ontological* one. Finally, accepting the methodological strategy of just focusing on objective elements at certain points in the analysis, and tying this together with a belief in an objective reality, is entirely compatible with an acceptance that any researcher will also bring a subjective standpoint to the investigation. We need to acknowledge that different observers would, for example, approach a methodological strategy of focusing on objective aspects of reality in different ways, from a variety of perspectives and with varying purposes in mind. All of this would affect which parts of objective reality were selected as worthy of interest. However, any elements those observers identified as 'objective', would be contestable as more or less valid or invalid. That is, knowledge of objective elements in the world can be more or less 'objective' in the *epistemological sense* of the word, which concerns itself with the quality of knowledge. Epistemological objectivity is concerned with such things as the provision of substantiated evidence to back up whatever claims are made about the objective elements that have been identified and selected.

- 2 Adapting a notion from the celebrated Princeton anthropologist, Clifford Geertz. See "'From the Native's Point of View": On the Nature of Anthropological Knowledge', in Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, 1983, pp. 55–70.
- 3 This section draws from Rob Stones 'Causality, Contextual Frames and International Migration: Combining Strong Structuration Theory, Critical Realism and Textual Analysis', *IMI Working Papers*, International Migration Institute, University of Oxford, paper 62, November 2012.
- 4 See Stones, *Sociological Reasoning*, pp. 74–8 and *passim*, and Stones, 'Causality, Contextual Frames and International Migration', for earlier expressions of these points.
- 5 David Nakamura and Rosalind S. Helderma, 'Senate Begins Floor Debate on Immigration Reform Bill', *Washington Post*, Saturday 8 June 2013, p. A3.
- 6 David Nakamura, 'Obama Renews Push for Immigration Bill', *Washington Post*, Wednesday 12 June 2013, p. A2.
- 7 This point can be brought out clearly by comparing the level of detail regarding these policy areas provided in the *Bangkok Post* account with the much more complex typifications of these policy areas given in the policy networks and state theory literature. See, for example, Martin Smith, *Pressure, Power and Policy: State Autonomy and Policy Networks in Britain and the United States*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993; and, for an account that draws out many of the key theoretical issues involved in grasping the complexity of power relations between state and societal agencies, see Bob Jessop, *State Power: A Strategic-Relational Approach*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2008.
- 8 Charles Richardson, 'Compare and Contrast: Protests in Ukraine and Thailand', *Crikey*, 3 December 2013.

- 9 Henry Meyer and Scott Rose, 'Putin Battles Europe for Ukraine, Ex-Soviet States', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 December 2013 (original publication: *Washington Post*).
- 10 R. Emmott, B. Lewis and S. Rao (editing by G. Jones), 'Factbox: Facts about Ukraine's Ties with Russia and Europe', *Reuters*, Friday, 22 November 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/22/us-eu-russia-ukraine-factbox-idUSBRE9AL0LQ20131122> (last accessed 22 April 2014).
- 11 Ukraine Profile, BBC News Website, 25 November 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-18018002> (last accessed 24 April 2014).
- 12 The following section draws heavily on Rob Stones, 'Social Theory and Current Affairs: A Framework for Greater Intellectual Engagement', *British Journal of Sociology*, 65(2), 2014, 293–316.
- 13 On binary oppositions and other aspects of the construction of meaning as characterized in structuralism and post-structuralism see Madan Sarup, *An Introductory Guide to Post-structuralism and Postmodernism*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988; Howarth, *Discourse*, 2000; and Sturrock, *Structuralism*, 2003.
- 14 Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold, 1995, see pp. 125–49 on identity and social relations within media texts.
- 15 Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1989, p. 79.
- 16 Roland Barthes, 'The Reality Effect in Descriptions', in L. Furst (ed.), *Realism*. London: Longman, 1992, pp. 135–41.
- 17 The analysis was initially written for the article in the *British Journal of Sociology* referenced above, which was submitted in November 2012.

Chapter 5

- 1 For a lucid, basic understanding of the workings of the financial markets leading up to the Global Financial Crisis, see the skilful, factual account by the novelist John Lanchester, *Whoops: Why Everyone Owes Everyone and No One can Pay*. London: Penguin, 2010. But also, see the review of the book by Howard Davies, the Chair of the Financial Services Authority (FSA) from 1997 to 2003, in the *Guardian*, 23 January 2010, which points to the need to also develop the same kind of sophisticated understanding of regulatory regimes in order to think effectively about preventive strategies that are embedded in real-world complexities.
- 2 See endnote 10, chapter 3, for references to Alexander's work.
- 3 See Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, 2000.
- 4 Fergal Keane, *Letter to Daniel: Dispatches from the Heart*. London: Penguin, 1996, p. 226.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 150.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 226.

- 7 Ibid., p. 228.
- 8 Ibid., p. 229.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid., pp. 230–1.
- 11 On the power and significance of cultural processes, see Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003; Alexander, *The Performance of Politics*; and Jeffrey C. Alexander and Bernadette N. Jaworsky, *Obama Power*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2014.
- 12 Keane, *Letter to Daniel*, p. 230.
- 13 Ibid., p. 227.
- 14 The classical sociologist, Max Weber, noted the tension between morality as pure principle, or ‘the politics of conviction’, on the one hand, and morality as needing to adapt itself to concerns with real-world consequences – what he called the ‘politics of responsibility’ – on the other hand. See Weber’s ‘The Profession and Vocation of Politics’, in P. Lassman and R. Speirs (eds), *Max Weber: Political Writings*. For more general literature on related issues see, Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift’s lucid volume, *Liberals and Communitarians*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992; C. Farrelly, *An Introduction to Contemporary Political Theory*. London: Sage, 2004; and Michael Sandel, *Justice: What’s The Right Thing to Do?*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009.
- 15 See Emirbayer and Mische, “What Is Agency?” *American Journal of Sociology*.
- 16 See endnote 13.
- 17 See Adam and Groves, *Future Matters: Action, Knowledge, Ethics*, 2007, and Adam, ‘Future Matters: Challenges for Social Theory and Social Inquiry’, *Cultura e Comunicazione* 1: 47–55.
- 18 The following section draws heavily on Rob Stones and Ake Tangsupvattana, ‘Social Theory, Current Affairs, and Thailand’s Political Turmoil: Seeing Beyond Reds vs. Yellows’, *Journal of Political Power* 5(2), August 2012, 217–38.
- 19 It is important to pay close attention to the textual and rhetorical forms in which news and current affairs pieces present their claims to knowledge. Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991, pp. 32–75, outlines five dominant forms available to documentary makers. These are the Expository; the Observational; the Interactive; the Reflexive; and the Performative. See Stella Bruzzi, *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 1–3, for a critical discussion of Nichols’s perspective on these forms. For a discussion of the accounts of the Thai conflict discussed here, within an academic article making a parallel general case for stronger links between social theory and news and current affairs, see Stones, ‘Social Theory and Current Affairs’, *British Journal of Sociology*, 2014.
- 20 Pasuk Phongpaichit and Baker, C., *Thaksin*, 2nd expanded ed. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2009, p. 237.

- 21 See David Beetham and Kevin Boyle, *Introducing Democracy: 80 Questions and Answers*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1995, pp. 31–3 and *passim*; Somchai Phatharathananunth, *Civil Society and Democratization: Social Movements in Northeast Thailand*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press, 2002, p. 126ff.
- 22 Oliver Pye and Wolfram Schaffar, 'The 2006 Anti-Thaksin Movement in Thailand: An Analysis', *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 38(1), 2008, 38–61. See pages 40–4; and see Stones and Ake, 'Social Theory, Current Affairs, and Thailand's Political Turmoil', 2012, for a more extensive chronicling of the academic literature relevant to this case.
- 23 This is not to imply that all the resistance was democratically motivated – this was certainly not the case, as future events were to roundly demonstrate – but large segments of it probably were, and, at the very least, the interests of the forces involved can be made better sense of when they are positioned around these socio-structural domains and not simply around the domain of electoral democracy.
- 24 For example, Ukrist Pathmanand, 'A Different Coup D'État?' *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 38(1), 2008, 124–42; see pp. 130–3; cf. Alexander, *The Meanings of Social Life*, pp. 155–77.
- 25 Alexander's work on cultural processes is invaluable in understanding the relative autonomy that such processes can gain from other institutional and organizational dynamics, and the links between this autonomy and the power that cultural processes manage to harness in particular times and places.
- 26 Dominic Hughes, 'Scandal Hit Mid Staffs "Faces Being Dissolved"', BBC News website, 28 February 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-21624407> (last accessed 20 June 2014).
- 27 The notion of a 'binary opposition', in which texts are organized in terms of a major division between different sets of meanings (often with one pole of the division rendered as positive and the other as negative) attached to different groups, is a central focus of structuralist and post-structuralist analysis. These theoretical approaches are the repository of a wealth of enduring insights about how texts of all kinds manage to construct and convey meaning. See endnote 13, chapter 4 for references, and also see Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. London: Verso, 1985.
- 28 Duncan Campbell and Denis Meikle, 'Mid Staffs Report Calls for Sweeping Changes to Improve Patient Safety', *The Guardian*, Wednesday 6 February 2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/feb/06/mid-staffordshire-report-sweeping-changes> (last accessed 21 August 2014).
- 29 In other words – in the disciplined way of thinking we've been insisting upon – we are talking about the *explanandum* or 'phenomenon-to-be-explained'.
- 30 Campbell and Meikle, 'Mid Staffs Report', 6 February 2013.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 The eminent Polish sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman, has written powerfully about the relationship between spatial distance and moral inoculation within bureaucracies. See his *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1989.

- 33** The Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry, Chaired by Robert Francis QC, *Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry*, HC 947. London: The Stationery Office, February 2013, volume 1, paragraph 2.215–8, p. 197.
- 34** Ibid., volume 1, paragraph 2.214, p. 198.
- 35** Ibid., volume 1, paragraph 2.220, p. 198.
- 36** Ibid., volume 1, paragraph 2.224, p. 199.
- 37** Ibid.
- 38** On the concept of an ‘independent causal force or influence’, and the difference between this and ‘irresistible causal forces’ see Rob Stones, *Structuration Theory*, pp. 109–15.
- 39** *Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry*, volume 1, paragraphs 2.222 and 2.223, pp. 198–9.
- 40** See endnote 6, chapter 3, for actors’ ‘hierarchy or purposes’ see Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method*, 2nd edn, pp. 84, 89–91. On the parallel notion of the ‘ordering of concerns’ see Archer, *Being Human*, pp. 230–41; and *The internal Conversation*.
- 41** *Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry*, volume 1, pp. 198–9.
- 42** Ibid., volume 1, paragraph 2.237, pp. 210–2.
- 43** Charlie Cooper, ‘Mid Staffs Nursing Chief Says: I’m Not to Blame’, *Independent*, 23 July 2013, p. 23.
- 44** See Nicos Mouzelis, *Back to Sociological Theory*, pp. 34–41, 106–7.
- 45** Andrew Sparrow, ‘Sir David Nicholson: I’m Accountable, But Only a Bit. The Main Points From the NHS Head’s Evidence on The Mid Staffordshire Hospital Trust Scandal’, *theguardian.com*, Wednesday 6 March 2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/mar/05/sir-david-nicholson-nhs-mid-staffs> (last accessed 21 August 2014).