According to Foucault, freedom is ensured even less by philosophy and theory than by institutions and laws. Philosophy and theory, too, can be reversed and transformed according to pragmatic, opportunistic objectives. During a meeting in 1983 between Habermas and Foucault, Habermas mentioned how upset he had been one day when he came across some texts of one of his former teachers, a well-known Kantian. The texts, from 1934, were thoroughly Nazi in their orientation. Foucault relates that he reflected upon Habermas's experience, especially after Foucault himself was later subjected to a similar experience. Foucault stumbled upon a text by the stoic Max Pohlenz, also from 1934, about the *Führer* ideal in stoicism and about true humanism in *das Volk* under the *Führer's* inspiration.[77] Foucault points out that philosophical and theoretical positions can be used and abused, and that one cannot expect that potentially emancipatory theoretical positions, or their authors, will automatically operate in an emancipatory fashion in practice: "certain great themes such as 'humanism' can be used to any end whatever – for example to show with what gratitude Pohlenz would have greeted Hitler."[78]

For Foucault, the association between political philosophy and social theory on the one hand and political practice on the other thus tends to be a weak one. From this perspective, Foucault states that attempts to solve the problems of our time by developing potentially emancipatory philosophical and theoretical positions become problematic. The struggles against rationalization and repression, which both Foucault, Weber, and Habermas see as one of our era's most important tasks, cannot – Foucault says – be effectively conducted at the theoretical level. Rather, they must be carried out in relation to specific instances of rationalization and repression in their particular contexts. Precisely on this point lies one of the most decisive differences between Habermas and Foucault as we saw in chapter seven.

Foucault's position does not mean that "anything goes" in a theoretical context. Nor does it imply that theory is not important.[79] Rather, it means that theories, and conceptualization in general, must be constantly confronted with praxis, including the praxis of the individual scholar. Here, again, Foucault shows himself to be closer to Aristotle and *phronesis* than to Plato and epistemology. "If I have insisted on all this 'practice'," says Foucault, "it has not been in order to 'apply' ideas, but in order to put them to the test and modify them."[80] Practice and freedom, according to Foucault, and to Aristotle, are not derived epistemologically or by theoretical work. Freedom *is* a practice, not a result or a state of affairs. And *phronesis* is the intellectual virtue most relevant to the project of freedom.

9   Methodological guidelines for a reformed social science

> [T]he way to re-enchant the world . . . is to stick to the concrete.
> *Richard Rorty*

After having explored in the previous two chapters the importance of power to a contemporary interpretation of *phronesis* and to social science, let us now begin to sum up the argument of the book by bringing together more explicitly what it might mean today to practice social science as *phronesis*. We will do this, firstly, by developing a set of methodological guidelines for phronetic social science in this chapter, and, secondly, by giving illustrations and examples of phronetic research in chapter ten.

I would like to stress immediately that the methodological guidelines summarized below should not be seen as methodological imperatives; at most they are cautionary indicators of direction. Let me also mention that undoubtedly, there are ways of practicing phronetic social science other than those outlined here. The most important issue is not the individual methodology involved, even if methodological questions may have some significance. It is more important to get the result right, that is, arriving at a social science which effectively deals with public deliberation and praxis, rather than being stranded with a social science that vainly attempts to emulate natural science.

As mentioned earlier, few researchers seem to have reflected explicitly on the strengths and weaknesses of social science practiced as *episteme*, *techne*, and *phronesis*, respectively. Even fewer are carrying out actual research on the basis of such reflection, and fewer still have set out the methodological considerations and guidelines for a *phronesis*-based social science. In fact, it seems that researchers doing *phronesis*-like work have a sound instinct for getting on with their research and not getting involved in methodology, a case in point being the sparseness of methodological considerations and guidelines in Michel Foucault's work already remarked upon. Nonetheless, given the interpretation of the actual and potential role of the social sciences as laid out in this book, it is essential for the development of these sciences that such guidelines are elaborated.

The main point of departure for explicating methodological guidelines for phronetic social science is our reading of Aristotle and Foucault in the previous chapters. We will supplement this reading, however, with a reading of other thinkers – Pierre Bourdieu, Clifford Geertz, Alasdair MacIntyre, Richard Rorty, and others – who emphasize practical before epistemic knowledge in the study of humans and society, despite important differences in other domains.

Focusing on values

By definition, phronetic researchers focus on values; for example, by taking their point of departure in the classic value-rational questions: Where are we going? Is it desirable? What should be done? As described in chapter five, in the discussion of value-rationality and *phronesis*, the objective is to balance instrumental rationality with value-rationality by increasing the capacity of individuals, organizations, and society to think and act in value-rational terms. Focusing on values, the phronetic researcher is forced to face the question of foundationalism versus relativism, that is, the view that central values exist that can be rationally and universally grounded, versus the view that one set of values is just as good as another.

Phronetic researchers reject both of these "isms" and replace them by contextualism, that is, by situational ethics. Distancing themselves from foundationalism does not leave phronetic researchers normless, however. They take their point of departure in their attitude to the situation in the society being studied. They seek to ensure that such an attitude is not based on idiosyncratic morality or personal preferences, but instead on a common view among a specific reference group to which the researchers refer. For phronetic researchers, the socially and historically conditioned context – and not the rational and universal grounding which is desired by certain philosophers, but which is not yet achieved – constitutes the most effective bulwark against relativism and nihilism. Phronetic researchers realize that our sociality and history is the only foundation we have, the only solid ground under our feet. And that this socio-historical foundation is fully adequate for our work as social scientists.

As regards validity, phronetic research is based on interpretation and is open for testing in relation to other interpretations and other research. But one interpretation is not just as good as another, which would be the case for relativism. Every interpretation must be built upon claims of validity, and the procedures ensuring validity are as demanding for phronetic research as for any other activity in the social and political sciences. Phronetic researchers also oppose the view that any one among

a number of interpretations lacks value because it is "merely" an interpretation. As emphasized by Alexander Nehamas, the key point is the establishment of a *better* alternative, where "better" is defined according to sets of validity claims.[2] If a better interpretation demonstrates the previous interpretation to be "merely" interpretation, this new interpretation remains valid until another, still better interpretation is produced which can reduce the previous interpretation to "merely" interpretation. This is the procedure which a community of social scientists would follow in working together to put certain interpretations of social and political life ahead of others (see also the section on "dialogue" pp. 139–40 below). The procedure describes not an interpretive or relativistic approach. Rather, it sets forth the basic ground rules for any social or political inquiry, inasmuch as social science and philosophy have not yet identified criteria by which an ultimate interpretation and a final grounding of values and facts can be made.

Placing power at the core of analysis

Besides focusing on the three value-rational questions mentioned above, which are the classical Aristotelian questions, a contemporary reading of *phronesis* also poses questions about power and outcomes: Who gains, and who loses? Through what kinds of power relations? What possibilities are available to change existing power relations? And is it desirable to do so? Of what kinds of power relations are those asking these questions themselves a part? Phronetic research poses these questions with the intention of avoiding the voluntarism and idealism typical of so much ethical thinking. The main question is not only the Weberian: "Who governs?" posed by Robert Dahl and most other students of power. It is also the Nietzschean question: What "governmental rationalities" are at work when those who govern govern? With these questions and with the focus on value-rationality, phronetic researchers relate explicitly to a primary context of values and power. Combining the best of a Nietzschean–Foucauldian interpretation of power with the best of a Weberian–Dahlian one, the analysis of power would be guided by a conception of power that can be characterized by six features:

(1) Power is seen as productive and positive and not only as restrictive and negative.
(2) Power is viewed as a dense net of omnipresent relations and not only as localized in "centers" and institutions, or as an entity one can "possess."
(3) The concept of power is seen as ultradynamic: power is not only

something one appropriates, but also something one reappropriates and exercises in a constant back-and-forth movement in relations of strength, tactics, and strategies.

(4) Knowledge and power, truth and power, rationality and power are analytically inseparable from each other; power produces knowledge, and knowledge produces power.

(5) The central question is how power is exercised, and not only who has power, and why they have it; the focus is on process in addition to structure.

(6) Power is studied with a point of departure in small questions, "flat and empirical," not only, nor primarily, with a point of departure in "big questions."[3]

Analyses of power following this format cannot be equated with a general analytics of every possible power relation. Other approaches and other interpretations are possible. They can, however, serve as a possible and productive point of departure for dealing with questions of power in doing *phronesis*.

Getting close to reality

Donald Campbell, Charles Lindblom, and others have noted that the development of social research is inhibited by the fact that researchers tend to work with problems in which the answer to the question "If you are wrong about this, who will notice?" is "Nobody."[4] Mary Timney Bailey calls the outcome of this type of research "'so what' results."[5] Phronetic researchers seek to transcend this problem of relevance by anchoring their research in the context studied and thereby ensuring a hermeneutic "fusion of horizons." This applies both to contemporary and historical studies. For contemporary studies one gets close to the phenomenon or group whom one studies during data collection, and remains close during the phases of data analysis, feedback, and publication of results. Combined with the above-mentioned focus on relations of values and power, this strategy typically creates interest by outside parties, and even outside stakeholders, in the research. These parties will test and evaluate the research in various ways. The researchers will consciously expose themselves to reactions from their surroundings – both positive and negative – and may derive benefit from the learning effect, which is built into this strategy. In this way, the phronetic researcher becomes a part of the phenomenon studied, without necessarily "going native" or the project becoming simple action research.[6]

Phronetic researchers doing historical studies carry out much of their

work in those locales where the relevant historical materials are placed, and they also typically probe deeply into archives, annals, and individual documents. Foucault, for instance, spent a large part of his typical Paris working day in the archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale or the Bibliothèque du Saulchoir. Here he found a knowledge whose visible body "is neither theoretical or scientific discourse nor literature, but a regular, daily practice."[7] In historical studies, as in contemporary ones, the objective is to get close to reality. *Wirkliche Historie* (real history), says Foucault, "shortens its vision to those things nearest to it."[8] C. Roland Christensen of Harvard University, arguably one of the fathers of the case method, expresses a similar attitude about his research by invoking Henry Miller to describe the approach taken by case researchers: "My whole work has come to resemble a terrain of which I have made a thorough, geodetic survey, not from a desk with pen and ruler, but by touch, by getting down on all fours, on my stomach, and crawling over the ground inch by inch, and this over an endless period of time in all conditions of weather."[9]

Emphasizing little things

Phronetic researchers begin their work by phenomenologically asking "little questions" and focusing on what Clifford Geertz, with a term borrowed from Gilbert Ryle, calls "thick description."[10] This procedure may often seem tedious and trivial. Nietzsche and Foucault emphasize that it requires "patience and a knowledge of details," and it depends on a "vast accumulation of source material."[11] Geertz explicates the dilemma involved in skipping minutiae. The problem with an approach, which extracts the general from the particular and then sets the particular aside as detail, illustration, background, or qualification, is that "it leaves us helpless in the face of the very difference we need to explore," Geertz says. "[It] does indeed simplify matters. It is less certain that it clarifies them."[12] Nietzsche, who advocates "patience and seriousness in the smallest things,"[13] expresses a similar, though more radical, point regarding the importance of detail when he says that "[a]ll the problems of politics, of social organization, and of education have been falsified through and through . . . because one learned to despise 'little' things, which means the basic concerns of life itself."[14]

The focus on minutiae, which directly opposes much conventional wisdom about the need to focus on "important problems," has its background in a fundamental phenomenological experience, that small questions often lead to big answers. In this sense, phronetic research is decentered in its approach, taking its point of departure in local

microplactices, searching for the Great within the Small and vice versa. "God is in the detail," the proverb says. "So is the Devil," the phronetic researcher would add, doing work that is at the same time as detailed and as general as possible.

Looking at practice before discourse

Through words and concepts we are continually tempted to think of things as being simpler than they are, says Nietzsche, "there is a philosophical mythology concealed in *language*" (emphasis in original).[15] Michel Serres puts the matter even more succinctly. "Language has a disgust for things," he says. Phronetic research attempts to get beyond this problem. Thus, practice is seen as more fundamental than either discourse or theory. Goethe's phrase from *Faust*, "Am Anfang war die Tat" (in the beginning was the deed), could be the motto for phronetic research. It is echoed by Foucault who says, "discourse is not life," regular, daily practice is.[16] As pointed out in the previous chapter, phronetic research does not accept the maxim that there is nothing outside the text, or outside discourse. Discourse analysis must be disciplined by the analysis of practices.

Phronetic research focuses on practical activity and practical knowledge in everyday situations. It *may* mean, but is certainly not limited to, a focus on known sociological, ethnographic, and historical phenomena such as "everyday life" and "everyday people." What it *always* means, however, is a focus on the actual daily practices which constitute a given field of interest, regardless of whether these practices take place on the floor of a stock exchange, a grassroots organization, a hospital, or a local school board.

At the outset, practices are recorded and described simply as events. "The question which I ask," says Foucault, "is not about codes but about events . . . I try to answer this question without referring to the consciousness . . . the will . . . intention."[17] The researcher records what happened "on such a day, in such a place, in such circumstances."[18] In *The Will to Power*, in describing his "principles of a new evaluation," Nietzsche similarly says that when evaluating human action one should "take doing *something*, the 'aim,' the 'intention,' the 'purpose,' back into the deed after having artificially removed all this and thus emptied the deed" (emphasis in original).[19] Data, events, and phenomena are presented together with their connections with other data, events, and phenomena. Discontinuities and changes in the meaning of concepts and discourses are documented. The hermeneutic horizon is isolated and its arbitrariness elaborated. Initially, the researcher takes no position regarding the

truth-value and significance ascribed by participants to the practices studied. No practice is seen as more valuable than another. The horizon of meaning is that of the individual practice. The researcher then attempts to understand the roles played by the practices studied in the total system of relations. If it is established, for example, that a certain practice is rational according to its self-understanding, but not when viewed in the context of other horizons of meaning, the researcher then asks what role this "dubious" rationality plays in a further context, historically and politically, and what consequences this might have.[20]

In addition to the Nietzschean removal of the doer from the deed, the focus on practices as events also involves a self-removal on the part of the researcher to allow him or her to disinterestedly inspect the *wirkliche Historie* of human action. This distancing enables the researcher to master a subject matter even where it is hideous, and there may be a "brutality of fact" involved in the approach. This, in turn, may offend people who mistake the researcher's willingness to uncover and face the morally unacceptable for immorality. There may also be intensity and optimism, however, in facing even the pessimistic and depressing sides of power and human action. The description of practices as events endures and gains its strength from detecting the forces that make life work. And a reality that is ugly or even terrifying when judged by the moral standards which we like to think apply in modern society, may also be deeply human and may have to be faced squarely by researchers, readers, and the general public if this reality is to be changed. Nietzsche acutely named this approach to research "The Gay [*fröhliche*] Science," and he called those practicing the approach "free spirits" and described them as "curious to a vice, investigators to the point of cruelty, with uninhibited fingers for the unfathomable, with teeth and stomachs for the most indigestible . . . collectors from morning till late, misers of our riches and our crammed drawers."[21]

Studying cases and contexts

We have seen that Aristotle explicitly identifies knowledge of "particular circumstances" as a main ingredient of *phronesis*.[22] Foucault similarly worked according to the dictum "never lose sight of reference to a concrete example."[23] Phronetic research thus benefits from focusing on case studies, precedents, and exemplars. *Phronesis* functions on the basis of practical rationality and judgment. As I have argued elsewhere, practical rationality and judgment evolve and operate primarily by virtue of deep-going case experiences.[24] Practical rationality, therefore, is best understood through cases – experienced or narrated – just as judgment is

best cultivated and communicated via the exposition of cases. The significance of this point can hardly be overstated, which is why Richard Rorty, in responding to Max Weber's thesis regarding the modern "disenchantment of the world," invokes John Dewey to say: "the way to re-enchant the world . . . is to stick to the concrete."[25] A focus on concrete cases does not exclude the attempts at empirical generalizations typical of much social and political science. Such generalizations are perfectly compatible with cases and with narrative.[26]

Cases exist in context. What has been called the "primacy of context" follows from the empirical fact that in the history of science, human action has shown itself to be irreducible to predefined elements and rules unconnected to interpretation.[27] Therefore, it has been impossible to derive praxis from first principles and theory. Praxis has always been contingent on context-dependent judgment, on situational ethics. It would require a major transformation of current philosophy and science if this view were to change, and such a transformation does not seem on the horizon. What Pierre Bourdieu calls the "feel for the game" is central to all human action of any complexity, and it enables an infinite number of "moves" to be made, adapted to the infinite number of possible situations which no rule, however complex, can foresee.[28] Therefore, the judgment, which is central to *phronesis* and praxis, is always context-dependent. The minutiae, practices, and concrete cases which lie at the heart of phronetic research are seen in their proper contexts; both the small, local context, which gives phenomena their immediate meaning, and the larger, international and global context in which phenomena can be appreciated for their general and conceptual significance.[29] Given the role of context in phronetic research, insofar as such research is practiced as applied ethics, it is situational ethics. The focus is on *Sittlichkeit* (ethics) rather than *Moralität* (morality).

Asking "How?" Doing narrative

Phronetic research focuses on the dynamic question, "How?" in addition to the more structural "Why?". It is concerned with both *verstehen* (understanding) and *erklären* (explanation). Effects of social phenomena are investigated and interpreted in relation to process. In the study of relationships of power, we saw how Foucault emphasized the how-question, "the little question . . . flat and empirical," as particularly important. Foucault stressed that our understanding will suffer if we do not start our analyses with a "How?"

Asking "How?" and doing narrative analysis are closely interlinked activities. Earlier we saw that a central question for *phronesis* is: What

should we do? To this Alasdair MacIntyre answers: "I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'"[30] This is why Nietzsche and Foucault see history as fundamental to social science and philosophy and criticize social scientists and philosophers for their lack of "historical sense."[31] It is also why history is central to phronetic research in both senses of the word; that is, *both* as narrative containing specific actors and events, in what Clifford Geertz calls a story with a scientific plot; *and* as the recording of a historical development.[32] Narratology, understood as the question of "how best to get an honest story honestly told," is more important than epistemology and ontology.[33]

Several observers have noted that narrative is an ancient method and perhaps our most fundamental form for making sense of experience.[34] To MacIntyre, the human being is a "story-telling animal," and the notion of a history is as fundamental a notion as the notion of an action.[35] In a similar vein, Cheryl Mattingly points out that narratives not only give meaningful form to experiences we have already lived through. They also provide us a forward glance, helping us to anticipate situations even before we encounter them, allowing us to envision alternative futures.[36] Narrative inquiries do not – indeed, cannot – start from explicit theoretical assumptions. Instead, they begin with an interest in a particular phenomenon that is best understood narratively. Narrative inquiries then develop descriptions and interpretations of the phenomenon from the perspective of participants, researchers, and others. In the historical analysis, both event and conjuncture are crucial, just as practices are studied in the context of several centuries, akin to what Fernand Braudel calls *"longue durée."* The century-long view is employed in order to allow for the influence on current practices of traditions with long historical roots.

Joining agency and structure

Phronetic research focuses on both the actor level and the structural level, as well as on the relation between the two in an attempt to transcend the dualisms of actor structure, hermeneutics structuralism, and voluntarism determinism.[37] Actors and their practices are analyzed in relation to structures and structures in terms of agency, not so that the two stand in an external relation to each other, but so that structures are found as part of actors and actors as part of structures. Understanding from "within" and from "without" are both accorded emphasis. This is what Pierre Bourdieu, in adapting the Aristotelian and Thomist concept of "habitus," calls "the internalization of externality and the externalization

of internality."[38] Elsewhere Bourdieu explicitly states that the use of the notion of habitus can be understood as a way of escaping from the choice between "a structuralism without a subject and the philosophy of the subject."[39]

As anyone who has tried it can testify, it is a demanding task to account simultaneously for the structural influences that shape the development of a given phenomenon and still craft a clear, penetrating narrative or microanalysis of that phenomenon.[40] Diane Vaughan has pointed out that theorizing on actors and structures remains bifurcated.[41] Social scientists tend to generate either macrolevel or microlevel explanations, ignoring the critical connections. Empirical work follows the same pattern. Instead of research that attempts to link macrolevel factors and actors' choices in a specific social or political phenomenon, scholars dichotomize. Structural analyses and studies of actors each get their share of attention, but in separate projects, by separate researchers. Those who join structure and actor in empirical work most often do so by theoretical inference: data at one level of analysis are coupled with theoretical speculation about the other. While issues of actor and structure come together with particular emphasis in institutions, social-science research methodology is less developed for studying institutions than for studying individuals and aggregate patterns.[42] On this background, many social scientists may not be convinced that there is a way out of the duality of structural and individual analysis, no middle ground; the very recalcitrance of the problem seems to attest to its intractableness.

There is mounting evidence, however, that the actor structure connection is not an insurmountable problem. In fact, it may not be a problem at all, says Vaughan, but simply an artifact of data availability and graduate training.[43] And we now have excellent examples showing us how to integrate actors and structures. Clifford Geertz's classic description of the Balinese cockfight progressively incorporates practices, institutions, and symbols from the larger Balinese social and cultural world in order to understand the seemingly localized event of the cockfight.[44] Robert Putnam and his associates similarly combine individual and structural analysis – as well as contemporary history and the history of the *longue durée* – in their attempt at explaining the performance of modern, democratic institutions in Italy.[45] And Stella Tillyard works from the basis of personal histories and family dynamics to incorporate the larger socioeconomic and political scene of the entire Hanoverian Age.[46] Phronetic researchers deliberately seek out information for answering questions about what structural factors influence individual actions, how those actions are constructed, and their structural consequences.[47]

Dialoguing with a polyphony of voices

Phronetic research is dialogical in the sense that it includes, and, if successful, is itself included in, a polyphony of voices, with no one voice, including that of the researcher, claiming final authority. Thus, the goal of phronetic research is to produce input to the ongoing social dialogue and praxis in a society, rather than to generate ultimate, unequivocally verified knowledge. This accords with Aristotle's maxim that in questions of social and political action, one ought to trust more in the public sphere than in science.[48] In *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and his coauthors expressed their hope that "the reader will test what we say against his or her own experience, will argue with us when what we say does not fit, and, best of all, will join the public discussion by offering interpretations superior to ours that can then receive further discussion."[49] This is as fine an expression of the phronetic dialogical attitude as we will find.

Thus, phronetic research explicitly sees itself as not having a privileged position from which the final truth can be told and further discussion stopped. We cannot think of an "eye turned in no particular direction," as Nietzsche says. "There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective 'knowing;' and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity,' be" (emphasis in original).[50] Hence, "objectivity" in phronetic research is not "contemplation without interest" but employment of "a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge" (emphasis in original).[51]

The significance of any given interpretation in a dialogue will depend on the extent to which the interpretation's validity claims are accepted, and this acceptance typically occurs in competition with other validity claims and other interpretations. The discourses in which results of phronetic research are used have, in this sense, no special status, but are subordinated to the same conditions as any other dialogical discourse. Some may fear that this dialogue, instead of becoming the desired polyphony of voices, will all too easily become a shouting match, a cacophony of voices, in which the loudest carries the day. In phronetic research, the means to prevent this from happening is no different from in other research: only to the extent that the validity claims of phronetic research are accepted will the results of such research be accepted in the dialogue. Phronetic research thus recognizes a human privilege and a basic condition: meaningful dialogue in context. "Dialogue" comes from the Greek *dialogos*, where *dia* means "between" and *logos* "reason." In contrast to the analytical and instrumental rationality which lie at the cores of both

episteme and *techne*, the practical rationality of *phronesis* is based on a socially conditioned, intersubjective "between-reason."

Phronetic social science

The result of phronetic research is a pragmatically governed interpretation of the studied practices. The interpretation does not require the researcher to agree with the actors' everyday understanding nor to discover some deep, inner meaning of the practices. Phronetic research is in this way interpretive, but it is neither everyday nor deep hermeneutics. Phronetic research is also not about, nor does it try to develop, theory or universal method. Thus, phronetic research is an analytical project, but not a theoretical or methodological one.

For this kind of research, practiced according to these heuristical guidelines, I suggest the term "phronetic social science." One task of research practiced on the basis of the heuristics presented above would be to provide concrete examples and detailed narratives of how power works and with what consequences, and to suggest how power might be changed and work with other consequences. Richard Rorty observes about this that, "[i]n so far as political situations become clear, they get clarified by detailed stories about who's doing what to whom."[2] Such clarification is a principal concern for phronetic social science and provides the main link to praxis. Phronetic social science explores historic circumstances and current practices to find avenues to praxis. The task of phronetic social science is to clarify and deliberate about the problems and risks we face and to outline how things may be done differently, in full knowledge that we cannot find ultimate answers to these questions or even a single version of what the questions are.

In the following chapter, I will illustrate how phronetic social science may be carried out in practice.

10   Examples and illustrations: narratives of value and power

Long years must pass before the truths we have made for ourselves become our very flesh.
Paul Valéry

Something happened

One summer, something happened that would prove consequential to my professional trajectory in life. I was employed as a student intern with the newly established Regional Planning Authority with Ribe County Council in Denmark. Parliament had just passed the first law on nationwide regional planning and the counties were in the process of preparing the first generation of regional plans. The atmosphere was one of novelty and aspiration. As a planner-to-be, I felt I was in the right place at the right time.

The central question of the regional planning exercise was the classic one of whether future development should be encouraged chiefly in the main urban centers or whether development should be decentralized and take place in smaller towns. My job was to carry out a survey of social, educational, and health services with the purpose of finding arguments for and against centralization and decentralization in these three sectors. One of the arguments I found was in a British study showing how young children's performance in school decreases with increasing distance between home and school. The study was presented in a well-known textbook with an instructive figure documenting the negative correlation between distance and learning. "Thus it would appear," the authors concluded, "that there are good psychological as well as economic reasons for minimizing the school journeys of young children."[1] This was a clear-cut argument for decentralized schools, that is, many schools close to where the children live, as opposed to fewer schools with longer distances to travel between home and school. I included this knowledge and the figure in my draft report together with many other results that might count as pros and cons in the County Council's decision regarding whether to centralize or decentralize urban development.

9 METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES FOR A REFORMED SOCIAL SCIENCE

1 It should be mentioned that Alasdair MacIntyre's Aristotle is substantially more Platonic than the Aristotle depicted by the others, and more Platonic than the interpretation given in this book. MacIntyre explicitly understands Aristotle "as engaged in trying to complete Plato's work, and to correct it precisely insofar as that was necessary in order to complete it." See MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), p. 94. See also MacIntyre's, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (London: Duckworth, 1990).

2 Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 63.

3 Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), p. 217.

4 Donald T. Campbell, "Science's Social System of Validity-Enhancing Collective Belief Change and the Problems of the Social Sciences," in Donald W. Fiske and Richard A. Shweder, eds., *Metatheory in Social Science: Pluralisms and Subjectivities* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 128–9; Charles E. Lindblom and David K. Cohen, *Usable Knowledge: Social Science and Social Problem Solving* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 84; Charles E. Lindblom, *Inquiry and Change: The Troubled Attempt to Understand and Shape Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). The quote in the text is from Campbell.

5 Mary Timney Bailey, "Do Physicists Use Case Studies? Thoughts on Public Administration Research," *Public Administration Review* 52: 1, 1992, p. 50.

6 Action researchers typically identify with those under study; that is, researchers take on the perspective and goals of those under study and use research results as part of an effort to achieve these goals. This is not necessarily the case for phronetic research.

7 Michel Foucault, *Titres et travaux*, pamphlet printed in fulfillment of requirements for candidacy at the Collège de France (Paris: privately printed, 1969), pp. 4–5; here quoted from Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 215.

8 Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), p. 89.

9 Henry Miller, "Reflections on Writing," in Miller, *The Wisdom of the Heart* (New York: New Directions, 1941), p. 27; quoted in slightly different form in C. Roland Christensen with Abby J. Hansen, "Teaching with Cases at the Harvard Business School," in Christensen with Hansen, eds., *Teaching and the Case Method* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1987), p. 18.

10 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 6 and Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

11 Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," p. 76.

12 Clifford Geertz, *After the Fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropologist* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 40. See also Geertz, "History and Anthropology," *New Literary History* 21: 2, 1990 and "Disciplines," *Raritan* 14: 3, 1995.

13 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 182 (§59).

14 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), p. 256 (§10).

15 Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (§11), here quoted from Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, p. 191 (Appendix C).

16 After Ludwig Wittgenstein had abandoned any possibility of constructing a philosophical theory, he suggested that Goethe's phrase from *Faust*, quoted in the main text, might serve as a motto for the whole of his later philosophy. See Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (New York: Free Press, 1990), pp. 305–6. The Foucault quote is from Michel Foucault, "Politics and the Study of Discourse," in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 72. On the primacy of practices in Foucault's work, see also Michel Foucault, "Questions of Method: an Interview," *I&C* 8, Spring 1981, p. 5; and Foucault, *Titres et travaux*, pp. 4–6, quoted in Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, pp. 214–6.

17 Foucault, "Politics and the Study of Discourse," p. 59. See also Foucault, "Questions of Method," pp. 6–7.

18 Michel Foucault, "Le Discours de Toul," *Le Nouvel Observateur* 372 (December 27, 1971–January 2, 1972), p. 15; here quoted from James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), p. 191.

19 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 356 (§675).

20 For more on eventualization, see Andrew Abbott, "What Do Cases Do? Some Notes on Activity in Sociological Analysis," in Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker, eds., *What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry* (Cambridge University Press, 1992).

21 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), p. 55.

22 Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 1141b8–1141b27.

23 Foucault, *Titres et travaux*, p. 7, quoted in Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, p. 216.

24 Bent Flyvbjerg, "Socrates Didn't Like the Case Method, Why Should You?", in Hans E. Klein, ed., *Case Method Research and Application: New Vistas* (Needham, MA: World Association for Case Method Research and Application, 1989). See also Alasdair MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," *Monist* 60, 1977.

25 Richard Rorty, "Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity," in Richard J. Bernstein, ed., *Habermas and Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), p. 173.

26 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: a Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, second edition, 1984), p. 215. For more on case study research, and on the relationship between case particularity and

theoretical generality, see chapter six.

27 Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, "The Interpretive Turn: a Second Look," in Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, eds., *Interpretive Social Science: a Second Look* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), p. 8. See also David K. Henderson, "Epistemic Competence and Contextualist Epistemology: Why Contextualism Is Not Just the Poor Person's Coherentism," *The Journal of Philosophy* 91: 12, 1994.

28 Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 9.

29 For more on context, see Daniel Andler, "The Normativity of Context," unpublished paper, Université Paris X, Nanterre, printed April 29, 1998; Craig Calhoun, "E. P. Thompson and the Discipline of Historical Context," *Social Research* 61: 2, 1994; Susan Engel, *Context is Everything: the Nature of Memory* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1999); Richard F. Fenno, Jr., "Observation, Context, and Sequence in the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review* 80: 1, 1986; and Benny Shannon, "What is Context?" *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 20: 2, June 1990, pp. 157–66.

30 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 216.

31 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 35 (§1).

32 Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives: the Anthropologist as Author* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 114. See also Geertz, "History and Anthropology" with response by Renato Rosaldo; and Gerda Lerner, *Why History Matters* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

33 Geertz, *Works and Lives*, p. 9.

34 M. Novak, "'Story' and Experience," in J. B. Wiggins, ed., *Religion as Story* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1975), p. 175; and Cheryl Mattingly, "Narrative Reflections on Practical Actions: Two Learning Experiments in Reflective Storytelling," in Donald A. Schön, ed., *The Reflective Turn: Case Studies in and on Educational Practice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1991), p. 237. See also Abbott, "What Do Cases Do?"; Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1958); D. Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986); MacIntyre, *After Virtue*; Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Ann Fehn, Ingeborg Hoesterey, and Maria Tatar, eds., *Neverending Stories: Toward a Critical Narratology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); David Rasmussen, "Rethinking Subjectivity: Narrative Identity and the Self," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 21: 5–6, 1995; and Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, second edition, 1997).

35 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 214, 216.

36 Mattingly, "Narrative Reflections on Practical Actions," p. 237.

37 For a discussion of the problems in moving beyond these dualisms, see Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, and Thomas McCarthy's considerations on hermeneutics and structural analysis in his introduction to Jürgen Habermas's *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. I (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984), pp. xxvi–

xxvii. Other works of interest on this problem, which in my view is one of the more challenging in phronetic research, are James Schmidt, *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Between Phenomenology and Structuralism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985); T. K. Seung, *Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982); and Anthony Giddens, "Hermeneutics and Social Theory," in *Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982).

38 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 72.

39 Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, p. 10.

40 See also Diane Vaughan, "Theory Elaboration: the Heuristics of Case Analysis," in Ragin and Becker, eds., *What is a Case?*, p. 183.

41 *Ibid.*

42 Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *The Good Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991) p. 302.

43 Vaughan, "Theory Elaboration," p. 182.

44 Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*.

45 Robert D. Putnam with Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

46 Stella Tillyard, *Aristocrats* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1994).

47 For more on the actor structure issue, see Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*; Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988); James Coleman, "Social Theory, Social Research, and a Theory of Action," *American Journal of Sociology* 91, 1985; Randall Collins, "On the Microfoundations of Macrosociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 86, 1980; Gary Alan Fine, "On the Macrofoundations of Microsociology: Constraint and the Exterior Reality of Structure," paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association, Atlanta, 1988; Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984); Paul Raymond Harrison, "Narrativity and Interpretation: On Hermeneutical and Structuralist Approaches to Culture," *Thesis Eleven* 22, 1989; Claude Lévi-Strauss and Didier Eribon, *Conversations with Claude Lévi-Strauss* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991), esp. pp. 102–4; William H. Sewell, Jr., "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation," *American Journal of Sociology* 98: 1, 1992.

48 For more on the relationship between the public sphere and science, see Robert Bellah, "Professionalism and Citizenship: Are they Compatible?" Symposium on Redefining Leadership: New Visions of Work and Community, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, May 21, 1993.

49 Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), p. 307.

50 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (New York: Vintage Books,

1969), p. 119 (§3.12).

51 *Ibid.* See also Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968): "There are no isolated judgments! An isolated judgment is never 'true,' never knowledge; only in the connection and relation of many judgments is there any surety" (p. 287 [§530]).

52 Richard Rorty, "Towards a Liberal Utopia," *Times Literary Supplement*, June 24, 1994, p. 14.

10 EXAMPLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS: NARRATIVES OF VALUE AND POWER

1 Ronald Abler, John Adams, and Peter Gould, *Spatial Organization: The Geographer's View of the World* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 478.

2 Bent Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998). See also Bent Flyvbjerg, *The Aalborg Study: Case Selection and Data Collection*, Research Report (Aalborg: Department of Development and Planning, Aalborg University, 1997).

3 Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), p. 77.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 76.

5 Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power*, p. 86.

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 86–7.

7 As a methodological footnote I should like to remark that in answering the question of who wins and who loses in the Aalborg Project, I carried out environmental and social impact audits using statistical and other quantitative analyses. This was necessary for relating process to outcome in the project. Here as elsewhere, the sharp separation often seen in the literature between qualitative and quantitative methods is a spurious one. The separation is an unfortunate artifact of power relations and time constraints in graduate training; it is not a logical consequence of what graduates and scholars need to know to do their studies and do them well. In my interpretation, phronetic social science is opposed to an either or and stands for a both, and on the question of qualitative versus quantitative methods. Phronetic social science is problem-driven and not methodology-driven, in the sense that it employs those methods which for a given problematic best help answer the four value-rational questions. More often than not, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will do the task and do it best. Fortunately, there seems currently to be a general relaxation in the old and unproductive separation of qualitative and quantitative methods.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 113.

10 The alderman is the city council member with administrative responsibility for the Aalborg Project and for all other matters regarding planning and environment in Aalborg. The City Council has four aldermen -women plus one mayor, each holding a powerful position with responsibility for a large budget and a large staff in each of five municipal main areas of policy and administration.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 114–15.

12 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 342 (§643) and *On the Genealogy of Morals* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), p. 77 (§2.12).

13 See Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power*, pp. 225–36, for the details of this conclusion.

14 "Better" is defined here simply as being more democratic and more effective in fulfilling the objectives of the Aalborg Project as ratified by the City Council.

15 I here understand a stakeholder to be an organization, group, or person with an interest in the outcomes of the research.

16 Michel Foucault, *Colloqui con Foucault* (Salerno, 1981); here quoted from James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), p. 235.

17 Morten Rugtved Petersen, *Byfornyelse: Bypolitik og beslutninger*, Master's Thesis (Aalborg: Aalborg University, Department of Development and Planning, 1993), p. 44.

18 Foucault, *Colloqui con Foucault*; here quoted from Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, p. 235.

19 Bent Flyvbjerg, "90'ernes trafikplanlægning for miljø, sundhed og bæredygtighed" (Traffic Planning in the 90s for Environment, Health, and Sustainability), *Miljø og Teknologi: Nordisk Tidsskrift for Miljøteknik, -forvaltning og -politik* 6: 1, 1991, pp. 28–32; and Flyvbjerg, "Når demokratiet svigter rammes miljøet" (When Democracy Fails the Environment is Hurt), in Benny Kullinger and Ulla-Britt Strömberg, eds., *Planera för en bärkraftig utveckling: 21 nordiska forskare ger sin syn*, Stockholm: Byggforskningsrådet, 1993, pp. 187–97.

20 For the other six measures, see Flyvbjerg, "Når demokratiet svigter rammes miljøet," pp. 194–7.

21 The first results of the work on mega projects may be found in Bent Flyvbjerg, Nils Bruzelius, and Werner Rothengatter, *Mega Projects and Risk: Making Decisions in an Uncertain World* (Cambridge University Press: forthcoming); Nils Bruzelius, Bent Flyvbjerg, and Werner Rothengatter, "Big Decisions, Big Risks: Improving Accountability in Mega Projects," *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 64: 3, September 1998, pp. 423–40; and Mette K. Skamris and Bent Flyvbjerg, "Inaccuracy of Traffic Forecasts and Cost Estimates on Large Transport Projects," *Transport Policy* 4: 3, 1997, pp. 141–6.

22 See also Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power*, p. 237.

23 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Michel Foucault, *Introduction: The History of Sexuality*, vol. I, (New York: Vintage Books, 1980). For a brief introduction to Foucault's work, see Gary Gutting, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge University Press, 1994). For a more extensive and in-depth introduction, see Paul Rabinow, ed., *Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vols. I–II (New York: New Press, 1997, 1998).

24 Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991);