GIDDENS AND POLITICS

BEYOND THE THIRD WAY

UTOPIAN REALISM IN THE LATE MODERN AGE

PETER KOLARZ

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Preface

The assessment provided in this book of the political content and utility of Anthony Giddens' work is intended not least as a contribution to debates around the renewal of centre-left politics, a pressing issue of the present day, which is worth considering here at the outset.

This book is written at a time of prolonged malaise of centre-left parties across Europe and beyond. Most recently, it follows an unexpected defeat of the Labour Party in the 2015 UK General Election. Further afield, centre-left, social democratic parties struggle to gain electoral success, often despite broadly underwhelming and uninspiring opposition from the centre-right, alongside the platitude-driven exploits of right-wing populists. Rethinking the scope for practical and feasible yet genuinely transformative approaches for the centre-left ought to be high on the agenda of political discussion. Yet such approaches appear hard to come by. In some cases, current reinventions of the left resemble too closely the social democratic politics of past decades, over-reliant on key phrases and underlying analyses that provide easy fodder for the centre-right and populist right, who are well trained at countering, defeating and ridiculing these. More often, reinventions of the left resemble too closely the market and austerity-led consensus best summarized by a term often levelled at German Chancellor Angela Merkel by her compatriot satirists: *alternativlos* ('without alternative'). This term is symptomatic of an enforced political consensus centre-left parties seem unable to escape.

Whether through substantive evidence or through powerful public discourses, the right has successfully managed to deconstruct most leftist political paradigms of the post-war era. Yet its own paradigm of austerity, market-led solutions and increasingly evident notions of nationalism, bordering in some cases on isolationism, is rapidly coming apart at the seams: austerity has failed to halt economic crises and transform societies for the better, and the link between economic growth and desirable social outcomes is becoming ever more tenuous. Wider challenges such as climate change and environmental damage more broadly, obesity, mental health, energy sources, surveillance and the future of the digital realm all present major political challenges that have so far not been adequately addressed. Not least, escalation of conflicts across the world triggering vast numbers of displaced individuals

risking their lives in desperation to reach safer shores gives further urgency to construct feasible political alternatives. Whilst world events continue to unravel current political paradigms of the right, there are few efforts with widespread appeal able to replace these and provide a new paradigm suited to the challenges of the present day. It is at this paradigmatic level where a reassessment of Giddens can provide new directions, distinct from his own political programme, the Third Way.

There are many individual policy suggestions detailing how to respond to any number of the above challenges, and this book will note them where relevant. But an alternative to the market-led, state-supported austerity politics cannot begin at the programmatic level. For widespread support and electorally salient strategy, it is important to develop a coherent and empirically sound account of present-day societies, to identify possibilities contained in the current age, and a narrative of how these possibilities might be realized. This is a formidable task, and one that does not sit easily with the individualization and fragmentation often associated with our world today. Yet, such an account may yield possibilities to connect seemingly distant concerns and policy solutions into a coherent whole, from which large-scale political alternatives may be formed.

This book draws such an analysis from the work of Anthony Giddens and is therefore based on the premise that social scientific analysis can inform and benefit the formulation of political programmes. Aside from underlying considerations deriving from the disciplines of economics and political philosophy, a sociological understanding is worth including in the construction of political projects: what structural features and constraints exist within the society that is sought to be governed? What social transformations is it going through?

Giddens' work presents an especially clear attempt to achieve precisely such an influence. However, whilst his Third Way is generally acknowledged as the programmatic application of his sociological analysis, this book notes that it is in fact a misapplication of his preceding sociological achievements, notably of his theory of structuration and his analysis of late modernity. Read in the context of utopian realism – a critically under-explored notion in his work – Giddens can aid the construction of political programmes and underlying sociological rationales radically distinct from the Third Way. Moreover, his broad approach to sociological analysis lends itself especially well to constructing inclusive accounts of the present age and political perspectives capable of encompassing a wide variety of different issues, ultimately leading to the possibility of electorally salient narratives for the centre-left.

The analysis in this book draws from the work of Anthony Giddens a sociological account of the present age that is not only plausible and empirically sound but also lends itself directly to the formulation of political platforms with a distinctly transformative and emancipatory character. Although the key findings and conclusions are therefore drawn from Giddens' own analysis, it would of course be futile to pretend that the motivation is not in some part rooted in the fact that my own political standpoint is similar (though not identical) to what I will show to be the politics of Giddens' social theory.

I wholeheartedly identify with the principles of emancipation, equality and empowerment, viewed by many as historical covenants of the left. At the same time, I remain sceptical about a fully adversarial stance towards capitalism and the market economy: not because it necessarily has any undeniable redeeming features (though I take on board the link to human creativity espoused by figures such as Adam Smith and Francis Hutcheson) but because a collapse or overthrow of global capitalism would, in my view, almost certainly lead to unimaginable violence – as indeed would its unfettered continuation. My central motivation is therefore not rooted in the question of whether capitalism is good or bad, creative or destructive, but whether it is possible at all realistically to transform the global capitalist order, and counter the market-led, state-supported politics of austerity, towards more sustainable, progressive and equitable outcomes than are currently evident.

Moreover, in my view, the state needs to play a key part in achieving such ends, as it is in many cases the only agent sufficiently powerful to help overcome the obstacles preventing their advancement. But whilst the state is often best placed to achieve empowerment, equality and emancipation for its citizens, it is citizens themselves who need in some way to voice what kind of empowerment, equality and emancipation are desired or needed, especially because the possibilities for social change and the areas of social life worth addressing in this context have changed considerably in recent times, and may well continue to be in flux. Given the violence exerted on individuals by their surrounding systems, and the need for civil society to be well-informed and politically minded, the experience and political capacity of the individual in the present age strikes me as a worthwhile point of investigation; yet, ultimately, I deem the state more able (though not necessarily more willing) than the individual to enable genuinely transformative and emancipatory measures.

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Summary of Chapters

Introduction

An integrated reading of Anthony Giddens to assess the normative political dimensions across the main clusters of his work is a task that has so far not been undertaken. Yet, it is a promising one, as it highlights a wealth of meta-theoretical and substantive points that make Giddens relevant to political debates, programmes and scholarship of the present day.

Chapter 1

Giddens' structuration theory contains a normative emphasis on empowerment and transformative agency which, when combined with his views on critical theory and his critique of historical materialism, gives us a pragmatic and agent-centred approach to critical social theory: utopian realism.

Chapter 2

Giddens' analysis of late modernity does not stand up well to empirical scrutiny when read as a descriptive account of the present age. However, read as a utopian realist analysis it has more promise. Fostering a reflexive, empowered self thereby becomes a normative goal rooted in the possibilities of late modernity, but requiring systematic political action.

Chapter 3

Emancipatory politics denote the aim to foster the late modern self, whilst life politics denote addressing the issues around life choice that the late modern self encounters. The relationship between the two is of a dialectical kind, leading to a political paradigm that coordinates and anticipates these connections.

Chapter 4

Despite the promising opportunities contained in the notion of globalization, Giddens' work contains often overlooked cautionary and critical

points, especially about global poverty, inequality and economic domination; these pitfalls risk undermining the possibilities brought about through the individual's global connectedness and imply the need for a transformation of global capitalism.

Chapter 5

The Third Way is not a successful completion of Giddens' utopian realist analysis of late modernity. It views capitalism as an un-transformable structural feature of the present age and critically underestimates the political effort necessary to enable a wider emergence of the late modern self. The assumed singularity of Third Way politics in the supposed wake of old-style social democracy and 1980s neoliberalism is a key reason behind this, diluting any sense of political opposition.

Chapter 6

Giddens' work gives scope for the design of programmatic approaches to transform global capitalism and augment the role of redistribution and public services. Seeking greater scope for individuals' reflexive action and empowerment gives such efforts a normative direction suited to the late modern age. An integrative approach to policymaking is a central component of Giddens' continuing political utility.

Introduction: Anthony Giddens – Social Theory and Politics

Anthony Giddens is a major figure in the discipline of sociology, with impressive breadth of scope and influence. His theory of structuration provided an essential approach for the study of social transformation, especially in complex organizations, and presented a possible solution to several long-standing problems in social theory, notably including how to coherently engage in sociological enquiry with due attention to both structure and agency. His analysis of late modernity put the term 'globalization' firmly on the sociological map and shaped debates about the distinctiveness of the present age, providing the terminology and descriptive foundations for research on individualization, challenges to tradition and individuals' self-understanding in the global age. His breadth of expertise has helped establish both his early expository works on classical sociological theory as well as his later sociology textbooks as standard reading for anyone entering into sociological endeavours.

Outside academic circles, Giddens is best known for his political move in the mid 1990s. His Third Way[1] was a key influence on centre-left governments across the globe, though most clearly on the UK's New Labour government under Tony Blair. Promising a renewal of social democracy beyond left and right, and suited to the changed nature of contemporary societies, his thoughts helped shape the political agenda and lent intellectual clout to centre-left endeavours at the turn of the twenty-first century.

The majority of his career was rooted in academia. Following completion of his master's degree from the London School of Economics (LSE), his professional academic career began in 1961 at the University of Leicester and included brief periods at Simon Fraser (Vancouver) and UCLA. In 1969, he was hired by the University of Cambridge, where he spent the bulk of his professional life. Subsequently, he moved towards

the boundary between the academy and politics: following appointment as director of the LSE in 1997, he penned *The Third Way* and established himself as a public intellectual in British and international political affairs. Since receiving a life peerage in 2004, his position as an intellectual on the boundary of the political world has been cemented; alongside his position in the House of Lords, he continues to write for academic and lay audiences and holds positions as a fellow of LSE and King's College London.

There is a general consensus about the wide and varied extent of influence of his theoretical, analytical and descriptive work on many fields of sociological interest. But interest in Giddens from a political point of view has focused almost exclusively on the Third Way, rather than on the political dimensions of his more analytical work prior to his move into politics. Whilst he remains a highly cited figure in terms of the more technical insights of his pre-Third Way work, the demise of the New Labour government brought with it an assumption that Giddens is no longer a relevant figure in political thought (O'Boyle, 2013).

But sociology is an inherently political discipline. From the early behemoths of the discipline to the most recent approaches and strands of enquiry, the goal of studying, describing and understanding society has for the vast majority of sociologists also entailed an implicit or even explicit aim to help change it towards better outcomes. Giddens' work prior to his Third Way is no different. It delivers many contributions on a range of important political questions: how can we integrate old political concerns about equality and emancipation with new ones such as environmental protection or changing life-course patterns? More broadly, how can we envisage emancipation and egalitarian undertakings in an age of reduced collective identities and heightened individualism? How can we construct a critical account of contemporary societies that does not assume historical guarantees, but also avoids the stifling notion of relativism? What is this thing we call 'globalization' – that for some signifies the root of many problems and for others the solution to them (Holton, 2005: 1)?

Giddens can provide important responses to these challenges. However, the political utility of his work only becomes apparent through an integrated reading of the various clusters of his work. Through such an integrated assessment, this book will show that his work from structuration theory to his analysis of late modernity contains a political, emancipatory intent, which can be utilized for normative political projects radically distinct from his own Third Way. As such, this book will foremost highlight the continued utility of Giddens' work, in

contrast to the conclusion that the end of New Labour and related Third Way projects around the world signal the failure of Giddens' sociological outlook and its consequent political implications.

This book also provides a comprehensive guide to Giddens' work, because the arguments to be made here require precisely an engagement with all its constituent parts: structuration theory, the critique of historical materialism, the analysis of late modernity, and the Third Way itself. It contains description of each of these clusters, providing a valuable resource for anyone beginning to study his work.

To give some initial context, especially for readers unfamiliar with the full extent of Giddens' work, the following section provides an overview of his contributions and thereby also demarcates the clusters into which it can be subdivided. Relating these clusters to each other and understanding the political project that evolves throughout them is a key dimension of this book.

The clusters of Giddens' work: an overview

Anthony Giddens' work spans over five decades, with his earliest academic publication dating back to 1960. Over time, the focus of his work shifted at several points, which allows the division of his work into thematic clusters. This has aided many commentators on his work to structure their volumes in such a way that they can deal with each cluster separately (Craib, 1992; Kaspersen, 2000; Loyal, 2003).

Giddens' earliest work revolves around the sociology of suicide (Giddens, 1965, 1966). These contributions will not offer much to the topic of this book. However, their subject matter presents an early indication of Giddens' interest in the individual's experiences in terms of their self-understanding in the social world. Put simply: the very selection of suicide as an area of interest provides an indication that Giddens was never likely to become overly focused on hard description of social structures and would instead tend towards at least some engagement with the individual's relationship to the surrounding world. This is not to say his eventual sociology of the late modern self was already contained in his work 30 years prior, but a certain thematic direction is implicit even in these earliest contributions. Though they still feature in sociological studies on suicide (Fincham et al., 2011), they are among his less well-known and rarely discussed texts.

In the 1970s, his focus shifted to the major concepts and issues in classical sociological theory. Initially these works took a descriptive approach, with *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (1971) even

explicitly noting its intention to be expository rather than analytical. At this point, Giddens considered the major competing perspectives in sociological theory: the contrast between structural sociology and interpretivist or phenomenological approaches, objectivist and subjectivist perspectives, attempts to equate or differentiate social science and natural science, different approaches to linking social theory with empirical analysis and differing responses to capitalism in the major sociological traditions.

These texts explore the approaches and debates between central figures in the discipline and are of exceptional use for the study of classical sociological theory. They also signify Giddens' ability to introduce, describe and relate a range of sociological concepts, an ability that has contributed to the on-going popularity of his sociology textbooks, one of which is currently in its seventh edition (Giddens and Sutton, 2013). Following early contributions on the relatively focused topic of suicide, Giddens' work on classical social theory also marks a significant broadening of scope. Just as at this stage his emphasis was on integrating and contrasting several broad issues at the level of abstract theory, his later work would take a similar approach on more substantive description of the present age and indeed, on the politics best suited to govern it. However, the detached and expository nature of much of these early texts on classical social theory makes them only peripherally relevant to his politics. They will nevertheless be helpful on certain occasions here, when clearer understanding is required of key concepts less well defined in his later work.

By the end of the 1970s, Giddens' work on sociological theory turned from the descriptive to the constructive. *New Rules of Sociological Method* (1976) and especially *The Constitution of Society* (1984) draw together the issues from previous work, outlining his theory of structuration. It represents a conclusion to extensive deliberation around the central issues in sociological theory, most notably the action/structure divide. Structuration theory emerged at a time when many paradigms in the social sciences were being challenged: second-wave feminism had decisively called into question any possibility of impartiality of social scientific endeavours; structural sociology was challenged by growing popularity of action-centred and interpretive approaches, whilst additionally the notion of the individual as a self-reflective site of enquiry was put into question by poststructuralist and postmodernist perspectives.

Alongside this range of emerging challenges, Giddens' structuration theory presents a further attempt at re-thinking the paradigms of

sociological enquiry, albeit for the most part a less radical one. This ontology of human activity has at its root the premise that structure is instantiated by agents: individuals draw on structural properties in order to produce the social systems in which we live. Crucially, they can do so in a reflexive and creative manner. In some cases, scope for creativity may be constrained to the point where little more is feasible than system reproduction, but in less constrained circumstances, scope exists for variable and creative instantiation, and thereby for system transformation. The individual is posited within this approach as reflexive, that is, able to reflect critically on their structural context and their position and identity within it by drawing on stocks of accumulated knowledge. As such, structuration theory gives us a way of conceptualizing the reproduction or transformation of systems over time. Implicitly, it thereby encourages insight into how individuals interact with their surrounding context and urges sociological enquiry to problematize the extent of individual reflexivity and scope for transformative as opposed to purely reproductive action.

In the first instance, structuration theory has since gathered attention as one of several attempts to reconcile structure-centred and agency-centred approaches to sociological enquiry, with related approaches of similar ambition put forward by Archer (1995), Bhaskar (1979) and Mouzelis (1989). Additionally, Giddens' emphasis on understanding how individuals relate to the system surrounding them has been of use for the field of microsociology: the study of individuals in particular systems, as opposed to the study of systems themselves, however broadly or narrowly defined. Within this field, structuration theory's most fruitful applications have often centred on instantiation, reproduction or transformation in large and powerful organizations. Weiss' landmark studies on the utilization of research by policymakers and civil servants use Giddens as a theoretical backdrop (Weiss and Bucuvalas, 1980). More generally, structuration theory is much cited in the literature on absorptive capacity in ministries. Likewise, it frequently features in literature on the management and organization of large firms (Macintosh and Scapens, 1997; Spybey, 1997).

Whilst structuration theory contributes little in terms of directly guiding or informing empirical research, it has aided these strands of investigation to frame and conceptualize their approach. Where enquiry focuses on how individuals make use and sense of their environment, structuration theory has proven a valuable tool.

Less pronounced is the capacity of structuration theory to frame normative political projects. Intuitively, a greater emphasis on social

structure itself might be more suited to this task, where the constraining or dominating nature of structure would be used as a basis for critique. However, through problematizing the individual's scope for reflexive action, Giddens' approach becomes distinctly normative – and this normative character is developed further throughout his work. At the same time, he presents a framework that allows us to understand, realistically and with the rules and resources currently available, how societies might be able to change. These implications constitute the clearest point of origin of the political character of Giddens' work, and will as such be of particular interest in this book.

The overtly normative and political character of Giddens intensifies in the third cluster of his work. Spanning only a brief period in the early 1980s, his attention turned towards a critique of Marx, encompassing two volumes under the banner of *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, respectively entitled *Power, Property and the State* (1981) and *The Nation State and Violence* (1985). This subject matter already had some precedents in his work, notably *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies* (1973), an early attempt to discuss social class in terms of its situatedness in particular social, political and economic contexts.[2] Nevertheless, this facet of his work has received comparatively little attention next to structuration theory and his later contributions. His focus shifts into a significantly different direction following publication of the *Contemporary Critiques*, so this cluster appears to sit awkwardly in the midst of his remaining work.

But Giddens' critique of Marx is of interest, as his stance is not fully adversarial: the objects of critique are for the most part the absolutes contained in Marx – historical guarantees; designated agents of change; and a singular approach to contradiction, conflict and power. Whilst Giddens argues against these notions, his aim is nevertheless not to dethrone, but to re-imagine transformative and emancipatory social theory. He does so by acknowledging a universe in which the exploitations, constraints and abuses highlighted by Marx exist, but are contextualized, or 'structurated' to the effect that historical materialism becomes a tool no longer suited to social analysis or to the formulation of political endeavours. For the purposes here, the *Contemporary Critiques* are significant in that they allow us to understand how the already normative understanding of social transformation found in structuration theory can be further concretized into a Giddensian approach to critical social theory.

By the late 1980s, the world was changing: the Cold War was coming to an end, modern communication and information technologies were

visibly transforming the way we live and the new social movements originating in the 1970s had put a host of new issues on the political map. From Fukuyama's 'end of history' (1992) to the 'death of class' noted by Pakulski and Waters (1996), many bold statements around this time signified an appetite for new overarching analyses of contemporary societies that would in some form part ways with established approaches, be they of Marxist scope or otherwise.

Giddens emerged alongside other authors such as Beck, Bauman and Lash as a provider of such an approach. The analysis of late modernity, chiefly encompassing *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990) and *Modernity and Self-identity* (1991a), moves Giddens' work from discussions focused on abstract concepts, such as structure, agency, power, time and space, to substantive description and analysis of the world we now live in. Along with the aforementioned authors, he described the present age as one of heightened individualization and reflexivity, brought about through a decisive weakening of traditional and self-referential belief systems, and the contraction of time and space through the advent of modern communication and information technologies, summarized under a blanket term that would form the basis of much attention in the social sciences and beyond for years to come: globalization.

Much as with structuration theory, Giddens offers an approach that appears less radical than alternative perspectives at the time. Like Beck and others, Giddens positions himself in opposition to postmodernists, who break with many more perspectives of the past, most notably on the issue of the self. Rather than understanding the self as a docile body at the mercy of discourse as argued by Foucault (1975),[3] or more broadly as disembedded and abstractly constructed, the individual is posited as knowledgeable, reflexive and able to act and engage with surrounding social contexts in a purposeful way. This notion of an altogether more socially connected self moreover exists in a context where the capitalist economy, the nation state system, the global military order and other features emblematic of modern societies remain central components. Rather than postmodernity, which implies a clean break from the past, Giddens opts instead for 'late' modernity, with 'reflexive', 'high' or 'liquid' modernity adopted as comparable descriptors by Lash (1990), Beck (1992) and Bauman (2000).[4] Use of these terms signifies the central opposition to postmodernists: the basic features of the modern age remain as important descriptors and analytical tools for the present age, but recent developments require some degree of reorientation in sociological enquiry. Put simply, modernity has not ended; it has transformed.

The analysis of late modernity is not merely descriptive: more overtly than in prior work, Giddens discusses the political implications of reflexivity and individualization. The late modern transformation of the self is not an un-problematic notion, because this new, more reflexive and knowledgeable self immediately presents new political challenges. As we shall see, the late modern self emerging from the transformations of globalization and the waning power of tradition is not necessarily a universal reality: structural constraint inhibits increased reflexivity and reflexive action, so fostering its wider emergence and available life choices become important political tasks. To the emancipatory politics of left and right, Giddens adds the notion of life politics, signifying the politicization of how we wish to live on this planet, how to make humankind's relationship with nature more sustainable and what moral and ethical codes we ought to live by.

The final main cluster of his work begins in the mid 1990s. From this point onwards, it becomes overtly political, largely abandoning sociological analysis beyond what is already contained in the analysis of late modernity, with *Beyond Left and Right* (1994) acting as a bridge between his analytical work and the political platforms contained in his subsequent publications. *The Third Way* (1998a) presents an outline for the renewal of social democracy in the present age and attracted considerable interest from centre-left governments recently elected at the time both in the UK and abroad. It also attracted considerable criticism from many scholars and activists on the left.

Its premise was that a renewal of social democracy was necessary due to five major social developments, all of which previously featured prominently in Giddens' analysis of late modernity: globalization, individualization, the apparent inability of the old left/right divide to properly encapsulate the totality of political discourse, changing forms of political agency towards less orthodox forms of democratic engagement and finally the growing spectre of ecological problems requiring political engagement.

In response to these five markers of change, *The Third Way* and subsequent texts proposed a programme that no longer viewed state and market as adversarial forces, advocated devolved models of decision-making, placed an onus on individuals to transform their lives and communities, shifted away from policy designed around outdated notions of a standardized life cycle, and finally, noted the importance of responding to challenges presented by globalization – most notably in the areas of employment, economics and environmental issues.

The Third Way was first published shortly prior to a Fabian Society pamphlet of the same name by the then prime minister Tony Blair (1998), which echoed much of Giddens' sentiments. Though there is some disagreement on the extent of the relationship between the two figures, Giddens lent intellectual clout to New Labour and was often described as Blair's political 'guru' (Driver and Martell, 2001: 43). Yet, *The Third Way* and subsequent works were not necessarily intended only for the UK context: these works make frequent reference to centre-left government in the UK as well as elsewhere (notably Clinton's New Democrats in the US), resulting in a stand-alone political agenda, which governments the world over were free to consider and utilize as they wished. The first Green and Social Democrat coalition elected to office in 1998 in Germany embraced a discourse of new centre-left politics suited to a transformed global age (Hombach, 2000), with similar discourses at work in comparable election victories in France and elsewhere. These centre-left governments of the late 1990s saw themselves as natural allies (Arestis and Sawyer, 2001), and so even beyond the UK, Giddens' pronouncements formed part of the intellectual landscape of the time.

The Third Way itself is often treated in the literature as a blanket term for a political platform with a range of different incarnations across the globe. The differences and national specifics of various Third Ways have been documented in some detail (Giddens, 2001). Several academics have influenced its formulation in the various countries that had a Third Way experiment. Leggett mentions Etzioni, Gray and MacMurray as internationally relevant thinkers behind the Third Way (2005: 37),[5] whilst others were specific to individual countries' Third Way experiments.

Whilst Giddens stands out as the most notable Third Way thinker (ibid: 13), these multiple influences make it important to distinguish between Giddens' and New Labour's Third Way: divergence naturally occurs due to the existence of several other Third Way intellectuals, as well as differing beliefs and priorities between Giddens and the politicians who sought to utilize his work (ibid: 43–5). But the extent of convergence or divergence remains a matter of contention: some critics note that the relationship between Giddens and New Labour may have been over-stated for purposes of mutual benefit (Morrison, 2004: 168). Yet, there is also significant commonality, especially around themes such as globalization, the knowledge economy and detraditionalization (Giddens, 1994, 1998; Blair, 1998, 1999). An article by Giddens with the

telling title *Did they foul up my Third Way?* (2004) highlights further ties in terms of New Labour's outlook, which he reiterates after New Labour's electoral defeat in 2010. Reflecting many themes from his own work that will feature heavily in this book, he notes:

> From the outset, the architects of New Labour offered a compelling diagnosis of why innovation in left-of-centre politics was needed… intensifying globalisation, the development of a post-industrial or service economy and, in an information age, the emergence of a more voluble and combative citizenry, less deferential to authority figures than in the past (a process that intensified with the advent of the internet). Most of Labour's policy prescriptions followed from this analysis.
>
> (Giddens, 2010b)

An understanding of Giddens' social theory and its relationship to his politics can therefore contribute to an understanding of New Labour's sociological outlook. At the same time, a critique of Giddens based on his own pre-Third Way work can highlight key shortcomings that may have decisively shaped the centre-left governments of the late 1990s and early 2000s. If Giddens' Third Way is a misapplication of his own sociological analysis, then so too are the politics of the governments he influenced.

As the rhetoric of the Third Way faded in political circles, Giddens continued to write on political matters, following up his initial contribution with the *Third Way and Its Critics*, then focusing more on the specific context of the UK with *Where Now for New Labour?* (2002) and *Over to you, Mr Brown* (2007a). Despite the shift from a more general scope to an explicit engagement with the UK context, the themes discussed by Giddens remain largely consistent throughout.

Most recently, Giddens shifted his focus to the subject of climate change (2009). Though a sociology of climate change has emerged in recent years (Yearley, 2009; Shaw, 2013), his contribution to this topic has once again been of a political nature and focuses on advocating political action. Despite wider public attention, his contributions therefore occupy a limited role in the sociological work emerging on climate change. The same goes for an additional recent focus in his work: the future of the European Union (Giddens, 2007b, 2014). His work on these topics represents a further shift, but both still relate in some part to his wider political contributions, zooming in, as it were, on key factors behind the need for his renewal of social democracy – programmatic

points both on the EU and on ecological issues already feature in *The Third Way*.

Though other authors have thematically subdivided his work slightly differently (Loyal, 2003), these are the discernible clusters of Giddens' work that will best aid the analysis in this book: inquiry into classical sociological theory culminating in the theory of structuration, the critique of historical materialism, the analysis of late modernity, the Third Way and, to a lesser extent, the early contributions on suicide and recent topic-specific texts on climate change and the future of the EU.

The need for an integrated approach

The critical literature on all aspects of Giddens' work is ample. However, the vast majority views the various clusters of Giddens' work – chiefly structuration theory, the analysis of late modernity and the Third Way – in isolation, or at most focuses on one of these three elements with short and often superficial reference to a second. Few attempts have been made to study all of these areas at once and to gain a deeper understanding of how they fit together and inform each other (or fail to do so). Works that do exist in this vein either focus on a relatively narrow theme and track it through the different stages of his work (Mouzelis, 2001) or give a comprehensive overview of all stages of his work but lack a critical approach to the implications of one cluster of his work for another (Kaspersen, 2000).

This lack of integrated approaches is particularly evident in the case of his overtly political texts in the 1990s and early 2000s, which has implicitly also diluted engagement with the political character of his pre–Third Way work. Most critical commentators on his Third Way have treated it either in isolation or in conjunction with a brief and surface-level assessment of the works immediately preceding it. As such, much of the critical literature on his Third Way is grounded normatively in the political preferences of its authors, leading to a broad range of different assessments on whether the Third Way is re-hashed neoliberalism or a genuine renewal of social democracy, or whether it is at all suited to societies of the present day (Hale et al., 2004; McNally and Schwartzmantel, 2009). There are therefore remarkably few attempts to look in depth across the clusters of Giddens' work to draw conclusions about the salience or appropriateness of his Third Way. Those that do generally focus on particular aspects of the Third Way rather than engaging in the broader task of ascertaining how as a whole it relates to the remainder of his work (Bagguley, 2003; McCullen and Harris, 2004).[6]

In short, the Third Way is either treated fully in isolation from previous work, or it is assumed to be a logical political consequence of it, whereby any judgement on the Third Way becomes also an implicit judgement on the political use of Giddens' work in general.[7] Through this dominant approach in the critical literature, the political salience of Giddens has been reduced to his Third Way, with a low level of understanding and awareness firstly of how exactly the Third Way relates to his previous work, and more importantly, of the richness of politically salient material already found throughout structuration theory, the critique of historical materialism and the analysis of late modernity.

With the demise of the New Labour government in 2010 and of several other centre-left governments aligned to the Third Way prior to that point (for instance, the German Red-Green coalition in 2005), interest in Giddens from a political point of view has all but disappeared. Though the period from Tony Blair's departure from office in 2007 to New Labour's election defeat in 2010 triggered a small wave of literature best termed an autopsy of the Third Way (Atkins, 2010; Jordan, 2010; Leggett, 2010), the decline in critical engagement with Giddens' politics indicates an implicit assumption that the end of the Third Way simultaneously marks the end of his political salience or relevance. Rather than concurring with this trend, this book provides an assessment of the political content throughout his work and demonstrates that the Third Way is by no means the singular programmatic consequence of his insights and perspectives.

Aside from filling this gap in the literature, an additional need for an integrated political reading of Giddens stems from the extensive critical literature on his descriptive accounts of late modernity. Many researchers have taken his claims around globalization, post-traditionalism, reflexivity and individualization as a starting point for their own investigations and suggested that these claims do not stand up well to scrutiny. This body of work will be assessed in detail later on, but in general terms it notes that globalization is chiefly a story of economic exploitation and domination by powerful economic actors and interests, rather than the signifier of a new reflexive and empowered self. Moreover, ample studies show persistence and even resurgence of traditional and self-referential belief systems, whilst the notion of reflexivity is countered by many researchers who note the continued significance of structural determinants of individuals' lifestyle and life choices, leaving little room for the notion of the individual as the reflexive author of their own biography.[8]

If the analysis of late modernity is assumed to provide a representative and descriptive account of contemporary societies, then this wealth of critical literature shows it to be a highly problematic one. However, by understanding the political intent contained throughout Giddens' work, it is possible – even necessary – to understand the analysis of late modernity not as a descriptive account, but as having an intentional focus on particular aspects of the present age, however minor, whose exposure can aid wider political endeavours. This book will show that such a way of reading his analysis of late modernity is in fact available from an ontology of critique contained within structuration theory, the critique of historical materialism and in the early stages of the analysis of late modernity itself: utopian realism.

A critically neglected feature of his work, utopian realism is Giddens' answer to Marx and historical materialism; it is his approach to facilitating transformative critical social theory in the absence of *telos* or clearly designated and historically determined transformative agency. As such, utopian realist theory needs to focus on highlighting precisely where transformative agency might lie, and what kind of desirable ends might be possible, leading to an agency-centred theory, which nevertheless shows awareness of structure and constraint but views these issues as a political challenge rather than as an analytical focus. Thereby, Giddens' approach allows for a sociological narrative that pays relatively little attention to issues of structural constraint (of which the analysis of late modernity is indeed guilty), but only if it is supplemented with a political project that shows how the constraints that do exist might be overcome. This emphasis on utopian realism is necessary if Giddens' work is to be viewed as coherent and empirically justifiable. Within it, his Third Way is then not simply a random occurrence, which he could just as easily have refrained from: a political project is necessary for the completion of his utopian realist analysis of late modernity. Without it, his analysis is decisively flawed.

Given the breadth of first- and second-order theoretical analysis in his work, alongside a normative character throughout, the contours of such a political project can be inferred in large part from his pre-Third Way work. The evident political demands set by the utopian realist project then open up the question of whether his Third Way actually fulfils them. The answer, as we will see, is a resounding 'no'. This will in turn pose the question of what a political project genuinely consistent with his analysis of late modernity would look like, and more importantly how, in the absence of clear programmatic descriptions, we might go about designing one.

The analysis here will therefore enable a utopian realist critique of the Third Way. It will show that there are four issues on which his Third Way fails to present a politics that satisfactorily reflects the utopian realist project evident throughout his prior work. Firstly, his prior work urges a significant transformation of capitalism through political action both nationally and through international cooperation, not dissimilar from Held's global social democracy (2004). But rather than seeking to transform capitalism, the Third Way openly accepts it as a structural feature to which many areas of life must adapt and be subservient. Secondly, whilst his prior analysis suggests that the late modern transformation of the self is an emergent possibility that needs to be politically fostered, his Third Way largely assumes that the notion of this empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self is already a universal reality. Thirdly, the Third Way is missing an engagement with the control, distribution and use of communication technology – a central component at the heart of the transformations of late modernity, yet curiously under-explored throughout his work. Finally, and more broadly, the Third Way signifies an implicit shift in terms of the constitution of the self: it advocates a need for individuals to be controlled and coerced, which is impossible to reconcile with the idea of a more empowered and reflexive self as a political goal.

Re-imagining Giddensian politics

The primary aim of this book is to expose and explain the political character of Giddens' work from his earliest contributions to the Third Way, and in so doing to highlight the relevance of his work to political endeavours of the present day. In order to detail this relevance, it is necessary to dethrone the Third Way as the singular or even primary manifestation of Giddensian politics.

To avoid confusion around the use of the term,[9] 'Giddensian' does not equate to 'written by Giddens'; it corresponds here instead to the term 'Marxist' or 'Marxian': conventionally, these terms can be applied to works that Marx himself did not write, and may well even have been critical of, so long as they are rooted in the fundamental assumptions of, say, historical materialism. A Giddensian politics is therefore one that is based on the theoretical assumptions and underpinnings of Giddens' past work. This definition could of course easily mean that Giddens' own political programme, if it turns out not to be informed by these underpinnings, might not be Giddensian: we will in fact see that in many ways, this is the case with the Third Way. Whilst this

book therefore offers a contribution to the critical literature on the Third Way, the central aim is to show that the politics of Giddens' social theory goes far beyond his explicit political project. It is possible to use his social theory to construct egalitarian, inclusive and redistributive models of centre-left politics distinct from his Third Way, rooted not in class solidarity, nationhood or similar concepts frequently associated with social democracy (Hicks, 1999) but instead centred on the individual in the context of globalization, post-traditionalism and reflexivity.

Given the use of this term, it is critical at this early point to clarify the issue of intention: where Giddens' sociological analyses are concerned, the aim of this book is to establish the political intentions that are demonstrably present in his work: to establish, what exactly he is saying. However, at the level of policy prescriptions, the outlook of this book will depart from this focus. The analysis of his Third Way in Chapter 5 will assess whether his policy prescriptions are consistent with the political intent evident in his prior work. Anticipating this assessment, several other chapters will, where relevant, note some examples of alternative policies that would be consistent with Giddens' sociological analysis. These will not necessarily be policies that Giddens himself has advocated, yet the aim will be to demonstrate their consistency with the Giddensian perspective. As a general rule therefore, whenever attention in this book shifts from sociological analysis to programmatic and policy issues, so too will the focus from exposing Giddens' own demonstrable intention to exposing implications consistent with those intentions, even if they do not readily materialize in his programmatic writings.

At the conceptual level, Giddensian politics pursues emancipatory concerns and does so with a focus on the constitution of the individual and how the individual relates to and interacts with the surrounding world. At the operational level, Giddensian politics is characterized by a high degree of pragmatism. The utopian realist approach is not closed off to the possibility of radical political positions, but it is primarily concerned with identifying immanent possibilities for social transformation and propagating their further progression through practically available means and channels. The political path contained in Giddens' work urges the social theorist to weigh up their own normative political orientations against the possibilities for system transformation that exist in the society they are studying. The critical scholar needs to take a view – reflexively and with due regard to both their sociological analysis and their own conscience and willingness to potentially compromise – and decide which existing and emergent developments they can help foster.

This focus on pragmatism and possibilities (for instance, system transformation through existing groups willing and able to transform it) rather than technically demonstrable necessities (for instance, a system overthrow rooted in the system's inherent contradictions) to a degree accounts for the hostility contained in some of the critical literature on Giddens. It is important therefore to note here at the outset that the Giddensian approach does not preclude other, more overtly radical forms of critical endeavour. These approaches can certainly co-exist as different tools in the critical social theorist's repertoire.

The pragmatism demanded in the Giddensian approach may not satisfy those seeking to construct a politics capable of responding in the technically optimal way to the full extent of contradictions or oppressions highlighted through social scientific analysis. But this pragmatism also makes Giddens' approach especially well suited to the challenging task of establishing dialogue and engagement with existing political movements, including the formal political sphere.[10] Indeed, the Third Way is a clear example of a political programme rooted in sociological analysis that had considerable influence on real political developments. But even aside from the Third Way, utopian realism as a whole lends itself to tactically aware political action and advocacy, building on sociological analysis comprising both theoretical discussion and empirical research.

Part I of this book will highlight and discuss the political dimensions of structuration theory, the contemporary critique of historical materialism, and foremost the analysis of late modernity, and thereby make the case for Giddens' work as an integrated utopian realist project. Part II, comprising Chapters 3 and 4, will establish the necessary contours of a politics consistent with the utopian realist approach. The relationship between emancipatory politics and life politics as well as the implications of Giddens' understanding of globalization will respectively be the main areas of analysis. Part III will then be concerned with critique and reconstruction of Giddensian politics: Chapter 5 will read the Third Way against the necessary contours of a Giddensian politics, whilst the final chapter will provide an assessment of Giddens' political relevance to the present day political landscape and highlight the alternatives to the Third Way that Giddens' utopian realist analysis can offer.

Many substantive policy positions emerge as logical political consequences of Giddens' social theory, though most are by no means new or unheard of: taxes on financial transactions; universal provision of Internet access and the creation of a digital public sphere; a global living wage; debt cancellation for developing countries; mandatory

environmental impact assessments. Where it is possible to ascertain such Giddensian policy positions, they will be noted, although the primary reason for this will not be for reasons of advocacy, but to illustrate how these come to be formulated through Giddens' work, why they are essential for a coherent utopian realist analysis and why conversely the utopian realist angle can benefit the coherence of centre-left programmes.

Giddens' utopian realist social theory of late modernity provides a new framework for thinking about wider policy agendas. Critically, it highlights the need to connect and integrate endeavours previously assumed to be separate, in geographical terms as well as in terms of substantive policy areas. A Giddensian politics requires a step beyond the established system of discreet sectoral ministries (health, education, environment, international development and so on). Instead, it urges coordination between these areas of policy activity, highlighting that there are important connections between, for instance, international development and industrial strategy, income inequality and renewable energy, constitutional reform and surveillance, arms exports and asylum policy. To the emerging cross-cutting challenges, such as climate change, obesity and digital futures (EC, 2014; OECD, 2014), which are already breaking down barriers between policy areas, Giddens provides a further framework for the formulation of policies that do not necessarily cut across policy areas in themselves, but where decisions in one area need to be closely coordinated with decisions in another. This next level of integrated politics and policymaking stems foremost from Giddens' distinction between life politics (the politics of life style and life choice) and emancipatory politics (the politics of inequality and redistribution), as well as from his discussion around globalization and the connections between global and local events. These two themes are respectively discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, and in both cases the discussion will highlight how integration of distinct policy areas needs to be considered in order to construct coherent emancipatory political platforms in the late modern age.

Part I

Utopian Realism: A Political Reading of the Early Giddens

1
Critical Foundations – Structuration and System Transformation

To fully understand the politics of Anthony Giddens, we need to begin by looking at work that preceded his overtly political contributions. *The Third Way* (1998a) is most evidently of a programmatic nature, and even *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990) and *Modernity and Self-identity* (1991a) have clear political implications, which will be the focus in subsequent chapters. But these later texts have been the subject of much critical literature, and there are many ways of interpreting their political salience. In order to be able to contextualize Giddens' political writings, we can look to his earlier contributions. Structuration theory and his critique of historical materialism give us a perspective on his approach to politics at a conceptual level. Here we can ascertain his deeper sociological outlook: how he treats power, constraint and emancipation; how societies can change; and how sociological work relates to such changes.

This chapter considers the overall utility and, in particular, the normative dimensions of structuration theory. It subsequently shows that these are further developed into a Giddensian approach to critical social theory – termed here a Giddensian ontology of critique – when combined with his perspective on historical materialism. Starting with *The New Rules of Sociological Method* (1976), *Central Problems in Social Theory* (1979), and explicitly outlined in *The Constitution of Society* (1984), structuration theory seeks to overcome the gulf between structural determinism on one hand and methodological individualism on the other. This is accomplished by noting the 'duality of structure' (Giddens, 1984: 25), meaning that structure is at once created by actors, as well as affecting their actions, and as such has both constraining and enabling properties. This is deduced from the idea that structure only comes into existence when instantiated by the agent, or more precisely, where structural properties, defined abstractly as rules and resources, are instantiated and thus contextualized by agents into 'systems' (Giddens,

1984: 24–5). Especially significant here is the role of knowledge, on which the agent draws in order to produce, reproduce or indeed transform the system. Whilst this signifies an attempt to solve the structure/agency debate implicit in classical social theory since its early days, Giddens notes:

> Specifically, [structuration theory] is the label I attach to my concern to develop an ontological framework for the study of human social activities. By 'ontology' here, I mean a conceptual investigation of the nature of human action, social institutions and the interrelations between action and institutions.
>
> (Giddens, 1984: 201)

This provides us with the most concise summary possible of structuration theory and of the fundamental aim attributed to it by Giddens. Naturally, a well-integrated theory on anything may be perceived by some as having a certain beauty in and of itself. But that aside, it is important to ascertain the further benefits of this 'ontological framework for the study of human social activities'. Especially in this case, where there is hardly any analysis of substantive contexts (as found for instance in Giddens' later works), and where instead abstract, second-order concepts such as structure, agency, change, power, time and space are theorized, the question is: what is this good for? Given its abstract approach, there are three main possible uses, none of which necessarily negate each other, but which would nevertheless result in different ways in which social scientists might look to structuration theory to aid their endeavours. Firstly, structuration theory might be understood as a general theory, in other words, as a broad narrative capable of informing the entirety of sociological endeavour at the meta-theoretical level. Secondly, it might be understood as a theoretical background for empirical research: a framework that researchers might look to in order to design and guide the collection or analysis of their data. Thirdly, it might function as a guideline or basis for critical theory and a more politicized social analysis. The analysis here will focus on the latter possibility, though it is worth briefly considering the former two.

Structuration theory: grand narrative, empirical tool or normative framework?

Regarding the possibility of general theory, structuration theory is of limited use because it lacks rigour on several concepts used within it. Gregory (1989), for instance, notes a failure in structuration theory to

adequately take into account both the production of space as well as the symbolic and normative aspects of spatial representation.[1] This is a significant weakness, because Giddens attributes much importance to the idea that structures are re-instantiated, reproduced and potentially transformed over time and space. Reflecting on Giddens' notion of agency, Wilmott (1997) has made the charge of an incomplete appreciation of the unconscious, resulting in limited and one-sided understanding of how the agent might operate. Meanwhile, Thompson (1989) notes a reductionist view of structure, defined by Giddens as rules and resources: this definition, once again, is characterized as opaque and incomplete, a charge that has been made frequently about Giddens' work (O'Boyle, 2013). In a similar vein, Bauman notes that Giddens' definition of structure amounts to little more than a conceptual shift 'from the realm of objects to the realm of rules' and that now structure operates 'in the algebraic rather than the mechanical sense' (1989: 42).

Further examples of these kinds of charges have been collected into several volumes of critical work.[2] The main conclusion to take from the existence of such extensive criticism is that viewing the theory of structuration as a general theory is problematic: this would certainly need to involve arranging all these concepts – structure, agency, time, space and so on – into some kind of integrated framework, satisfying the merits of all previous methodological traditions from the interpretive to the structural-functionalist and beyond; but at the same time, these concepts would also all need to be adequately theorized and defined. As shown earlier, many commentators note that this is not the case. Summarizing the point, Kaspersen notes:

> Giddens' structuration theory…is unique in its scope. Giddens applies the entire spectrum of classical and modern social theory as the basis of his grandiose attempt at reconstruction. No one other than Giddens has been able to combine elements from Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Mead, Goffman, Parsons, Merton, Schutz, Offe, Heidegger, the Swedish geography of time, Freud, Eriksson, Foucault, etc. into an apparently coherent theoretical approach. It is precisely the enormous, ambitious character of the project which is also Giddens' weakness, creating flaws and gaps in his argumentation.
>
> (Kaspersen, 2000: 186)

The case for general theory is further weakened by the fact that Giddens himself hardly ever refers to general theory in his work and has in fact distanced himself from overarching theories of this type, though

specifically he uses the thematically slightly different term 'grand narrative' (Giddens, in Bryant and Jary, 2001a: 244–5).

Though commentators are sometimes suggestive of the idea of structuration theory as a general theory, exemplified for instance in the earlier quote from Kaspersen, it can hardly be viewed in this way due to vagueness and incomplete definitions on several key components. Giddens has himself expressed caution about such types of theory, and there is furthermore little consensus among social scientists on whether a general theory would be desirable in the first place (Holmwood, 1996). On these grounds we can discount the option of structuration theory having much discernible use in this respect; the possibility chiefly arises due to its broad thematic scope. Though Giddens draws together a plethora of different perspectives, there is little evidence to suggest he does so in order to construct a theory to unify all theories. Instead, this integrative project likely serves a more substantive purpose, and not integration for its own sake.

On structuration theory's possible capacity to aid empirical research, the picture is more complex. Unlike on the issue of general theory, where Giddens distances himself from the notion, he makes several pronouncements on the importance of the relationship between theory and practice. He notes the importance of the link between theoretical and empirical work at many points in his career (Giddens, in Bleicher and Featherstone, 1982: 74), and elaborates on this importance in *The Constitution of Society*, dedicating substantial portions to the issue of structuration theory in relation to empirical research and even stating a set of rules to inform and guide empirical research. These are worth paraphrasing here as an illustrative summary of the structurationist approach:

- All human beings are knowledgeable agents, and their knowledgeability infuses social action with a level of complexity sociological endeavours are scarcely able to fully capture and describe.
- Some of the most important tasks of social science are to be found in the investigation of unconscious action, unacknowledged conditions, and unintended consequences of action, and their ideological connotations.
- The study of day-to-day life is integral to analysis of the reproduction of institutionalized practices. Wider connections to the everyday need to be understood in the context of their integration into this micro-level.

- Most daily practices are not directly motivated, making routinized practices a key site of investigation and a prime expression of the duality of structure.
- Contextualities are integral to the investigation of social reproduction.
- Social identities are associated with rights, obligations and sanctions. Variable between societies, such use of standardized markers associated with age, gender and so on are fundamental in all societies.
- 'Constraint' can have many meanings and does not necessarily derive from structural properties of social systems.
- The degree of closure of societal totalities – and of social systems in general – is widely variable, dependent on structural principles.
- The study of power is integral to social scientific enquiry: it provides the context for action.
- Any sociological observation can be incorporated by non-sociologists into their frame of reference. Lay objections to sociological findings may therefore have considerable importance.

(Giddens, 1984: 281–4)

Giddens' commitment to empirical research and his wish to inform empirical endeavours is evident from such prescriptions. Yet, there is in fact limited empirical work that directly utilizes structuration theory, especially if we compare Giddens' direct impact on empirical research to figures such as Bourdieu or Foucault, the former of which especially has become a near ubiquitous provider of theoretical frameworks in ethnographic work. The main areas where we find structuration theory as a methodological framework for empirical research is in fields such as governance and strategy of organizations, for instance in studies on policy spheres or management (Weiss and Bucuvalas, 1980; Morgan, 1990; Whittington, 1992). However, these studies typically make limited use of it, most often identifying a 'duality of structure', or other individual concepts from Giddens' theory in their field and then using it as a frame of reference, rather than using the theory as a whole – or the entirety of his guidance – to inform their approach. Studies on the use of technology are an exception to this: here we find more systematic application of structuration theory. But in these instances, where structuration theory has explicitly been utilized for empirical research, it has often first undergone considerable extension and reworking by other authors: owing to its abstract nature, criticisms noted earlier are confirmed in their salience, and authors often design and develop methodological frameworks of their own around the basic concepts given by Giddens – in effect filling the gaps and tightening

his vague definitions until a suitably detailed methodological framework is developed (Orlikowski, 1992; Pozzebon and Pinsonneault, 2005; Stones, 2005). Held and Thompson summarize these points on salience for empirical research:

> Although the theory of structuration, and Giddens' related work on time and space, have generated considerable theoretical debate, they have received a more cautious response from social scientists engaged in empirical research. For there are many who feel that Giddens' work, however interesting it may be on a general theoretical level, is too abstract and formal to be of much use in carrying out empirical research projects.
>
> (Held and Thompson, 1989: 9)

In her critique of structuration theory in relation to empirical research, Gregson goes as far as saying that Giddens' guidelines offer nothing new and, indeed, that Giddens' characterization of certain empirical projects as 'structurationist' is flawed (1989: 242). In this context she reflects on Willis' *Learning to Labour* (1977), an example used by Giddens to illustrate the use of structuration theory (1984: 298). Contrary to his claims, Gregson notes that *Learning to Labour* goes well beyond the scope of Giddens' guidelines and, more importantly, is not theoretically informed by Giddens, but rather by Gramsci, Althusser, Lukacs and Marx. Consequently, she concludes, most empirical researchers have little need for Giddens, whilst Giddens requires examples such as *Learning to Labour* to justify the scope for structuration theory's application (Gregson, 1989: 242–3).

Furthermore, she notes the relative brevity of Giddens' comments on empirical research, adding to the issue of structuration theory being too abstract and having insufficient clarification of key concepts to be able to substantively aid empirical endeavours – a point that likewise limits its scope as a general theory. Reflecting on Giddens' guidelines, she notes:

> . . . whilst few would disagree that social research has an ethnographic moment, that people demonstrate a vast number of skills in the course of daily life and that temporal and spatial structures are critical, for the purposes of empirical research the key questions concern which 'actors', which skills and which temporal and spatial structures we choose to investigate; and how we investigate these, where and when.
>
> (Gregson, 1989: 240–1)

Though structuration theory has been used in some areas of empirical research, usually either in a rudimentary fashion or in conjunction with significant development, there is evidence to show that by and large the theory is not of much direct use as a methodological framework to take to a field. But we can account for this mismatch between Giddens' pronouncements on the importance of empirical research and structuration theory's eventual lack of utility for it, by supposing that it does not seek to directly guide or prescribe certain forms of empirical research but rather seeks in some form to position empirical research in relation to theory. In other words, Giddens is trying to say something about a possible function rather than a possible process of empirical research. This may not be of direct use to commentators such as Gregson, whose points would thereby be no less valid, but it would be possible to account for the importance Giddens places on the theory-practice relationship despite his limited use to the practitioners. This brings us to the last of the three possibilities for structuration theory's use posited at the outset.

In the case of structuration theory, where there is no explicitly stated critical intent, a useful starting point is to assess its normative dimensions. Even of these, little is ever made explicit, but there is a distinct normative element, which some commentators have noticed, though never fully appreciated in terms of its implications. The normative dimension of structuration theory lies in the undue emphasis Giddens places on the agent, which in turn urges us to problematize forms of reflexivity and capacities for social transformation.

We saw earlier that many critics have voiced charges of vagueness and incompleteness in the discussion of structuration theory's various components. But whilst specific elements, such as time, space or the unconscious, are criticized as being insufficiently defined and lacking depth of consideration, critiques of Giddens' ideas on agency are centred not on incompleteness of definition but rather more on the excessive degree of optimism regarding the agent's capacity to act freely. Bauman notes:

> The goal is . . . on the one hand to dethrone the concept of 'structure' as an external, pre-existing determinant of action; on the other, to deny the random or entirely self-propelled character of actors' behaviour.
>
> (Bauman, 1989: 42)

Bauman hereby suggests an element central to structuration theory: one of its fundamental tenets is that the individual has power. Bauman only

vaguely alludes to this, but some further investigation confirms this. In his guidelines to empirical research, Giddens notes:

> The study of power cannot be regarded as a second-order consideration in the social sciences. Power cannot be tacked on, as it were, after the more basic concepts have been formulated. There is no more elemental concept than that of power. . . . power is the means of getting things done and, as such, directly implied in human action.
>
> (Giddens, 1984: 283)

In the context of structuration theory, it is therefore of crucial importance to Giddens that the power to affect the reproduction of structure is in the hands of the agent. Importantly, the individual does so as an active, reflexive, knowledgeable social agent (Giddens, 1984: 15; Tucker, 1998: 56, 80–1). At the same time, Giddens is cautious not to portray the notion of power as an entirely positive concept. Whilst he separates the concept of power from that of domination, he notes that power is tied to constraint, exploitation and coercion as well as to freedom, emancipation and interdependence (Giddens, 1984: 257; see also Tucker, 1998: 114–5). So whilst the power of the individual is a central theme here, the question that structuration theory may immediately demand in the study of any society is, 'how much power does the individual have?'

Far from viewing power as an unproblematic notion – seemingly limitless regardless of structural forces such as poverty, class, gender or ethnicity – structuration theory problematizes the extent of individual empowerment in any given society. This is further evidenced, as Giddens explicitly rejects the idea of power as a zero-sum game, where structure would exercise power over the agent just as much as the agent has power to transform structure, or where this relationship must ultimately have some form of equilibrium at the macro level (1984: 15).

The idea of structuration theory as a framework with empowerment of the individual as its key site of investigation is deepened when examining critiques of Giddens' concept and use of action: many critics note that Giddens overstates the ability of actors to act freely, even within the context of his own theory. Kilminster concludes that despite his insistence upon a duality of structure, Giddens still appears as an action-theorist (1991: 84–98; see also Johnson et al., 1984). Bauman (1989) also concludes that Giddens has gone too far in his attempt to reconstitute the actor as a knowledgeable, independent focal point for sociological enquiry. But there is little sign of any capacity to read structuration

theory as general theory, which would need to fully theorize structure, agency and the relationship between the two in such a way that the resulting framework could be taken to any field and seen to be pertinent. Since this is neither within the scope nor likely within the intentions of structuration theory, this emphasis on agency is best understood primarily as part of a normative, rather than a methodological, outlook. Kilminster is one of the few authors (see also Loyal, 2003) who show awareness of this:

> . . . structuration theory articulates, with an implicit normative stress, the dominant self-experience and public code of behaviour of highly self-controlled individuals in advanced industrial societies. But it is unable to show how this kind of individual came to develop in the first place.
>
> (Kilminster, 1991: 101)

We can further develop the normative foundations of Giddens' perspective from here. Kilminster is correct in saying that Giddens gives little indication of 'how this kind of individual came to develop in the first place'. It is indeed hardly conceivable how any theory with so few substantive or descriptive components might achieve this. But it is precisely in this vacuum that the root of Giddensian critical social theory is located. Since structuration theory posits the idea of reflexive, empowered actors who draw on stocks of knowledge to either reproduce or transform social systems, it also implicitly raises issues of how much power particular agents have in particular societies, how much reflexivity is possible, who or what controls the stocks of knowledge and, indeed, how much capacity for transformation as opposed to straightforward reproduction there is in any particular case of instantiation. Moreover, structuration theory might lead us to ask, 'what kind of transformation appears conceivable in a particular society?'

Structuration theory itself does not provide answers to these questions: arguing at an abstract, second-order level, it cannot provide answers to questions so sensitive to particularities (Gregson, 1989). However, contemplating these questions at all requires engagement with Giddens' conceptualization of structure and constraint, to assess how these are to be thought of, and how they relate to the normative primacy of agency in his work. Moreover, the notion of stocks of knowledge may initially suggest a culturalist definition of structure in Giddens' work, but further analysis highlights that this is not the case.

Structure and constraint in Giddens' work

In his later work Giddens shows awareness of structural features and constraints in present-day societies, but – as we shall see in the next chapter – he chooses not to explain these any further. Structuration theory is the only area of Giddens' work that contains more than surface-level engagement with notions of structure and constraint. Despite conceptually emphasizing the importance of agency, structuration theory nevertheless devotes considerable thought to these issues.

Structure is defined by Giddens simply as rules and resources. Self-evidently, this initial definition is vague, and Giddens explicitly adds to this vagueness, noting when he further discusses 'rules' that this term ought to be taken in a wide sense, encompassing formal laws, where disobedience is met with formally stated punitive consequences, as well as non-punitive rules, social protocol or unspoken behavioural codes (1984: 169–74).[3] On 'resources', he is less explicit, but we can infer that here too the term is to be understood in a wider sense, encompassing capital and property, but also social or cultural capital. Given Giddens' extensive work on canonical social theorists, inclusion of the latter in his definition of resources is intuitively feasible. Even a Foucauldian dimension can be read into this, where discourse (Foucault, 1966) could be understood as a resource.

Of course, if we can read such a broad range of perspectives into Giddens' definition of structure, then the criticism is once again validated that he offers nothing new and should best be ignored in favour of other authors who are more specific in their analysis. However, his vague definition of structure is unsurprising, because his primary concern is not the definition of structure itself, but its development over time and space. It is on this issue that his conceptualization of structure becomes especially important.

Giddens emphasizes the importance of time and space in the conceptualization of social structure by noting that structures are not timeless constants that exist independently of agents. To illustrate: there may well be a rule that states that lateness for work is punishable by certain sanctions; but if human beings spontaneously ceased to exist, this rule would equally cease to be of significance as there would be nobody to either enforce, obey or violate it. Thus Giddens distinguishes within his conception of structure between structural properties and systems. Rules and resources are in themselves structural properties; systems are reproduced relations between agents – relations, which are organized based on these structural properties. Therefore, 'structuration' then refers to

the conditions governing the continuity or transformation of systems (Giddens, 1984: 25).

Giddens does little to clarify his definitions of structural properties and systems, so we could once again read any number of social theorists into his thoughts on this. We might, as mentioned, envisage a Foucauldian dimension, where discourse might act as a resource. Similarly, there is room for Marxist theory, where ownership and capital form systems that are reproduced over time. We could take social or cultural capital to be 'resources', whilst 'system' is a term that could easily accommodate for Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977). This certainly underscores the abstract nature of structuration theory and its lack of clear definitions of key terms. However, regardless of what we take to be meant by structural properties and systems, Giddens chiefly urges the reader to investigate the conditions of system reproduction and thus also the scope for system transformation.

Though rightly pointed out by critics, Giddens' vagueness on rules, resources and systems is unproblematic for the subject matter at hand here. Given the extent of his later contributions on more substantive matters, we can go directly to empirical analysis to ascertain the key structural properties and systems in the late modern age. But before moving on to such a substantive analysis, the issue of constraint is a further element of structuration theory that needs to be considered in order to understand how to problematize the extent of transformative agency and the agent's empowerment.

The Constitution of Society deals with this issue explicitly. Having separated 'material constraint', meaning constraining properties of the physical world (including mortality and gravity), Giddens then defines constraint resulting from sanction on one hand and structural constraint on the other. The former relates to punitive responses on the part of some agents towards others, which may take the shape of anything from formal punishment to simple disapproval.[4] Structural constraint is then defined as:

> . . . constraint deriving from the contextuality of action, i.e. from the 'given' character of structural properties vis-à-vis situated actors. (1984: 176)

Put differently, actors may either draw on rules and resources to directly and perhaps intentionally limit other actors' possibilities, or an actor may find their possibilities limited due to their own position within a certain system at a particular time of its ongoing reproduction. This

can be taken to empirical contexts, where we can then ask: where are the instances in which the scope for punitive action or contextuality of present systems limits actors' ability to act in an empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable way? As examples, we might envisage a woman fearing the disapproval of her peers should she decide to become a working mother (sanction), or the lack of digital infrastructure in a rural area, denying the community access to information (contextual character of structural properties).

But this in itself tells only part of the story for the task of ascertaining a critical and potentially transformative endeavour from the normative dimensions of Giddens' earlier contributions. A further element of structuration theory vital for this task derives from the duality of structure.

Giddens' theory departs from most classical sociological theory in that structure is not viewed as fixed. It does not view structure and action as separate entities, where structures become iron fortresses limiting what would otherwise be infinite scope for action. Instead, he notes on several occasions that structure has constraining and enabling properties, and that whilst structure can limit the scope for action, it also provides the context for action to take place (Giddens, 1984: 25, 177). Those actions that can take place in a given system at a given time lead to the reproduction of structure; and due to the possibility to reinterpret and recontextualize structural properties, there is scope for transformation of systems over time.

Whether or not this is always a useful way to look at sociological problems is contestable. Indeed, the question of how much capacity for transformation as opposed to straightforward reproduction agents may have in a given system is both a key site of interest for structuration theory and is also a determinant of how useful structuration theory might be.[5]

From normative foundations to utopian realism

At this point, we can begin to depart from meta-theoretical discussion and note at this early stage what the political implications of a Giddensian social critique might look like, based on the duality of structure and on the issue of scope for system transformation.

Firstly, the duality of structure, the capacity to transform structure and its capacity to be enabling as well as constraining, implies that a Giddensian politics project would not necessarily need to abolish or overthrow the structural properties or systems currently in existence.

In practical terms this means that such a project does not have to be of a revolutionary nature – as would be the case for instance with Marx – because it is at least theoretically possible to achieve social change through the systems that are already in place, providing that the available rules and resources can be drawn on in new ways in order to achieve system transformation. Secondly, this means that a Giddensian politics does not work towards abolition or minimization of structure itself. That is to say, it is not a case of 'the fewer structural properties or systems we have, the better'. Since in principle structure has enabling elements, a Giddensian political project should ask how the present system might be transformed to the effect of limiting its properties that constrain reflexive action by empowered, knowledgeable individuals, whilst fostering those elements that enable it.

Giddens' opposition to notions of equilibrium between constraining and enabling aspects of structure is critical: were structure a zero-sum game with consistently equal amounts of winners and losers, removal of constraints for some would automatically result in new constraints for others. Within structuration theory, it is feasible for some systems to entail intensely constraining features, virtually stifling most agents' capacity for transformative action, whilst others may give a lot of scope for transformation rather than structurally determined reproduction.[6] As we will see, this is reflected in the analysis of late modernity, which Giddens identifies as a period in which the capacity for reflexivity and the possibility of different lifestyle choices has been amplified, albeit nevertheless still obstructed by various factors.

Moving to the fully substantive realm, a Giddensian politics could therefore be based firmly within the present system. If it is possible not just to reproduce but to transform systems, then there is no reason why such a project could not be based within political systems that already exist. In practice, this means that the realm of political parties and representative democracy, alongside civil society, the public sphere and the everyday could easily be the context in which a Giddensian political project might operate. Viewed through the normative lens of structuration theory, this could, for instance, be through reform of a political party that already exists or through the creation of a new one.

Given the breadth of different modes of political action advocated by social theorists, it is important to even consider these rather basic elements of what shape a Giddensian politics might take. Rather than randomly selecting the existing realm of formal political activity – in preference perhaps to revolution or anarchy – these points show that Giddens' conceptualization of structure, systems and structural

constraint is favourable to this type of political project. Meanwhile, the way he conceptualizes social transformation also gives some indication of where, ultimately, a Giddensian politics might be going.

Having established the normative dimensions of structuration theory and assessed how structure and constraint are operationalized, we can now look directly at Giddens' own thoughts on the issue of critical social theory. Most extensive engagement with this issue is found in his work immediately following the outline of structuration theory: the two volumes of the *Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*. Some helpful introductory thoughts are also contained in an interview conducted between publication of the two volumes by Bleicher and Featherstone. In it, Giddens notes:

> I want to follow the strategy of, so to speak, firing critical salvos into reality and attempting to focus them around these issues that I mentioned before: the distinctiveness of the modern world, the implications of that by contrast to the traditional world, what this leaves in the way of obvious formulae for political theory and then how one can, as it were, spin a web around them.
>
> (Giddens, in Bleicher and Featherstone, 1982: 72)

The notion of distinctiveness is central, as this is the point where importance is attributed to empirical research in the construction of social critique. But it is also worth understanding what Giddens means by 'firing critical salvos into reality'. Bernstein (1989) argues that for Giddens, the capacity of social theory to be critical stems from the reflexive nature of sociological texts. In other words, even if a sociological text is not of an immediately evident critical nature and does not have a normative grounding for critique in and of itself, its transformative capacity, rooted in the reflexivity of its readers, ensures that it can nevertheless act as a starting point for critical theory. This 'double-hermeneutic' (Giddens, 1982, 1984), where the researcher studies society and society studies the study, leads Giddens to claim that all social sciences are inherently critical (Giddens, in Bleicher and Featherstone, 1982: 74; see also Bryant, 1991). This is contentious: being aware of the transformative capacity of any kind of text is important, not least in trying to ascertain what purpose a critical social theory might have; but simply stating that the transformative power of text is something that the social theorist should be aware of gives little indication of what exactly the social theorist ought to do, or what their 'critical salvos' should involve.

In *Power, Property and the State* and re-stated in *The Nation State and Violence,* Giddens introduces a further aspect of his views on critical theory: reflecting on Marx, he advocates 'critical theory without guarantees' (1981: 1–2, 1985: 337). Perhaps uncontroversially, he notes that history does not follow a *telos* and that it is therefore misguided to place 'the whole burden of history upon one revolutionary agency – the proletariat, acting in the context of class struggle' (1985: 337). Based on this lack of an overarching framework attached to claims about historical inevitability, he then notes that critical theory becomes stripped of historical guarantees and enters the universe of contingency:

> I do not mean by this that the Marxian theorem of the unity of theory and practice should be abandoned altogether. What we should envisage is, rather, a process of critique that does not recoil from connecting material possibilities of social reform with an utopian element. Every analysis of existing conditions of social life, because it is 'historical', i.e. concerned with the temporality of institutions in their reproduction by human actors, generates an understanding of their potential transformation.
>
> (Giddens, 1985: 337)

Having acknowledged the transformative power of sociological enquiry, Giddens elaborates on his approach by stating that social theory should work to acknowledge material possibilities of social reform and engage with possibilities for transformation.[7] From this, we can see that the aim of Giddens' approach is to focus on elements where the capacity for social reform and transformation may be identified as emergent, or where developments are emerging that might ultimately lead to transformations. This approach to social theory is further contextualized, expressed explicitly in contrast to Marx, and given its name in *The Consequences of Modernity*:

> . . . we can envisage alternative futures whose very propagation might help them be realised. What is needed is the creation of models of utopian realism.
>
> (Giddens, 1990: 154)

The concept of utopian realism is not discussed at any length in the critical literature on Giddens. Even the comprehensive edited volumes and books that seek to cover all aspects of his work rarely devote more than a couple of pages to this (Kaspersen, 2000: 111–3; McNally and

Wheale, 2001: 108–9; Loyal, 2003: 152–3). Indeed, Giddens himself does not devote much space to explaining this concept further.[8] Bryant and Jary make the point, echoing the argument here, that utopian realism is a direct continuation and contextualization of normative dimensions found in *Constitution of Society* (Bryant and Jary, 2001b: 45), although even they do not pursue this connection further. But if this were the whole story of utopian realism, we could easily voice serious objections: at this point, Giddens' methodological and ontological focus on the individual and relative neglect of structure and constraint seem to make him more utopian than realist.

This focus on agency and the individual in the context of critical theory is best illuminated by further contrasting utopian realism to historical materialism (Marx and Engels, 1846). Based on his rejection of *telos* – the notion of an evolution of societies – and the insistence on sociological endeavours as being inherently critical and transformative, he advocates 'critical theory without guarantees'. This absence of guarantees, evolution and *telos* necessarily gives Giddens an analytical focus distinct from that of historical materialism: if historical guarantees are assumed, then identifying transformative agency, exploring its transformative capacity and contemplating what kind of transformations might occur are relatively straightforward tasks, as compared to the task of typifying the society in question, especially its oppressive and constraining features, and thus making the case for transformation. On this issue, Giddens' utopian realist outlook differs.

In the absence of these 'guarantees', the task of identifying transformative agency, the scope for transformation and the processes by which this might take place becomes the most significant challenge for a critical social theory. We can contrast the two approaches directly: Marx engages in an extensive analysis of capitalist societies, highlighting its constraints and contradictions and understanding these as being part of an evolutionary process (Marx and Engels, 1846). Ultimately, this allows him to point to the proletariat as the transformative agency and communist societies as the end result (Marx and Engels, 1848). But Giddens, rejecting class struggle (see also Giddens, 1973), or anything for that matter, as the singular historical thread with all its attached inevitabilities, must emphasize this latter issue, of identifying the capacity for transformative agency and contemplating what kind of 'immanent possibilities' (Giddens, 1990: 155) for social change are contained in a given society. In a nutshell: for Marx, analysis of oppressive structures will highlight where the transformative agency is; for Giddens, identifying

the transformative agent may then highlight which structures can be transformed.

Outline of a Giddensian ontology of critique

What we have so far is an approach to critical theory that suggests empirical research as a starting point, where the aim is to identify capacities for, and limitations to, transformative agency. Given the transformative capacity of knowledge itself, it is the formulation of transformative capacity into sociological theory that may aid such transformations to take place. From the arguments here, there is no definitive indication as to whether a purely descriptive theory of transformative agencies would be sufficient to help bring about the social changes perceived by the theorist to be possible or whether a programmatic dimension would also be necessary. Such programmatic dimensions of critical social theory are nothing new: Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* (1848), acting as a call to arms based on other, more descriptive parts of their theory, is one example of these. Whilst this latter element might be viewed as a desirable part of a critical social theory, the texts containing the Giddensian ontology of critique do not yet allow for a definitive conclusion on this point. But the issue we are still left with is that of normative foundation, of a distinct political outlook to which the critical theory in some way ought to conform. Giddens' work has a normative stress on transformative agency, which acts as the starting point for the Giddensian ontology of critique but does not present us with a normative grounding of a critical theory as such. Based on what we have seen so far, a Giddensian critical theorist might for instance identify the executives of large financial corporations as having the transformative agency to plunge developing regions of the world into devastating debt crises. Many might ask, including the theorist themselves, whether the idea of fostering such developments through the espousal of theory would really be a wise thing to do. What is still needed is a device capable of giving some direction to a Giddensian critical theory, in other words, to help decide what kind of transformative agency is worth theorizing and thus fostering. On the issue of normative grounding in critical theory, Giddens notes:

> I don't really think that I'd support any programme of trying to ground critical theory, but nor will I support the opposite, that is the idea of a purely immanent critique or ungroundable form of critique.

> I would probably work more from within a sociological conception which would seem to me to suggest that some things are clearly noxious and other things are clearly desirable and that it isn't necessary to ground them in order to proclaim this to be so.
>
> (Giddens, in Bleicher and Featherstone, 1982: 72)

In extreme cases, such as full-scale nuclear annihilation or ecological disasters, there is a degree of merit to this point, but beyond this the sentiment expressed in the preceding quote is likely to run into trouble upon any significant scrutiny. But whilst at the universal level, Giddens' assertion is disputable, it does of course apply to the subjective: it is hard to conceive of an individual who does not view anything as either 'desirable' or 'noxious'. The source of moral relativism stems from the fact that what exactly those things are differs between individuals (Lukes, 2008). This subjectivity applies likewise to the theorist. In this sense, every critical social theory is likely to be grounded initially in the subjective moral outlook of its author. But the Giddensian ontology of critique allows questioning of the extent to which this necessarily affects the critical theory as a whole. By placing empirical research in general and the identification of transformative agency in particular at the heart of the construction of critical social theory, its normative grounding can partially be positioned outside of the author's own subjectivity.[9] If analysis of a society were to highlight transformative capacity in a way that differs from but is still compatible with the critical theorist's own outlook, a Giddensian ontology of critique would oblige the theorist to change their outlook based on the empirical research. To contextualize this in an example: a theorist might, for instance, be of a revolutionary socialist persuasion, but analysis of a particular society might reveal no desire for revolution within that society nor agencies capable of carrying it out; it may however highlight social movements or other political agencies with goals broadly compatible with socialism, albeit perhaps under a different name and with a non-revolutionary agenda.[10] Assuming that the theorist is willing to modify their outlook without compromising their integrity, a critical social theory could be created, which still has as its starting point the inescapable subjectivity of its author, yet assumes a normative grounding that is mediated by empirical findings located beyond the author's subjectivity. Though not too much should be read into the connection, Giddens' stance on critical theory is remarkably analogous to a slogan espoused by Tony Blair's New Labour government in its pronouncements on the importance of evidence-based policymaking, 'what counts is what works' (Labour Party, 1997).

Having demonstrated its key components, it is now possible to define the Giddensian ontology of critique. His work suggests an approach to constructing critical social theory involving four stages: firstly, an empirical analysis of the society to which the critical theory is intended to apply, with an emphasis on the identification of transformative agency towards potential ends broadly congruent with the subjective outlook of the theorist; secondly, the adaptation of the author's subjective outlook to the transformative agencies identified by empirical research (if the author wishes to adapt – if not, the process ends here); thirdly, the construction of a critical theory that highlights these forms of transformative agency, and which may also include a substantive political project to tackle whatever structural constraints that may be limiting these agencies; fourthly, aiding the social transformation deemed possible through empirical analysis, most immediately by propagating the theory.

There are no grounds in Giddens' work to claim that this approach to critical theory is the only possible one. It can exist in the ontological repertoire of critical social theory alongside other approaches, including more outspokenly subjective critiques as well as other synthesising approaches such as Archer's morphogenesis and critical realism (1982, 1995) or Mouzelis' related approach (1995). But the Giddensian approach extracted here has two distinguishing features.

Firstly, we can understand the Giddensian ontology of critique as an attempt to steer clear of both teleological dimensions as well as of dimensions limited by pure subjectivity. The former of these two tasks is relatively unproblematic: Giddens rejects the notion of historical guarantees and urges social theorists and researchers to focus on the particularities of a given society. On the latter, the approach found in his work does not do away with the issue of subjectivity on the part of the theorist, but points instead towards a normative grounding of critique that is not fully located within that subjectivity. By viewing empirically observable emergent transformative agencies as the starting point for a critical theory, the theorist does not directly build a theory on their own normative political outlook but must instead decide whether the observed emerging phenomena are sufficiently compatible with it. Giddens' work is thus of use to those interested in constructing critical social theories that move beyond normative subjectivity but who do not wish to do so by resorting to potentially unfounded notions of historical guarantees or teleological assumptions.

Secondly, the approach found in his work affirms the importance of the entirety of social scientific endeavour by giving us a framework that

links empirical research, the construction of theory and the creation of a normative outlook. Empirical research is not simply an important basis for social theory so that theories are not, as it were, plucked out of thin air; it also directly shapes the normative outlook of said theory. Whilst other writers with a comparable thematic focus to Giddens might well be viewed as more successful in terms of integrating and sufficiently analysing the various components of sociological investigation, Giddens' approach succeeds in integrating the key elements of sociological endeavour as a whole and therefore presents a way of adding coherence to the discipline in terms of shaping the relationships between empirical research, the formulation of theory and construction of normative critical potential.[11]

Discussing this most abstract level of Giddens' work was necessary in order to move forward to his more substantive contributions. His descriptive accounts of contemporary societies have been subject to extensive criticism, and in order to make sense of these works, it was first necessary to clarify the higher level theoretical context in which those accounts need to be placed. The possibility of reading his analysis of late modernity as an application of the ontology of critique outlined here will be a major theme of the following chapters. For now, the most important point to consider is that from this relatively early stage in Giddens' work, there is a strong normative critical streak, which above all urges us to consider that the individual has power, and that problematizing its extent, its context and its given possibilities for social transformation should be the focal point of utopian realist endeavours.

2
Utopian Realism – Late Modernity Revisited

The analysis of late modernity comprises a series of Giddens' texts first published in the early 1990s. These include most notably *The Consequences of Modernity*, *Modernity and Self-identity* and to a lesser extent *Beyond Left and Right*, which in part already moves from sociological analysis towards more programmatic pronouncements. Unlike his works around structuration theory, which deal with abstract theoretical concepts (structure, agency, time, space, power), these texts are centred on a substantive analysis of the world we inhabit today, and the social transformations, inequalities, opportunities and threats we encounter in it.[1] For the most part, these works attempt to analyse contemporary societies with ambitiously all-encompassing scope. *The Transformation of Intimacy* (1992) focuses on more clearly demarcated sociological issues, but nevertheless reflects and elucidates key conclusions evident in his wider analysis of late modern times, and is as such an important part of this central cluster of his work.

This chapter highlights two distinct ways of reading Giddens' analysis of late modernity: either as a descriptive account with the intention of accurately representing the current state of affairs, or as a utopian realist account, where highlighting the existing capacity for system transformation is the central aim. The former – which without the preceding analysis on the Giddensian ontology of critique would be the more obvious approach – makes Giddens' conclusions highly problematic; the latter is more defensible but, as we shall see, results in the need for a political project, without which his work remains utopian, with little sense of a realist component, and vulnerable to charges of elitism.[2] Additionally, this chapter will highlight evidence that reading the analysis of late modernity in the second of these two ways is in fact Giddens' demonstrable intention. These conclusions open the debate on what a

Giddensian political project needs to look like in order to complete the utopian realist reading of his work, and indeed, whether the political project he devised in the late 1990s meets those criteria.

Giddens famously rejects the idea of postmodernity and instead introduces the idea of 'late' or 'radicalized' modernity (Giddens, 1990: 149). By this he means that the basic characteristics typically used to define modernity – capitalism, the nation state system, paradigms of science and rationalization, the worldwide division of labour and the global military order (1990: 55–78) – are still in place but are supplemented by increased reflexivity, triggered by increased access to resources that make such reflexivity possible. His works explicitly contrast this idea with that of postmodernity, which understands the self as dissolved by the fragmenting of experience. The insistence on 'late' rather than 'post' modernity is shorthand for the idea of the self as more than just a site of intersecting forces because active processes of reflexive formation of identity deriving from the critical capacity of individuals are not merely possible in contemporary societies but become more pronounced, even institutionalized (1990: 150). The notion of late modernity thereby continues the theme found in structuration theory of empowered individuals and of the agent as the key site through which we can sociologically investigate the world. The question is: where does this reflexivity come from?

Giddens' answer is that a new, late modern constitution of the self becomes possible due to three profound social revolutions: globalization; post-traditionalism; and, finally, individualization, which in the context of his arguments is already synonymous with reflexivity. Globalization, understood primarily as the rise of information and communication technologies, forces formally distant cultures and ways of living into contact with each other. Consequently, cultures and lifestyles that formally justified and legitimized themselves in a self-referential way have greater difficulty doing so: as information about alternative ways of life becomes available to individuals, traditions lose their natural self-legitimation and thus, potentially, their salience and significance. With tradition no longer fully shaping and dictating the formation of each individual's identity, the individual herself, through means of interaction, observing and absorbing different possible lifestyle choices, becomes the author of her own identity, with social structure or culture less able to function as determinants, resulting in a reflexive project of the self. It is not without travails, and can easily become politicized, as individuals come up against barriers to the implementation of their life choices or struggle to see the political implications of their choices

reflected in their surrounding social, economic and political context. Moreover, decline of external determinants of identity, combined with the complexity of the global social system in which the individual finds herself, amplifies notions of risk, trust and uncertainty – notions also explored in particular detail by Beck (1992). But fundamentally, the tone throughout Giddens' work suggests that this increased capacity for reflexivity is essentially positive and desirable: it is, for Giddens, the single most distinctive social development of the present age, and marks the foundation of his subsequent political work.

This overview should not be read as attributing an essentialist character to Giddens, where globalization is the direct root cause of all the further revolutions. Other factors often feature as important prerequisites for these phenomena to take place, most notably the rise of mass literacy (1992: 26, 40), which is not necessarily attributable to globalization or post-traditionalism but nevertheless a precondition for heightened social reflexivity. The following chapters will additionally highlight that many of these social revolutions can exacerbate each other in many different combinations. Given Giddens' rejection of linear historical development, such a perfectly neat and sequential pattern would indeed have been surprising.[3] But fundamentally, globalization, post-traditionalism and social reflexivity contribute to individualization, which here is understood as self-creation in the context of reflexivity and availability of information.

The social revolutions of globalization, post-traditionalism and individualization highlight a critical point: Giddens' notion of the knowledgeable, reflexive, empowered agent already posited in structuration theory should not be understood as a universal, timeless constant. Reflecting structuration theory's emphasis on particularities, this type of agent is facilitated in the context of modernity and especially of late modernity. Given that there are distinct components of late modernity that enable this type of agent, there is also the possibility of factors that may inhibit their existence. This conclusion has significant implications for whatever political projects might later on be based on these writings of Giddens.

The Consequences of Modernity is an important connection point: it is heavily informed by structuration theory, drawing on many of its elements and explaining in more detail how the principles of his earlier work are to be understood in a substantive context, most notably reflexivity and the individual's self-understanding in the context of their surrounding systems. Additional points in this context are time and space, whose transformation is now tied to globalization, as well

as the standardization of these dimensions through the institutions of modernity.[4] At the same time, the foundations for Giddens' later works are laid here (Rosenberg, 2000: 87–91), culminating in discussion of the substantive political implications of the late modern age. Many of these points also recur in more elaborated form in *Modernity and Self-identity*, where late modernity is once again described as an era whose characteristics enable (or even enforce) the emergence of a new and differently constituted self. Furthermore, the capacity for social transformation through the interplay between the availability of information (ranging from academic literature to all forms of mass media) and individuals' capacity to access it and to integrate it into their lives are important themes. This feature, along with its increasingly globalized nature, contributes to Giddens' perspective on late modernity.

The Transformation of Intimacy highlights particularly clearly how the transition from reflexive agents as a meta-theoretical emphasis to a substantive claim about the late modern age comes about. Giddens explains that the emergence of scientific knowledge and the advent of more-or-less fully literate populations constitute part of the necessary resources for individuals to be able to engage in reflexive processes, in this case around their sexuality and intimate relationships (Giddens, 1992: 24).[5] This capacity was therefore not always universal: in pre-modern times, he notes, sexual liberation and individuals able to pursue their sexual desires did exist, but typically only within the very top social strata and even here only to a limited extent (ibid: 39).

As in his wider works on late modernity, here too Giddens' conception of agency cannot be seen to apply universally but is a condition specifically attributable to modern societies. We saw earlier that the normative nature of Giddens' previous work urges us to assess the extent of reflexivity and empowerment in a given society. This is precisely the approach taken in *The Transformation of Intimacy*, amplified by rejection of Foucault's theory on sexuality, which is characterized as placing much emphasis on structure and its constraining nature, where power, its substantive locus ill-defined, lies squarely in the realm of structure, whilst agents are effectively viewed as 'docile bodies' (ibid: 18–34).[6] Meanwhile, the issue of critical social theory and transformative power is also evident here. The availability of, and access to, relevant information is noted as a key precondition for social transformations to occur (ibid: 24), and Giddens notes explicitly:

> An expansion of institutional reflexivity is a distinctive characteristic of modern societies in the relatively recent period. Increased

> geographical mobility, the mass media and a host of other factors have undercut elements of tradition in social life which long resisted – or became adapted to – modernity. The continual reflexive incorporation of knowledge not only steps into the breach; it provides precisely a basic impetus to the changes which sweep through personal, as well as global contexts of action.
>
> (ibid: 29)

This passage draws together some of the most relevant points on structuration theory and its first-order applications: social agents are reflexive, empowered beings with capacity for transformative action. However, this definition only becomes evident in the contemporary context, where several factors are given that enable individuals to be characterized as such, with the reflexive nature of knowledge of paramount importance.

This brief look at *The Transformation of Intimacy* shows how some key tenets of structuration theory noted earlier re-appear in Giddens' later work. Regardless of the salient criticisms that have been made about the data used and the conclusions drawn in this particular text (Gimenez, 1993; Jamieson, 1999), it is nevertheless visibly informed by Giddens' earlier work. The continuity between Giddens' structuration theory and his analysis of late modernity suggests that he has made the move from second-order theory, which draws on canonical theorists to consider abstract concepts such as structure, agency and power, to a substantive first-order theory that deals with the present age in more specific terms – a shift that was in fact postulated by some critics prior to the analysis of late modernity (Gregson, 1989). An understanding is developed in which there are prerequisites for this type of agency to come into being, thus also opening up the possibility to identify forces that may inhibit it. This reflexive, late modern self comes about due to globalization, the ensuing post-traditionalism, individualization and social reflexivity. The question now is: how valid is Giddens' assessment? In other words, can these supposed hallmarks of late modernity be questioned in terms of their empirical accuracy?

The limits of late modernity as a descriptive account

Given Giddens' openly adversarial stance, postmodernists tend to disagree with his entire analytical framework (Lemert, 1992).[7] But more broadly, Giddens' analysis of late modernity has triggered critical literature ranging from hostile to sympathetic, and most often voicing

concerns about particular elements of his assessment of the current age. A major shortcoming worth noting here before we consider other critiques at length is the charge of a limited understanding of media research (Kaspersen, 2000: 170; Tomlinson, 1994). This weakens the assertion that mass media creates a worldwide unitary framework of experience through globalization and standardized time-space relations. Indeed, despite information, communication and the possibilities of modern technology being a cornerstone of his analysis, there is little reflection in his work about the large body of research on the media as an industry, with the capacity to manufacture opinion, distort facts and affect the constitution of the self in a market-friendly and at times politically premeditated form (Thompson, 1995; Rozell and Mayer, 2008). This shortcoming will be of particular significance in the final chapter of this book as it decisively affects the capacity to extract programmatic suggestions from Giddens on the renewal of public spheres.

Though the aims of this book necessitate mentioning Giddens' limited assessment of the contemporary media and information landscape at the outset, this lack of deeper engagement with factors inhibiting the social revolutions described in the analysis of late modernity is a theme highlighted throughout the following pages. The previous chapter showed that despite the charge of over-emphasis on agency, structuration theory goes to some effort to consider the element of structure, thus creating a synthesis of sorts. In Giddens' later contributions, the charge is that such efforts no longer appear to be present. Kaspersen notes in his assessment:

> In [Giddens'] analysis of modernity it has been an underlying intention to base this analysis on the theory of structuration in order to provide a more adequate diagnosis of modernity without falling into the actor or structure gap. This ambition is not fulfilled. His analysis of self-identity, life political choices, and the transformation of intimacy does not specify the constraining aspect of structures.
>
> (Kaspersen, 2000: 169)

If true, this is a serious charge, leaving Giddens' analysis vulnerable to critiques demanding awareness of structural constraint. It would further constitute an inconsistency between this purely agent-centred analysis and a genuine attempt at synthesis – all be it skewed – in his earlier work. Structure as a context for action to take place is of course an important component of Giddens' theoretical framework, and these enabling properties are implicit in his account of the late modern self. However, the

extent of awareness of structural constraint evident in the analysis of late modernity needs to be assessed in some detail. The central question here is whether there is empirical merit in highlighting the significance of globalization, post-traditionalism and increased reflexivity and individualization, or whether these social revolutions can be convincingly countered through evidence of factors constraining their significance – or even existence.

Globalization

There is barely a publication by Giddens beyond the late 1980s that does not refer to the theme of globalization in some form. However, there are two definitions of globalization present in his work. The first denotes the global capitalist economy of the present day: trade networks, financial markets and corporate empires have come ever more to transcend national borders and operate globally – for better or for worse. This definition is by far less central in his work but significantly more prominent in the wider literature relating to this emblematic term (Hirst and Thomspon, 1998; Held et al., 2000; Martell, 2010; Germain, 2013). The second definition more prominently at work in his analysis focuses on the individual's connectedness to the wider world: modern communication and information technology – from long distance phone calls and satellite TV to mass transit and the Internet – have led to a contraction of time and space and thus fundamentally alter the individual's experience of the world and consequently the world's social fabric.

These two definitions are connected: the globalization of the individual's experience has been facilitated through the networks and innovations of global economic players. The form and content of the individual's channels of information and communication are shaped by said players' interests – and the players in turn rely on the effective functioning of these channels for business to continue. However, sociologically, we need to separate these two dimensions as they are distinct in terms of where an analysis of globalization might lead us. Globalization understood as a key development in the capitalist economy requires extensive analysis throughout the social and economic sciences. It is clearly a major structural and structuring feature of contemporary life and a source of much hardship and oppression as well as innovation and opportunity. But globalization understood primarily as vastly increased means of communication and information sharing is also significant, though these developments inevitably take us into different analytical terrain.

The economic dimensions of globalization will be the main subject matter of Chapter 4, which will assess the economic context in which a politics based on Giddens is set and how such a politics ought to view capitalism and the present-day market economy. In order to better understand Giddens' thesis on late modernity, and to assess whether the notion of reflexive, knowledgeable individuals is plausible as a condition of present-day societies, we need here to focus on the idea of globalization as an altering of the individual's experience, brought about by what might be termed the globalizing technologies. Though as we shall see, Giddens discusses economic and political dimensions of globalization at several points in his work, the consequences of the globalizing technologies are central, as reflected in his definition of the term:

> Globalization can . . . be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.
>
> (Giddens, 1990: 64)

This definition not least encompasses economic dimensions, as the global economy relies just as heavily on intensification of worldwide social relations as the individual. But this is only half the story; reflecting predominantly on Marxist critics of the global economy as well as on commentators who embrace the current economic state of affairs, Giddens also notes:

> . . . I don't believe that either the sceptics or the radicals have properly understood what [globalization] is or its implications for us. Both groups see the phenomenon almost solely in economic terms. This is a mistake. Globalization is political, technological and cultural, as well as economic. It has been influenced above all by developments in systems of communication, dating back only to the late 1960s.
>
> (Giddens, 1999: 10)

This line of thought is key to understanding Giddens' globalization thesis: a certain degree of primacy is attributed to the globalizing technologies. Without these, the economic, political and cultural dimensions would be unthinkable. The global economy, its political and cultural order, may well refract back on how global communication and information networks develop and change – in both form and content. But due to this conceptual primacy, it is the contraction of time and space

rather than, say, the increased might of global financial institutions or the social and economic impacts of transnational corporations that lies at the heart of his perspective.

Even ardent critics concede that in terms of numbers of channels and their geographical reach, there has clearly been a globalization of the telecommunications infrastructure in recent decades, starting especially since World War II and speeding up with the advent of digital communications and the Internet around the time Giddens published his main works on late modernity (Held et al., 2000: 343). Yet, despite the existence of new technologies able to link different parts of the world a lot more easily than was the case in previous times, there are several empirical cautions when linking this up to the notion of globalization. Although there is, in principle, an observable phenomenon of a globalization of telecommunications (Staple, 1996), it is by no means evenly spread around the globe and certainly does not manifest itself in an undifferentiated rise in communications between all countries: many regions of the world have been largely excluded from this type of globalization, with the resulting scenario termed the 'digital divide' (Norris, 2001). Differential levels of access to communication technology are also a major issue within developed countries and will therefore be discussed in more detail later on in contexts other than globalization. Suffice to say for now, Giddens' globalization thesis already runs into trouble due to large shares of the world population having little part in the technological innovations that might lead to a contraction of time and space.

It is not just form but also content of the existing communication and information channels that lead to scepticism of Giddens. Access to media varies greatly across the globe, especially between rich and poor countries (Held et al., 2000: 358). In this realm, it is not just a matter of unequal distribution of access to media, but additionally a limited number of countries – notably the US and UK – whose media content ranging from TV programmes to research publications are distributed on this scale in the first place (ibid: 355, 360; Tietze and Dick, 2013). Globalization of media then appears as a form of cultural imperialism, where those countries that had economically successful industries on an international scale in the first place have expanded this success into the media sector. Therein lies a principal charge that has been applied to many levels of the globalization debate, most notably to the economic, the military (Rappa, 2011) and the cultural: that globalization is, by many critics' assessment, 'westernization' (Ritzer, 1993; Held et al., 2000: 372; Artz and Kamalipour, 2003).[8]

It is here that the economic dimension of globalization becomes a direct challenge to Giddens: in the 1990s, there were many who criticized the very concept of globalization, because the disproportionate consumption and production of cultural phenomena made the new global order appear as a case of 'much of the same', entailing dominance of long-established, predominantly western superpowers, with simply a few additional channels through which to exercise said power.

A famed study in this context is Hirst and Thompson's *Globalization in Question* (1998), which takes the approach of first defining globalization as the development of a new global economic structure that departs from the existing economic relations of past ages (ibid: 7) and then assessing whether such a transformation has taken place. Based on evidence gathered by other individual scholars, as well as UN and IMF data, the authors then largely dismiss globalization as a 'fashionable concept' (ibid: 195) and note, summarizing their critical objections:

> ... first,... few exponents of globalization develop a coherent concept of the world economy in which supra-national forces and agents are decisive; second, ... pointing to evidence of the enhanced internationalization of economic relationships since the 1970s is not in itself proof of the emergence of a distinctly 'global' economic structure; third, ... the international economy has been subject to many structural changes in the last century and ... there have been earlier periods of internationalization of trade, capital flows and the monetary system .... Fourth, ... truly global TNCs (transnational corporations) are relatively few and ... most successful multinational corporations continue to operate from distinct national bases ...
>
> (ibid)

Others have argued along similar lines, noting that there is no genuine transformation towards a truly global economy to be observed in our time, and that the type of international economy presently observable is at best a slightly evolved form of what has essentially been in place for centuries (Gordon, 1988; Ruigrok and Tulder, 1995; Boyer and Drache, 1996; Weiss, 1998). Along with other critics (Callinicos, 1994), Hirst and Thompson view the present international economic state of affairs as highly problematic and inegalitarian and envisage globalization, if anything, as a potential future project, centred around global governance as a tool for tackling the disproportionate yet historically far from unprecedented influence of transnational corporations (Hirst and Thompson, 1998: 170–94).

These perspectives suggest that how to respond critically to Giddens' globalization thesis depends on the starting point: agreeing with Giddens on the central role of the globalizing technologies leads us to highlight unequal access and distribution of these technologies, the strongly western and business-led influence on how these technologies operate and what content is consequently propagated through them. But not accepting Giddens' premise, and instead understanding economic dimensions as central to defining and understanding globalization, leads to an analysis around how much – or how little – has changed in terms of the world's powerful economic entities. This line of argument leads to qualitatively different critiques, where the globalizing technologies are just one further set of channels through which a global economic order that has been in place for centuries can continue to exist.

Objections to Giddens' globalization thesis therefore fall into the distributional or the ontological category. On economic dimensions of globalization, many critiques are of an ontological sort, where the very existence of globalization is questioned and countered. On the significance of the globalizing technologies, the arguments at hand focus more on distributional issues: acceptance of the principal existence of new technologies and technological revolutions coupled with observations on unequal distribution of, and access to, those technologies, leading to forms of exclusion from this type of globalization. Both lines of critique are important in trying to understand Giddens' work on late modernity. The economic line of critique becomes especially important for the subject matter of this book, as we have to assess how a Giddensian politics might react to the threats and opportunities of the present-day global economic order, which will be the central theme in Chapter 4.

But sociologically, in terms of understanding whether Giddens' thesis of post-traditional societies, heightened reflexivity and a transformation of the self stands up to empirical scrutiny, it is globalization in the realm of communication and culture that is of key interest. The claim in question is that globalization has created a social climate in which traditional systems of belief and lifestyles can no longer justify themselves self-referentially, leading to a post-traditional or even de-traditionalized[9] society.

The use of further investigating critical objections to Giddens' globalization thesis is therefore exhausted for the time being. His views on this matter are problematic and empirically questionable at many levels. In order to further evaluate the viability of his claims, it is now necessary

to examine the next social revolution Giddens associates with the late modern transformation of the self.

Post-traditionalism

Giddens never gives an exhaustive list of examples of what qualifies as a traditional belief system or a traditional lifestyle. However, two elements mentioned are established major religions (Giddens, 1991a: 195, 297), and ideas about family structures, gender roles and sexuality (Giddens, 1994: 84, 117). Occasionally, some other elements are pointed to, including, for instance, a section in *Beyond Left and Right*, where he cites electoral participation as being sustained by tradition (1994: 114). Given the lack of a comprehensive overview of possible traditions, the focus here will be on the two aforementioned areas. In both of them, there is considerable evidence that Giddens' assertions about post-traditional societies hardly stand up to scrutiny.

Many studies have shown that traditional religious beliefs and dogmas are, as it were, alive and well, and in parts even experiencing considerable resurgence. Such studies began to emerge prior to first publication of Giddens' seminal works on late modernity and continue to do so up to the present. Whilst Giddens claims that globalization has led to a weakening of tradition, Mendieta notes:

> Globalization has accelerated . . . the creation of the religious and the increase in the awareness that religion itself was not, could not and will not be abolished. [. . .] It is not co-incidental that globalization was partly heralded by global movements of religious revival and activism.
>
> (Mendieta, 2001: 46–7)

Mendieta draws this claim from several studies (Garrett and Robertson, 1991; Turner, 1991; Beyer, 1994). Although their authors do not necessarily acknowledge the causal link inferred by Mendieta, all conclude that there is at least continued survival, if not resurgence of religious beliefs, mostly centred on major established religions.

Further research highlights not only a survival of religious dogmas in the age of globalization, but notes that such belief systems often act self-referentially, for instance, where views and values founded in religious dogma become the major criterion for considering the moral acceptability of political platforms (Juergensmeyer, 2001). Further studies argue along similar lines, resulting in considerable objections to the idea of traditional religious beliefs becoming less significant, or indeed

less self-referential, and thus allowing us to speak of post-traditional societies. These objections hold at the level of empirical case studies and in wider theoretical discussions.[10]

There is likewise a substantial canon of critical literature on the idea of post-traditionalism in the field of gender, family, intimacy and sexuality. Though clearly an area of interest to Giddens, there is ample material that puts his conclusions into question. Not long after Giddens wrote his seminal texts on late modernity, many studies questioned his claims – some implicitly and some explicitly – by highlighting prevalence of the widespread desirability of marriage and child rearing within marriage as opposed to alternative relationship and family setups; widespread adherence to traditional gendered division of labour; and widespread persistence of traditional views on sexual practices, especially in relation to attitudes on monogamy and promiscuity.[11]

Based on the sheer volume of evidence alone, Giddens' views on post-traditionalism in the field of family, intimacy and gender are problematic. A qualification here is that many studies on this subject matter place a lot of emphasis on opinion surveys as opposed to actual social outcomes. This type of data is clearly useful when discussing issues relating to lifestyle choices. However, it is also of interest to look not just at public opinion but also whether lifestyles in these areas are in fact becoming de-traditionalized. Vogel's (2003) statistical analysis of social outcomes is much in line with what has been said above, though with a few qualifications. The study is based on indicators including birth rate, extra-marital birth rate, divorce and forms of co-habitation across all EU countries. On certain areas, for instance on gendered division of labour, the traditional gender roles still dominate everywhere (ibid: 96). In other areas, the study accepts the notion of post-traditionalism to an extent, but gives major qualifications:

> . . . gainful employment is . . . a matter of existing gender roles embedded in traditional value systems, which may change gradually, but still have a strong impact on individual decisions related to family pathways. There is no doubt that there is a common trend in Europe in the direction of changing values towards a two-breadwinner model, and towards full employment for men as well as women. However, the pace and level may vary much between [EU] member states, in relation to the opportunity structure, i.e. the supply of jobs and the public arrangements supporting female employment . . .
>
> (ibid: 95)

Much of Vogel's research reaches conclusions of this type, and indeed, other studies show variation in terms of social outcomes that do not reflect traditional lifestyles, but these are almost always limited to particular countries, regions, communities or social strata.[12] Whilst there are such qualifications, there is likewise research highlighting not just persistence, but intensification of traditional beliefs in certain spheres. Adkins considers gender in the workplace and concludes that in terms of the roles attributed to each gender there is in fact an evident process of re-traditionalization of gender in terms of employment (1999: 119).[13]

As in the case of religion, there is thus much evidence that many forms of traditional lifestyle and values persist and are showing little sign of giving way to a post-traditional age. Some of the research cited here explicitly mentions Giddens as its target of criticism, whilst some others only question his ideas by proxy. It is also worth noting that the research on religion on one hand and gender, intimacy and relationships on the other are acknowledged as being closely linked. Gross, who directly criticizes Giddens in relation to gender, intimacy and family, explicitly aligns himself with authors who have argued against post-traditionalism in other areas such as religion and nationalism (Gross, 2005: 305). This indicates that the authors cited here on intimacy, family and gender, and the previously discussed authors on the persistence of self-referential religious tradition can to a certain extent be viewed as part of a wider canon of research that opposes notions of post-traditionalism in general.

The case against Giddens strengthens: according to critics, globalization is in some respects not happening at all and in others, only to a limited extent, whilst post-traditionalism is also limited in its empirical manifestations. These deliberations leave little ground to suppose that the further social revolutions of social reflexivity and individualization have much empirical traction.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity and individualization are closely linked in Giddens' analysis, so much so that separating these two concepts here becomes superfluous: where individuals construct their identity reflexively through the information available to them, and where this reflexivity is understood to be replacing structural determinants, divergent identities no longer bound by said determinants are the inevitable result. The individual, rather than the society or structure that surrounds them becomes the key site of identity construction. Individual reflexivity thereby implies individualization, which allows us here to assess the two concepts in tandem.[14]

There are two related yet essentially distinct types of objection, both of which raise questions about reflexivity: some critiques question whether post-traditionalism – assuming it is happening at least to some extent – necessarily leads to reflexive formation of identity; others look at the availability of, and access to, the information flows that enable reflexivity in the first place, and show evidence of groups being excluded from them. These latter arguments follow to an extent from previously discussed critiques of Giddens' globalization thesis.

Elchardus (2009) dismisses reflexivity at a fundamental rather than distributional level. He explicitly mentions Giddens as the focus of critique, along with Beck[15] and others, which makes his arguments an especially helpful point of departure. Moreover, Elchardus accepts that there is some merit to the notion of post-traditionalism and even so argues against the consequent emergence of reflexivity. Put simply, a critique that accepts the developments supposedly leading to reflexivity provides Giddens' reflexivity thesis with its best shot at standing up to scrutiny. He defines individualism, specifically in relation to the work of Giddens and Beck:

> The most commonly encountered meaning sees individualization as an increased or great autonomy of the individual, resulting in (very) weak relationships between the individual's tastes, convictions and practices on the one hand, his [sic] collective identifiers on the other. Phrased differently: the tastes, convictions, and practices of individuals are idiosyncratic, and can no longer, to any significant extent, be predicted on the basis of the standard sociological variables (such as class, level of education, gender).
>
> (ibid: 148)

Elchardus then argues against this idea: the individual's life choices are still substantially affected by their position in the social structure, and it is in fact possible to predict life choices through analysis of structural determinants. Post-traditionalism has merely replaced or changed the structural determinants themselves, meaning that the classic analytical categories such as social class have either conceptually changed (Stewart, 2010; Savage et al., 2013) or have given way to new categories altogether, which now nevertheless have predictive power for individuals' lives. Consequently, individuals' life choices are affected by something other than reflexivity:

> Scarcity, religious belief and ideology, traditional ethics and roles, sensitivity to command and respect for authority, have lost much,

> if not all of their steering and controlling capacity. This does however not herald an epoch of individual autonomy, but a new form of social control, centered around the self, and in which schooling, the mass-media, the world of goods and therapy play an important role.
>
> (Elchardus, 2009: 146)

This sentiment is echoed by Adams (2003), who notes that reflexivity is at the very least mediated by culture, which consequently plays an important determinant role in shaping identities. These authors' scepticism about reflexivity can be illustrated by the example of vote choice. For some time, research has suggested that social class is becoming less of a determinant of voting behaviour (Inglehart, 1984). However, in their analysis of results of British elections held between 1964 and 1997, Andersen et al. (2006) demonstrate the presence of structural and cultural determinants of voting behaviour, as long as these determinants are properly defined, including in this case education as a main indicator of class. In other words, formally observable determinants may have changed, but they have not disappeared altogether and given way to reflexivity.

Aside from the specific issue of voting, there is a large canon of research on the predictability of individuals' life choices in general. The implication of reflexivity and individualization is that there can hardly be a standard life cycle. Echoing Giddens' views on reflexivity, Beck famously notes that the individual becomes the 'producer of his or her social biography' (Beck, 1992: 93); thus, elements of life cycles, such as residential setups, cultural practices or even tastes, should no longer be predictable through structural variables – however, ample research shows that they are.[16]

So, even assuming that post-traditionalism is a real phenomenon, there are two problems. Firstly, there is no logical ground to assume that if *A* (post-traditionalism) is the case, then *B* (reflexivity/individualization) must be the case as well. Secondly, empirical evidence on a range of issues strongly suggests that this is not the case.

Adkins (2003) argues along similar lines, though with a slightly more benevolent critique. Like Elchardus, she also explicitly addresses Giddens' theories rather than a broader hypothesis around rising individualism. She notes that whilst reflexivity might well exist to an extent, Giddens does not situate reflexivity in the life-world. In this sense, Giddens' concept of reflexivity is of an objectivist character, as it sees the reflexive individual as separated from its surroundings – in which structural determinants (gender in this specific case) must still be at

work (ibid: 23, 26; see also Crook, 1999; Dean, 1998). Adkins effectively shows that whilst the reflexive individual may partially be a determinant of life choice, there is the issue of individuals' situatedness, which in itself determines the specifics of their reflexivity. Thus, she asks, perhaps rhetorically:

> Why are there reflexive communities in some places and not others?
> (Adkins, 2003: 26)

This question leads to the second type of critique that can be mounted against Giddens' reflexivity thesis: the distributional critique, which was already alluded to earlier. In the context of globalization, it was foremost important to consider different levels of access to the communication and information technologies through which heightened social reflexivity becomes possible. However, we can add to this now that there must also be the individual's capacity to use technology. Beck echoes the importance of competence when he notes that it is specifically the 'educated person' who can become the producer of their own biography (Beck, 1992: 93). The direct analogue to this in Giddens' work, though somewhat vague compared to Beck, is still worth noting:

> A world of intensified reflexivity is a world of clever people.
> (1994: 7)

Even if we assume – contrary to some of the research discussed in the previous section – that post-traditionalism is a real phenomenon, and even if we assume arguments by Elchardus and Adkins to be irrelevant, we can still question whether access to communication technology and the necessary knowledge to make use of it – both central elements of Giddens' reflexivity thesis – are universal phenomena.

This is resoundingly not the case. On a global scale, access to such technology varies, the result being the digital divide. Many regions of the world are sidelined from these technological innovations – and rather than developed nations merely getting ahead of other countries in this respect, the lack of availability of such technologies directly puts developing countries at a disadvantage as more elements of social and economic life shift their mode of operation to the digital realm (Galperin and Mariscal, 2007). If the communication and technology-based elements of globalization give rise to reflexivity, then the digital divide poses a challenge to the idea of reflexivity as a universal condition of late modernity.

But the reason for looking at this issue here, under the heading of reflexivity, rather than earlier on the issue of globalization, is because the issue of the digital divide also applies within developed nations. Cullen (2001) notes:

> The phrase 'digital divide' has been applied to the gap that exists in most countries between those with ready access to the tools of information and communication technologies, and the knowledge that they provide access to, and those without such access or skills. This may be because of socio-economic factors, geographical factors, educational, attitudinal and generational factors, or it may be through physical disabilities.
>
> (ibid: 311)

Many studies demonstrate the salience of this point, noting significant differences in terms of access and ability to use information and communication technology within developed countries.[17] But there is a caveat worth keeping in mind: Selwyn (2004) argues that it is problematic to conceptually divide societies into digital haves and have-nots based simply on class, gender, location or age, due to issues such as access to information technology at home versus at work, or different stages of access to, and competence in, information technology. This argument does less to question the existence of a digital divide itself and more to deconstruct 'zombie categories' in favour of a more complex analysis of the digital divide, assessing precisely which individuals are affected by it and to what extent (ibid). In short, even this angle on the subject matter does not dispute the existence of structural determinants but highlights that the determinants need to be better defined than with broad-brush terms such as class or occupation.

The alternative approach: late modernity as a utopian realist account

Whether on globalization, post-traditionalism or reflexivity, there are clear grounds to contest Giddens' analysis of late modernity as an accurate portrayal of the present age. At a theoretical level, the research in all these fields identifies several structural forces that have a profound effect on the individual: the inequalities generated by modern capitalism (a key hallmark of globalization sceptics), the values and life-prescriptions given by the continued importance of tradition, the new structural determinants identified in preference to old zombie

categories and, indeed, the differential access to information and communication technology. All these factors demonstrably affect individuals' life options and life choices. If we therefore take Giddens at face value, where present-day society is chiefly characterized by globalization (meaning the proliferation of information and communication), post-traditionalism and reflexivity, giving rise to an empowered, reflexive, late modern self, then there is little choice but to deem his theory indefensible.

This face value reading of the analysis of late modernity has been a source of much criticism of Giddens and has led some authors to dismiss him out of hand. Along with other figures who propagate similar ideas about a transformation of the self and present social revolutions of modern times in an essentially promising light (Beck, 1997; Delanty, 2000), Giddens does not sit well especially with those who engage with the inequalities, injustices and structural constraints that exist in the present age. To those studying the oppression created in developing nations by the actions of transnational corporations, the promise of globalization as a vehicle for more knowledgeable and empowered individuals is over-idealistic – and likewise the notion of post-traditionalism for those studying the very real and resurging allure of religious dogma and often closely connected traditional family structures and life courses.

However, we saw in Chapter 1 that Giddens' approach to a critical, transformative theory – summarized under the label of utopian realism – cannot afford to emphasize structural constraints until it has identified the possibilities and opportunities for transformative action. Such a theory would not seek to accurately and fairly describe the full landscape of the society under investigation. It instead needs a focus on locating types of agency and social developments, which, however minute, could hold promise for social change towards an end considered broadly desirable by the author. Normative positions can be grounded in the real possibilities that exist in contemporary societies, even if these possibilities deriving from enabling properties of the present structure are impeded by significant constraining features. Utopian realism may ultimately also involve ideas on how these constraining features could be overcome, and hence, how the possibilities identified by the author might be fostered and a better future realized, lest it be simply utopian. Nevertheless, given the centrality of identifying transformative agency in the first place, the utopian realist approach is likely to analytically neglect constraint in favour of deeper discussion of the possibilities and agencies through which better futures might be realized.

Given that Giddens clearly advocates utopian realism at several points in his work, with initial indications in *The Constitution of Society*, right up to his seminal works on late modernity, it is worth assessing whether we can read Giddens' analysis of late modernity as a utopian realist critical social theory. In this approach he would consciously focus on some selected elements of social reality he sees as having potential for social transformation. In other words, we could understand the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self not as an empirical claim about an existing universal human condition of the present age, but as an immanent possibility arising from globalization and post-traditionalism. In a utopian realist account, its immanence provides the grounds for Giddens to posit this new constitution of the self as his normative aim.

To be clear, if Giddens' ideas about globalization, post-traditionalism, reflexivity and the consequent emergence of the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self are entirely unfounded, then a utopian realist reading of his work would still make his analysis of late modernity indefensible, as it would then be void of any empirical justification. But if these developments have credibility, even in very partial or tendential terms, and quite possibly only existing alongside considerable structural constraints and counterweights, then Giddens' theories would stand up to the critiques highlighted in the previous section.

However, given the inevitable presence of constraint, its scale demonstrated by the analysis in this chapter so far, a mere analysis of the possibilities for a better future will not do. A utopian realist social theory of late modernity would need to involve a discussion of how the possibilities identified might be built on to actually make a better future happen: that is, how the forces contradicting these possibilities can be dealt with. This line of thought suggests a key facet of Giddens' work that will be further discussed shortly and is central to understanding the critical nature of his work: within the utopian realist approach, identifying structural constraint and forces opposed to the normative position of the author is not chiefly a sociological, analytical task, but a political one.

If we accept that Giddens writes from a utopian realist point of view, his analysis stands up to almost all of the scrutiny that has been levelled at it, because virtually all critiques of his work – both implicit and explicit ones – only partially reject his ideas. There is much convincing evidence to show that he cannot justifiably claim that globalization is the universally observable, undifferentiated phenomenon of intensifying worldwide social relations, or that tradition and internally referential systems of belief and lifestyles are giving way to post-traditionalism,

or that all individuals are becoming ever more reflexive and empowered: these are demonstrably not universally applicable conditions of late modernity. Many critical objections to Giddens show that there is persistence, even resurgence of tradition, and that globalization is to a large extent the continuation of international capitalism for the benefit of the already wealthy nations and individuals within them. Additionally, new structural determinants are identified, which further shape individuals' life choices. But almost none of these critiques argue against a partial, tendential or even just possible emergence of the social revolutions posited by Giddens. Most critiques ultimately concede that elements of Giddens' theories do apply in some cases, in some regions, in some social strata; in short, to some – at times very limited – extent. A utopian realist reading of Giddens scarcely requires more than that: these are the possibilities utopian realism needs to identify.

On the information and communication dimension of globalization, critics noted that the availability of new technology is largely limited to wealthy countries; but none of them deny that these technologies exist in principle and that therefore, for some individuals (though by far not all), there is indeed an intensification of worldwide social relations. In a utopian realist context, we might say that the intensification of worldwide social relations is not a universal, undifferentiated reality but that these new technologies, and the fact that some individuals have access to them, give rise to such a possibility. If the advent of these technologies simply had not happened, entertaining the possibility of an intensification of worldwide social relations would indeed be ludicrous.

On post-traditionalism, we saw that whilst there is widespread persistence, even resurgence of traditional lifestyles, there are also areas where post-traditionalism is observable to a certain extent. Vogel (2003), for instance, fundamentally highlights the persistence of traditional lifestyles but makes qualifications in his conclusions, noting that non-traditional lifestyles are on the increase in some countries. Critics also point out that some of the legal sanctions formerly placed on deviance from traditional lifestyles have been lifted in some parts of the world. This does not equate to post-traditionalism; but once again, in societies where legalising homosexuality, divorce and blasphemy had not yet happened, even entertaining the possibility of post-traditionalism in these areas would be unthinkable.

On reflexivity, critics also showed that we have not entered into a world where individuals make all their life choices reflexively and that there are in fact new structural determinants to either supplement or

substitute for old ones. But here too, the emergence of reflexivity cannot be dismissed out of hand. Elchardus notes, for instance:

> Various empirical analyses have already pointed out that the events highlighted by the authors who claim that the standardized life cycle is disappearing, such as the reversal of the standard sequence or wide variation with regard to the timing of transitions, are in fact quite rare (Glorieux et al., 2004; Breedveld, 1996). Yet, those events receive a lot of attention and are often without further ado interpreted as the harbinger of major changes.
>
> (Elchardus, 2009: 150)

We can unproblematically dismiss the idea of fully reflexive societies. But even critics of the reflexivity thesis acknowledge that some instances of reflexivity do exist and that these have come about specifically in the late modern age. Critics are easily able to dismiss Giddens' claims when read as universally applicable to the contemporary world, but not in absolute terms: most of the time, critics acknowledge that Giddens' social revolutions do exist, albeit in limited terms. Understanding Giddens as a utopian realist therefore produces a largely successful reading of his analysis of late modernity, which can answer the criticisms we saw.

However, on one element of his analysis the utopian realist angle does not provide us with a straightforward solution: the economic dimensions of globalization and the arguments on this subject matter by authors such as Hirst and Thompson (1998), echoed to varying extent by globalization critics to this day (Germain, 2013). Unlike on the other social revolutions, including also the time-space dimension of globalization itself, where totalizing notions are rejected but emerging tendencies and possibilities are conceded by critics, on globalization in the economic domain we have seen critiques that flat-out reject any kind of globalization thesis, because they reject the centrality of information and communication flows in favour of global economic parameters as the basis of their definition. Even if Giddens is merely arguing for a partial emergence of a new type of worldwide economy, his views are still unable to answer to this kind of critique. If there is simply nothing new about globalization or if it simply represents the continuation of transnational market expansion, it is nonsensical to counter by conceptually framing this as emergent or in terms of scope or possibility: global pillage continues as it has for centuries, it is simply happening faster and more efficiently now.

As we saw, Giddens' definition of globalization goes far beyond just the economic realm. He explicitly highlights other dimensions as being much more important in many ways. Certainly, in terms of the factors enabling the emergence of the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self, communication rather than economics is of key importance. These two dimensions of globalization are related and refract on each other profoundly; but although the utopian realist reading of Giddens' analysis of late modernity is generally successful in terms of answering to his critics, the issue of economic globalization still leaves a major gap, to which the utopian realist reading in and of itself cannot answer.

In Chapter 4, the contradictions between the opportunities of global communication and information technologies and the threats and barriers posed by capitalism and global economic inequalities will be discussed in order to ascertain how these developments and forces might be viewed in the context of Giddens' work. This will be a crucial element in the formulation of Giddensian politics. For the time being, we can conclude that a utopian realist reading of Giddens answers to all critiques that we have seen, except for those on the issue of economic globalization, to which we return later on.

It may be comfortably objected here that this approach to Giddens' work entails considerably more goodwill than is merited at face value. Though Giddens himself suggests the utopian realist approach, the line of argument so far effectively absolves his work of its critics by claiming that he says something different from what he appears to be saying. But there is textual evidence showing that he is acutely aware of his theories not being universally applicable, that there are many issues of varying prevalence of the revolutions he describes and that he consciously decides not to dwell on such issues, rather than simply being unaware of the kind of critical research highlighted here.

The vast bulk of Giddens' work on late modernity – be it the topical assessment in *Transformation of Intimacy* or the more general works such as *The Consequences of Modernity* – focuses on the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable agent in the present age. The principal charge, brought forward by critics in several different ways, is that his analysis fails to consider the structural constraints that inhibit his notion of agency to take hold universally. However, this notion of agency is not viewed as a universal, timeless constant in Giddens' work, but has instead come about as a result of several developments specific to late modern societies. In both seminal works on late modernity he decisively deepens this sentiment, tying together his theory on agency and individuals in late modern societies with the aspect of structural constraint. In *The*

Consequences of Modernity, Giddens provides a critical note of context for his analysis:

> The transformations of the present time occur in a world riven with disparities between rich and poor states, in which the extension of modern institutions throws up all sorts of countertrends and influences, such as religious fundamentalism or forms of reactive traditionalism. If I do not consider these in detail in this book, it is for purposes of economy of argument, not because I think they can be disregarded in any more concrete interpretation of likely global trends.
>
> (1990: 158)

Modernity and Self-identity contains a strikingly similar qualification (1991a: 6), but overall such qualifications on his part are rare, which goes some way to explain how charges of ignoring issues of structural constraint come about. The preceding passage is a clear indication that Giddens is aware of the fact that he is sidelining a large portion of what may comfortably be termed 'social reality'. Yet, it also becomes clear here that he places his theory on the late modern transformation of the self within the context of the inequalities and structural constraints he is accused of neglecting. The preceding passage contains a characterization of the late modern self that is more nuanced than conventional readings suggest.

Modernity and Self-identity recounts the elements associated with the late modern self, from globalization to the rise of reflexivity. But in the final chapters, Giddens focuses on the other side of this coin. He already indicates the constraints given by class or inequality at the outset (1991a: 6). In the penultimate chapter he then begins to cite further constraints, chiefly the endurance and, indeed, the resurgence of tradition and traditional value systems, the resurgence of religious beliefs and of new religious dogmas (ibid: 206–7). These developments tend to promote prescriptive rather than reflexive forms of identity, which runs contrary to Giddens' notion of the individual in late modern societies. Having shown awareness of this multitude of constraints, the final chapter considers 'the return of the repressed' (ibid: 208). 'Repressed' does not just refer to the resurgence of belief systems that overtly counter his notion of a knowledgeable, reflexive, empowered self but also refers to the indirect repression triggered by structural constraints such as class, gender and ethnicity.

Revisiting the charge of a lack of awareness of structural constraint in the analysis of late modernity, it is evident that Giddens shows much

interest in the type of agent emerging in the late modern context and considerably less in the constraining aspects of structure. However, it is also evident that he is nevertheless aware of the many processes counteracting the emergence of the late modern self. But in line with the idea of utopian realism, he chooses not to examine these in much depth and instead to focus on those elements of late modernity he sees as containing promise for social reform and transformation. Put differently, at face value, evidence demonstrates that his story of late modernity is hardly defensible and empirically unsubstantiated. But if we accept that he is writing from a utopian realist perspective and if we consider that he explicitly shows awareness – though not much analysis – of structural constraints, then a different verdict emerges.

Read in this way, Giddens sees late modernity as an epoch containing at its core a fundamental tension: on the one hand, there are very real, often historically unprecedented developments, which may have the capacity to enable the emergence of the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self, and in certain sections of certain populations this is beginning to happen. On the other hand, there is not just the partial persistence of old structural forces, but indeed the advent of new ones, which decisively inhibit its emergence.

Without an understanding of the utopian realist angle, dismissal of Giddens becomes likely given the magnitude of research questioning the social revolutions posited in his analysis. But a utopian realist reading of late modernity answers well to the vast majority of the critiques we saw earlier. However, there are still some problems that remain, even aside from the issue of economic globalization, where, as we saw, even the utopian realist reading of Giddens cannot readily mitigate the critiques.

Towards a Giddensian politics

The purpose of utopian realism is to bring about social transformation and reform, but at present it is unclear how the analysis of late modernity is meant to do this. The first issue in this respect is one of proportion: most of the critiques highlighted here merely concede that there are a few, often very small sections of the population, to which Giddens' social revolutions apply. The extent of the persistence and resurgence of structural constraints, old and new, is still far greater in terms of determinant power. Giddens devotes the lion-share of his attention to these empirically rare occurrences of reflexivity and post-traditionalism, alongside relatively little engagement with the other side of the coin. How such a disproportionate description is in itself supposed

to lead to social transformation is hard to grasp, even in the context of the double hermeneutic and the consequent transformative power of social scientific observations.

Where his theories on late modernity do find empirical manifestations, they generally tend to be concentrated in wealthy nations, amongst people of relatively high social status, or in Beck's earlier cited terms, 'educated people'. From this view, Giddens' analysis of late modernity appears to say little more than that the wealthiest, most educated individuals in the wealthiest countries are starting to become more empowered, more reflexive and more knowledgeable. This is a far cry from the initial charge, which suspected the assumption that all individuals are in this position. In empirical terms, this is now a lot less controversial. Yet, it is unclear how this amounts to a critical salvo aiming to achieve social reform and transformation.

This matter is made more problematic still by the fact that Giddens rejects notions of *telos* (1981: 1–2, 20, 42). This makes it impossible to infer from his works that just because the emergence of the late modern self is taking hold in some circles, largely centred on elites, this development will somehow trickle down with historical inevitability. Meanwhile, his act of describing reflexivity and post-traditionalism does not in itself do much to trigger any kind of social reform. So far, the utopian realist reading of his work is therefore still missing a key component. Put differently, having outlined that there is scope for the emergence of a new kind of late modern self, and having shown awareness of the fact that this emergence is severely hindered by substantial structural constraints, Giddens (and more to the point, his reader) faces a question central to the utopian realist angle: now what?

To move beyond an account of the late modern transformation of the self wide open to charges of elitism, there are two principal options: either Giddens could supplement it with an equally extensive analysis of the structural constraints inhibiting the emergence of this new self, in other words, to produce an additional set of works devoted to hard description of structural constraint, or he could largely bypass this step, relying instead on the wealth of social research by a host of other authors who have effectively already accomplished this[18] and construct a framework for political action around his analysis, aimed at turning the emergent notion of the late modern self into a universal social reality.

A deeper analysis of oppression, domination or structural constraint in late modernity is not present in Giddens' work. However, a political programme certainly is. Even prior to the formulation of the Third

Way, Giddens' choice of political action over further analysis becomes evident: both seminal works on late modernity – *The Consequences of Modernity* and *Modernity and Self-identity* – culminate in a discussion of frameworks for political action. In both cases, this discussion revolves around the distinction between what he calls emancipatory politics and life politics. The latter denotes political action stemming from the existence of the late modern self: as individuals formulate their identity reflexively, they encounter issues of lifestyle and life choice that are of a political nature and require representation and advocacy. The former relates to the emancipatory concerns that need to be addressed for this late modern self to emerge in the first place. This distinction will be the subject matter of the following chapter.

Part II

The Contours of a Giddensian Politics

3
The Political Consequences of Late Modernity

The utopian realist perspective enables a reading of Giddens that makes his analysis of late modernity defensible in relation to its critics; however, there is no indication of how exactly his analysis of late modernity points towards social reform or transformation. This is problematic, firstly because Giddens explicitly notes that this is the aim of his work, and secondly because without a clear focus on how to achieve social transformation, his analysis of late modernity is vulnerable to charges of elitism. To address these points, we need to consider one further element of his analysis of late modernity. Having told the story of globalization, post-traditionalism and reflexivity, and having provided evidence that he is essentially aware of structural constraints inhibiting these developments, *The Consequences of Modernity* and *Modernity and Self-identity* both conclude with a discussion about the need for political action.[1] In both works, he makes the distinction between 'emancipatory politics' and 'life politics' (1990: 156, 1991a: 209–10). This distinction lines up with the tension identified in his analysis of late modernity between the potential for a more empowered, reflexive self on one hand and the forces inhibiting its emergence on the other. Emancipatory politics is the term Giddens chooses to summarize what most scholars of politics will identify as the principal well-established struggles between the political left and right:

> ... in all cases, the objective of emancipatory politics is either to release under-privileged groups from their unhappy condition, or to eliminate the relative differences between them .... Emancipatory politics is concerned to reduce or eliminate exploitation, inequality and oppression.
>
> (Giddens, 1991a: 211)

Such a definition encompasses anything from allocation of resources and redistribution to the legal emancipation and equality of marginalized groups, though Giddens notes that the financial and redistributive element of emancipatory politics has generally been given the highest importance compared to the other emancipatory issues he mentions (ibid: 212). These issues of the emancipatory category are all centred on the issue of equality (in the widest sense of the word). Life politics, by contrast, is the politics of self-actualization:

> . . . life politics concerns political issues which flow from processes of self-actualisation in post-traditional contexts, where globalising influences intrude deeply into the reflexive project of the self, and conversely where processes of self-realisation influence global strategies.
>
> (ibid: 214)

In the moral void left by post-traditionalism, life politics becomes a significant area for debate in which moral grounds need to be created, which in turn enable decisions on issues that emerge for knowledgeable, reflexive agents or for collective groups thereof. The notion derives from the New Social Movements of the 1970s and 80s (Habermas, 1981; Offe, 1985), and Giddens cites nuclear power and nuclear armament, environmental protection and changing lifestyles of women (beyond the legal elements of women's emancipation) as just some of the crucial issues that appear in this context, but he is also suggestive of a vast quantity of other, perhaps smaller-scale issues that may emerge in this field (ibid: 217–23).[2]

His discussion of politics goes some way to complete the utopian realist reading of the analysis of late modernity. In line with the logic of utopian realism, most of Giddens' analysis highlights empirically verifiable tendencies and developments, which he sees as desirable; then he briefly acknowledges that these tendencies and developments are inhibited by structural forces. Finally, he points towards the need for political reform so that said tendencies and developments can be fostered towards universal emergence and that the new political issues that will arise as they take hold can be anticipated. In the context of his belief in the transformative power of sociological writing, he has thus succeeded in identifying social developments that he views as desirable and points towards the kind of social reform and transformation required to build on and foster these developments.

To an extent, the utopian realist reading is then successful: it answers critics of Giddens' analysis of late modernity, and through

the pronouncements on politics, it points towards social reform and transformation. But given the relative brevity of his sections on politics – especially on emancipatory politics – there is little clarity on what exactly a full Giddensian political project might look like. Giddens may simply be saying that emancipatory politics in the style of socialism or social democracy should continue and that life politics just needs to be tacked on, but the link between the two may also be more intricate. Whilst the notion of life politics itself has been a topic of discussion and disagreement (Ferguson, 2001; Garrett, 2003), there have so far been no attempts to assess the relationship between these two poles. We therefore need to consider whether emancipatory politics would need in some form to be re-framed in such a way as to work better in tandem with life politics.

Addressing this point is the main focus of this chapter. By doing so we can deduce a framework for articulating a political outlook and policy positions consistent with Giddens' utopian realist analysis. To be clear, the aim here is to understand how the notions of emancipatory politics, life politics and the relationship between them can give us a framework for establishing a political platform based on Giddens' work, rather than describing the platform in detail. As such, this chapter will highlight some substantive policy positions, though these will be mainly for illustrative purposes; their underlying Giddensian logic will be of more interest than the positions themselves. The examples of policy positions to be highlighted here will therefore not be selected based on their importance in the wider scheme of political discourse, but on their capacity to illustrate the process of Giddensian policy formulation. Where exactly a politics based on Giddens would need to come down on the most fundamental political issues – capitalism, the global economy, poverty, inequality, wealth creation – will be the focus of the next chapter, alongside a discussion of the unresolved issue of globalization in Giddens' work.

Emancipatory politics and life politics: a dialectic

Emancipatory politics and life politics are blanket terms, respectively addressing structural constraints inhibiting the late modern self and the political concerns that this new self might confront. Separately, each term can be outlined as above, but there is the more complex issue of how emancipatory and life politics are connected. In other words, could Giddensian politics simply be an established form of social democracy (thus dealing with emancipatory politics), supplemented with an agenda on life-political concerns, where the two are effectively

separate elements of a Giddensian political platform? Or are the two more intimately connected, where the need for life politics refracts upon emancipatory politics, determining what the emancipatory policies need to look like, and *vice versa*? There are two options we can dismiss out of hand.

The first option is that we already live in a world populated entirely by empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable individuals. This would effectively mean that emancipatory politics is a completed and obsolete endeavour and that life politics has become the sole objective of a Giddensian political project. This, as we saw, is clearly false. It is firstly indefensible in empirical terms, as we saw in Chapter 2. Additionally, it is not a position Giddens himself advocates. Noting his acknowledgements of the existence and importance of constraining factors, and reading his work as a utopian realist analysis, highlights that this is emphatically not what he is saying.

The second option we can dismiss easily is what might be described as a dualist view of contemporary societies. This option would entail a view by which there are two entirely separate groups of people: those who are empowered, reflexive and knowledgeable, and those who are not. From this view, we could deduce a Giddensian political project in which life politics and emancipatory politics would be separate elements with separate constituencies. To those who have attained the status of empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable individual, a Giddensian government would cater with life-political policy positions, to all others, it would cater with emancipatory policies, so that they too may eventually transform into this new type of individual.

Aside from likely striking most readers as intuitively ridiculous, reading like a bizarre caricature of Marx's emergence of class consciousness, this option is once again neither vindicated by empirical research nor evident from Giddens' own work. Instances of the late modern self exist, but often only in partial, emergent ways. It is not the case that there are some select areas or communities that consist of fully empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable individuals. Instead, there are some areas of the world where we find a relatively low prevalence of traditional beliefs, others where these beliefs are more widespread; some areas in which there is a lot of access to informational resources and contact with alternative lifestyles, others where there is less of this. Additionally, some studies noted earlier show that in certain areas there is some validity to the claim of post-traditionalism, but that post-traditionalism has not necessarily led to individualization and

reflexivity. Giddens' work does not allow for this dualist view of late modern societies:

> It would be too crude to say simply that life politics focuses on what happens once individuals have achieved a certain level of autonomy of action . . .
>
> (1991a: 214)

This process of elimination alone shows that life politics and emancipatory politics cannot be viewed as separate entities. To use Giddens' own terms, emancipatory politics and life politics are respectively the politics of life chances and lifestyle (1991a: 214), or in the more sociological language used in *Consequences of Modernity*, of inequality and self-actualization (1990: 157). These two concepts are so intertwined in his work, and affect each other so profoundly, that any Giddensian policy position must be formulated in consideration of both, albeit with occasional emphasis on either one or the other.

The becoming of the late modern self is dealt with most decisively in *Modernity and Self-identity*. One part of this process of becoming has been the major theme of this book so far: globalization forces different lifestyles into contact with each other, traditions are questioned and enter into dialogic relationships, leading to post-traditionalism, and thus to the reflexive project of the self, which, given the basic tenets of structuration theory, can lead to major social transformations as individuals draw on available rules and resources and contextualize them in new ways. But much of *Modernity and Self-identity* then deals with other elements of the late modern self, culminating in a discussion of the 'tribulations of the self' (Giddens, 1991a: 181–208). Here, Giddens outlines the backdrop of problematic issues, against which the reflexive project of the self happens: firstly, the experience of unification in conflict with fragmentation, in other words, the individual's challenging task of constructing and maintaining a reflexive self-understanding in the face of constant change characteristic of the late modern age; secondly, the experience of powerlessness experienced by the individual when confronted by the sheer scale of the social universe; thirdly, the prevalence of risk and uncertainty in a situation where traditional authority loses significance; and, finally, the standardizing effects of capitalism, under which the project of the self opens up (ibid: 189–96).

The need for life politics arises in the context of these tribulations. Put simply: just because an individual is now more reflexive and

knowledgeable does not mean that a utopia of sorts is reached with no further political needs to speak of. These thoughts furthermore indicate that even the life-political agenda must be sensitive to issues of access, inequality, empowerment and capitalism – themes that might initially seem to relate more to the emancipatory agenda. Deepening the complexity of the connection between life politics, emancipatory politics and the emergence of the late modern self, Giddens makes a crucial statement:

> . . . one might assume that 'lifestyle' refers only to the pursuits of the more affluent groups or classes. The poor are more-or-less completely excluded from the possibility of making lifestyle choices. . . . Indeed, issues of class divisions and other fundamental lines of inequality, such as those connected with gender or ethnicity, can be partly *defined* in terms of differential access to forms of self-actualisation and empowerment discussed in what follows. Modernity, one should not forget, produces *difference*, *exclusion* and *marginalisation*. Holding out the possibility of emancipation, modern institutions at the same time create mechanisms of suppression, rather than actualisation, of self. . . . Yet it would be a major error to suppose that the phenomena analysed in this book are confined in their impact to those in more privileged material circumstances. 'Lifestyle' refers also to decisions taken and courses of action followed under conditions of severe material constraint.
>
> (ibid: 5–6)

Though he also notes that he does not intend to deal at any length with the inequalities he mentions, it is significant that he nevertheless acknowledges these inequalities and their relationship to self-actualization. This passage says much about the issue currently at hand and highlights a tension between the capacity to be reflexive and the ability to take action based on that reflexivity. It is worth considering the above passage in conjunction with a critical remark by Kaspersen:

> Some actors might have more resources, with more opportunities as a consequence. The well educated doctor can, better than a single mother with three kids, choose to live a healthy life. By possessing a higher level of cultural and economic capital, the doctor has easier access to high-quality organic food, a healthy house, a better job, etc.
>
> (Kaspersen, 2000: 169)

To some extent, Kaspersen's remark is accurate: in the preceding passage, Giddens partially suggests that the reflexive project of the self does apply

to everyone, regardless of structural constraint. However, in the same breath he notes that structural features, such as class and gender, impact upon the possibility of self-actualization.

This view is consistent with Giddens' views on social structures, whereby structure is the context for action and as such always has enabling and constraining properties (Giddens, 1984: 25). In this sense, it is inevitable that the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable individual still lives a life that is in some ways constrained, by mortality and finite resources if nothing else. Since enabling and constraining aspects of structure are not seen by Giddens as amounting to a zero-sum game, a political project based on his work should nevertheless pursue the possibility of removing those constraining aspects directly involved with the emergence of the late modern self. But at the same time, the assertion is that under severe constraint, individuals still have some capacity for reflexive life choices and, thus, for self-actualization. And whilst we can interpret his work as stating that there are differences in the extent to which various individuals can reflexively transform their lives, the political implications of this are not yet addressed.

In this account, the conclusion is that we are all empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable individuals within the limits of the structural factors that constrain us, which for some people may be few and for others many. But in the late modern age, structural factors have ample determinant capacity for the individual's life course compared to limited instances of reflexive lifestyle choice. Giddens may then be right in saying that if an individual should encounter an unobstructed life choice in some minute area, we can speak of an instance of reflexivity; but surely he is missing the bigger picture here!

The demonstrable extent of structural obstacles to self-actualization clearly poses a challenge to Giddens' analysis. But lack of engagement is not equal to unawareness: the analysis so far has shown that Giddens consciously chooses not to document inequalities and their relationship to self-actualization, despite being aware of them. Later on, he makes a similar comment on emancipatory politics, noting that emancipatory struggles are important but that he chooses not to engage with them at any great length (1991a: 210).

The brevity of Giddens' few passages on emancipatory politics is most likely a factor for the existence of so many critiques noting insufficient attention to the issue of structural constraint. But what he does say is nevertheless sufficient for us to understand how life politics and emancipatory politics might combine to help transform societies of limited reflexivity and comparatively strong determinant power of

structural factors into societies where the opposite is the case. His thoughts on politics, as expressed in the final chapter of *Modernity and Self-identity*, amount to a dialectical relationship between emancipation and self-actualization. The following provides an illustrative starting point:

> Life political issues are likely to assume greater and greater importance in the public and juridical arenas of states. Demands for emancipatory rights . . . do not thereby become any less important.
>
> (1991a: 226)

Though Giddens openly neglects emancipatory politics in his analysis, and despite his claim that 'life politics presumes (a certain level of) emancipation' (ibid: 214), it is not his intention to claim that emancipatory politics should give way. If his fundamental assertion were that individuals are becoming more emancipated, and that there will therefore be less need for emancipatory politics in the future, but more need for life politics, then the above passage would be inconsistent. However, he goes on to note:

> Thus far, emancipatory politics has been described as though it were merely the preparation for the emergence of life politics. The relation between emancipatory and life politics is, of course, more complicated than such a view would suggest. Emancipatory politics will not come to an end as life politics moves to claim more of the overall political agenda; virtually all questions of life politics also raise problems of an emancipatory sort.
>
> (ibid: 228)

The advent of life politics does not signal the gradual end of emancipatory politics; instead, it may often precede emancipatory issues. In the first instance, life politics as a whole is tied to emancipatory issues: introducing life-political debates into public discourse – including questions on topics such as abortion, nuclear power and environmental protection – immediately raises the issue of who is entitled or able to have some input into discussions that might lead to policies on these matters. This leads Giddens to advocate extension of citizenship rights and concerted efforts to renew arenas for public debate (ibid: 226). But individual life-political issues may themselves highlight issues relating to emancipatory politics. Giddens draws on feminism and on divisions between developing and developed nations as examples. On the former,

he notes that whilst women's movements had clear emancipatory objectives, life-political concerns within such movements can be highlighted early on as well, which in turn trigger further emancipatory discussions that might not have been evident from the outset:

> When the women's movement gained its initial momentum in the early nineteenth century, some individuals were already proposing that more than sheer emancipation was at stake. Making the voices of women heard, they proposed, would both need far-reaching changes in the actual organisation of social life and bring them about.
>
> (ibid: 229)

On global inequalities, he notes that mere expansion of industrialization is unlikely to solve emancipatory problems, but instead:

> . . . a process of emancipation on the part of the world's poor could probably only be achieved if radical lifestyle changes were introduced in the developed countries. Emancipation presumes life-political transformation.
>
> (ibid: 230)

Both examples are problematic in certain ways: the former assumes essentialist gender differences[3] and the latter ignores the fact that emancipatory and life-political concerns are not necessarily pursued by the same group of people. Yet, there is already some contextualization of how life-political concerns might in turn lead to new emancipatory struggles. But discussion of these examples is short, and his thoughts are insufficiently detailed to help us understand how the connection between emancipatory and life politics is to be conceptualized.

An understanding of his earlier work, specifically his writings on Marx, can help us fill the gap and develop a more coherent framework. As we saw in Chapter 1, elements of Marx's theories relating to *telos* or to the proletariat as the singular transformative agency are rejected by Giddens. But a key element he does not criticize, and in fact acknowledges as a useful element of Marx's writings, is the connection between consciousness and action (Giddens, 1981: 34–7). His works on late modernity of course depart considerably from Marx's intentions, since he departs from any kind of emphasis on class as a uniform concept (see also Giddens, 1973). But the basic outlook that applies to Marx and equally to Giddens is that emancipation does not come out of nowhere, and is not something that can be facilitated purely

in a top-down manner (that is to say, governments deciding without consultation that one or another group is oppressed, and then doing something about it). Instead, emancipation often begins with individuals or groups becoming conscious of their oppression or constraint. This might happen through obtaining the knowledge that others in their society are not experiencing the constraint in question, or indeed by coming into contact with other societies in which said constraint does not exist, or is somehow managed differently.[4]

Though as a whole Marx's theories are far from uncontroversial, this idea of consciousness as a central precondition for emancipatory or revolutionary action is an established feature of his work and is in itself one of its less controversial elements. Given that this is an area where Giddens agrees with Marx, we can apply this to the idea of life politics as a potential precondition for emancipatory struggles.

The existence of life-political issues and the access to information on different lifestyles can thereby be the very factor that highlights the existence and the severity of inequalities, oppression and constraint. To use the example considered earlier, of the well-educated doctor and the single mother, it is worth considering the following possibility: questions of diet, and what kind of food we ought to eat (organic, GM, fair-trade) are highlighted by Giddens as part of the life-political agenda (1991a: 227). The doctor is more able to decide, given greater financial resources, to purchase for instance organic foods. However, it is unlikely that the single mother is unaware of debates on why organic or fair-trade foods may be better, both from an ethical point of view and in terms of personal health.[5] The very existence of life-political issues consequently highlights or augments existing inequalities and constraints, expressing conflicts between reflexive identity and reflexive action. On this specific example, we might say that the single mother was principally aware of her position in the greater scheme of social inequality and of the fact that this had constraining effects on her life; but now, given the rise of this particular life-political concern, she finds herself put at an additional disadvantage, given that fair-trade and especially organic foods are more expensive than the alternatives. It is possible of course to imagine a whole host of similar life-political concerns that may exacerbate the implications of social inequality in similar fashion.

Taking seriously the difference between access to knowledge and ability to reflexively incorporate it into the life cycle, where each of these two possibilities might be obstructed by potentially quite different constraints, further highlights the importance of empowerment as a key component of Giddensian politics – not just to think, but to act

reflexively. As we saw, despite life politics presuming a certain degree of emancipation, he states that emancipation should not give way to life politics and that life politics can itself open up new emancipatory issues. The only way to make sense of this is by accepting that emancipatory struggles must be preceded by some form of realization of oppression or constraint.[6] Giddens acknowledges that becoming aware of different lifestyles highlights the availability (or lack) of the life chances necessary to adopt them. Given this logic, the notion of a dialectical relationship[7] between emancipatory and life politics becomes a helpful way of understanding Giddens' thoughts on this issue.

In certain cases, the connection between emancipatory and life politics is even closer. Giddens notes that issues of reproduction (abortion, IVF) are a significant element of the life-political agenda (1991a: 227). Here we do not even need to infer any kind of dialectical relationship. Given that for Giddens emancipatory politics is not just about material inequalities but also concerns other forms of domination, constraint and inequality (ibid: 210–11), this issue has at once emancipatory and life-political dimensions. The question of whether or when abortion should be allowed does not merely lead on to questions about emancipation; it is at once a question of ethics regarding the foetus (life politics) and the rights of women (emancipatory politics). In this particular case, and doubtlessly in some others, it is clear that any policy position one might want to advocate would need to be informed by emancipatory as well as life-political considerations.

We can see some implications of this analysis for a Giddensian political project: rather than having an emancipatory as well as a separate life-political agenda, Giddensian policy positions need to be formulated in consideration of both. On some issues, such as in the above example, this means that considerations of life chances and lifestyle need to inform the ultimate policy position in equal measure. But more often, policies on issues, which at face value appear to be of an emancipatory nature, need to be formulated with their potential life-political consequences in mind, and *vice versa*. Later in this book we will see several concrete examples of this. But before concluding the present chapter with a more detailed account of what this means for the formulation of Giddensian policy positions, it is first necessary to ask, aside from being consistent within Giddens' theories, whether the assumptions underlying this dialectic between emancipatory and life politics are correct.

Fundamentally, the answer is that yes, they are, but that Giddens' utopian realist approach once again has its immediate focus on possibilities rather than constraints, so to successfully complete his

utopian realist social theory of late modernity, a Giddensian political project needs to put more emphasis on emancipatory politics and its connection to life-political concerns than his work would suggest at face value.

The assumption that emancipatory issues often (if not always) need to be preceded by some form of consciousness of oppression is an entirely defensible one. We can use Giddens' own thoughts on structural constraint here, specifically his differentiation between material constraint and structural constraint (1984: 174–9): material constraints, as he defines that category, are unalterable – based on all currently existing knowledge, it would be futile to advocate emancipation from mortality or gravity. If there is no indication that a particular constraint is even theoretically alterable, then emancipation from said constraint is a non-starter. However, once there is information on possible ways (even purely theoretical) of overcoming said constraint, we are in the domain of contextuality: if available rules and resources are merely contextualized in a constraining form, when they could be used in new ways to transform the system and thus alleviate the constraint in question, then there is a possibility for emancipation. This much we can infer from Giddens himself, and it highlights that being aware of the fact that things could be done differently is an important ingredient of emancipatory struggle.

Empirical examples can tell a similar story. Klein's seminal account of sweatshop workers in Southeast Asia notes that there is little awareness of the vast discrepancy between the daily wage of the workers and the high street price of a single pair of trainers they produce (2000: 195–298, 347). Another, rather more large-scale example can be highlighted in East Germany and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s. Here, the role of western media played a part in discrediting government propaganda and galvanizing social movements (Stiehler, 2001; Schulz, 2003). Indeed, though beyond the subject matter of this book, we may infer from this that the link between consciousness and emancipation may well be a reason why totalitarian states to this day tend to try and restrict citizens' access to outside information.

The logic of awareness of different lifestyles potentially highlighting a lack of life chances in principle has merit. However, the theoretical points and the examples above do not show that this is necessarily always the case. To bring this discussion back to Giddensian politics, we also need to ask whether there are empirical grounds on which a reliance on this dialectical relationship between life and emancipatory politics is possible.

For Giddens, the awareness of different lifestyles, and by extension, of life-political issues, is often given, but the ability to adopt different lifestyles or to change lifestyles based on life-political considerations is not. His theoretical rationale for the distinction between awareness and ability is that globalization forces different lifestyles into contact with each other, with questioning of one's own lifestyle and comparison to others being the consequence. Nevertheless, because structural obstacles and constraints persist, implementation of lifestyle change can often be impossible for many people. This is a fundamental tension of the present age, which Giddens' work illuminates, and which a politics consistent with his work must deal with.

This viewpoint does not stand in opposition to much of the empirical material considered in Chapter 2: on its own, the simple awareness of other lifestyles does not preclude the existence of barriers to lifestyle change, or indeed the existence of structural determinants of life decisions. The single mother from our earlier example may well be knowledgeable, even reflexive, in the sense that she may well be more aware of different lifestyles and life-political issues than even the wealthiest individuals in past generations, but ultimately this may do little more than to highlight the constraints that exist in her life. To speak of empowerment here would be cynical at best.

A Giddensian political project needs to weigh in at this point, utilizing its available rules and resources to transform the present system in such a way that the relevant constraints are alleviated, leaving the single mother to not only identify different possible lifestyle options, but to implement them. This is the basic political outlook that a Giddensian political project would have in an ideal world. However, the idea that such a project could work simply by being in tune with the dialectic between lifestyle options and emancipatory concerns is problematic: it presupposes that access to the means by which different lifestyles come into contact with each other are already universal, which is not the case.

The idea that it is merely widespread knowledge of different lifestyle choices that characterizes late modernity, rather than the unobstructed ability to implement them, is more defensible than the conventional face value reading of Giddens that has been subject to so much criticism. However, it is demonstrably false to assume that everyone – even within developed nations – already has sufficient access to the global information and telecommunication flows to be fully aware of life-political issues and suitably able to engage with them. Evidence of digital divides, of technological haves and have-nots renders this idea unworkable. In addition, the necessary knowledge to use such resources differs

between individuals. Aside from the ability to use the relevant equipment (a central issue in digital divides between age groups), we may also cite geographical location and literacy as important factors determining whether or to what extent a particular individual is able to engage with life-political debates and reflexively ascertain the limitations imposed on them by social structures. Moreover, issues of media manipulation and monopolies pose further challenges.

It is plausible to conclude that in developed nations, where communication and information technology is widely spread, it could be a realistic political ambition to envisage new realms of civil society and public space through which engagement with life-political issues can take place and through which emancipatory concerns can be discovered and communicated.[8] This would be a centrally important site of the envisaged dialectic between emancipatory and life politics, and a Giddensian political project would be obliged to engage with these spheres in order to formulate its policies based on the concerns, constraints and moral dilemmas that individuals are experiencing. However, much would need to be done before any reliance on such a feature of public life is possible. Naturally, there are ample examples to show that the availability of communication and information technology has already been used by individuals to create social movements, highlight and discuss life-political issues and influence governments, but access and participation are not universal, and are often restricted by the very structural forces that already create significant disadvantages for individuals (income, education, age, location and so on) before technological dimensions are even considered.

Towards an integrative model of social democracy

So far, the analysis has mainly been concerned with the task of establishing how best to read Giddens' theory on emancipatory and life politics. Not just in this chapter, but also in the previous two, the emphasis has been on understanding what Giddens is saying. As such, the main conclusions drawn so far have been concerned with Giddens' demonstrable intentions. At this point, we depart from this emphasis. Having established the critical and political intent, as well as the function of a Giddensian political project within the context of his wider theories, we now turn for the first time to a more inferential dimension: having established what Giddens is saying about critical social theory and politics, we need to establish in substantive terms what a politics able to complete the utopian realist project needs to say: what kind of

policy positions does the dialectical relationship between emancipatory and life politics demand? In addition to the general characteristics of a Giddensian politics noted in Chapter 1 – its situation within existing parliamentary democracy and its approach of transforming rather than overthrowing social structures and systems – it is now possible to spell out two further key characteristics of such a project.

Firstly, in order to be consistent with the logic of a dialectic of emancipatory and life politics, and with the necessary links between government and the public, it should aim to create an inclusive public sphere, where individuals are universally guaranteed access to resources through which engagement with life-political as well as emancipatory issues becomes possible. Ultimately, this would need to lead to a bottom-up approach to formal political and legislative decisions, where governments engage with the public and assess which emancipatory issues are important to the population. However, given the present lack of this type of inclusive public sphere – substantiated by evidence on digital divides, poverty and inequality – some top-down emancipatory decisions would precede this envisaged dialogue between governments and populations. Looking ahead to an assessment of the Third Way in Chapter 5, some elements are worth briefly mentioning here for the purpose of illustration. Few of the following policy positions are unproblematic, and there is extensive critical literature on all of them. However, the purpose here is not to defend these policy positions against their various counter-arguments, but to demonstrate that they follow from Giddens' social theory:

- Universal provision of key information and communication resources, regardless of location or income, would need to be guaranteed. This could be, for instance, through nationalization or subsidization of Internet provision.
- An egalitarian education system of a high standard is essential. Once again, universal access would need to be ensured, as well as a curriculum that heavily emphasizes teaching the ability to assess and critically engage with whatever issues individuals might be confronted with through the vast flow of informational resources.
- Within the education system, it is unlikely that a private/public divide could continue to exist, especially if the standard of education is deemed to be higher in private institutions.
- Given the importance of creating an inclusive public sphere, doubtlessly relying in large parts on modern communication and information technologies, issues of online privacy and of media

monopolies would have to be dealt with. Media watchdogs and regulating bodies would assume an important role in this.
- Alongside safeguarding data protection and online privacy of individuals, governments guided by Giddensian politics should seek to expand their accessibility and build on existing technologies to enable contact between themselves and the public.

Secondly, whether through public consultation or not, Giddensian policies should always be considered in relation to both emancipatory and life-political dimensions. This means that policies regarding life-political concerns need to be designed with possible resulting emancipatory concerns in mind. If for instance a case would be made for a policy to limit the production and distribution of GM foods, or indeed to expand organic food production, issues of cost and lack of access for people on lower incomes would need to be considered. Likewise, moves to change the energy supply, for instance, away from nuclear power and towards renewables, would need to consider cost and the potential constraints on poorer households – in the extreme case, there might for instance be the danger of a two-tier energy supply dependent on individuals' incomes. Conversely, policies regarding emancipatory concerns need to be formulated in relation to the aim of increasing individuals' possibilities of self-actualization and enabling individuals to engage with life-political concerns and debates. In other words, a Giddensian politics should seek not only to neutralize social inequalities and constraints; it needs to do so in such a way that access to knowledge and greater ability to formulate and construct a reflexive project of the self are explicitly enabled. To give just one example: provision of state benefits to the unemployed may well go some way to alleviating the worst of financial constraint, yet this hardly provides many new opportunities for self-actualization. Complementing benefits with Internet access or with improvements to local infrastructures and educational facilities in poor areas is more likely to achieve such goals. To better understand and implement such integrative policy solutions, a rise in research and evidence use for policymaking and an overall increase in absorptive and analytical capacity of government will likely be necessary. Indeed, such increases are already visible, and Giddens' perspective highlights the need for further progress in this area, as policy solutions require increasing efforts of coordination and intelligence (Arnold et al., 2015).

None of these policies are completely new: the final stages of this book will outline where similarities and complementarities to other existing political orientations and economic agendas lie. What is crucial here

is that these are the political positions that follow logically and consistently from Giddens' social theory and with which a Giddensian political project – including his own Third Way – must stand in agreement if it is not to be dismissed as an unsuccessful completion of his utopian realist social theory of late modernity.

It becomes possible now to characterize a Giddensian political project in relation to other existing party-political platforms: much of what we have seen here places Giddensian politics squarely in the realm of social democracy. In the first instance, it would be a party-political project that does not seek to overthrow social systems but that places a heavy emphasis on redistribution, not just of wealth, but also directly of resources such as education and information and communication technologies. So far, this is not entirely dissimilar from the kinds of social democracy found in many European countries in the post-war years, which broadly shared the outlook that within a system involving nation states and capitalism, the egalitarian provision of key services and resources can and should be ensured by the state (Padgett and Paterson, 1991).

However, we can also see an initial way in which a Giddensian politics would move beyond this social democratic outlook. Bobbio notes that most leftist politics share a principle stance of equality as a normative political goal (1996: 60). In some cases this is viewed as an end in itself, because equality might be seen as a good thing from a philosophical point of view, or, in the case of Keynesianism, as a precondition to ensure demand, and thus to guarantee stable, prosperous economies (Keynes, 1936).

This outline of a Giddensian politics does not stand in opposition to such notions, but the central purpose of its egalitarian character is different. Rather than redistribution and emancipatory policies being ends in themselves, or aiding economic growth, the aim is to foster the emergence of inclusive public spheres, where the dialectic of emancipatory and life-political concerns can unfold and where the state can gradually move from active, top-down decisions to responsive decisions formulated through dialogue with the public. In order to achieve this, emancipatory policies need to be formulated in such a way that inequalities and constraints will not just be tackled by arbitrary means, but that the possibility of inclusive public spheres is the explicitly desired result.

Above all, these arguments highlight a main rationale for looking at Giddens in the first place: the individual policy positions noted here are nothing new, and could just as easily have been arrived at by means other than Giddens' theory, or indeed without any use of sociological

perspectives. What is significant is that this analysis of Giddens' work allows us to construct a model of social democracy with a new sociological basis. A brief overview of assumptions underlying the social democratic tradition highlights why this is necessary.

Summarizing the experience of centre-left parties in several European countries, Sassoon notes that social democratic parties across Europe traditionally based their rationale for policy, as well as their scope for electoral success, on elements such as nationhood, class solidarity and community cohesion (1997). Noting then that these features have lost their capacity to enable successful social democratic government, he characterizes the European centre-left movements as converging to a defensive position (ibid: 4).[9] Case studies on centre-left parties in individual European countries frequently confirm that the elements mentioned by Sassoon have ceased to be able to act as convincing ways of justifying centre-left policies (Leys, 1997: 21–2; Meyer, 1997: 126). Independently of discussions on social democracy, but more-or-less parallel to first publication of Giddens' seminal works on late modernity and politics, other authors also pointed to the demise of class and community solidarity (Pakulski and Waters, 1996; Putnam, 2000). We can tie this outlook back to Giddens by concluding that post-traditionalism in areas such as nationhood, community and especially class solidarity has caused problems for the prospects of social democracy. But Giddens gives us a way of basing policy positions broadly identifiable with social democracy on an outlook that does not require these features. Instead, we can obtain from his work a social democratic outlook centred on individualization, where prospects of post-traditionalism and globalization are the very features that supply justification for redistributive policies.

Given the travails of social democratic movements across Europe, as well as the fact that the dwindling salience of their sociological outlook is identified by several authors as a key part of these travails, Giddens is an especially worthwhile figure to look to in the context of renewing social democracy. Moreover, whilst others have sought to base left-of-centre politics on the notion of cosmopolitanism (Beck, 2005; Delanty, 2009), Giddens adopts a more cautious approach sensitive to the barriers obstructing desirable social revolutions: Giddens' utopian realist analysis understands that the cosmopolitan moment has not yet arrived, but a Giddensian politics[10] effectively suggests how we might get there.

Aside from providing a new sociological rationale distinct from that of most European social democrats, the principal aim of Giddensian politics, fostering the emergence of the empowered,

reflexive, knowledgeable self, is additionally useful in that it does not simply dictate that redistribution and emancipation are important but can also help to specify what kind of redistributive and emancipatory policies should be pursued. Whilst we can infer specific programmatic points from this, Giddens at the same time highlights a wider integrative approach to policymaking, where policy positions need to be arrived at through coordination of emancipatory and life-political concerns.

For now, there is little more that can be said about a Giddensian political project, and where it stands in relation to other political platforms currently in existence, because a centrally important element has as yet not been addressed: where exactly do capitalism and the free market economy stand in all this? Once again without much further deliberation, Giddens notes:

> Capitalism, one of the great driving forces in the expansion of modernity, is a class system which tends to generate major material inequalities – on a global scale as well as within the economically developed societies. The emancipatory struggles which have helped moderate the polarising effects of 'unfettered' capitalist markets are hence directly relevant to the pursuit of life-political endeavours.
>
> (1991a: 228)

A Giddensian political project needs to engage critically and extensively with capitalism both on a national and on a global scale. This leads us back to a previously identified and unresolved issue: what does Giddens say about economic dimensions of globalization, and is what he says coherent and justified? Tackling this question will be the task of the next chapter. In doing so, we will see in more detail what Giddensian policies on global and national inequality, taxation and finance need to look like, and where, ultimately, a political project consistent with the utopian realist analysis of late modernity needs to stand on the issue of capitalism.

4
Globalization and Capitalism

Despite globalization being a well-known theme in Giddens' work, the analysis in Chapter 2 showed that the potential for greater reflexivity and empowerment he ascribes to the time-space dimension of globalization cannot readily be reconciled with bleaker perspectives focused on the economic realm. By resolving this tension, we can ascertain where a politics consistent with Giddens' utopian realist analysis of late modernity would need to stand on capitalism and the current shape of the global market economy. Having established in the last chapter the basic contours of what such a politics would need to look like to successfully complete the utopian realist project, the task here is to consider this fundamental structuring feature of the present age, to understand its role in Giddens' analysis and to put flesh on the skeleton of Giddensian politics developed so far. This will enable an assessment of whether Giddens' own Third Way does in fact present a suitable conclusion to the utopian realist analysis, and will also help us constructively think about emancipatory politics going forward.

As we saw, Giddens' analysis of late modernity is highly contestable at face value. However, his comments on utopian realism allow for a more defensible reading: within this approach post-traditionalism, individualization, reflexivity and the new late modern self are mere possibilities, empirically verifiable in some respects in some sections of some populations yet severely obstructed by many factors. Empirical evidence supports this: many investigations convincingly argue against blanket assertions of post-traditionalism or individualization but nevertheless concede that in certain instances these developments are indeed taking place.

Giddens only briefly and superficially covers the structural constraints inhibiting the universal emergence of the late modern self. For good

reasons: his idea of utopian realism does not involve dwelling on these much and instead seeks to identify potential sources of social transformation. For Giddens, this is a necessary approach in order to construct a critical theory without guarantees in the absence of *telos* and historically designated transformative agencies.

But since the developments identified by Giddens are at best emergent, and in many instances mere theoretical possibilities, a corresponding political project needs to be clear about the other side of this coin, namely the factors that inhibit the emergence of this new constitution of the self. Based on the conclusions of the previous chapters, we can define the basic strategy of a Giddensian political project: it would most likely involve a political party, based in the presently existing sphere of representative democracy. Its outlook should be to identify instances where the way in which available rules and resources are contextualized leads to sanctional or systemic constraints on the possibility of individuals becoming more empowered, reflexive and knowledgeable. Such a project should then seek to draw on the available rules and resources in ways likely to lessen or indeed fully remove said constraints whilst also integrating emancipatory and life-political concerns in the formulation of policy. A key requirement for this approach is the task of identifying the structural features of late modernity from which sanctional or systemic constraints might derive.

These considerations have already highlighted the need for redistributive policies, especially in terms of education and access to technological resources. A fundamental need to address inequalities in areas such as age and gender has also been implicit in some of the conclusions drawn earlier. Yet, these observations say little about the relationship a Giddensian politics should have with capitalism more broadly. Conclusions on this matter will allow for a clearer programmatic detailing of Giddensian politics: not only is the approach to capitalism and the global market economy a long-standing contentious point of debate within left-wing politics (Overthrow? Regulate? Transform? Submit?); it is also acknowledged as the most central structuring feature of modern societies in the estimation of many authors, including Giddens himself: *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (1971) highlights how capitalism fundamentally altered the contours of modern societies, replacing religion as the dominant value system and structuring force. Chiefly, Giddens outlines how three founding figures of classical European sociology – Marx, Durkheim and Weber – responded to this change in the social fabric, comparing and contrasting its effects perceived respectively by these figures. For all three, Giddens concludes, capitalism has

profound effects on the role, function and constitution of the individual, encapsulated by Marx in the concept of alienation, by Durkheim in the notion of *Anomie* and by Weber in the rise of Bureaucracy. The question of how to respond to capitalism, both in descriptive and normative terms, is a characteristic noted by Giddens for all three figures.

Despite its promising subject matter, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* does not contain helpful information about where Giddens himself might stand on the issue. First published in 1971, the utopian realist project was not to be expressed for many years, and similar to many of his early works on classical sociological theory, Giddens notes that the text is intended to be of an expository and comparative rather than a critical nature (1971: viii). However, Giddens' evident interest in this matter indicates that the place of capitalism in his work needs to be a central line of inquiry.

In the absence of a normative and descriptive analysis of capitalism elsewhere, we must return to Giddens' analysis of late modernity and specifically to his views on globalization. Though he attributes primacy to globalization as the transformation of time and space, brought about chiefly through technological innovation, he likewise highlights that the global market economy has both shaped this transformation and is shaped by it. Capitalism is one of several dimensions of globalization, and it is therefore possible to elicit a view on its role in the utopian realist project. The temporal and spatial dimension of globalization as a driver for the late modern transformation of the self, alongside the economic dimension as a potential inhibitor, makes this an especially important point of investigation.

Globalization: reconciling enabling and constraining properties

Globalization in the realm of information and communication is identified by Giddens as a benevolent feature of late modernity. It is the most fundamental element through which the possibility of a more empowered, reflexive self has arisen. It is not the sole cause of this new constitution of the self: the rise of widespread literacy is an important additional factor Giddens mentions. We might add the invention of the printing press, translations of the bible into languages other than Latin, anything in fact that has somehow made information more widespread or improved access to it. Nevertheless, the era of globalization is shown by Giddens to amplify this process significantly, as availability of information and contact between different cultures

and lifestyles has increased dramatically in a relatively short amount of time.

However, large sections of the literature on globalization view it principally as an economic or political phenomenon. We naturally find this approach in subject areas such as global political economy or international relations (Hardt and Negri, 2000; Germain, 2013). Especially in the years immediately following first publication of Giddens' seminal works on late modernity and globalization, we see a high incidence of such work, with Hirst and Thompson's *Globalization in Question* (1998) noteworthy as perhaps the most emblematic study, highlighting the striking degree of continuity of the global economic order, and emphasizing the transnational approach of long-standing major economic players over the internationalist perspective of more benevolent critics. For them and others (Callinicos, 1994; Boyer and Drache, 1996; Weiss, 1998), an equitable and genuinely internationalized global economic order present at best a future project – and thereby, a normative perspective – rather than a descriptive account of the present age.

Nevertheless, besides the far from unprecedented transnational influence of long-established global economic players and the consequently undesirable economic order, it is also evident that closely related developments occur alongside this global economic system: international travel, migration, distribution of information from films and TV programmes to research and journalism as well as the advent of the Internet more broadly. These have had profound effects on many areas of interest typically studied in the discipline of sociology, including culture, lifestyle, employment and mobility. Sociologists' interest in globalization is therefore unsurprising: understanding how hallmarks of globalization, such as mass transit and digital communication technologies, have affected the social fabric and the relationship between the individual and society is an important undertaking. This is precisely what Giddens has done and, in simple terms, the literature on globalization would be incomplete without it. But it would also be problematic to look at these elements of globalization in complete isolation from its economic and geopolitical dimensions. Many, if not all, of the globalizing technologies have been developed and distributed in large part through principles of capitalism, by companies based in a select few parts of the world. Trade, market forces and industrial relations therefore need to be considered when looking at how these technologies affect social life in late modernity. These areas are in themselves relevant to problems of a sociological nature, notably inequality, poverty and divisions of labour – all of which entail forms of structural constraint.

In both normative and empirical terms, global capitalism is a contradictory structural feature in Giddens' work, in the sense that on one hand it has been the vehicle for the advent of the technologies that give rise to the possibility of the late modern self, whilst on the other undermining that very possibility through the inequalities it produces and widens. This links up with Giddens' views on structure as having enabling and constraining properties (Giddens, 1984: 25), and, indeed, reflecting on the contradicting forces inherent in the late modern age, Kaspersen points out that Giddens' utopian realism urges us to be sensitive to such contradictions and to see in them possibilities for social transformation:

> [Utopian realism has to be] sociologically sensitive and thereby sensitive to the hidden contradictions in the institutions of modern society that can be used to propagate progressive forces on the path to a better world. . . . [it must] be politically and geopolitically tactical. By this, Giddens understands that moral convictions and 'good faith' alone will not lead to the desired changes.
>
> (Kaspersen, 2000: 112)

The notion of globalization as a normatively and empirically contradictory phenomenon can readily be grasped: globalizing technologies add to the power and efficiency of large economic players but have also already been used to undermine or oppose them, with examples ranging from organization of social movements to the rise of alternative news media, peer-to-peer file sharing, torrent sites and freeware such as Linux and OpenOffice (McCourt and Burkart, 2003). An understanding of global capitalism sensitive to these contradictions is critical to the Giddensian perspective. Of interest here are therefore not so much economic definitions of globalization in themselves but relational definitions, in other words, analyses trying to understand how economic and cultural/sociological elements of globalization relate to each other. In this context, there are two schools of thought, of which Giddens represents one.

Giddens sets out what he sees as four dimensions of globalization: the world capitalist economy, the international division of labour, the world military order and the nation state system, all of which interrelate in various ways (1990: 71). But the shrinking of time and space has centrality in his perspective. All other dimensions – economic, political, military, and, of course, the emergence of the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self – flow from it. This conceptual situating of time-space and

communication technologies in relation to all other dimensions of globalization is worth noting here again mainly for the sake of clarity and coherence. Indeed, Spybey notes that this approach to globalization is consistent with structuration theory: if time and space are viewed as key concepts that social theory should consider, then factors profoundly affecting such dimensions attain key importance (2001: 149).

As his four dimensions show, Giddens does not deny that economic dimensions of globalization exist: capitalism and the need to generate profit are important factors in the globalizing world (Giddens, 1990: 72). But based on his framework of globalization, the key angle of sociological enquiry is to look at the information and communication element of globalization and to understand how it affects other spheres: the economic, the political, the military and the personal. From here, it is not a far cry to become optimistic about globalization: whatever adverse or downright gruesome conditions the global economy and labour market, military interests and so on might entail, they are all subject to the possibilities opened up by these new technologies that have shrunk time and space. In theory, these technologies and this shrinking may then provide new rules and resources, which individuals might utilize to transform present systems, perhaps alleviating the negative effects currently observable within the various institutional dimensions of globalization. Those pursuing political ideals of emancipation and empowerment might conclude that there is cause for hope.

In contrast to Giddens' framework of globalization, there is another school of thought, which sees the economic dimension, rather than the time-space dimension, as the driving force behind globalization, shaping all others in the process.

Among the more extreme proponents of this view we can even cite those authors who argue against the notion of globalization altogether, most notably Hirst and Thompson, who famously argue that the global economic order has in fact changed remarkably little (with some qualifications, which we consider shortly). Although they discuss what are essentially global processes and issues, they reject the term 'globalization' as a misnomer: capitalism and the continually growing economic power of western nations and the corporations based within them are the central feature of the contemporary global order, resulting not in international integration of the self and the world, but in transnational expansion of existing power centres (Hirst and Thompson, 1998: 195–201).

Hirst and Thompson themselves do not directly consider the new communication technologies and the consequent significance of

time-space dimensions of globalization. Their view is nevertheless a useful starting point for arguing that this element of globalization is driven by the economic order: highly uneven access to, and distribution of, communication technologies around the globe can be explained by the kinds of global economic forces they point out.[1]

Other authors deal explicitly with this type of relational analysis of the different dimensions of globalization. Martell, though not a globalization sceptic in the sense that Hirst and Thompson are, also views the global economic order as centrally important, decisively shaping access to whatever new communication and information technologies the last few decades have produced:

> One area in which the opportunities of globalization remain unfulfilled or even actively countered is in economic globalization . . . . It is important to have a pluralistic understanding of globalization that does not reduce explanations to economic or other single factors. At the same time, it is also important to see the links between different factors in globalization and look at the extent to which some have causal power over others, rather than just seeing all as equal, separate or unaffected by one another. The search for resources, trade, production or investment, and the wealth that can be made from this, has been a driving force in globalization . . .
>
> (Martell, 2010: 312)

Reflecting on other sociologists who have written on globalization, of which Giddens may easily be read as an implicit example, he also concludes:

> . . . leaving out the economy and the way economic motivations, economic power and inequality structure globalization gives an overbenign, harmonious and equalized picture of globalization . . . . a key element is left out, that is, the way that globalization is based on and reproduces power, inequality and conflict.
>
> (ibid: 310)

The distinctions between critical and benevolent accounts, as well as between perspectives emphasizing novelty and those highlighting continuity, are well explored (Martell, 2007). But whatever the analytical or normative consequences, the issue of primacy becomes an additional important element of the debate once the presence of multiple dimensions of globalization is acknowledged. Primacy does not simply denote

what came first, the economic order or the technological revolutions, but which of the two is analytically best placed at the heart of a globalization thesis. The two contrasting approaches highlighted here are additionally symptomatic of a more general point made by Holton, who concludes:

> Globalization for many signifies a major root cause of inequality, human misery and injustice, while for others it is seen as a way of addressing these social ills.
>
> (Holton, 2005: 1)

So who is right? Does the best explanation lie somewhere in between the two? And most importantly here, what does this say about the validity of Giddens' analysis of late modernity? Although evidence largely favours the views taken by Martell or Hirst and Thompson, these two approaches to globalization are in fact compatible with each other, especially when we consider some further comments made on the issue by Giddens.

Much of the evidence presented in this book points to the idea that economic power, located in a select few parts of the world, is an important feature of the present age and a causal determinant of many global processes. The western nations[2] and the corporations based within them are growing rather than declining in their significance and influence; global inequalities are increasing, as is the poorer nations' dependence on the west; additionally, access to the globalizing technologies is heavily distributed in favour of the developed countries, giving them ever more advantages over the less developed countries and regions of the world. Placing economic considerations and the growing power of the developed world at the centre of globalization theory, giving the context in which all other elements of globalization might take place, appears to be a suitable approach. Meanwhile, the evidence in favour of Giddens' view is comparatively weak: instances of social transformations towards post-traditionalism and reflexivity exist, but they are rare, often limited to wealthy nations, regions and sections of populations, and largely still overshadowed in scale by the persistence of tradition and other structural determinants. Whilst there is sociological merit to highlighting the time-space and technological dimensions of globalization, these are still underpinned by inequality and economic power.

But despite his repeatedly stated insistence on communication technologies and the shrinking of time and space as the central underlying feature of globalization, Giddens is nevertheless acutely aware of the

constraining and destructive power of the global market economy. In *Runaway World,* a summary booklet of his 1999 BBC Reith Lectures, he notes:

> To many living outside Europe and North America [globalization] looks uncomfortably like Westernisation . . . . Most of the giant multinational companies are based in the US . . .
>
> (1999: 15)

> The share of the poorest fifth of the world's population in global income has dropped, from 2.3 per cent to 1.4 per cent between 1989 and 1998. The proportion taken by the richest fifth, on the other hand, has risen . . . . Some transnational companies sell goods there that are controlled or banned in the industrial countries . . . . Rather than a global village, one might say, this is more like global pillage.
>
> (ibid: 15–16)

Further reflecting on economics, and hinting at issues such as the digital divide, he adds:

> . . . it is surely obvious that free trade is not an unalloyed benefit. This is especially so as concerns the less developed countries. Opening up a country, or regions within it, to free trade can undermine a local subsistence economy. An area that becomes dependent upon a few products sold on world markets is very vulnerable to shifts in prices as well as to technological change.
>
> (ibid: 17)

These comments seem a far cry from what Martell calls 'an over-benign, harmonious and equalized picture of globalization' disproportionately representing the experience of European elites (2010: 310–11). Yet despite these qualifications, Giddens insists:

> Economic influences are certainly among the driving forces [of globalization] – especially the global financial system. Yet they aren't like forces of nature. They have been shaped by technology, and cultural diffusion . . .
>
> (1999: 14)

Giddens identifies technology as the driving force behind economic globalization whilst also leading to the advent of the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self; simultaneously, his perspective sees economic

globalization as deepening inequality, poverty and dependency, and undermining any possibility for this new late modern self to emerge for large sections of the world's population.

Given the extent of evidence showing globalization to entail an economic system that increases global inequalities and puts only a select few regions of the world at an ever greater advantage in relation to all others, it is critical to find a way of reading Giddens in such a way that these elements of his perspective are consistent with each other. Contemplating a Giddensian political project is only a worthwhile task if Giddens' analysis of the contemporary age is coherent and correct: there is no sociological merit in designing a politics for a fictional world.

Above all, understanding Giddens' globalization thesis involves not getting blind sided by the use of 'globalization' as a blanket term covering various dimensions, from the economic to the political and the cultural. Much of the expansion of western economic power has indeed been made possible through the advent of modern communication technology, which is in turn distributed disproportionately in favour of economic power centres. This, however, does not necessarily mean that economic power and communication technology must be conceptually viewed as unitary or monolithic. Giddens' structuration theory gives a helpful perspective: the global economic order on one hand and communication technologies on the other are sets of rules and resources, which actors can draw upon in varying ways, depending on status and location. At the present point in time, we can further infer, actors privileged by the rules and resources of the global economy are in turn more able to draw on the consequent technological resources, thus enabling them to lead more reflexive, empowered lives, whilst actors experiencing sanction or contextual disadvantage are unable to draw on the globalizing technologies to the same extent.

Read in this structurationist way, globalization involves multiple different sets of rules and resources from various domains – economic, political, technological and so on – which affect each other in various ways. De-coupling the different dimensions of globalization at a meta-theoretical level allows for communication technologies to be viewed as aiding the expansion of global inequalities on one hand, whilst also making them identifiable as a potential resource to lessen these very inequalities in the future on the other. This gives us a consistent and empirically viable theory of globalization from Giddens: the expansion of western economic power and the rise of the globalizing technologies have doubtlessly affected each other. But whilst it is then justified to say that the globalizing technologies are deeply bound up with western

economic power and expansion, this approach nevertheless also leaves room to say that these technologies are a resource in their own right.

To use the language of structuration theory, specifically in relation to transformation of systems over time: technological advances and global economics have at present been drawn on to produce a system marked by intense inequality and widespread constraint upon the empowerment, knowledge and reflexivity of individuals; but there is no reason why presently available technological resources should not be drawn on to transform the present system, and, indeed, why the present economic order should not be transformed to the effect of increasing access to the globalizing technologies for those presently disadvantaged. In other words, just because the globalizing technologies have largely been a good servant and vehicle for the expansion of western economic power so far does not mean that this necessarily has to continue to be the case in the future.

This interpretation accepts what sceptics and critics of globalization say about inequality and uneven balances of power whilst also accepting the transformative potential of the globalizing technologies alongside the role these technologies have played in intensifying economic inequalities.[3] Secondly, this reading is consistent with Giddens at a meta-theoretical level, as it constitutes an application of structuration theory. Starting with globalization as a blanket term to designate the present system, we can identify its various structural properties (rules and resources) and contemplate how these might be drawn on in new ways, in order to transform the present system to the effect of alleviating the constraints currently inhibiting the emergence of a new constitution of the self.

At a substantive level, the interpretation proposed here explains how Giddens can discuss globalization as enabling transformative power and leading to the emergence of a new empowered self whilst openly acknowledging rising global poverty and inequality. If globalization is read as a blanket term encompassing many different dimensions that when put together form the present system, then the constraining context of one dimension does not necessarily inhibit the otherwise promising and empowering features of another. In Giddens' own words:

> Globalization is not a single unitary process but a complex mixture of processes, which often act in contradictory ways, producing conflicts, junctures and new forms of stratification.
>
> (1994: 5)

This suggests that in his work globalization should be understood primarily as a label attached to the entire present system. Giddens has noted that he finds the term globalization to be too broad for many analytical purposes as it involves many dimensions, to the effect that it becomes a blanket term for the present age.[4] Put differently:

> ... globalization is not incidental to our lives today .... It is the way we now live.
>
> (1999: 19)

This does not negate his definition of globalization relating to time-space distanciation through technological advances found in *The Consequences of Modernity*: he consistently mentions time-space dimensions in conjunction with the other dimensions of globalization (1990: 65–78). The time-space dimension is a genuinely new component in the late modern age, especially where digital communication is concerned, and as such has influenced and shaped other dimensions of the global system that are not so new, such as western economic power. Although the time-space dimension therefore holds central theoretical importance, it exists in Giddens' work alongside the idea that western economic power and rising global inequality is nevertheless a central determinant of the present-day global landscape.

The discussion in previous chapters provides an explanation why Giddens then spends so much time discussing how globalization leads to post-traditionalism, reflexivity and the new late modern self, whilst devoting relatively little space to discussing the dire economic context within which these transformations might take place: the key lies in utopian realism, and closely bound up with it, the need for a Giddensian political project. As a utopian realist, Giddens focuses on those sociological issues containing possibilities for social transformation whilst paying relatively little attention to factors constraining them. Dealing with the constraints currently inhibiting the scope for social transformation then falls into the realm of a Giddensian political project. At this point we can move once again from the expository to the inferential realm and outline the implications for such a political project resulting from the discussion here.

Broadly speaking – and perhaps unsurprisingly – these deliberations mean that such a project needs to have a globalist outlook. Since the emergence of the late modern self and the factors inhibiting its universal emergence are closely bound up with global processes, a Giddensian political project, though based within the sphere of national

parliamentary democracy, must engage with these global processes. However, given the various dimensions of globalization, and the ways in which they affect each other, this is not to be understood in a normative sense.

Globalization is somewhat of a buzzword in Giddens' Third Way.[5] However, the matters discussed here suggest that it is misleading to talk about globalization as a conceptually unitary and distinct phenomenon. Therefore, rather than either fully endorsing or being hostile to globalization, a Giddensian politics needs to take a nuanced view of this term. It would need to be committed to expanding those elements of globalization that carry possibilities and opportunities *vis-à-vis* the late modern transformation of the self, but also to tackling those elements shown to cause problems for the fulfilment of this aim.

Since the two key areas of interest here were shown to be economic and technological dimensions of globalization, a Giddensian political project needs to take an active role in addressing both global capitalism and trade as well as global access to and distribution of technology. But Giddens' theories do not point towards the need for an overthrow of the capitalist system. Instead, they indicate a need to help transform the global economy, utilizing available rules and resources. This might for instance involve actively seeking international cooperation to create global regulatory frameworks aimed at creating a more autonomous economic model and sustainable economic growth in those areas currently suffering as a result of the present incarnation of the global economy. Some examples are worth noting here, for instance, allowing developing countries to take protectionist measures in cases where national economies are stifled by the economic power of western transnational corporations or, at the more ambitious level, the introduction of a global living wage.

Meanwhile, the centrality of technology in Giddens' globalization thesis indicates that a Giddensian political project should likewise seek ways of expanding access to the globalizing technologies in those areas currently declining in global economic power as a result of the digital divide – in effect, to bring about a more equitable time-space contraction. Again, a number of possibilities come to mind here ranging from the provision of incentives and resources for existing companies to build digital infrastructures to allowing governments to do this in a nationalized form.

Such suggestions are the political consequences of Giddens' pre-Third Way work. They are based on, and consistent with, his theory of structuration, which proposes that structural constraint can

be alleviated by drawing on available resources (in the above cases chiefly political power, international cooperation and existing technology) to transform existing system components (in this case the global economy). Secondly, they reflect his analysis of globalization, which highlights a current tension between technology as a possible pathway towards reflexivity and self-creation, and capitalism – in its current form – as a force obstructing these possibilities in many areas. Moreover, policy positions of this type are demonstrable preconditions for the utopian realist goal of fostering the universal emergence of the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self. These kinds of policy positions emerge as a consequence from Giddens' work, and in order to complete the utopian realist project, a Giddensian politics needs to address the economic dimension of globalization in a fashion broadly comparable to them.[6]

Finance in the globalization debate

Globalization was an especially fashionable term in the 1990s, and the discussion so far has largely focused on the disagreements that existed around the term at that particular time. These disagreements have never been fully resolved since, though we have seen here that Giddens' work – viewed in the context of structuration theory and the utopian realist approach – can provide a solution in some respects. However, since the 1990s globalization has come to entail other areas of concern, one of which is the global financial system. Relevant both to the use of global information flows, as well as to the global economy, financial markets and financialization require exploration here.

Following the global financial crises post-2008 culminating in the politics of austerity (Major, 2014), a discussion of political platforms deriving from sociological theory needs to consider the issue of global finance. Even prior to the crises of 2008, finance capitalism and global governance of finance had shown concerning effects: the financial crises of Argentina or the Southeast Asian economies in the 1990s highlighted the devastating effects that debt – private and sovereign – can have on economic and social prosperity even of highly developed and industrialized nations. Meanwhile, the Washington Consensus (Babb, 2013) and its capacity to dictate socially damaging terms to countries requiring financial assistance has been a topic of discussion among political economists for some time. But since the crash of 2008, debt and finance have received significant added attention from disciplines across the social sciences. A sociology of debt has begun to take shape (Brown and

Spencer, 2014; Kus, 2015), whilst at a wider level the phenomenon of financialization has provided grounds for discussions on the changed meaning of labour's relation to capital, owing to the emerging trend of capital no longer necessarily deriving from labour productivity but from the abstract value of the firm as a tradable asset (Thompson, 2013). Wider discussions on sovereign debt, personal debt and global financial governance and audit also continue (Iley and Lewis, 2013).

This brief sketch of the growing interest in finance and its effects on nations and individuals is far from exhaustive. At the same time, there is much ground to be covered, prompting a keynote speaker at the British Sociological Association's 2012 annual conference to note that we are in desperate need of a sociology of finance (Ackroyd and Blatt, 2012).

These developments in the literature are hardly surprising following the financial crises post-2008: it is a theme that has been forced into the attention not just of academics of all disciplines, but also of the wider population. More surprising is that financial markets have occupied a distinct place in the globalization debate ever since it gathered pace in the early 1990s. This has not only been the case with authors from political economy or economics backgrounds but also from sociologists – including Giddens – who discuss globalization and have given finance an important status within their analyses.

When Giddens discusses economic dimensions of globalization, specifically in relation to trade, he rarely focuses on the trading of tangible goods. Instead, finance capitalism (currencies, speculation, banking and related areas) is the key example he often uses to make the case that there is something genuinely new about trade and capitalism in the late modern age.[7] In *The Consequences of Modernity* he mentions money markets ahead of commodity markets as a factor affecting local conditions at distance (1990: 64), and in subsequent work on globalization he notes:

> The level of world trade today is much higher than it ever was before, and involves a much wider range of goods and services. But the biggest difference is in the level of finance and capital flows. Geared as it is to electronic money – money that exists only as digits in computers – the current world economy has no parallels in earlier times. (1999: 9)

Technological revolutions and intensification of financial markets do not change the fact that commodity trade still follows the same patterns that have been in existence for centuries. Likewise, the idea of globalization as a misnomer – insinuating inclusion of all parts of

the world when this is not the case – is, if anything, strengthened when discussing money markets. Financial power centres are not only concentrated within the long-established wealthy nations but within select districts of a select few global cities within a few of those nations: New York, London, Tokyo, Frankfurt and a few others (Sassen, 1999). But when viewed as separate from commodity trade, finance capitalism presents a good case for Giddens' overall globalization thesis: through the advent of the globalizing technologies, finance capitalism was able to expand and accelerate at a rapid rate and has become a more powerful structural force in late modernity than it was before. Even the staunchest globalization sceptics accept the unprecedented growth of finance capitalism over the past decades. This view is widely shared, as are deliberations on the impact this has on national governments, state finances, welfare and redistributive policies. Sassen concurs both with the significance of the globalizing technologies and with the political implications of the unprecedented growth of financial markets:

> ... the particular properties of digital networks have assumed added meaning because the number of transactions that can be executed within a given timeframe can be multiplied with every additional participant .... the global integration of a growing number of financial centres, computers, and telecommunication technologies have contributed to an explosive growth in financial markets. The high degree of interconnectivity in combination with instantaneous transmission signals the potential for exponential growth.
>
> (Sassen, 2007: 92–3)[8]

Sassen's thoughts support the centrality of the globalizing technologies in the wider phenomenon of globalization. Following the globalization sceptics of the 1990s, we may however ask whether this intensification inevitably signifies transformation of any kind. Finance capitalism, speculation and powerful banking sectors with international reach have existed for centuries. Yet, we need to consider whether this recent intensification of financial activity signifies any conceptual shifts, in other words, whether there are factors of global social, political and economic life that need to be viewed differently as a result.

Whilst answering this question is problematic in the case of transnational corporations and global economic activity more broadly, there is a more clear-cut sense that in the specific case of finance capitalism, intensification of worldwide relations has led to conceptual shifts. Reflecting

on the financial crises of the 1990s and comparator incidents of financial penetration reaching back as far as the tulip mania of 1637 and the South Sea bubble of the 1710s, Gilpin notes:

> Whereas earlier crises were restricted to particular markets or regions of the world, the immense scale and velocity of international financial flows and the equal swiftness of information flows today have resulted in a situation where, with the push of a button, billions of dollars can be shifted from one country to another, and the whole globe can quickly be drawn into a maelstrom. As a consequence of the global financial turmoil of the late 1990s, the economics profession and many governments have become increasingly concerned about, and deeply divided over, international finance and the regulation of international capital/investment flows.
>
> (Gilpin, 2002: 134–5)

Whilst economic globalization as a whole is an ambiguous issue in many ways – though this chapter has proposed a justified way of understanding it – the issue of financial markets has a special position in this debate, in that a certain extent of novelty is widely accepted. Likewise, financial markets' considerable influence on national economies and by extension on government policy is suggested by many authors. Giddens concurs with this view:

> In the new global electronic economy, fund managers, banks, corporations, as well as millions of individual investors, can transfer vast amounts of capital from one side of the world to another at the click of a mouse. As they do, they can destabilise what might have seemed rock-solid economies – as happened in the events in Asia.
>
> (1999: 9)

Finance capitalism and its effects on national governments is therefore an issue that any political platform of the present day must consider; but it is furthermore an important component of Giddens' analysis of late modernity. We have already seen that a Giddensian political project needs to involve several policies entailing redistribution and investment in key services. The demonstrable political power of finance capitalism and the limitations it may place on governments' ability to implement such policies additionally make this an important point for consideration. The questions to consider here are: can finance capitalism be regulated, should it be regulated, and if so, how?

The first question, though primarily a technical one, is worth asking precisely because much of finance capitalism operates globally and through international digital spaces. This raises the issue of whether finance capitalism is simply beyond the reach of national governments. To use the language of structuration theory: we need to question whether national governments have available rules and resources that can realistically be drawn upon to transform the financial sector in such a way that it does not pose a threat to the viability of the Giddensian policy positions noted so far. The international and electronic character of financial markets may initially appear to suggest that they do not. However, two points suggest otherwise. The first derives from financial markets' embeddedness in the realm of the nation state. Sassen notes in this context:

> ... the private digital space of global finance intersects ... with the world of state authority and law ... through the partial embeddedness of even the most digitized financial markets in actual financial centers, an intersection that in part returns global finance to the world of national governments.
>
> (Sassen, 2007: 96)

Even with potential further technological developments the embeddedness of finance capitalism in physical centres is unlikely to cease: physical financial centres are important to the functioning of financial markets, and these centres need to be located in well-developed cities, where there is physical proximity to other firms, as well as suitable infrastructure and desirable locations for high-level employees to live.[9]

Given this embeddedness within nation states, national governments could place limitations on what firms, investors and speculators can and cannot do in those spaces. Furthermore, there is the possibility of achieving changes through international cooperation between national governments. This could be either through direct cooperation, or through supra-national communities like the EU, where several countries hosting major financial centres simultaneously legislate to limit certain powers of companies based within them. It could also involve jointly setting up and strengthening international regulatory and watchdog organizations to combat internationally those elements of finance that pose such threats to national economies and, more importantly in this case, to governments' ability to implement redistributive policies. Indeed, Giddens' continuing advocacy of European

integration (2014) signifies a continuing need for international coordination to combat market excesses and facilitate social progress.

There are, of course, powerful interests and lobbies likely to stand in opposition to such measures (Singh, 2005: 52), but the literature indicates that they are within the scope of action for national governments. Indeed, greater regulation of financial markets has been suggested frequently,[10] and Giddens' comment on the volatile and destabilizing character of financial markets gives clear justification for doing so in the context of Giddensian politics.

The second question, whether transforming and regulating financial markets is desirable in the context of a Giddensian political project can thereby be answered straightforwardly, given the potential effects of financial markets both on the stability of national economies and the possibilities for large-scale redistributive programmes. Yet, the case for this can be strengthened.

Although there have been some charges of exaggeration (Mosley, 2005), the literature on the subject matter indicates that financial markets in their current form do limit governments' possibilities to implement policies of the kind noted as necessary components of a Giddensian political project. In the first instance, this is because the financial sector uses its clout to ensure government policies do not hinder profit maximization. This has been pointed out since long before the debt crises post 2008. Many governments have high levels of commercial debt and thus become heavily influenced in their policy decisions by the will of banks. Historically, this has been especially true of developing countries (Holton, 2005: 170–1), although by now this doubtlessly applies to many developed countries as well. Gilpin strengthens this point by noting the conditionality that accompanies IMF loans, ensuring that debtors facilitate free markets (both commodity and money markets) through their government policy (Gilpin, 2002: 157). Holton echoes this stance, noting that IMF conditionality, favouring liberalization of trade and financial markets, has typically resulted in cutbacks to health and public education systems, poorer public services in general, higher costs of living and failure to achieve either economic growth or social protection and equality (Holton, 2005: 172).

Soros (2002) and Stiglitz (2002) also argue along similar lines, where the present role of global finance, its political power and the conditionality it enforces are undesirable on several counts. This is especially the case when considering political projects seeking to implement emancipatory policies, redistribute and universally provide certain services. Recently, this has become additionally evident by the conditions

attached to bailout packages for strongly indebted states, most notably – at the time of writing – in the case of Greece (Karyotis and Gerodimos, 2015). Some authors go even further, noting that quite aside from the constraining effects that finance capitalism imposes on governments, there are hardly any discernible benefits:

> The arguments in favour of financial globalization are not well founded. Empirical evidence militates against the orthodox thinking that unfettered global capital flows can promote investment and growth besides better allocation of resources and deepening of financial markets. In the light of recent experiences, very few can assert that global capital flows provide immense benefits to countries, particularly developing ones. The benefits of global capital mobility have only accrued to a miniscule number of 'global investors' and financiers.
>
> (Singh, 2005: 51)

This brief overview of relevant aspects of finance capitalism allows us to note some important points that a Giddensian politics would need to reflect in order to suitably complete the utopian realist project. Giddens accepts the recent rapid growth of financial markets as well as the constraints this places on national governments. Finance capitalism is furthermore a favourite argument for his thesis on the current global economic system as something genuinely different from previous times. The logic of structuration theory indicates that as with the wider global economy, a Giddensian political project would not aim to completely abolish finance capitalism. Instead, it should be transformed in such a way that it does not obstruct the possibility of other Giddensian policies, most notably those relating to redistribution and universal provision of key resources. There is scope for national governments to achieve this at least partially, and Giddens' concurrence with the idea that globalization does not negate nation states as a locus of political power (Giddens, 1990: 71–2) makes this a necessary course of action for a Giddensian politics. To briefly tie this argument back to the original aim of such a project: in a sense, finance capitalism does not obstruct the emergence of the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self – although events such as the Subprime Crisis and the way it destroyed many individuals' livelihoods could quite possibly be used to make such a case. But it clearly does so in a secondary way, in that its present incarnation limits the kinds of policies governments are able to implement, more so than in previous times.

To address the final question, how finance capitalism should be transformed and regulated, we can note that governments pursuing Giddensian politics could draw on the resources of legislative power over financial centres within their borders and on international cooperation where limits on such measures arise due to the globalized dimension of finance capitalism. These resources would need to be drawn on to minimize the constraints placed on redistributive policies by finance capitalism and, indeed, to reform the financial sector so that elements of it may even be utilized explicitly for such purposes. A few concrete points, some of which have already been alluded to here could be to reform organizations such as the IMF in such a way that there is no conditionality pressuring governments to abandon or reduce public service provision; the cancellation of government debt, especially for developing countries[11]; the introduction of legal restrictions on types of speculation or financial transaction that destabilize otherwise prosperous economies; and, finally, taxing of financial speculation or indeed taxing financial transactions in general.

As with previous examples, these policy positions are not new; they are noted because the analysis shows them to be integral parts of a Giddensian politics. This is in fact an area where Giddens has often advocated political action broadly resembling the above points (1998a: 148). Measures of this kind are also postulated by other authors who offer accounts of globalization and individualization in the present age: Beck, whose analysis of late modernity (or high modernity, as Beck usually refers to it) is similar in many respects to Giddens', advocates similar proposals for the regulation of global finance capitalism (2004: 130–2), as does Held (2004). Once again, the rationale here should be clear: firstly, the aim of a Giddensian political project is to foster the emergence of a more empowered, reflexive self. Secondly, several elements of the financial sector obstruct governments' ability to implement policies that could lead to this end, and, thirdly, it is within the scope of governments to achieve regulation and transformation of finance capitalism. Controversial as some of these policy positions may be, the task of transforming finance capitalism is an inescapable element of a Giddensian political project.

Responding to capitalism: integrating global and national dimensions

As we have seen, there is good cause to locate a Giddensian political project within the realm of national parliamentary democracy. From

a point of view of pure *Realpolitik*, any political faction seeking to enter office in a national political sphere needs foremost to address political issues immediately applicable to the context of the nation in question. However, ascertaining Giddensian policy positions at a global level is necessary for analytical reasons because global processes and developments have such centrality in Giddens' perspective. Following this analysis, we can now infer Giddensian policy positions on national issues of inequality, redistribution and technology, using the present analysis of globalization alongside the assessment of late modernity from Chapter 2, which highlighted numerous examples of research questioning the extent of participation in information flows, post-traditionalism and overall capacity for reflexive action.

On the issue of global poverty and inequality, it was possible to ascertain the Giddensian approach straightforwardly: he focuses the bulk of his analysis on the transformative potential of globalization, whilst empirical studies show that this transformative potential is largely undermined by poverty and unequal distribution of the resources that might lead to said transformations. In order to move from this mismatch to a sound social theory, his work then needs to be supplemented by a political programme, which must be concerned with minimizing the factors obstructing the transformative potential of globalization. The policy positions outlined at the end of the previous section are therefore necessary for the completion of Giddens' utopian realist approach – in this case, on the particular issue of the global capitalist economy. But if we move away from the global perspective and focus instead on the national, a similar logic needs to be applied if Giddens' analysis of late modernity is to stand.

The analysis in Chapter 2 showed that even the wealthiest societies are hardly marked by widespread post-traditionalism, reflexivity or individualism. Instead, there is a continued significance – and indeed resurgence – of traditional systems of belief and many powerful structural determinants. The digital divide is not a phenomenon only observable between rich and poor countries: in developed nations, digital communication technologies and mass travel are likewise neither universal nor undifferentiated realities for all. Universal applicability of Giddens' theory therefore falls apart, long before we even get on to post-traditionalism and reflexivity. But Giddens' claims have merit as long as they are understood as emergent possibilities, currently only leading to transformations towards a late modern self on a limited scale. The need for a Giddensian politics stems from this narrative, and its operational scope derives from the normative dimensions of structuration

theory: the systems – the present contextualization of available rules and resources – that we see within developed nations have many different components and dimensions, and these refract upon each other. This also entails that there are dimensions of the present system limiting the extent to which resources can be utilized by individuals; dimensions that lead to a selective distribution of these resources, and which ultimately present not just old forms of structural constraint, but also introduce new ones. On the global scale, the central factor negating much of the possibilities for a new constitution of the self lies in the economic dimension of globalization or, put differently, in the present incarnation of global capitalism, even though this dimension has simultaneously brought about some of the prerequisites for the emergence of the late modern self. The noted examples of international regulation in this domain therefore become essential.

This conceptual approach can also be applied to the national level. However, it is possible here to contemplate considerably more scope to Giddensian policy positions, because the rules and resources available to a national government by definition give it more transformative capacity within its national boundaries than on an international scale. The central structural obstacles preventing Giddens' utopian realist aim from being realized lie once again in constraints posed by inequality and capitalism.

Giddens identifies the capitalist economy and social inequalities as central system components of modern and late modern societies from his early contributions onwards (1971, 1984: 184). Given his stance on structure as having enabling and constraining characteristics, it follows that these are therefore sources of constraint. In *Beyond Left and Right*, he notes that markets often have a polarizing effect on distributions of wealth and income, and that quite aside from global poverty and inequality, large sections of the population within the world's richest countries are also poor (1994: 98–9).

Poverty, both absolute and relative, exists even in the richest countries on a large scale, and widespread rising levels of poverty are frequently intensified by relative stagnation or decline of wages, unemployment and many other related economic factors (Townsend et al., 1997, 2000; Walker, 2004; Whelan and Whelan, 2004; Byrne, 2005). As for levels of inequality resulting from societies structured largely by market forces, Wilkinson and Pickett's *The Spirit Level* (2009), as well as Piketty's more overtly economic perspective (2014) make further important contributions, citing ample reasons why inequality is a concerning phenomenon. Many of the reasons cited – including higher crime rates and

poorer health outcomes – might easily find agreement with Giddens. However, it is the barriers to reflexivity and the globalizing technologies that make the question of inequality so important to a Giddensian politics. This in itself gives us some clues as to what Giddensian policies to tackle inequality should look like.

Rather than normatively identifying inequality as a bad thing in and of itself – a position that Bobbio (1996) notes as being a somewhat constant characteristic of left-wing politics (see also Giddens, 1998a: 40) – a Giddensian politics should view it as an issue to be tackled with the aim of facilitating the specific result of increased reflexivity. This means that such a politics could not be content simply with ensuring that there are high levels of unemployment benefits and reasonable wages with the one-dimensional aim of decreasing wealth or income inequality, however necessary this aim in itself might be. Given research on the effects of inequality, it may be advisable to pursue greater financial equality as well – and there are little grounds in Giddens' work not to advocate this – but the key factor in a Giddensian politics would need to be the kind of redistributive policies that actively foster increased reflexivity and access to the opportunities given by the globalizing technologies.

Foremost, this would mean ensuring universal access to communication technologies, such as the Internet, regardless of location or socio-economic status. This could be facilitated through a nationalized broadband service, or, perhaps more in line with the logic of structuration theory, through governments cooperating with existing providers to ensure access for individuals who otherwise could not afford it.

But the path to widespread reflexivity is not limited to mere availability of technological resources. The question of competence, as well as safeguards against manipulation, also point to the need for an overhaul and equalizing of education systems. In order to move societies on from having mere pockets of reflexivity, state education systems would have to become a high government priority. In effect, any existing differences between private and public education should be minimized or multiple-tier education systems avoided altogether, to prevent some being more reflexive than others.[12] Central aims need to be the improvement of educational facilities in underprivileged areas and introducing into curricula the training to use the globalizing technologies and engage critically with the masses of information that these technologies generate. This would also need to involve equipping individuals with the ability to comprehend and navigate their way through factors such as media

monopolies, selective presentation (or withholding) of facts, as well as powerful commercial and ideological forces, all of which shape the global information and communication landscape.[13] Without a greater understanding of how to be what might be termed a competent digital citizen, the reflexive project of the self is likely to fall victim to the most aggressive and domineering forces disseminating information, ideas and discourse.

More broadly, to enable the new constitution of the self advocated by Giddens, it is also necessary to advocate a universally adequate standard of living to ensure that individuals are not cut off from the resources central to the formation of the late modern self and are able to respond in suitable fashion to life-political considerations. In areas such as housing, infrastructure, healthcare and childcare, resources need to be made universally available, though egalitarian provision of well-funded education systems is the most immediately discernible element that becomes inescapable in a Giddensian politics. But having considered issues of inequality, poverty and access to globalizing technologies at both the global and the national level, it is worth noting that these two levels of Giddensian redistributive policies are closely connected.

An additional important element of Giddens' views on globalization concerns not so much its dimensions but, for lack of a better word, its mechanics: at several points in his work, Giddens discusses the relationship between the global and the local as a key hallmark of globalization. He refers to the fact that distant events can have consequences – immediate consequences at times – in one's own location. Likewise, personal or local decisions can have consequences in distant locations (Giddens, 1994: 5, 1990: 64, 1999: 12). Whilst the essential logic of the connectedness of events Giddens describes is hard to dispute, it is worth questioning whether there is anything new about such connections. Globalization sceptics would likely point out that in the economic order of past centuries, demands and decisions of people in one corner of the world would also have had repercussions for events in another. However, though this connectedness between local and distant events is frequently acknowledged as part of Giddens' thoughts on globalization, it is never explicitly characterized as something new. Mostly Giddens merely talks about intensification and greater visibility of this connectedness. New or not, the principle idea that connections between global and local activities exist, and that these may have been intensified in certain regards by the globalizing technologies, is relatively uncontroversial. By the same token, this point is in itself not particularly illuminating. But the idea of connectedness is important because it

gives us a rationale for having both global and national dimensions of tackling inequality.

Utilizing international cooperation to build digital infrastructures in developing countries or creating legally binding minimum wage standards across the globe would almost certainly have repercussions within developed nations. What these repercussions might be is unwise to predict; but this line of thinking nevertheless indicates that Giddens' frequent mentioning of interconnectedness between global and local events leads to a position where international development cannot be viewed as separate from national redistributive issues. Similarly, the transformation of finance capitalism – mainly an international project – would surely have direct repercussions for national issues, foremost for the affordability of redistributive policies. In his own words:

> We must 'take globalization seriously' – we have to accept that many policy questions cannot be dealt with, or opportunities grasped, only at the national or regional levels. This view does not imply taking an uncritical approach either to free trade or to the expansion of global market mechanisms. Regulation is needed, nationally and internationally, to promote corporate responsibility and control corporate power . . .
>
> (Giddens, 2002: 18)

A central feature of a Giddensian political project, and an element on which it breaks with many versions of social democracy, is that equality is not something to be achieved essentially within the realms of the nation state, with international development as a benevolent add-on or as a device to avoid ideological contradiction. Giddensian politics moves beyond redistribution justified through notions of nationhood: global and national dimensions of engagement with inequality are mutually necessary parts of an integrated framework. Giddens' social theory contains the normative political aim of fostering the universal emergence of the empowered, knowledgeable, reflexive self, and he concedes that poverty, inequality and uneven access to key resources are structural barriers to this. Since he furthermore emphasizes the connection between the global and the local, a framework for tackling inequality that integrates global and national dimensions becomes an inevitable part of Giddensian politics. These connections between the global and the national level form a second component to the integrative formula for Giddensian policymaking noted at the end of Chapter 3. Coordination is required between emancipatory and life-political as well as between

national and global dimensions. The implications of this formula are discussed further in the final chapter of this book.

These deliberations on global and national dimensions of economics and inequality mean that Giddens' utopian realist project needs to advocate a transformation of global capitalism, brought about through global and national transformations of welfare, redistribution and trade, where international cooperation between nation states is utilized to implement the necessary changes at the global level and legislative power over territory at the national. At both levels, the central approach is to lessen digital divides, provide universal access to globalizing technologies as well as the necessary skills to make use of them, and to lessen or eliminate the material inequalities that in themselves obstruct the emergence of the late modern self (through poverty, crime, starvation and so on). Giddens concludes *Modernity and Self-identity* with the following passage:

> The emergence of life politics, I have argued, results from the centrality of the reflexive project of the self in late modernity . . . . The capability of adopting freely chosen lifestyles, a fundamental benefit generated by the post-traditional order, stands in tension, not only with barriers to emancipation, but with a variety of moral dilemmas. No one should underestimate how difficult it will be to deal with these, or even how hard it is to formulate them in ways likely to command widespread consensus . . . . Responding to such problems will surely require a major reconstruction of emancipatory politics as well as the pursuit of life-political endeavours.
>
> (1991a: 231)

The final two chapters will assess the extent to which Giddens' Third Way manages to provide such a reconstruction, where it fails, and how the utopian realist project might help shape politics beyond the Third Way.

Part III

The Third Way and Beyond: Critique and Reconstruction

5
The Third Way – A Utopian Realist Critique

From the mid-1990s onwards Giddens produced a number of texts, which constitute his political project: the Third Way. The main works here are *The Third Way* (1998a), *The Third Way and Its Critics* (2000), parts of *Beyond Left and Right* (1994), as well as several articles elaborating on one or several elements already found in the main Third Way works. His Third Way broadly focuses on three themes: the state and civil society, the welfare state and inequality, and responses to globalization. The substantive chapters of *The Third Way* respectively deal with each of these themes but they also recur in some form in most of his Third Way texts. In brief, the central recommendations of his Third Way are:

- No longer viewing state and market as being fundamentally in tension and, instead, fostering a partnership between the two, where the private sector helps to deliver and improve public services, while public services place greater emphasis on actively aiding the private sector.
- Devolving political decision-making to communities and individuals, combined with a greater onus on individuals to transform their lives and communities.
- Understanding the importance of life politics, primarily by legislating to change policies that enforce a standardized life cycle, such as the mandatory retirement age, and actively legislating to enable different lifestyles, for instance, by using policy to diversify education and work (both in terms of times and places).
- Acknowledging globalization as an important social revolution, to which policy must respond in a number of ways, most notably in the areas of employment, economics and environmental issues.[1]

The Third Way was a term adopted by the UK's New Labour government in 1997, with Tony Blair publishing a Fabian Society pamphlet of the same name (1998). The Third Way moreover had considerable international appeal at the time: Germany's first Social Democrat and Green coalition, elected in 1998, used *Die Neue Mitte* (the 'New Centre') as a flagship term analogous to the trend from the UK (Hombach, 2000). Meanwhile, Giddens himself became a welcome advisor and speaker for many centre-left governments across the globe. Following this political move with *The Third Way* and associated publications at its core, Giddens' influence on the direction and discourse of formal politics both in the UK and abroad rose to a level scarcely paralleled by any other member of the social scientific community. After the demise of the various Third Way governments of the late 1990s and early 2000s, followed by varying degrees of malaise in centre-left parties in many countries, this sense of impact adds particular urgency to developing a better understanding of Giddens' contribution to these movements. Reading the Third Way against the arguments developed here so far can help build such an understanding.

There has been ample critical literature on the Third Way. Leggett provides a helpful overview and classifies this critical literature into three broad categories: neo-Marxist, social democratic and anti-technocratic critiques (2005: 65–118). Although he takes the approach of viewing the Third Way chiefly as New Labour's political orientation, where Giddens is one of several influences, Giddens nevertheless features heavily, though notably less so in the latter of these three categories, which tends to emphasize the operational dimensions of policy over their underlying rationales.

Much of the critical literature on the Third Way is problematic for the task at hand here, as it either conflates New Labour's policies and Giddens' pronouncements unreflected or focuses specifically on New Labour's Third Way, of which Giddens is then noted as one of many constituent influences. Driver and Martell are among authors who distinguish particularly clearly between Giddens and New Labour, devoting some discussion directly to the differences between the two (Driver and Martell, 2001: 43–5). Their analysis highlights divergent emphases on the public sphere and civil society; different definitions of concepts such as globalization and individualization; differing proposals in the area of global governance; as well as differing attitudes towards welfare, redistribution and equality (ibid). Morrison is another of relatively few authors who contemplate the distinction between

Blair and Giddens. His arguments enforce the idea that a conceptual separation of their two respective Third Ways is advisable for most analytical purposes. Morrison in fact goes further, bordering on the cynical:

> The cover of Giddens' book [The Third Way] claims that Giddens is 'allegedly Tony Blair's favourite intellectual'. There is mutual advantage in this claim. Giddens is posited as an intellectual who is close to and influential with the government, while Blair has the advantage of being able to claim intellectual support from the academy for his own position.
>
> (Morrison, 2004: 168)

Many examples highlight the necessity for this distinction: it is for instance apt that Hale (2004), discussing the communitarian philosophy of New Labour, draws on several figures from many academic traditions (Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer, to name the most prominent), but only mentions Giddens once. The critical literature on the Third Way emphasizing New Labour's practice rather than Giddens' texts is therefore of limited use here. Similarly, those that simultaneously discuss Blair's and Giddens' Third Ways[2] need to be treated with care, as they tend to treat the Third Way as a mixture of Giddens' texts, Blair's pamphlet (1998) and New Labour's policies. Although viewing the Third Way in this light may be useful for some purposes, it is likely to cause misconceptions when trying to understand specifically the link between Giddens' Third Way and his earlier work.

Whilst critiques of New Labour's Third Way can draw on empirical analysis of policy and its known effects, those focussing purely on Giddens are vulnerable to strongly normative approaches, where the authors' own stance becomes an exclusive mediator of the analysis, resulting in vastly different conclusions from authors conducting very similar endeavours. Cammack's critique (2004) is a helpful starting point, as it criticizes Giddens' Third Way purely on its own terms, with no reference to any works other than *The Third Way* and *The Third Way and its Critics*. This especially ferocious critique goes through *The Third Way* virtually point by point, reaching conclusions including accusations of Orwellian newspeak and doublethink: the Third Way, Cammack concludes, is an active neoliberal agenda (2004: 152) and as such redefines formerly social democratic terminology – solidarity, emancipation, community, redistribution and

equality – in ways that suit a strictly market oriented ideology (ibid: 157–63):

> . . . the Third Way systematically re-defines social democratic values in order to give them neoliberal content. Casting himself in the role of Blair's Minister of Truth, Giddens offers New Labour a set of slogans tailored to the needs of the age: individualism is solidarity; responsibility is emancipation; risk is security; enterprise is community; opportunity is redistribution; inclusion is equality; self-help is welfare. It obviously won't do to pass this off as renewed social democracy.
>
> (ibid: 165)

There are many other critiques of this type, though few of them as ferocious. Many contemplate whether and to what extent the Third Way constitutes a renewal of social democracy or whether it is instead neoliberal or centrist (Leggett, 2004: 195–8). While the results of such deliberations differ between authors, most critiques share a neglect of Giddens' earlier work, be that his works on structuration theory or his analysis of late modernity. Such readings of *The Third Way* can be problematic: reading a text in isolation may easily result in different interpretations, ranging all the way from approval to the charge of doublethink and neoliberalism. This is especially the case with *The Third Way*, which, much like Giddens' previous work, has faced the charge of being abstract and vague (Morrison, 2004: 168).

Reading the Third Way with reference to Giddens' previous work is therefore a useful undertaking in itself, as many key terms only briefly mentioned in the Third Way texts are explained in greater detail in previous work. Some of the ambiguity might therefore be alleviated. A small number of critics, notably Leggett (2005), have engaged with the sociological roots of the Third Way. But these have limited their focus to the analysis of late modernity itself, without considering the context of Giddens' analysis found in his earlier contributions or, indeed, the utopian realist perspective necessary to contextualize the rationale and scope of Giddensian politics. Hardly any authors have commented on the Third Way with reference to Giddens' structuration theory or undertaken critical engagement with the analysis of late modernity to assess its meaning, function and significance. Out of the few examples that exist, it is worth considering McCullen and Harris (2004), who conclude that for Giddens self-actualization, a possibility emanating from the increased reflexivity of the late modern age, is directly equivalent

to Marx's 'good life' (ibid: 95). In order for everybody to achieve it, they conclude further, Giddens sees it as necessary to advocate generative equality, resulting in the need for forms of welfare that are not based on a top-down approach. This interpretation stands in considerable contrast to Cammack's charge of the Third Way as a disingenuously neoliberal undertaking.

A key reason why McCullen and Harris arrive at such a different conclusion from Cammack is precisely because of their engagement with Giddens' earlier work,[3] enabling them to track the concepts he develops, leading to a deeper understanding of the terms and concepts used in *The Third Way*. Examples of this type indicate that a critique of Giddens' Third Way ought to take his earlier work into account as much as possible. McCullen and Harris do not attempt a comprehensive critique of the Third Way and ultimately veer into a somewhat different direction. Yet, their endeavours demonstrate that attention to Giddens' earlier work is a potentially fruitful line of critique.

Bagguley (2003) provides a further critique briefly worth considering here, as he links up Giddens' work on the Third Way with his earlier work reaching all the way back to structuration theory. Bagguley argues that there are problems in these earlier works that ultimately render Giddens' writings on politics and reflexivity un-workable. He settles for this conclusion of un-workability, which is not the aim here, and his arguments focus on the more operational aspects of structuration theory rather than on its normative premise, and as such do not delve into the utopian realist project, resulting in a technical rather than politicized critique.

This overview of the critical literature highlights a remarkably low level of critical inquiry into the Third Way that draws to any significant extent on Giddens' wider sociological endeavours. But the analysis in the preceding chapters gives us a new framework for critique, where the central question is whether it presents a suitable conclusion to the utopian realist project contained in Giddens' pre-Third Way work. Starting with structuration theory's normative stress on problematizing the individual's ability to act reflexively, developed through his outspoken stance on critical social theory in his contemporary critiques of historical materialism and given its name in *The Consequences of Modernity*, Giddens' utopian realist project produces an empirically viable analysis, in which contemporary societies are characterized by a fundamental tension: on one hand there are elements – some of which are genuinely new – that could enable the emergence of a new, reflexive and empowered constitution of the self; on the other hand, there are

elements that obstruct it. The need for a political project stems from this tension.

It does so for two reasons: firstly, Giddens posits utopian realism as a transformative undertaking and views the emergence of this new type of self as worth fostering. A politics aiming to reduce the constraints inhibiting its emergence therefore becomes necessary. Secondly, the need for such a politics arises because, as it stands, Giddens' work on late modernity paints an overly benevolent picture of contemporary societies. Although he points to developments that exist in some form, he openly neglects many issues of structural constraint, making his overall analysis one-sided and empirically questionable. To remedy this, he needs to complete the utopian realist approach by producing a political project with the capacity to transform the largely obstructed immanent possibilities into a universal reality.

In Giddens' work, a political project consistent with his sociological theory is therefore critically important, more so than with many other authors whose work contains analytical and programmatic dimensions. To briefly draw on one example: Marx produced both sociological theory (Marx and Engels, 1846) and a political project (Marx and Engels, 1848); and although any inconsistencies that may be highlighted between the two would be lamentable, the theory of historical materialism is internally coherent without the *Communist Manifesto*. With Giddens this is not the case: a political project is an integral part of his analysis of late modernity, without which it would be a problematic and unnecessarily skewed theory with limited critical capacity. The critique at hand here thereby assumes its vital importance: the question of whether the Third Way is consistent with the analysis of late modernity is not merely a quest for an aesthetically pleasing link-up; it concerns the validity of his analysis of late modernity itself. To the extent that Giddens influenced New Labour and other governments, this critique can also shine some light on the extent to which these governments' programmes accurately reflected the sociological outlook on which they were based.

The previous chapters of this book allow us to deduce what a Giddensian political project needs to look like in order to suitably complete Giddens' analysis of late modernity. The concrete policies mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4 (for instance, a global living wage and nationalized Internet provision) were cited as illustrative examples of policies consistent with his analysis, but different policies on these issues may of course provide such consistency as well. For the purpose of direct critique, it is necessary to outline a more general framework, against which the Third Way can be assessed, notably deriving from his definition of structure and structural constraint, the relationship

between emancipatory and life politics and his views on economic dimensions of globalization. Based on the analysis so far, the following are the key criteria implicit in the utopian realist reading of Giddens and developed over the course of this book, with which the Third Way needs to be consistent in order to complete the utopian realist project:

- The central normative aim of Giddensian politics must be to foster the universal emergence of the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self by addressing the structural constraints currently inhibiting this.
- Giddensian politics does not advocate revolution or complete system overthrow. Instead, it works on the principle that structures and systems can be transformed over time by utilizing and re-contextualizing available rules and resources.
- Capitalism and inequality, both nationally and globally, are central elements limiting the scope for the emergence of the late modern self. As such, Giddensian politics must seek to transform capitalism and significantly lessen inequality – both globally and at the national level. Tackling inequality here refers partially to greater income equality, eliminating poverty and achieving legal equality (for instance, in areas of citizenship, gender and sexuality). But crucially, it must involve universal education and access to the globalizing information and communication technologies, which, although developed and pioneered in the context of capitalism, are also obstructed by it in terms of access, content and distribution.
- Giddensian politics cannot view global and national issues of inequality as separate endeavours. Tackling poverty, inequality and digital divides worldwide is a prerequisite for genuine globalization, as opposed to increasing dominance of developed nations. Given the significance of globalization for the emergence of the late modern self, fostering this emergence within developed nations must go hand in hand with doing so globally.
- Similarly, Giddensian politics cannot view life politics and emancipatory politics as separate categories. Instead, they must be viewed as two sets of considerations that both inform policy: emancipatory policies must be designed to enable more widespread engagement with life-political concerns, and life-political issues must be responded to by taking their emancipatory implications and consequences into account.

Each point of this framework has been shown as a necessary consequence of Giddens' analysis of late modernity, aided where necessary by the theory of structuration. In order for the utopian realist analysis

of late modernity to stand as empirically sound and justifiable, a Giddensian political project cannot afford to deviate to any significant extent from this framework. Through this, it is now possible to outline a critique of the Third Way from the utopian realist perspective and note a number of central points of concern.

The un-transformable capitalism

The first issue on which the Third Way fails to link up suitably with the utopian realist project of Giddens' earlier work lies in its treatment of capitalism. A benevolent view of capitalism, the private sector and market principles are one of its better known features, as critics frequently point out, often leading to charges of neoliberalism or varying degrees of market fundamentalism (Callinicos, 2001). In previous work, capitalism and market principles are noted as sources of structural constraint in late modernity. In the Third Way, the notion of capitalism as a source of social problems is explicitly rejected:

> . . . social democrats [cannot] any longer see either capitalism or markets as a source of most of the problems that beset modern societies.
> (Giddens, 2000: 28)

The charge of neoliberalism is excessive: Giddens also notes that markets and the private sector are unable to single-handedly lead to a better society (2000: 55, 1998a: 99–100). Nevertheless, rather than discussing how the private sector and market principles are problematic, he posits that the capitalist economy is an important pillar for the functioning of society, where the only issue is that these mechanisms will not suffice on their own. Hence, he proposes a partnership of state, civil society and market, where the market creates dynamism and growth, the state enables access, creates the key components for the necessary workforce and tackles the worst excesses of market-driven inequality, while civil society acts as a check on the legitimacy of both spheres (1998a: 69, 84, 99). The Third Way therefore does not view capitalism and market forces as a source of constraint requiring transformation in order to enable the emergence of the late modern self. Instead, they are largely viewed as essentially useful societal features that need to be supplemented by an active state and civil society, without which they tend towards neoliberal excesses. Indeed, Giddens points to the private sector as a role model for the state, suggesting that various branches of the state should aim to emulate the practices of private companies, especially in

terms of efficiency, personal responsibility and dynamic business models (2000: 59).

Some critics view this approach as a transition from passive to active neoliberalism, where the role of the state shifts from non-interference to active support of markets (Cammack, 2004). However, the central point of contention here is not whether or not the Third Way warrants the label of neoliberalism; it is that the Third Way views capitalism as an immovable, un-transformable component to which all government activity must be made subservient. Whilst Giddens often praises the dynamism and initiative found in the private sector, sometimes contrasted to a lack of these qualities in the public sector (1998a: 74), he occasionally also notes that if left to its own devices, capitalism will lead to excesses, inequality and much social hardship. But rather than concluding that capitalism carries with it any dangers, he merely identifies it as being insufficient on its own to suitably organize society – hence his idea of partnership between state, market and civil society. Some further analysis can help to ascertain what is meant by this notion of partnership.

Aside from a few brief instances, discussions on capitalism are conspicuously absent in the Third Way texts: the global capitalist economy functions as an undiscussed context, between the lines as it were, forming a non-negotiable backdrop against which the Third Way is laid out. Ample examples highlight this background position in the Third Way's argumentation: 'market forces' are posited as decisively shaping the labour market, the scope for workers' rights and the need to be flexible and competitive, from the macro to the individual level (1998s: 123–6, 2000: 75–6); the need for investment in education is consistently justified through pressures to provide 'human capital' (1998a: 117, 122, 125); the need to reform pensions is accepted based on financial pressures without deeper engagement of where these pressures stem from (1998a: 118, 120). More broadly, where firms do not provide a suitable level of employment opportunities, the state is obliged to subsidize and facilitate transfer of individuals into private sector jobs (ibid: 124–5). Overall, the Third Way reifies capitalism to an extent that is counterintuitive with regard to Giddens' preceding work. At times, this becomes explicit:

> Since no one can say whether or not global capitalism will in future generate sufficient work, it would be foolish to proceed as though it will.
>
> (ibid: 126)

The common thread throughout the Third Way is that the global capitalist economy is seen as an unalterable fact of life. Whether flexibility, global free markets for products, workers and customers or the potential lack of sufficient work are viewed as good things or bad things is not the issue: these features are accepted as unalterable circumstances to which government policies – and societies in general for that matter – must adapt or else face dire consequences. Notions of the potential for transforming structures and systems (Giddens, 1984) or of globalization as an open-ended process (Giddens, 1990) are absent. This appraisal does not concur with the charge of neoliberalism voiced by other critics, though this charge has been noted in conjunction with an inferred 'omnipotence of neoliberal capitalism' (O'Boyle, 2013). Such a charge would require the presence of an overall appreciative understanding of capitalism, with an ascribed capacity to guide and structure social life towards desirable ends. But such appreciation is hardly present, underscored by the need for a partnership with state and civil society to avoid its worst excesses: the Third Way's view on capitalism is not idealistic – it is defeatist.

We can see how this notion of capitalism as an un-transformable structural feature leads to policy outcomes that deviate from the utopian realist perspective: the analysis in previous chapters highlighted that education is a key element of a Giddensian politics. Central tasks need to be provision of the intellectual and practical tools necessary to participate in a renewed public sphere, as well as fostering the ability to critically engage with the vast information flows made possible by globalization. Education is indeed viewed as a necessity in the Third Way, yet it is flagged as important for entirely different reasons and is consequently a different kind of education: the need for education is consistently described as being rooted in the need for a competitive and flexible labour force. Its purpose is not to facilitate greater empowerment and emancipation, but the provision of human capital. At a general level, referring to what the state should and should not provide to individuals on a range of issues from education to pensions, the following quote is emblematic of the Third Way outlook:

> Instead of relying on unconditional benefits, policies should be oriented to encourage saving, the use of educational resources and other personal investment opportunities.
>
> (1998a: 125)

The notion of partnership between market, state and civil society is not necessarily a misnomer on the part of Giddens. The two spheres are

certainly not viewed as adversarial in the Third Way. However, far from being a partnership of equals, the approach amounts to subservience of the state. The central purpose of the state is consistently to enable a competitive and dynamic private sector. Examples of this include viewing education and welfare-to-work programmes as the creation of human capital and providing infrastructure for businesses. Conversely, where services and resources provided by the state are not conducive to the private sector, they must be changed to adapt.

Depending on each reader's point of view, some of the policy positions cited above may principally be regarded well, others not. But Giddens' break with the utopian realist project lies in the fact that all the above examples reflect the conceptual property of un-transformability that is implicitly attributed to global capitalism. Global capitalism and the need to be competitive and flexible are features that exert nigh-absolute power over what the state should and should not do or provide. Instead of asking how global capitalism might then be transformed to alleviate these pressures that it generates, Giddens' Third Way effectively capitulates. Redistribution and equality are still demonstrably important to Giddens, yet any attempt at policies that may achieve such ends is consistently kept subservient to the often unspoken backdrop of market forces.

Based on the framework for Giddensian politics established over the preceding chapters, this is a serious problem. We saw that global capitalism and market forces are a significant source of structural constraint on the emergence of the late modern self. Implicitly, the Third Way restates this point: the pressures exerted by the global economy are such that individuals need to spend much of their lives training and retraining in order to have the skills to compete with other workers in a global marketplace. Flexibility is demanded, be it geographical, temporal or otherwise, both for individuals and businesses. At times Giddens acknowledges that this need for flexibility can cause problems and that adapting to it involves trade-offs on the part of the individual. Moreover, wherever state services are under financial strain – for instance, on pensions and unemployment benefits – it is not the systemic foundations of the financial strain that are proposed to be changed but the services themselves, whilst education, far from facilitating greater reflexivity and self-creation, must instead serve to create competitive and flexible workers.

As a consequence, rather than being more able to reflexively create their own biography, individuals are under increased pressure to improve their competitiveness and adapt to whatever requirements the global marketplace may have. It is, of course, not the Third Way itself

that constrains individuals in this way, but the Third Way is highly permissive to a system that plainly does. This attribute does not satisfy the criteria necessary for Giddensian politics. Additionally, this notion of global capitalism as an unalterable structural property does not sit well with the structurationist outlook, where systems can be transformed, or with Giddens' general outlook on late modernity, which he identifies as an age in which there is in many ways more scope for transformation of systems than in the past.

There is a possible explanation for this U-turn: the possibility to transform a given system depends on whether the agent who wishes to transform it actually has the necessary resources to do so. Although Giddens' previous work says nothing of the sort, it is conceivable that he changed his mind by the time he wrote the Third Way texts, concluding now that the state genuinely does not have the capability to transform the system of global capitalism and therefore must resign itself to doing what it can for the emergence of the late modern self within the limitations posed by it. When putting the analysis of late modernity and the Third Way together, the result would then be a coherent, but dark outlook on contemporary societies, doomed to never-ending constraint at the hands of global capitalism, where scope for reflexivity and empowerment are so utterly limited that utopian realism ceases to be a salient descriptive term.

This possibility can be refuted for two reasons. Firstly, Giddens reaffirms the idea of globalization (including its economic dimensions) as an open-ended process as late as *Runaway World* (1999: 6–35, 81), published after *The Third Way*. There is no indication even at this late stage that globalization is open-ended within the limitations of the immovability of the global capitalist economy. The second reason lies in comments made in the Third Way texts about financial markets. On this topic the Third Way matches up more-or-less fully to what his utopian realist analysis of late modernity demands; yet, this is also the element of the global economy that should be the most difficult for the state to regulate and transform.

Unlike the production and distribution of goods, and even of many services, finance capitalism is able to operate almost fully through global information and communication networks, though the existence of embedded global financial centres mitigates this to some extent. As such, it is further beyond the reach of governments than is the case with other economic sectors, given that they rule over fixed territories. Meanwhile, finance capitalism is the source of much constraint, owing to issues such as national debt, interest payments and

IMF conditionality. Areas such as pensions, public services and unemployment benefit are, as Giddens rightly points out, under financial strain. Though not in full, these problems are partly exacerbated by currency speculation, fluctuating interest rates and other causes traceable to finance capitalism.

In the seminal works on late modernity, Giddens often uses finance capitalism, its recent unparalleled growth and its ability to function mostly without the use of sovereign state territory, as a central argument to show that the present-day global economy is genuinely different from that of past ages. This is continued in the Third Way (1998a: 30, 2000: 66), so that for Giddens, financial markets are further beyond the influence of the state than is the case with other elements of the economy. Yet, Giddens stands in agreement with authors who nevertheless assert that finance capitalism can – and should – be controlled (Soros, 2002; Stiglitz, 2002). More than once in his Third Way texts, he notes that finance capitalism is a source of many problems, both for states and for individuals. On the final pages of *The Third Way*, he notes that the regulation of financial markets is 'the single most pressing issue in the world economy' (1998a: 148) and proceeds to outline a number of possible measures, including greater regulation of currency speculation and the possibility of a speculation tax, reform of the IMF and World Bank, and establishing a UN economic security council (ibid: 148–53). Later on, he restates some of these measures and adds regulation of short-term bank loans, hedge funds and derivatives (2000: 126) and the abolition of third world debt (ibid: 168). Given Giddens' lack of engagement with the physical locations of financial markets, it can be inferred that the means by which to achieve these measures are largely through international cooperation. By themselves, he perceives nation states to have relatively little promise of achieving change but that they can do so through international bodies such as the EU and the UN. On the issue of financial markets, Giddens' thoughts are absolutely in line with the framework for Giddensian politics developed earlier.

Within Giddens' analysis of late modernity, the financial sector should be the most difficult for governments to regulate, yet he is clear that this can be done. Meanwhile, pressures from other economic sectors far more reliant on nations' employment laws, infrastructure and customer spending power, form an unalterable structural feature of late modernity, to which government policy must submit. But if speculation, third world debt and derivatives can be regulated, scrutinized and transformed to create better outcomes for populations, then in the context

of Giddens' work, so should wages, job security or the ease with which manufacturing sites are shifted from one place to another.

With the counterintuitive exception of finance capitalism, Giddens' Third Way thus fails to fulfil the demands of Giddensian politics made by the utopian realist reading of his work, because the global capitalist economy, a major source of structural constraint for the emergence of the late modern self, is viewed as an unalterable force, which the state is unable to control or transform, and to which it must therefore be subservient.

The late modern self: emergence complete?

The second main point of critique from the utopian realist perspective derives from the fact that a Giddensian political project cannot assume the emergence of the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self to be in any way complete – it must pursue fostering this emergence as its primary objective. We saw that this involves two central components: the first is a major redistributive element, the potential for which is now already hampered considerably by the notion of global capitalism as an un-transformable structural feature in the Third Way. The second component is to design policies in such a way that they imply both emancipatory and life-political considerations: issues of a life-political character must be recognized as having emancipatory consequences, which in turn must inform what kind of a policy position should be put forward on the issue in question. It is also prescriptive for issues that are at face value of an emancipatory nature: not any kind of emancipatory policy will do – it needs to be formulated in such a way that individuals' possibilities of engaging with life-political concerns increase.

Given these parameters, the second point where Giddens' Third Way breaks with the utopian realist project lies in its implicit assumption that this new late modern self is a universal reality and that consequently life politics is conceptually separated from emancipatory politics, removing salience and direction from what few emancipatory policies the Third Way advocates. In the preamble chapters of *The Third Way*, Giddens outlines central issues that his renewal of social democracy wishes to address, including:

> The new individualism . . . is associated with the retreat of tradition and custom from our lives, a phenomenon involved with the impact of globalization widely conceived rather than just the influence of

> markets. . . . All of us have to live in a more open and reflective manner than previous generations. This change is by no means only a beneficial one: new worries and anxieties come to the fore. But many more positive possibilities do too.
>
> (1998a: 36–7)

Though rephrased here as the 'new individualism', the Third Way reiterates the theme of a new constitution of the self, based on the key developments that shape the analysis of late modernity, and identifies it as an important element of present-day societies to which politics must respond. But tradition and custom are only retreating from the lives of a select few, in a select few areas or on a select few issues; structural determinants of individual behaviour still abound, casting doubt on whether we really do all have to live in a more reflective manner.

The theme of the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self is therefore not abandoned in the Third Way. The question is how Giddens' political project proposes to respond to this theme and whether this response implies that the new individualism is an emergent possibility that needs to be fostered or whether it is implied as a universal reality. A closer look at Giddens' policy suggestions shows that the latter is the case.

Policies in areas such as welfare, pensions and education are subjected to the pressures of global capitalism, which in itself is a major problem of the Third Way *vis-à-vis* Giddens' earlier work. However, even if we temporarily accept this submission to global capitalism, the Third Way still assumes all individuals to essentially have access to all necessary information, be capable of reflexively incorporating it into their lives and able to transform their lives accordingly. On the example of unemployment benefits, Giddens frequently discusses education as an important resource, which must be made available to the socially excluded (1998a: 102–4). He also notes that education refers specifically to vocational skills and, more generally, to the development of human capital. Alongside education, entrepreneurship should be encouraged and facilitated, for instance, by provision of venture capital and benevolent taxation systems in the early years of new businesses development (ibid: 124). The proposed approach is to maintain levels of government spending in the area of social security but to spend in such a way as to enable career improvement and entrepreneurship by such means.

But merely putting in place these mechanisms and possibilities does not mean that everyone will be equally willing or capable of using them. Giddens contemplates the issue of individuals not making use of

the mechanisms he proposes, specifically on the issue of benefit dependency, and concludes that entrepreneurship should in certain cases be encouraged through legal obligation (ibid: 122). He also notes that the issue of benefit dependency largely arises in situations of long-term rather than short-term unemployment (ibid: 115),[4] giving rise to a problematic conclusion: for some individuals, the processes Giddens outlines could enable emancipation from certain types of structural constraint, albeit purely in the realm of careers and work-life. But for many individuals, crucially the long-term unemployed, where multiple structural constraints are likely significant, dependency is potentially replaced by coercion through legal obligation.

On the issue of unemployment, we therefore initially have a familiar picture: provided that individuals are not subject to structural constraint other than those of a purely financial kind, mechanisms are put in place that could conceivably be used to a positive effect by those individuals. But where other types of constraint exist, Giddens resorts to coercive means, rather than contemplating how emancipation from structural constraint – in this case, those experienced by long-term unemployed individuals – might otherwise be facilitated. He assumes, in short, that the issue lies with individuals rather than with structure.

Giddens also outlines further principles through which the realm of work and careers should be changed, including family-friendly workplace policies (ibid: 125). Again, there is inconsistency with the idea that the emergence of the reflexive self is often obstructed, for instance, by prevailing tradition: for some individuals, family-friendly policies in the workplace may indeed prove useful, and, indeed, Giddens also provides evidence to support the idea that this might additionally benefit employers in terms of increasing productivity (ibid: 127). But once again there is no engagement with the possibility of structural constraint preventing use of such mechanisms. Their mere presence does not mean every individual will be able to make use of them, especially among individuals or entire communities where traditional views about work-life persist. The issue of gender roles in relation to work might be especially important here: a wife in part-time work may still be viewed as signalling a husband's inability to feed his family; fathers taking time off for childcare might equally be viewed as unacceptable in many circles (Smith, 1998). Many individuals may not be so readily able to change their lifestyle through changes in employment law. Given Giddens' own deliberations on resurgent traditional morality and dogma in previous work (1991a: 206–7), it is astonishing that such issues are not considered in his policy proposals.

Similar points can be raised about the ideas put forward on civil society and the public sphere. Fostering a renewed public sphere would have to be a key element of a Giddensian political project, and, indeed, this theme features in the Third Way. However, there is an implicit expectation that governments merely need to put certain dialogic props in place and individuals will be able to make use of them. Giddens makes several points on 'downward decentralization', advocating devolution in terms of introducing more local or regional assemblies and more direct involvement in decision-making on the part of individuals: in line with the 'new individualism', electronic referenda, citizens' juries and lay committees and experts coming together in public debate are cited as mechanisms to 'democratize democracy' (1998a: 75–7).

Whilst these policy suggestions fit well with the idea of empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable individuals – and are essentially in line with the demands on Giddensian politics stemming from the utopian realist project – there is no awareness of structural constraint in these deliberations: what of different levels of access to, and participation in, these devices of democratization? Different levels of education, social/cultural capital and issues such as different social class positions, gender or ethnicity could easily result in many individuals being excluded. The use of technology would be crucial in creating a new public sphere, and Giddens' mentioning of electronic referenda suggests the same. But issues of digital divides and competence to use the relevant technology are not considered, let alone issues around surveillance or manipulation of information. So whilst Giddens suggests an essentially credible apparatus for democratization, there is no indication of how universal access and engagement with this apparatus might be facilitated.[5] The assumption is that all individuals are already sufficiently knowledgeable, reflexive and – crucially – empowered for discussion of these issues to be redundant.

Having explained the Third Way's lack of engagement with fostering the new late modern self based on two examples from quite different areas of policy, additional issues arise when we consider the place of life politics in the Third Way. Here too, the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self is treated as a reality rather than a possibility worth fostering. Reflecting on the idea of left and right, which he broadly identifies as the politics of class and inequality in general, Giddens notes:

> What I mean by [life politics] is that, whereas emancipatory politics concerns life chances, life politics concerns life decisions. It is a

> politics of choice, identity and mutuality. How should we react to the hypothesis of global warming? Should we accept nuclear energy or not? How far should work remain a central life value? Should we favour devolution? What should be the future of the European Union? None of these is a clear left/right issue.
>
> (1998a: 44)

Analysis of the distinction between emancipatory and life politics, as outlined in *The Consequences of Modernity* and *Modernity and Self-identity*, showed that the connection between them is a close one. But in the Third Way, life politics is conceptually separated from the politics of equality and emancipation. The arguments presented in this book demonstrate that this separation is problematic. All the questions raised in the above quote can in fact be linked to emancipatory concerns: the wealthy will more readily than the poor be able to afford potentially costly renewable energy; the implications and possibilities of work-life balance differ between high-level managers and low-wage workers desperately trying to afford their rent; the future of Europe may well depend on whether it promotes redistributive measures or narrow economic interests. The utopian realist project urges us to flag emancipatory questions of this type. As such, instead of conceptually separating emancipatory politics and life politics so clearly, there needs to be an acknowledgement that life politics can be an important way of highlighting emancipatory concerns and that the policies introduced on life-political matters must be formulated based at least partially on their emancipatory dimensions.

Giddens acknowledges that many poorer individuals are acutely aware of life-political issues (2000: 42), but the consistent underlying assumption is that structural determinants – in this case different levels of wealth – make little difference to how individuals can respond to them. So whilst he is consistent with the analysis of late modernity by putting life politics on the political agenda, he does not deal with the issue of ensuring that everyone is able to react to life-political concerns freely – or of designing solutions to life-political issues in such a way that structural determinants matter less. The distinction between individuals being principally aware of life-political issues and being able to respond to them in accordance with their knowledge and moral conscience is absent.

Within the restriction of the first point of critique (the Third Way's submission to global capitalism), many points from Giddens' Third Way discussed here ultimately follow from his previous work. However, there is effectively one step missing on many policy positions, which is the

question of how individuals could be empowered to be able to engage in all the participatory and deliberative mechanisms he suggests. Tradition, gender roles, poverty, digital divides and educational levels are among the structural constraints insufficiently dealt with. Given this lack of engagement, the Third Way implies that the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self is already a universal reality. Life politics meanwhile, far from additionally highlighting existing structural constraints experienced by individuals, is posited as superseding emancipatory needs in their importance.

An additional substantive point on which the Third Way departs from Giddens' earlier work is the relative absence of calls to better distribute and harness technological resources, specifically what has been referred to in this book as the globalizing technologies. Giddens' definition of globalization has the advent of these technologies and their precursors at its root, and fostering the emergence of the late modern self is dependent on expanding access and ability to use them. On the specific issue of civil society and the public sphere, we saw that the technological resources would need to be made more widely available in order to speak of any kind of genuine renewal.

Technology generally features in the Third Way in one of three forms. Firstly, as noted, information and communication technologies are occasionally mentioned as tools for greater democratization, for instance, electronic referenda. Secondly, it features as bringing about the knowledge economy, to which governments must react by acknowledging the importance of human capital as opposed to fixed industrial assets such as property (2000: 69–75). Thirdly, there are a few notes on technology in general, which associate it with new risks – especially ecological ones (1998a: 153). Whilst all these deliberations have some merit, the centrally important feature of access and distribution of technological resources does not feature in the Third Way. Apart from brief allusions in the preamble chapters, where the effects of globalization are noted as decisively shaping the 'new individualism' (1998a: 31, 36), access to, distribution of and ability to use key technologies are absent themes in the Third Way texts.

The lack of a programme detailing the redistribution of technological resources is related to both points of critique noted so far. It is related to the Third Way's submission to global capitalism, because information and communication technologies are at present largely in the hands of private companies, be it production and distribution of hardware components or provision of infrastructure such as broadband networks. A sophisticated degree of regulation or, indeed, nationalization of these technologies would most likely be necessary to ensure universal access

irrespective of economic or geographical position. The Third Way's basic outlook on capitalism largely negates such possibilities. The lack of a programme for redistributing technological resources is also related to the Third Way's assumption that the late modern self is a universal reality: digital divides exclude many individuals from global information flows and contact with other cultures and lifestyles and, indeed, from participation in any kind of renewed digital public sphere. A programme to ensure universal access to the globalizing technologies would be an important step towards acknowledging that the late modern self is not a universal reality yet, but might eventually become one with the right political initiative. Given the conceptual importance attributed to the globalizing technologies in the analysis of late modernity, the lack of engagement with further distribution of these technologies represents a further inconsistency in its own right between Giddens' Third Way and his previous work.

The Third Way's constitution of the self: from empowerment to coercion

These three points – viewing capitalism as an un-transformable system component; assuming the emergence of the late modern self to be complete; and the absence of a programme to fully harness the transformative potential of the globalizing technologies – represent major inconsistencies between the Third Way and the utopian realist project spanning through structuration theory, the critique of historical materialism and the analysis of late modernity. Whilst the utopian realist project holds promise for reconstruction of centre-left political platforms, the Third Way abandons many of its key points of inquiry. But in addition to these substantive points of critique, the Third Way also departs at a meta-level from utopian realism, in terms of how the individual, as constituted in the late modern age, is viewed in terms of its capacity to do good things as opposed to bad things in the absence of punitive and determinant structures.

Giddens' emphasis on the individual as being reflexive, empowered and knowledgeable, and his position that this type of self is worth fostering, effectively demands a fundamentally positive stance on the individual. This does not necessarily require locating in his work assertions about human nature – a topic sociologists tend to shy away from – complying, for instance, with Rousseau's notion of the innocent child and the morally superior state of nature (Rousseau, 1755). But Giddens' stance on the individual does imply that individuals will essentially tend to do desirable things rather than undesirable things as long as structural

constraints are kept to a relative minimum and individuals have access to knowledge and formulate their own morality and life decisions in accordance with it. Were this not the case, the idea of an empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self as a political goal would be nonsensical. At the very least, we can say that Giddens cannot be placed in any kind of Hobbesian tradition, where human nature is conceived of as egoistical and violent, and where the state needs to set up a bulwark of constraining features to prevent life from being 'nasty, brutish and short' (Hobbes, 1651). Giddens' notions of reflexivity, emancipation, democratization and lifestyle choice simply do not allow for such an angle.

In *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (1971), Giddens notes Durkheim's notion of the 'historical nature of man [sic]', and contrasts this to what he describes as oversimplified notions of human nature associated with Hobbes and Rousseau (ibid: 224–5). He also notes Marx's concept of the appropriation of human nature, where human nature itself is viewed positively and conducive to reciprocal relationships between individuals and communities, whilst capitalism then overrides this by constituting humans in a more egoistic fashion. Giddens describes this as being part of an 'exciting and brilliant formula' (ibid: 17). From the idea that human nature is constituted historically, we can infer that despite Marx's identified potential of capitalism to negate positive and reciprocal tendencies in individuals, the late modern age is in Giddens' view nevertheless constitutive of a human condition worth building on in political terms.

This does not mean that in Giddens' perspective it is impossible for individuals to do bad things. He is surely right to discuss the issue of crime in his politics and to note that criminals should generally be either punished, rehabilitated or kept away from potential victims until no longer deemed a clear and present danger to others. The possibility of individuals committing acts of violence and deceit could easily be explained through structural factors, and this is often the case in the Third Way: Giddens discusses crime, punishment and rehabilitation by focusing on improving communities with high crime rates as a possible solution (Giddens, 1998a: 86–9). But beyond that, his work also gives rise to the expectation that individuals' autonomous life decisions should generally be respected. In other words, if fostering empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable individuals is deemed a desirable political goal, then the state should generally retreat from coercively prescribing how individuals ought to live their lives. If reflexivity and empowerment of the individual are considered worthwhile undertakings, the underlying assumption must be that these characteristics will lead to broadly positive outcomes. But this line of thought is often absent in his Third

Way. Quite the contrary: rather than putting in place resources to allow for greater reflexivity and empowerment, the Third Way in many cases prescribes more coercion and punitive sanctions, based on some fundamental assertions about human behaviour. Nowhere is this more obvious than on the issue of recipients of unemployment benefits.

Next to its relatively high cost and its lack of promoting flexibility and entrepreneurship, Giddens cites at length the issue of moral hazard as a central shortcoming of unemployment benefits:

> It isn't so much that some forms of welfare provision create dependency cultures as that people take rational advantage of opportunities offered. Benefits meant to counter unemployment, for instance, can actually produce unemployment if they are actively used as a shelter from the labour market.
>
> (1998a: 115)

> Benefit systems should be reformed where they induce moral hazard, and a more active risk-taking attitude encouraged, wherever possible through incentives, but where necessary by legal obligation.
>
> (ibid: 122)

This general approach to benefits, with moral hazard as a central concern, is mentioned at several points in the Third Way texts (2000: 56–7, 1994: 142). It entails the fundamental assumption that rational choice based on a narrow sense of self-interest is a central element of human behaviour. This stands in contrast to the idea of reflexive incorporation of knowledge into the life cycle as a means of developing new, post-traditional moral frameworks. In general terms, the inherent suggestion here is that many individuals cannot be allowed to reflexively design their own life cycle and that the state needs to intervene in order to ensure they make the correct life choices. The question of whether there is such a thing as dependency culture, moral hazard or rational choice is subject to debate (Eriksson, 2011; Wiggan, 2012), but it is surprising that Giddens takes this stance, given the normative emphasis on the individual in his previous work. Rather than providing more resources with the aim of increasing individuals' capacity for reflexive action, legal obligations are suggested to steer individuals' lives towards very specific choices – which at this point is clearly a misnomer. Indeed:

> Policies designed to counter social exclusion won't be successful if they aren't directed to the changing character of the life course that accompanies the development of the new economy.
>
> (2000: 107–8)

If reflexivity and empowerment do not lead directly to economically beneficial circumstances, then they are not politically desired and government must steer the individual's life cycle accordingly. The clearest evidence for Giddens going against his own notion of empowerment and reflexivity on this issue is found subsequently:

> 'Strategic users' [of benefits] have a more instrumental attitude still. They deploy social assistance as one resource among others to achieve a certain style of life. . . . They may have chosen to be unemployed, at least for a period, in order to pursue other concerns or interests.
>
> (ibid: 111)

It is not contemplated here that said 'other concerns and interests' may in fact be of a beneficial nature, such as childcare or volunteering. Instead, just as elsewhere in the Third Way texts, the objective is to promote choices leading to employment and discourage all other possible choices. In a sense, this point ties in less with the constitution of the individual and more with the Third Way's established submission to global capitalism: there must be profitability at all costs, and the state must ensure that each individual plays their part. Nevertheless, it is important to note the additional dimension here of distrust in the individual. Reflexive life choices will not do; the government must steer the individual's life cycle towards a preconceived form. If not, individuals will act in narrow, rationalistic self-interest. This approach on the constitution of the self could not be further removed from the notions of the self found in Giddens' pre-Third Way work.

Beyond the specific example of unemployment benefits, we can see this attitude prevailing at a general level in the Third Way, most clearly in the emblematic phrase, 'no rights without responsibilities' (1998a: 65). This phrase, along with its implications for the concept of citizenship appears in both Giddens' and New Labour's Third Way and has as such been the subject of considerable critique:

> New Labour's concept of citizenship is characterised by its prioritising of responsibilities over rights, with the latter largely replaced by opportunities. . . . this discourse of citizenship indicates both an institutionalising of a normative and moralistic conception of the good citizen, which simultaneously defines the identity of the bad citizen, and a shift in the responsibility for ensuring social justice away

> from both the government and the social sector to individual citizens themselves . . .
>
> (Morrison, 2004: 181)

Though Morrison's discussion focuses on New Labour's Third Way, this critique likewise applies to Giddens. He adopts the mantra of 'no rights without responsibilities' and applies it – foremost to welfare and to a lesser extent to other areas (1998a: 121, 2000: 52) – with potentially coercive and punitive measures. The primacy of empowerment and reflexivity is thereby replaced with the state's prerogative to decide what a correct life cycle is[6] and to enforce it: individuals clearly cannot be trusted with their own reflexivity.

To summarize, this chapter began by setting out a framework of outlooks and characteristics that a Giddensian politics consistent with his utopian realist analysis would need to satisfy. We have now seen that the Third Way fails to satisfy large portions of that framework. Firstly, it treats global capitalism as an immovable, un-transformable structural feature. Secondly, it assumes in large parts that the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self is a universal reality. Thirdly, distribution of and access to technology are absent themes. Permeating these substantive points is also a meta-level shift where, rather than viewing the reflexive, empowered self as a normative political goal, the Third Way has a more Hobbesian take on the self, where the state must coerce and legislatively ensure that individuals will adopt a specific type of behaviour, moral understanding and lifestyle. As such, Giddens' utopian realist social theory is a failure. His analysis of late modernity correctly identifies elements and developments in contemporary society with scope to bring about a new type of reflexive, empowered self. Yet, his political project fails to build on this by coherently and consistently showing how these developments may be fostered and encouraged.

The failure of the Third Way to successfully complete the utopian realist project presents a significant shortcoming of Giddens' work from the mid-1990s onwards. However, it is also precisely this failure that allows us to think back to the utopian realist project and beyond the Third Way, in order to envisage how the promise of his earlier work can aid the reconstruction of centre-left projects and provide guidance for redistributive and emancipatory policies in the late modern age. If the Third Way does not present a successful conclusion to the utopian realist analysis of late modernity, then we are invited to consider both

programmatically and conceptually, what would. The next and final chapter will provide such an assessment.

Following the demise of the New Labour government in 2010, and considering the ongoing debates about the Labour Party's past and possible futures, the analysis presented here offers a contribution to the literature comprising an autopsy of the Third Way (Atkins, 2010; Jordan, 2010; Leggett, 2010), inasmuch as Giddens acted as a decisive influence upon its discourse and policy approach. However, in order to do so in a meaningful way, it is first necessary to understand why these inconsistencies between the utopian realist project and the Third Way come about. Especially where underlying analytical failures rather than personal weakness on the part of Giddens can explain the disjuncture, gaining such an understanding can highlight why this influential blueprint for centre-left politics of the late 1990s and early 2000s failed to match up to the sociological analysis on which it was based. Furthermore, an understanding of why the disjuncture between the Third Way and the utopian realist project occurs can add insight to the task of assessing Giddens' continuing relevance to political endeavours beyond the Third Way.

Singularity: why the Third Way fails

A rather crude possible explanation for the disjuncture between Giddens' Third Way and his earlier work is worth noting at the outset: it is possible that Giddens simply sold out and abandoned his original political outlook in order to gain stature and fame through an alliance with Tony Blair. Morrison is of this view (2004: 168), and a forceful iteration is also given by Castree (2010). Though a genuinely possible explanation, it is not worth pursuing further here. Firstly, exploring this option does not have sociological merit: it would at best result in a journalistic account of Giddens as a flawed, quasi-Shakespearean character, torn between integrity and opportunity. Secondly, this charge has already been made, so it is unlikely that pursuing this issue further would make any useful contribution to an understanding of Giddens' work. Thirdly, resorting to a personal attack on Giddens would only constitute an illuminating approach if there were genuinely no other possible explanation that might lend itself more to critical enquiry.

However, there are a number of such possible explanations. A relatively straightforward option in the more substantive realm is that

Giddens changed his mind about key elements of his pre-Third Way work. If true, this could be a suitable explanation, providing he changed his mind for good reasons. A comment once made by Foucault is worth considering:

> When people say 'Well, you thought this a few years ago and now you say something else', my answer is 'Well, do you think I have worked like a dog all those years and not be changed?'
>
> (Foucault, quoted in Mills, 2003: 3)

But for Giddens this is emphatically not the case. There is no record of Giddens openly refuting past work, and he notes on several occasions after publishing the main Third Way texts that he still stands by the central conclusions of his pre-Third Way work. In 1999, he notes in an interview that, if given the chance, he would not change the substance of structuration theory as outlined in *The Constitution of Society* (Giddens, in Bryant and Jary, 2001a: 229). In the same interview, he also still identifies with the concept of utopian realism (ibid: 234). Later still, in a keynote speech at an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) event in 2005, he notes specifically that he still stands in full agreement with the key conclusions of *Modernity and Self-identity*, crucially including the sections on emancipatory and life politics (Giddens, 2005). Regarding the Third Way itself, Giddens reaffirms in 2010 that he understands his Third Way as an attempt to integrate the theoretical issues he dealt with in the late 1980s and early 90s – globalization, the knowledge economy and the reflexive self – with policy, and that even beyond the end of the New Labour project this remains an important task (Giddens, 2010a: 67–9).

Far from changing his mind about any of the issues at hand, Giddens is on record as standing by the tenets of structuration theory, late modernity, globalization, post-traditionalism, reflexivity, utopian realism and the connection between his theoretical work and politics. An explanation for the disjuncture between his theory and his politics cannot lay here. But there is another, not entirely unrelated possible explanation: it is possible that the Third Way is based on assumptions and discourses besides those found in his own earlier work. Elements of his earlier work clearly act as an influence on his Third Way, but this does not negate the possibility of separate concerns existing alongside these. Such additional influences on his Third Way may have diluted the link-up between his theory and his politics, potentially to the point of inconsistency.

This supposition has merit. In virtually all of Giddens' Third Way texts, but especially in *The Third Way* itself, the presence of an additional theoretical background is apparent. *The Third Way* divides into five chapters, the first two of which lack policy prescription and have a more analytical tone. They act as a preamble and explain why a renewal of social democracy is necessary in the first place. The second of these two chapters, entitled 'Five Dilemmas' links the book to Giddens' previous work. The five dilemmas, to which a renewal of social democracy must respond, are globalization (both economic and other dimensions); reflexivity, termed here the 'new individualism' but substantively still in line with Giddens' earlier conclusions about the late modern self; the addition of life politics to the old left/ right divide; new scope for individual political agency; and ecological issues (1998a: 27–63). Reading this chapter in isolation gives rise to the conclusion that the Third Way is indeed the political extension of Giddens' social theory of late modernity.

But the first chapter of *The Third Way* provides an additional and entirely different rationale. Entitled 'Socialism and After', this chapter hardly refers to any issues or concepts from his earlier work. Instead, he discusses here what he sees as the two main ideologies that have shaped politics in most industrialized countries since the end of World War II: socialism, and to a greater extent 'old-style social democracy' on one hand and neoliberalism on the other. He criticizes and compares the two doctrines, concluding that both are flawed – neoliberalism leading to excessive social inequality and old-style social democracy to static economies – and that a renewal of social democracy must acknowledge the respective successes and failures of both (ibid: 1–26).

Whether or not Giddens' assertions about neoliberalism and old-style social democracy are correct is not so much the issue here. Discussions on the success or failure of these two doctrines are the subject matter of several volumes (Gillespie and Paterson, 1993; Lavelle, 2008). The issue here is that Giddens' Third Way is motivated by two distinct backgrounds. One of them – the social developments of globalization, post-traditionalism and reflexivity – is substantiated by a theoretical backdrop in Giddens' previous work, including even meta-theoretical dimensions provided by structuration theory. The other background has no equivalent in Giddens' work, save for some comparable sections in *Beyond Left and Right*. The key question for the issue at hand here is whether the presence of this additional background can explain the disjuncture between the analysis of late modernity and Third Way politics.

Whilst Giddens criticizes the methods of both doctrines in question, he agrees with the fundamental aims of both: wealth creation in the case

of neoliberalism and social justice in the case of social democracy. Neither of these two aims is incompatible with those of the utopian realist project. But beyond their two respective fundamental aims, Giddens is critical of both. The neoliberal outlook is untenable as it leads to social polarization (1998a: 101); social democracy on the other hand is largely centred on defending welfare institutions but struggles to do so, given its lack of ability to deal with global economic pressures (ibid: 4–5). Meanwhile, both doctrines are characterized as anachronistic, for instance, in that both rely heavily on the existence of traditional family structures and divisions of labour (1994: 9, 1998a: 16).

Whilst noble in their aims, Giddens concludes that both doctrines have considerable flaws, some of which they share, others that are diametrically opposed. It is plausible then that his own programme should try to avoid several policy approaches of both doctrines. This limits the options of what his political project may advocate. For instance, his views on social democracy are likely to make him cautious not to emphasize top-down decisions and attempts to control national economies. Ensuring some form of social cohesion in the absence of traditional families might be an important point he would take from the perceived failures of neoliberalism and old-style social democracy alike.

Whilst such considerations derived from his short analysis of recent political and ideological history place limitations of this kind on his policy formulations, they are insufficient to explain the magnitude of the contradictions identified between the Third Way and previous work. They may partially explain the Third Way's submission to global capitalism, in the sense that much of the taming of capitalism undertaken by old-style social democracy was ultimately unsuccessful. But it does not explain the seismic shift towards capitalism as a conceptually un-transformable system. Likewise, the absence of any policy on the redistribution of technological resources or the Third Way's comparatively darkened view of the individual cannot be explained by the perceived failure of these two doctrines. To be clear, on issues of how to balance wealth creation and social justice as well as ways in which these ends may be met, Giddens' preambles on neoliberalism and social democracy may have had some effect, limiting and ruling out certain policy approaches from the start. But whilst this explains a certain degree of dilution, the observed disjunctures cannot be explained through this alone. However, Giddens' dismissal of the two major competing political platforms of the past highlights one further characteristic of the Third Way that opens up a more fruitful line of explanation for its shortcomings noted here: its self-ascribed singularity or, put differently, its lack of openly perceived enemies.[7]

'Singular' should not be confused with 'centrist'. The question of whether the Third Way is left-wing, right-wing or centrist is implicit and sometimes explicit throughout the critical literature, with little consensus. Giddens himself claims that the Third Way is on the left and openly rejects the notion of centrism (1998a: 44–5, 2000: 39). Barrientos and Powell (2004) on the other hand characterize the Third Way as centrist, trying to combine precisely the two doctrines Giddens discusses in his introductory chapters of *The Third Way* and *Beyond Left and Right*, whilst Cammack (2004), as we saw earlier, places it squarely on the right as rehashed neoliberalism. Centrism as a political platform can acknowledge its position in a wider plethora of political platforms that are non-centrist – in fact, extremisms are to an extent a requirement for centrists to identify themselves as such. The Third Way differs precisely from this, as it does not identify itself in opposition to any other present-day political ideology.

There is a strong suggestion throughout the Third Way texts that there can only be one way of politically dealing with the social realities of our time – subject to minor alterations and nation-specific particularities,[8] as exemplified by the existence of a global Third Way debate (Giddens, 2001) – and that all previous political ideologies have already failed to do so. Whether the Third Way is ultimately viewed as being positioned closer to neoliberalism, to social democracy or between the two is therefore not the point here: whatever attributes it borrows from either of them, it positions itself as the 'Only Way' for politics in the late modern age. Other ideologies are not acknowledged as competitors on a political level playing field but are instead all dismissed as rightly long-gone anachronisms: at the level of political doctrines and ideologies, the Third Way's enemies are all located in the past. Though discussing New Labour rather than Giddens, Marquand concisely summarizes this stance, noting that New Labour advertised itself as 'uniquely suited to a young country' and noting further:

> The world is new, the past has no echoes, modernity is unproblematic, the path to the future is linear. There is one modern condition, which all rational people would embrace if they knew what it was. The Blairites do know.
>
> (Marquand, 1999: 226)

Other authors have noted this criticism specifically in relation to Giddens. Anderson cautions that Giddens lacks any understanding of politics as a struggle for power and is thus effectively blind to any potential ideological opposition (Anderson, 1995; see also Hall, 1998;

Kaspersen, 2000: 177).[9] Aside from dismissing other noteworthy political ideologies of recent decades as anachronistic and unable to respond adequately to the present age, Giddens gives us further evidence about the salience of this point:

> The politics of the traditional left was – and is – grounded in finding and confronting the 'bad guys' – the adversaries, as Stuart Hall calls them. The bad guys are the capitalists, markets, the large corporations, the rich, or the US with its imperialist ambitions. The right, of course, has its own collection of bad guys – big government, cultural relativists, the poor, immigrants and criminals. Neutralize and get rid of the bad guys and all will be well. But there isn't a concentrated source of the ills of the world; we have to leave behind the politics of redemption.
>
> (2000: 38)

We can pinpoint the earliest remarks in Giddens' work that indicate the move towards a singular political platform with no perceived enemies. *Beyond Left and Right* contemplates the existence of individuals unwilling to let their lifestyles be influenced by others and thus resisting post-traditionalism and reflexivity. He identifies these as 'fundamentalists' (1994: 84–5, 115) and notes that little political interaction with such individuals is possible. The use of this term, alongside its marginalizing tone, sits uneasily with the magnitude of barriers preventing greater reflexivity and post-traditionalism. By Giddens' broad definition of 'fundamentalists' (see also Leggett, 2005: 17), this term might refer to anything from radical clerics preaching violence against infidels to CEOs of large corporations who show unwillingness to engage with their workers' concerns about low wages. Analytically marginalizing so many individuals who might be termed enemies of reflexivity, many of whom are sufficiently powerful to exercise sanctional constraint (Giddens, 1984: 175) may well be viewed as a point of origin of what would later become the singularity of the Third Way.

This issue additionally cannot be solved by a utopian realist understanding. This would allow for a relative minimum of analytical emphasis on certain elements of social reality but not for dismissal of this kind. Far from being fundamentalists, individuals who self-referentially hold world views that run counter to post-traditionalism and reflexivity, and who may have the power to impose these views or their worldly repercussions on others, are the legitimate and equal political adversaries of Giddensian politics. Giddens does not appear to recognize this.

Whilst it is debatable whether the Third Way's policy positions are on the left or on the right,[10] its implicit self-ascribed singularity is evident. It is possible to link its singular character to the main points of critique made here. Giddens sees late modernity as characterized by an overriding tension: those elements that enable the emergence of the late modern, reflexive, empowered self, and those elements that obstruct, even extinguish, any scope for its wider emergence. Politically, this implies that a Giddensian politics must have an adversarial stance towards certain structural features of late modern societies, or, to use the language of structuration theory, towards those individuals who have vested interests in keeping said structures intact and reproduce them accordingly. There is merit to his suggestion that tarring markets or corporations with the undifferentiating brush of 'bad guys' is overly simplistic (though few left-wing writers are likely to unreservedly agree with such a stance). In some respects, these entities may even be characterized as good guys, for instance, in the sense that modern communication and information technologies, central to the emergence of the late modern self, have been developed by corporations, and spread, wealth-permitting, by markets. But this does not mean that the ways in which many markets and corporations currently operate do not have a multitude of dire consequences for many individuals the world over; it does not mean that the way markets and corporations operate cannot or should not be changed. And it certainly does not mean that there are no individuals with competing interests who might want to resist such change. Rustin (2001) reflects this sentiment and offers a helpful starting point to explain the major shortcomings of the Third Way noted in this chapter:

> Politics is usually about interests and power, about friends and foes . . . and a politics which ignores these dimensions in favour of an exclusive reliance on dialogue is liable to be ineffectual. This is the central problem with Giddens' programme, and it derives from his theoretical idea that the moment of reflexive rationality has arrived.
>
> (Rustin, 2001: 191–2)

This line of causality is possible; but since Giddens shows awareness of structural constraints inhibiting the 'moment of reflexive rationality' in his pre-Third Way work, the opposite direction of causality is more likely: relegating individuals capable of limiting others' reflexivity from the realm of political opponents to that of fundamentalists leads to a politics without adversaries, making the advent of universal reflexivity

seem less problematic than it would otherwise be. Awareness of structural constraint has not translated into awareness of political conflict with individuals intent on keeping said constraints in place. We can ascertain from this a plausible explanation for the Third Way's failure to produce a politics consistent with the utopian realist project, which does not resort to accusations about Giddens' personal character.

Not acknowledging political adversaries in the context of promoting greater reflexivity and empowerment leads to an outlook where notions of constraint are stripped of any sense of domination or what Giddens describes as 'sanction' in *The Constitution of Society* (1984: 176). With little sense of how punitive or sanctional effects of structure might then be enforced, the very concept of structural constraint is decisively weakened. This is a misapplication of structuration theory, where the importance of domination (ibid: 29–31) and constraint based on sanction is highlighted. This leads to a situation where constraint, even though it exists, exerts little power, and where government then needs to do little to further enable all individuals to engage in dialogue wherever disagreements arise, leaving it as a mere facilitator of such dialogues, rather than having to represent one set of interests against another. Giddens indeed devotes some attention to 'dialogic democracy', with little consideration of who is able to participate in such dialogue (1994: 112–24).[11]

Meanwhile capitalism, already deemed harder to transform than previously expected, given the failure of 'old-style social democracy', does not require any enforced transformation from governments: if dialogue is possible at all levels, then individuals may achieve whatever transformation could be deemed necessary through their own reflexive capacity for dialogue and action. Furthermore, if such possibilities already exist without a concerted effort to spread the globalizing technologies to all parts of the population, then doing so is no longer necessary. Hence, there is also less need for the state to regulate the forces of capitalism beyond some limitation of its unequalizing and socially destabilizing effects. Certainly there is no need for any additional redistributive interventionist programmes, such as in the realm of technology.

The Third Way's singularity also enables an understanding of the wider shift highlighted here, from the individual as a transformative agent for positive change in the utopian realist project to the individual in need of coercion towards economic performance in the Third Way. In the absence of competing ideologies and their worldly manifestations, it becomes difficult to explain the persistence or increase of problems. How to explain mass unemployment, if not through the

profit-driven excesses of neoliberalism? How to explain rises in illiteracy and innumeracy, if not through economically necessary cuts to education budgets? Any number of these questions could be asked and Giddens' Third Way can have recourse to two options.

Firstly, a government practicing the Third Way could be blamed – not for taking the wrong approach, but for not doing its job well enough. This line of thought is reflected in the criticism often levelled at New Labour's Third Way that it is technocratic and overly obsessed with targets and numbers.[12] Alternatively, in a society without fundamental ideological tensions, where no manifestations of political or economic doctrines impinge on the individual's empowerment and reflexivity, it is the individuals themselves who must be at fault for social ills. Despite being reflexive and despite having a government that embraces that reflexivity, individuals make wrong choices and, hence, a discourse on responsibility and accountability occurs. Where no serious proponents of factors constraining greater reflexivity and emancipation are acknowledged, deficiencies can only be located with the technical self-management of the emancipator or the moral self-management of the emancipated. The Third Way's moralizing discourse, the technocratic critiques of New Labour, as well as the parallel rise of an intensive evaluation and audit culture (Power, 1997; Hood, 2002; Dahler-Larsen, 2012) are outcomes consistent with a singular politics. Identifying 'bad guys' with a broad brush reminiscent of tabloid media will not do; but neither can a Giddensian politics afford to ignore political enemies of the reflexive, empowered, late modern self or discursively relegate them to the realm of fundamentalists.

The implicit singularity ascribed to the Third Way by Giddens is not so much a failure of his sociological enquiry but an underestimation of ideological opposition to the political implications underpinning the transformation of the self in the late modern age. This provides an additional element we need to consider when assessing the future relevance of Giddens' utopian realist project to centre-left politics beyond the Third Way: a politics consistent with Giddens' analysis of late modernity and his utopian realist outlook must recognize that it is on a level playing field with other doctrines that potentially pursue very different goals. Based on its central aim, a Giddensian politics must be clear about which interests it actively represents and which interests it opposes. These interests cannot be explained away as fundamentalisms – they are the political adversaries of greater reflexivity and emancipation, whose equal footing must be acknowledged as part of the political climate of the present day.

6
Conclusion – Integrated Policymaking and the Transformation of Capitalism

The main arguments of this book have not been intended necessarily as an outright criticism or an outright defence of Giddens. They instead describe the political character of his work as comprehensively as possible in order to highlight its shortcomings and strengths and to show that an integrated reading yields the most fruitful scope for future political utility. The most overt points of criticism have been on his Third Way, but only in the sense that it does not follow from the rest of his work. Depending on other critics' standpoints, the Third Way may be viewed favourably; for instance, in the sense that it contributed to significant electoral successes for centre-left parties in many countries after long periods in the political wilderness. The critical points noted here do not counter such arguments.

Besides ambitious attempts to provide solutions to some of the most central problems in sociological enquiry and to give a wide ranging account of the late modern age, we have seen that Giddens' work, above all, has a strongly normative political character throughout. The preceding chapters have made a case for Giddens' continuing political significance. Though the political character of his work is best understood when considering it holistically – with key themes developed from structuration theory to the Third Way – the political utility of Giddens can be separated into three distinct elements.

Firstly, there is the utopian realist model of critical social theory, focussed on identification of transformative possibilities with an emphasis on pragmatism in terms of both political solutions as well as the theorist's own choice of which emergent transformations to support. Secondly, the analysis of late modernity, read in the context of utopian realism, describes the current age as characterized by a central tension between genuinely new opportunities for a more reflexive and

empowered constitution of the self, alongside persistence and resurgence of severe structural barriers currently obstructing that transformation. This tension provides a possibility for reconstructing centre-left emancipatory politics, not around notions of solidarity attached to group identities but around the individualization attributed to the present age by a range of contemporary thinkers (Lash, 1990; Beck, 1997; Bauman, 2000; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). Thirdly, the utopian realist project as a whole, but more specifically the dialectical relationship between emancipatory politics and life politics in tandem with the multiple competing and overlapping forces of globalization, enables the formulation of policy by integrating formerly distant political concerns. This has significant implications, which will be further discussed in the following sections.

The arguments presented here also highlight an alternative reading of Giddens, which allows for his analysis of late modernity to be empirically defensible. Whether or not this alternative approach – utopian realism – is generally a desirable course for social theory to take is debatable. Many social theorists may believe that it is not, and the arguments here do not dispute such a stance. What is crucial is that Giddens himself clearly advocates the utopian realist approach to social theory and that this approach leads to a more defensible reading of his otherwise overly benevolent portrayal of the late modern age.

A review of Giddens' structuration theory and his analysis of late modernity highlighted the notion of empowered, reflexive agents as a central theme in both these clusters of his work. Within structuration theory, the individual's knowledge, reflexivity and empowerment are not so much empirical claims but an analytical focus: the extent of reflexivity, access to knowledge, and hence of individuals' transformative power are posited as key sites of analysis in a given society. There is a normative dimension implicit in the emphasis on this type of agency, which then, through the critique of historical materialism, provides the outline of Giddens' approach to critical social theory. The utopian realist approach entails that the theorist should seek to point out developments and features of contemporary societies which, if fostered, may lead to 'desirable' ends (Giddens, in Bleicher and Featherstone, 1982: 72). This approach does not necessitate much attention to structural constraint because in the absence of *telos* or historical guarantees, it is the quest for transformative agency that assumes primary importance; however, it also requires the social theorist to show what might need to be done in order to foster and encourage those emerging developments to take hold on a larger scale.

In the analysis of late modernity, this theme of reflexive agents as a focal point for system transformation is no longer just part of a meta-theoretical guidance on how sociologists might conceptualize and analyse societies, but – at face value at least – appears to be a substantive claim about the present age. However, overwhelming evidence shows that an analysis highlighting widespread reflexivity and individualism, brought about through post-traditionalism and globalization, is incorrect. Although pockets of these developments exist, they tend to apply only partially, to a small number of individuals in a few privileged locations or on a select few issues, whilst on the other hand there are unprecedented global inequalities, resurgence of tradition and the emergence of new structural constraints and determinants.

This triggers the proposition that Giddens should be read as a utopian realist, where the universal emergence of the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self is the central normative goal, brought about chiefly by the technological dimension of globalization and the consequent access to information and contact between different lifestyles; a normative goal, in other words, which derives from the possibilities identified by Giddens in the late modern age. But keeping in mind the ample structural barriers currently preventing this aim from being realized, Giddens' utopian realist analysis needs to be supplemented by a political project showing how these barriers to knowledge, reflexivity and empowerment could be overcome. This forms the basis of a utopian realist critique of his Third Way.

In order to embark on this critique, it was first necessary to establish in more detail what a Giddensian politics needs to look like. Structuration theory and the utopian realist angle already suggest that a Giddensian politics should be situated within existing political structures and make use of available rules and resources in order to transform the constraining properties of the present system. This approach is additionally in line with utopian realism in the sense that it does not advocate system overthrow but instead looks to the possibilities for system transformation already in existence.

On the question of how to respond to a society in which reflexivity increasingly takes hold, a Giddensian politics needs to envisage a dialectical relationship between emancipatory and life-political issues. This follows from the argument that emancipation can lead individuals to engagement with life-political concerns, but also that becoming aware of life-political concerns might highlight new forms of constraint. Based on this logic, a Giddensian politics implies strongly redistributive policies in order to provide the fundamental requirements for greater

reflexivity and access to knowledge, information and communication tools. Additionally, commitments to greater citizen engagement and an inclusive public sphere are requirements that follow from his analysis, though this component is weakened by lack of engagement with ideological and corporate influence on media and mass communication. Above all, a Giddensian politics must seek to achieve an extensive transformation of the global economy since the growing inequalities and pressures resulting from its present incarnation pose barriers for many individuals. This once again makes the case for major redistributive agendas within nations as well as internationally.[1]

Having established this basic framework of what a Giddensian politics would need to do in order to successfully complete the utopian realist social theory of late modernity, it was then possible to contrast these requirements with the Third Way. Whilst the Third Way has elements of consistency with the analytical accounts of late modernity found in Giddens' earlier work, this contrast highlighted that it fails to successfully complete the utopian realist analysis of late modernity due to four key issues.

Firstly, the Third Way has limited critical engagement with global capitalism and sees it as a structural property of late modernity that cannot be transformed (with the strikingly contradictory exception of financial markets) and to which consequently all other government policy must be subservient. Secondly, the Third Way in large parts assumes that the empowered, reflexive, knowledgeable self is already a widespread social reality, which, rather than needing to be fostered and expanded, needs only to be responded to by government and policymakers. Thirdly, the issue of redistributing technological resources fundamental to Giddens' entire project of the late modern self is absent in the Third Way. Finally, the Third Way has an implicitly bleak view of the constitution of the individual, which at a general level undermines the premise of Giddensian politics: rather than assuming that removing structural constraints and allowing reflexivity to take hold will lead to desirable outcomes, it views individuals as driven by rational choice considerations and susceptible to moral hazard, leading into a discourse on responsibilities and coercion rather than emancipation and empowerment. We therefore need to reject the Third Way as a successful completion of Giddens' utopian realist social theory of late modernity.

An assessment of the possible reasons for this failure found that the Third Way is not just underpinned by the analysis of late modernity, but also by an additional discourse around the two major political doctrines of the late twentieth century, post-war social democracy and

neoliberalism. Both approaches are seen by Giddens as failures and, more importantly, as anachronisms. Providing a second rationale for the Third Way, this additional discourse dilutes its capacity to unreservedly engage with the task of completing the utopian realist project. More significantly, this dismissal of the old politics leads to an implied singularity of the Third Way. Dismissing those opposed to the goals of his utopian realist project as fundamentalists, Giddens fails to take seriously the issue of politics as a contest for power – not just between various parliamentary factions, but also between competing political standpoints and ideologies more widely. There is no awareness in the Third Way of its legitimate political enemies; consequently, the salience and severity of structural constraints inhibiting individuals' ability to formulate their lives reflexively is decisively diluted.

Several points made within the wider arguments of this book are not in and of themselves new. For instance, the Third Way's uncritical view of capitalism has been pointed to by others (Cammack, 2004). Likewise, its bleak view of human nature has also been alluded to elsewhere (Morrison, 2004). Earlier points, such as the empirical indefensibility of many elements of Giddens' analysis of late modernity or various points made on his globalization thesis were explicitly taken from many other authors. It was necessary to draw on these existing conclusions in order to illustrate most clearly the central arguments of this book and to highlight their importance.

The Giddensian ontology of critique is of interest from a meta-theoretical perspective. It offers a comparatively pragmatic perspective for critical endeavours that can feature alongside other, more radical approaches in the critical theorist's repertoire. The insistence on a miutic approach (O'Kane, 2009) places limitations on how far critical theory might go. The realist components of the Giddensian approach will therefore not satisfy every critic's endeavours. By the same token, it lends itself well to direct engagement with the existing political sphere in its current context. It can be a stifling task to ask what can be done within the current instantiation of our political sphere to enable emancipatory system transformation, especially in contrast to more creative deliberations not bound by the criterion of current feasibility. However, by emphasizing transformative agency and highlighting possible avenues for social change that do currently exist, Giddens gives us a framework suited to identifying the highest possible degree of scope for system transformation.

Beyond this meta-theoretical endeavour, the utopian realist analysis of late modernity presents a politically insightful account of the present

age. Acknowledging the complexity and interrelating dimensions of globalization, it confronts us with a central tension of our time, where genuinely new possibilities for greater reflexivity and empowerment collide, in myriad ways, with obstacles to the wider emergence of this transformation. Far from signalling an end of history (Fukuyama, 1992), this transformation highlights new political issues and struggles, leading to an ongoing progression of emancipatory and life-political concerns as individuals' engagement and awareness of their surrounding world develops. In this view, there is no inferred presence of fixed oppressive structures that can be brought to an abrupt end by a single political move. Barriers to emancipation – global and national – might be in constant flux, and new life-political issues may come and go; Giddens' work urges us to keep track of such developments – not least by ascribing a central role to empirical social research – and to develop our understanding of how these various emancipatory and life-political concerns are linked.

Most importantly, this backdrop at the levels of abstract theory and concrete analysis allow for the formulation of policy platforms and political agendas. A key motivation for this book is to show that the utopian realist analysis of late modernity can be used as an important theoretical framework, through which it is possible to construct contributions to debates about the future of centre-left politics. Having also shown that his Third Way is a misfired attempt at such a contribution, it becomes important to show substantively what a contribution to these debates based on Giddens' pre-Third Way works could look like. Importantly, Giddens offers scope for contribution in two ways. Firstly, there are in some areas possibilities to define programmatic alternatives to the Third Way, with specific policy positions. But additionally, Giddens also allows for a wider contribution, which does not give us individual policy positions, but an integrative formula for policymaking, which reflects and augments efforts already beginning to occur in policy circles. The next two sections respectively spell out these two distinct elements of Giddensian politics.

Transforming capitalism: a programmatic alternative to the Third Way

If we discard Giddens' Third Way and instead contemplate what kind of policy positions follow more clearly from his utopian realist project, we can establish a model for politics in line with long-standing normative positions of the left: equality, emancipation, progressivism and

a critical approach to capitalism (Giddens, 1994: 51; Bobbio, 1996; Schecter, 2007). At the same time, it gives scope for contemplating renewal of these values, based on a sociological premise distinct from that of existing social democratic traditions, which have struggled to achieve success – electoral or otherwise – in recent decades. These features are contained not just in the substantive policies that follow from his work but also in its central normative premise: the emergence of a new, empowered, reflexive self. This premise is situated in an understanding both of the barriers, as well as of the emerging possibilities and developments that exist in contemporary societies, and allows us to formulate consequent political agendas.

Many policy positions (though not all) that follow from Giddens' analysis are not necessarily new. Moreover, none of them are uncontroversial, and the majority of them have been the subject of much literature. Furthermore, it is impossible to draw on Giddens for a fully comprehensive political programme, simply because there are some policy areas where clear positions cannot be readily inferred from his work. For instance, rules governing the deployment of the military, or what the criminal justice system ought to look like cannot readily be extracted in this way – the thematic focus of his work is too far removed from these issues. A comprehensive political programme that could achieve this would have to draw on additional authors who discuss such issues in more detail.

A comprehensive programme is indeed not within the scope of this book. However, having largely discarded the Third Way as a suitable completion of the utopian realist analysis of late modernity, it is worth outlining programmatic alternatives in a more substantive form. The focus here will be specifically on the contours of a Giddensian economic and redistributive agenda. Outlining an alternative approach in this area addresses directly the two central points of critique levelled here at the Third Way: the notion of capitalism as an untransformable structural feature of late modernity, and the implicit assumption that the emergence of the reflexive, empowered self is already a universal reality. Given the subject matter of Giddens' main works on late modernity, and in particular his multifaceted perspective on globalization, this is furthermore an area in which particularly fruitful grounds for programmatic discussion are readily available.

Whilst the following pages note several programmatic points, the central aim is not simply to list them but to demonstrate why they follow from Giddens' pre-Third Way work and thereby offer a suitable completion of his utopian realist analysis. The following pages are furthermore

by no means the only possible programmatic consequence of Giddens' work but are outlined in such a way as to demonstrate most clearly how they relate to it.

A Giddensian approach to the economy needs to be based on three theoretical premises. Firstly, since social inequalities and lack of access to key resources inhibit the emergence of the late modern self, a redistributive agenda is necessary. Secondly, due to the pressures of the global economy, a redistributive agenda cannot simply be implemented within national borders, blind to economic pressures from the outside. Transforming the global economy must be a prerequisite for the ability to implement redistributive agendas within nations. Thirdly, transforming and achieving a more equal balance of power in the global economy is essential for the emergence of the late modern self. If reflexivity results from increasing contact and dialogue between different cultures and lifestyles, then it is crucial to the very concept of reflexivity itself that sections of the world's cultures and lifestyles are not disadvantaged or cut off from this process as a result of an unbalanced global economy.

In order to make possible domestic redistributive agendas and to allow for an age of reflexivity based on inclusive and equitable globalization, a Giddenisan politics must pursue far-reaching reform of the global economy. International cooperation with other governments needs to be harnessed to accomplish this, as does legislative power over corporations within national borders. A cornerstone of this is the financial sector, given the extent of leverage that money markets currently have over national governments and economies. Introducing an international tax on speculation and other financial ventures would likely be an important element of this, as would global regulations on what kind of speculation is possible: where speculation and other elements of finance capitalism (such as hedge funds) are likely to promote job creation and widely beneficial economic growth, they should be encouraged, for instance, through varying rates of financial transaction tax; where they run contrary to such ends, they must be penalized, either through tax rates or legislative power.

Additionally, it is crucial to seek reform of the IMF and other bodies that administer financial aid to governments. There can be no place for the type of conditionality several authors identify, where financial aid is provided on conditions that extend the power of large transnational corporations in developing countries and reduce those countries' capacity to set up health and education systems and other public services (Babb, 2013). Ideally, financial aid should be provided on conditions diametrically opposite to these, with the aim to create more autonomous

economies in developing countries, which create jobs and raise the standard of living, allowing those countries to become developed economies in their own right. Although financial aid and loans to governments of developing nations (and developed nations for that matter) are quite possibly inevitable, it is also worth at least considering the possibility of cancelling third world debt, as was already unsuccessfully attempted in the late 1990s.[2]

In the real economy of goods and services, Giddensian politics must acknowledge that private enterprise is beneficial in many respects and contributes decisively to the capacity for more reflexive societies – not least through technological innovation. But it must also tackle the central constraints that stem from the way in which many private firms currently operate. In both developed and developing nations, these include foremost driving down wages, effectively making potential employees in different areas compete by offering the lowest possible labour costs, and destabilizing communities, countries and regions through rapid mobility and transnational approaches. The aim here is not to overthrow but to transform capitalism and lessen these destructive effects, whilst at the same time preserving its capacity to enable wealth creation and innovative new products and services.

At the national level, many relevant approaches have been practiced with some degree of success both in the past and the present. Where the fundamental aim of private enterprise is concerned, elements of the Japanese model (McCormick, 2004) might be drawn on, where private enterprise tends to be financed through local or regional banks with vested interests in long-term prosperity in the region in which they mainly operate, alleviating the demands for quick returns often necessary in shareholder financing (Dore, 2000; Engelen, 2002; Michel and Reberioux, 2005). Elements of approaches found in Germany and France referred to sometimes as 'Rhenish' capitalism (Albert, 1993) could also be pursued, for instance, mandatory representation of employees on the directors' boards of major companies and obligations on companies to offer apprenticeships. Other ways of giving employees both stakes and decision power in companies could be considered, for instance, expansion of the cooperative approach practiced by many businesses in the UK and elsewhere.

However, given the pressures of economic globalization, such approaches will be deemed unworkable through a mass exodus of businesses and exploitative, low-wage job creation in developing countries.[3] This type of national economic agenda must be combined with an agenda for international economic reform, to be achieved through

cooperation with potentially like-minded governments and through international organizations.

In order to avoid the phenomenon of the working poor, it is desirable in the context of Giddens' utopian realist project to have mechanisms in place preventing wages that do not enable a basic standard of living, be that through a standard living wage or through tariffs negotiated by unions. In order to counteract the global competition for low wages, there is a critical need to campaign for global wage regulation. A global minimum wage, linked for instance to average living costs in each individual country, is one possibility here. Providing aid for labour movements and trade unions, especially in developing countries, might be an alternative or simultaneous step.

In terms of the mobility of businesses themselves, international regulation is needed to safeguard the areas in which large employers are located and in those areas to which they might choose to relocate. Mobility of businesses can be desirable: infrastructure, proximity to raw materials, key customer bases or sufficiently skilled workforces often provide suitable grounds for relocation. But given the potential for dire side effects of relocation and abandonment of communities, there is a need to consider public interest in major relocations of mass employers. Mandatory social impact assessments on the old and new locations of mass employers could be useful here. Obligations to contribute to sustainable infrastructures in the new location, as well as contributions to start-up funds in the old location are other possible measures. Mandatory provision of apprenticeships could also be advocated on a national as well as international level as an additional requirement for relocation.

Pollution and environmental protection are additional issues related to relocation, especially of large industrial production facilities. Giddens acknowledges this as a global problem (1998a: 153), and it is in many cases likely to require global rather than national regulation. The option for businesses to relocate to areas with less stringent environmental protection rules needs to be addressed: given the effects of bad environmental practice on the health and wellbeing of communities, such considerations cannot influence business mobility.

These are some examples of what kind of an economic agenda would be consistent with Giddens' analysis of late modernity. To illustrate the contrast to the Third Way: whilst it advocates policy positions that make individuals, their life cycles and life choices subservient to the market, these policy positions make the market subservient to individuals. As we saw, the lack of engagement with possibilities of transforming capitalism is a central weakness of the Third Way in relation to the connection

between Giddens' social theory and his politics. As such, this is a central element that an alternative Giddensian politics must deal with. Furthermore, these examples build directly on Giddens' pre-Third Way work in a number of ways.

Firstly, in line with structuration theory, they reflect the notion of capitalism as a central structural feature of the present age that has both enabling and constraining properties. As such, there is no intention to abolish this structural feature altogether, but instead to transform it in such a way as to lessen those elements constraining the political aim of fostering the reflexive, empowered self. In order to do so, they draw on resources already available to governments, most notably legislative power and international cooperation.

Secondly, and related to this, the above approach is consistent with Giddens' view on globalization, where the nation state is still an important player, but where international cooperation is essential, given that economic pressures are often exerted from beyond national borders.

Thirdly, these examples are consistent with the central aim of Giddensian politics in two ways. Within Giddens' analysis, the capitalist economy is a key source of constraint on the emergence of the late modern self – hence a critical, though not fully dismissive approach to capitalism is necessary. Furthermore, the emergence of the late modern self depends on a pluralistic and inclusive form of globalization, whilst westernization and global inequalities currently undermine the possibility of cultures coming into contact on at least roughly equal footing. Therefore it is necessary to regulate both the financial and the real economy to the effect of lessening the power of western interests over developing countries, and allowing those countries to build more autonomous and sustainable economies.

Overall, this economic agenda provides two important cornerstones of a political project consistent with the political imperatives implicit in Giddens' utopian realist analysis: at face value, it seeks to regulate capitalism at both the national and global level, in order to lessen its constraining influence on individuals' empowerment and capacity for reflexivity. But additionally, it redefines the framework of rules and possibilities within which private enterprise can operate, making it subservient to the sustainable prosperity of communities and individuals.

But a Giddensian politics also requires a redistributive agenda, focussing on issues such as progressive taxation, healthcare, education and technological resources. The viability of such a redistributive agenda depends at least in some part on available funding and prevention of an

outflux of businesses as a result of unfavourable economic conditions. By harnessing finance capitalism to make it more subservient to the aim of stable, wealthy and productive economies, and by tightening and harmonizing the rules within which businesses can operate, some key preconditions for any large-scale redistributive agenda become possible.

Research such as Wilkinson's studies on the effects of social inequality (Wilkinson, 1996; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009) might of course lead to a politics where reducing inequalities is a desirable end in itself, given the measurable problems it brings to any society. Piketty's (2014) economic assessment of inequality adds further weight to such an aim. But in the case of Giddens, where the central normative political aim is more intricate – focussed as it is on fostering a new type of self – the features of a redistributive agenda can be defined more clearly than would be possible with a simple watchword of 'equality at all costs'. Giddensian politics therefore adds to these studies on inequality by providing a clearer framework for what kind of equality and redistribution are necessary. A Giddensian politics certainly cannot promote widening income inequalities between the richest and the poorest in society and must respond where sections of the population live on so little that full participation in public life and the capacity for reflexivity are hampered. But the analysis in this book provides further parameters of a Giddensian redistributive agenda.

Firstly, there needs to be a focus on alleviating poverty and life circumstances that demonstrably hinder the emergence of the late modern self. This may be termed negative redistributive policies, in the sense that the aim is to reduce factors that obstruct the goal of Giddensian politics. But equally important are positive redistributive policies,[4] in other words, policies that seek to redistribute and create universal access to resources that directly contribute to this aim, notably in the realm of education and technological resources.

Secondly, in line once again with Giddens' views on globalization, there cannot be a focus limited to national dimensions. Much as with the economic agenda suggested above, global redistributive dimensions must also feature. In part, the economic agenda already deals with this. But the existence of global digital divides is an issue that a Giddensian politics must address explicitly in order for the notion of the empowered, reflexive self to be anything other than a strongly western and elitist notion.

Thirdly, any redistributive agenda placing a heavy emphasis on public services requires considerable amounts of funding. This is dealt with in some part by regulating the financial sector and by ensuring that

businesses cannot simply leave any given country for the sake of lower wages. But this must be combined with adequate levels of taxation. In a Giddensian approach, tax levels are unlikely to be especially low, as is typically the case in countries with strong public services. Given the constraining effects of poverty (including the phenomenon of the working poor), the emphasis needs to be on progressive taxes, for instance, income and inheritance tax rather than VAT. Significantly, a Giddensian politics self-evidently also demands a concerted effort to tackle problems of tax evasion and illegal offshore banking.[5]

The closest relative of a Giddensian redistributive agenda is the Scandinavian model, where the state accumulates high amounts of revenue, provides state-of-the-art public services and social protection with the aim of benefiting all levels of society rather than just providing a safety net, and ensures high levels of training, infrastructure and research, thus aiding the creation of a highly skilled workforce and a productive business environment.[6]

A politics consistent with Giddens' analysis of late modernity stands in agreement with the basic formula, as it were, of the Scandinavian model, acknowledging capitalism as a key structural feature of late modernity with important merits worth encouraging, particularly in areas such as innovation and the creation of wealth and jobs. However, Giddens also postulates awareness of its constraining features, which need to be addressed through government action to provide and distribute the resources necessary for the widespread emergence of the empowered, reflexive self – a task that the market, given its unequalizing characteristics, cannot undertake on its own and in fact often counteracts.

An additional congruence lies in the Scandinavian model's non-traditionalist character. More conservative welfare models rely on traditional gender roles and family setups for the provision of important social tasks, notably care for children and the elderly (Esping-Andersen, 1997). A system of this kind could not be part of a Giddensian politics: given his emphasis on post-traditionalism, individuals' ability to reflexively make their life choices and design individualized biographies, a welfare system reliant on the persistence of structural determinants is not an option. However, a clear divergence from the Scandinavian model lies in the globalist dimension of a Giddensian programme of redistribution and public services.

His globalization thesis highlights a tension between the cultural dimension of globalization deriving from technology, from which the capacity for post-traditionalism, reflexivity and empowerment stems,

and the economic dimension, which at once has partially given rise to these technologies and also led to their uneven distribution. If access to information is the foundation of the empowered, reflexive self and if market principles lead to unequal access, then a Giddensian politics must step in to ensure that no individual is denied said access.

Developed countries as sole beneficiaries of globalization render the project of the late modern self problematic. As such, governments in leading industrial countries need to take steps enabling the preconditions for an emergence of the reflexive, empowered self to be established more widely. In some part, a global economic agenda of the kind set out above accomplishes this. The hope is that where developing countries are not burdened by IMF conditionality and where transnational corporations cannot simply enter and leave at will, indigenous and sustainable economies may emerge and long-term wealth may be created. However, relying purely on this may be insufficient, given the lack of infrastructure or scope for entrepreneurship in many parts of the world. To more reliably achieve an inclusive globalization, Giddensian politics needs to sustain and increase financial aid to regions affected by abject poverty and little scope for economic growth. This can include support for humanitarian organizations operating in those regions, but the logic of utilizing available rules and resources suggests using expertise of existing companies to lay the foundations for a digital infrastructure in areas currently on the losing side of global digital divides.

Offering tax incentives for companies able to accomplish this is a possible course of action, potentially leading to growth of those companies and to the creation of jobs within the countries they are based in, as well as to close economic ties and good diplomatic relations with the developing countries in question. This form of investment in digital infrastructures of the developing world adds to creating a genuine notion of globalization, enabling a less westernized emergence of post-traditionalism, reflexivity and the late modern self.

A note on media and the public sphere

Aside from economic and redistributive agendas, Giddensian politics also requires us to reimagine the relationship between the individual and the state, in particular due to Giddens' emphasis on the experience and reflexive formulation of the self in the late modern age, alongside his acknowledgment of the state as a central actor and potential facilitator of emancipatory measures. Use of electronic referenda and online petitions and overall greater use of digital communications in the

political process might well be a part of this, as would school curricula aimed at fostering citizen engagement, critical thinking and competence in manoeuvring through the formidable wealth of information that surrounds us. Additionally, this would almost certainly necessitate steps to ensure a pluralist media landscape, tackling the corporate control of news media and rethinking government secrecy and freedom of information laws. The Third Way notes the importance of some of these areas; however, Giddens' work has a critical weakness in terms of lacking engagement with issues such as partisanship, monopolies, control and manipulation in the modern information landscape. Recent phenomena, such as trolling (Hardaker, 2010), add yet more important issues that would need to be addressed with little to no recourse to Giddens' own work. Whilst many programmatic alternatives to the Third Way can be readily highlighted from his work, there is less capacity to do so on the issue of a renewed digital public sphere.[7]

Nevertheless, it is important to note at this juncture that this would have to be a further central element of a Giddensian political programme, but one that would need to be accompanied by significant economic reform to make participation possible in a meaningful way. The above economic agenda places Giddens among others who have sought recently to redefine the relationship between state and market (Mazzucato, 2014), and, to an extent, he is likewise relevant to the relationship between state and society. However, on this latter issue his strength is limited to providing a rationale for such redefinition, with comparatively little input on how to achieve it.

The future of policymaking: an integrative approach

One of the gravest misunderstandings around the political consequences of Giddens' work can most succinctly be highlighted through his emblematic phrase, 'beyond left and right'. His interest in old-style social democracy and the neoliberalism of the 1980s and his subsequent outline of a Third Way invite the conclusion that this phrase signifies the time of left and right to have passed and some kind of new political era to have replaced it. However, the continued importance placed in his work on the institutions and structuring principles of modernity mean that this cannot be the case: 'beyond left and right' must be understood spatially, not chronologically. In other words, emancipatory politics – the politics of left and right – are as important as ever, if not more; but it is important to assess what political tensions and issues have appeared outside of this spectrum. Giddens' main contribution here is to show

that the scope and significance of these new political struggles relate back to the emancipatory axis of politics, and as such can help us make a case for greater emancipation, whilst also allowing an assessment of how and precisely to what end such emancipation needs to be brought about.

Aside from the substantive programmatic contributions of the type outlined above, Giddens' work therefore also contains a meta-level approach to policymaking, focussed on a need to integrate formally distant policy concerns. This need stems from the dialectical relationship between emancipatory and life politics, as well as from the connections between the various dimensions of globalization. If national policy decisions have global consequences, and emancipatory policy decisions have life-political consequences (and, in both cases, *vice versa*), then these domains cannot be treated in isolation.

Effectively, Giddens' analysis of late modernity urges us to design policies in one particular sectoral area of governance with close attention to ramifications in seemingly distant policy domains. This affects firstly the way in which we might design political programmes in the sense that we cannot simply itemize policy preferences in a discreet list of sectors (health, education, environment, international development, research and innovation, and so on) without considering at length the connections between them. At the operational level, this approach might go as far as questioning whether the established system of sectoral ministries is still suited to politics in the late modern age. In the context of the arguments presented in this book, policies and political programmes can be neither outlined nor implemented in a sectorally divided fashion. Project-based or issue-based, rather than traditional sector-based organization of the policymaking domain is a likely transformation contained within the parameters of Giddensian politics.

In some areas, we are already seeing increased collaboration between different sectors of government: the rise of cross-cutting challenges, such as obesity, climate change and digital futures (EC, 2014; OECD, 2014), presents issues that do not readily fit into the remit of a single government sector. Whilst the structure of ministries persists, there is increased cross-sectoral collaboration on these most obviously multifaceted policy challenges. Typically, the ministerial structures and traditions currently in place in most government spheres do not readily enable such cross-cutting activity (Arnold et al., 2015), so central government is usually obliged to put in place additional facilities through which different parts of government can come together and formulate cross-cutting policies for cross-cutting issues, such as the UK

government's 'What Works' centres (HM Government, 2013). In some polities, notably the European Commission, representation of multiple ministries (Directorates General) in major policy assessments and decisions is becoming increasingly typical.

Giddens' work urges further movement into this direction. However, in those instances where cross-sectoral collaboration currently happens, it is driven predominantly by considerations around efficiency or by lack of a clearly identifiable fit of an issue into a single sector of policymaking. But the Giddensian approach highlights that coordination is also precisely what facilitates design and implementation of transformative, emancipatory political agendas suited to our time. Coordination between different sectors of policymaking is thus not so much about efficiency or accommodation of hard-to-categorize issues, but about enabling the operationalization of specific values and objectives characteristic of centre-left political persuasions. Put simply, integration of different policy areas is not primarily a means of ensuring efficiency in government – it presents a way of operationalizing leftist political ideals in the late modern age.

To an extent, the Third Way implicitly has this integrative approach, though it is decisively limited by designing programmatic points almost exclusively in relation to the market, in other words: education, pensions, family rights and so on are made subservient to economic growth and free market capitalism. The extent of coordination in a Giddensian approach needs to be significantly more complex. On any given issue, it is necessary to ask how decisions might affect other policy domains, and indeed, what the interplay between national and international dimensions might be. The Giddensian imperative to connect emancipatory and life-political, national and global concerns, allows us to identify policy preferences reflecting these connections. Sustainable energy consumption – at face value a life-political concern – might strike many as an issue worth addressing, though there are clearly many ways in which this could be done. A Giddensian, utopian realist approach would urge us to consider which emancipatory issues might be affected by various possible policy options. In this example, issues of poverty and inequality readily come to mind: solutions likely to drive up energy costs would put those already struggling financially at a further disadvantage; focussing efforts on financial incentives for homeowners to equip their homes with solar panels or geothermal generators excludes anyone who does not own property, effectively risking the creation of a two-tier energy market. A Giddensian approach would involve contemplating how sustainable energy use could become an inclusive process, rather

than a privilege for those with the resources to pay for it.[8] Considering these problems, the Giddensian perspective might instead suggest equipping social housing with renewable energy sources as one of many possible modest approaches; adding the international dimension and seeking to invest in and coordinate large-scale renewable energy projects might feature among more ambitious possibilities.[9]

Likewise, rethinking our food supply in terms of quality, sustainability and ethical production (life politics) is at risk of becoming a bourgeois issue for bourgeois people (emancipatory politics): those able to afford organic, non-GM or fair-trade might well understand themselves as a vanguard of progressive change, whilst those who cannot are left little choice but to sustain a global food industry incapable or unwilling to adopt healthier and more sustainable approaches to the manufacturing, processing and marketing of their produce. This leads to a further widening of existing financial inequalities through the life-political implications of this issue respectively for haves and have-nots. A Giddensian approach would force consideration of issues such as higher global food safety and production standards, a crackdown on food price speculation and removal of barriers to market entry for players genuinely capable of delivering sustainably sourced and competitive produce.

Many further examples abound of the need for policymakers to prioritize such connections in their decision-making, be it on the national-global or on the conceptual emancipatory and life-political axes (or both). Debates around immigration and the increasing numbers of refugees trying to escape conflict to comparatively safer parts of the world typically centre on how to either prohibit or, occasionally, accommodate new arrivals. But a Giddensian approach might steer the debate towards reconsidering the west's arms exports and economically convenient relationships with despots, as well as more targeted and concerted international development programmes to lessen the legitimate and desperate reasons for this type of migration. But likewise, where arms exports stop (life politics), life sustaining jobs in the manufacturing industry are lost (emancipatory politics) and such losses need to be addressed, for instance, through generous social security programmes, industrial strategy or direct incentives and support for businesses to retrain their workforce and switch to manufacture in a different sector.

In order to formulate emancipatory politics coherently, Giddens' analysis urges that we cannot afford to neglect connections of this type and that they must in fact form the central element of our deliberations, instead of understanding, in the above case, immigration policy,

foreign policy, industrial strategy, welfare and vocational education as separate domains with separate institutions to devise separate strategies. The required approach is open-ended, and the brief overview of issues here hardly does it justice – it is intended for illustrative, not analytical purposes. The Giddensian integrated approach to policymaking is likely to involve a new level of creativity in policymaking, alongside needs for more generalist as well as specialist expertise in the formal political sphere to suitably identify and respond to the multitude of connections that exist between domains and issues formally thought of as distant.

The outcomes of such integrative approaches are of course uncertain: late modernity is not a closed system, in which enough integrative deliberation could eventually yield a fully comprehensive, logical and self-referential policy framework. We are ultimately, in Giddens' words, 'riding the juggernaut' of late modernity (1990: 151). Many of the possible approaches noted here may need to start in the form of test phases, and as such the Giddensian perspective adds merit and urgency to the notion of experimental government and the increasing use of policy laboratories (Halpern, 2015; Wilsdon and Doubleday, 2015). But once again, Giddens' perspective does not simply support the notion of experimental policymaking as is: it can add normative direction to current and more technocratic drivers behind such developments.

At the level of economic policy and redistribution outlined in the previous section, the required level of integration is perhaps most clear: in order to ensure well-funded public services as well as financial resources allowing individuals to participate in public life and begin to seize the possibilities of late modernity, a global transformation of capitalism is necessary. These political aims broadly reflecting those of what Giddens calls 'old-style social democracy' need not be diluted in the late modern age. But due to the race to the bottom inherent in international wage competition and due to the power of transnational corporations and financial interests to hold nation states to ransom, an outward looking economic reform agenda becomes a prerequisite for their feasibility. This line of thought is certainly not new, and its integrative dimension is perhaps more straightforward to grasp than in some of the issues noted above. Nevertheless, it represents perhaps the most important substantive element of Giddensian politics, given the centrality of his globalization thesis and the extent to which global inequalities undermine the possibility of a late modern transformation of the self. The agenda outlined in the previous section provides an example of how this might be done. More generally, the Giddensian perspective stands alongside other calls to integrate national and global economic and

redistributive concerns and urges centre-left governments to formulate their emancipatory agendas through this prism.

Politics and sociology: taking Giddens forward

The integrative approach to policymaking drawn in this book from Giddens' work is characteristic of his political scope more broadly. Giddens' work by his own admission hardly ever constitutes a grand narrative or general theory (Giddens, in Bryant and Jary, 2001a: 244–5). Though especially structuration theory and the analysis of late modernity are impressively broad in scope, his work rarely has enough detail to present the reader with a comprehensive outline of the way things are, and therefore in no way entails consequent redundancy of sociological analysis by other authors. The complexity and multiplicity of different meta-theoretical and substantive issues, debates and struggles that a general theory would need to address is arguably too great for such endeavours to still be possible, if ever they were. But rather than attempting to give us a framework that satisfies and directly accommodates a range of theoretical perspectives, topics of analysis and methods of social research, the normative political strength of Giddens is that his work allows for ways of connecting them. We have seen how this occurs at the programmatic level and this, for practical purposes, is the most significant. Most policy areas mentioned here have large fields of policy research attached to them, and Giddens does little to either criticize or add much to them directly. His perspective does however allow policymakers – as well as interested analysts and theorists – to draw suitable links between them, creating coherent wider policy platforms and in many cases augmenting scope for feasibility of solutions.

But this approach to policy formulation is also based on an integrated understanding of late modernity: Giddens' analysis says few specific things about the multitude of fields of sociological interest – poverty, inequality, work and employment, families, gender, ethnicity, media and communication, and so on. But the notion of late modernity as an age of related, intersecting and often contradictory forces, especially at the higher level of globalization, provides a prism through which the relationships between them become apparent. Recognizing such connections is not essential to conducting robust and meaningful social research in any given area of investigation. The importance of particularities is noted by Giddens himself, and so the plurality and multi-facetedness of the social research landscape can only be welcomed

from a Giddensian perspective. But his meta-perspective allows us to see a normative whole in this plurality.

Any sociological analysis of any particular topic, regardless of whether or not it aligns itself with Giddens' perspective, can be understood as a part of the wider late modern landscape in which the possibility of a reflexive, empowered self is contained. Any analysis may have something substantive to add in terms of facilitative or obstructive elements to this possibility. Giddens, in effect, gives us a late modern, open-ended equivalent to Marx's 'good life' in the form of the reflexive, empowered self, but paving the way towards its wider emergence is not achieved through singular agencies or a closely delineated analysis but precisely through the multitude of approaches characteristic of present-day social scientific enquiry.

At a wider level still, Giddens helps us connect social theory, empirical social research and the situatedness of the sociologist. The ontology of critique contained in his earlier works provides this by placing the identification of transformative agency at the heart of critical social theory. As such, normative grounding becomes a task rooted in empirical investigation. But far from a consequently determinist approach to developing normative frameworks, Giddens acknowledges that there are many empirical claims that could be made and many transformative agencies that could be identified – it is the task of the researcher, based on their own standpoints and sensibilities, to decide which truths are worth speaking, which emergent transformations worth fostering.

Notes

Introduction: Anthony Giddens – Social Theory and Politics

1. To clarify, 'his Third Way' refers to the cluster of texts forming his political project, whilst *The Third Way* denotes the specific book (1998a).
2. A close relationship has been pointed out between Giddens and Weber's class analysis (Weber, 1947; Loyal, 2003: 98).
3. Giddens' adversarial stance towards Foucault is especially clear in *The Transformation of Intimacy* (1992). As I note subsequently, this adversarialism is unfortunate, as synergies between these two authors are in fact feasible, with promising scope.
4. For a systematic contrast between Giddens', Beck's and Bauman's analyses of late modernity, see Dawson (2013) and Archer (2014).
5. Finlayson (2003) opts for an even broader perspective, considering also cultural influences.
6. Loyal (2003) is a key exception: he notes that an integrated reading of Giddens can yield new insights because his work as a whole represents at some level a comprehensive project. However, his analysis focuses largely on Giddens' earlier work, exposing a continuous struggle to sociologically accommodate liberal values. Loyal's focus on Giddens' attempt to balance various standpoints and traditions to uphold a certain set of values reveals some important points, but ultimately says more about those traditions than about the political relevance and utility of Giddens. Indeed, his book concludes with hardly any points on utility, and is as such relevant mainly to theoretical rather than practical concerns.
7. A notable exception to this is Leggett (2005, 2009), who endeavours a reconstruction of New Labour, based in part on Giddens. But whilst this signals acknowledgement of multiple political paths from Giddens' work, critical engagement centres on his Third Way, whilst his pre-Third Way work is generally taken at face value.
8. This phrase originally stems from Beck (1992: 93). As I note at various points in this book, his assessment of individualization is similar to Giddens in many ways, and this phrase succinctly encapsulates the implications of their observed social transformations for the constitution of the self.
9. I hope this brief definition will avoid any confusion when I use this term. Varela (2007) is among the few authors who use it. It is slightly more common in German, for instance, in Kiessling's *Kritik der Giddenschen Sozialtheorie* (1988). These two authors use the term differently from me and indeed from each other.
10. Giddens notes that establishing a dialogue and becoming able to influence high-level political movements and decisions is a challenge many have underestimated, including himself: a robust analysis with fitting political implications and conclusions is unlikely to gather much

support – highlighting issues that already have visible salience and identifying agents willing and capable of addressing them are additional and essential tactical elements of such endeavours, as are translation from scholarly language into salient and politically digestible messages, as well as sufficient networking (Giddens, 2007c).

1 Critical Foundations – Structuration and System Transformation

1. Similar points are also made by Gregson (1997) and Urry (1997).
2. Bryant and Jary's (1997) four volumes of *Critical Assessments* provide an excellent collection, but for an impressively concise summary of criticisms, see Mestrovic (1998).
3. At one point, he even implies mortality as a source of structural constraint, an indication of just how wide the definition of 'rules' might be (1984: 175).
4. This shows an important separation between constraint and domination on the part of Giddens, where the two are nevertheless still part of the same framework.
5. It is therefore not by chance that structuration theory has been used successfully for research in areas such as management and policymaking, and less on subject matters where social conditions are such that individual scope for transformation intuitively seems more limited.
6. Lockwood's (1964) distinction between social and system integration potentially presents an alternative way of understanding simultaneous presence of enabling and constraining aspects of structure. However, in Giddens' analysis, this distinction is not evident: constraining and enabling features can derive from one and the same structural property. For a discussion on Lockwood and Giddens, see Mouzelis (1997).
7. This approach to critical theory is not unique to Giddens: O'Kane notes that others have referred to

   > ... the miutic approach [to critical theory], which aims to engender the realization of emerging tendencies towards the good life.
   >
   > (O'Kane, 2009: 5)

8. Nevertheless, he notes that he still finds the concept of utopian realism important in some of his most recent contributions (Giddens, 2005, 2009).
9. There is the additional issue here that subjectivity already enters into play when the researcher chooses which aspects of social life to study in the first place. The point is not to ignore the implications of the researcher's subjectivity and situatedness altogether but to mediate it as far as possible within these parameters.
10. I do not infer here that Giddens' approach necessarily leads to moderation of political views. The given example could just as easily be the other way around.
11. There have in recent years been claims about a 'crisis of sociology', owing in part to a lack of coherence between these different aspects of the discipline (Lopreato and Crippen, 2002). Giddens' ontology of critique may well present a helpful perspective in this context.

2 Utopian Realism – Late Modernity Revisited

1. Giddens does not give an exact timeframe for when late modernity is supposed to have begun, until 2003, when he notes as a starting point the 'marriage of satellite and information technology that dates from the early 1970s' (2003: 24). However, in *Beyond Left and Right*, he notes that many of the processes he talks about have taken place 'over no more than the past four or five decades' (1994: 4). McCullen and Harris (2004) note that 'the year of the first satellite TV broadcast [is] sometimes identified as a watershed' (ibid: 48–9), although they give no reference for this. We may thus infer that the supposed beginnings of late modernity can be placed roughly in the 1950s at the very earliest but likely somewhat later.
2. Expressed amongst others by O'Boyle (2013).
3. For a similar synopsis of Giddens' late modernity thesis, see Leggett (2005: 16–17). I note the point of caution around attributing a linear character to Giddens' perspective, as Leggett and others have a tendency to do so, when Giddens' work, in fact, contains little ground for such inference (Anderson, 1995). In my view, this in itself has not resulted in any problematic conclusions about Giddens, yet it is worth keeping in mind that his late modernity thesis is, for lack of a better word, messier than the linearity inferred by others suggests.
4. Whilst time and space are previously discussed abstractly, Giddens now contextualizes them, explaining how they have become standardized and conceptually altered, citing concrete examples such as clocks, time-zones and maps (Giddens, 1990: 17–21). For the first time in Giddens' work, the reader is therefore given an understanding of how time and space are to be understood, how these elements must be viewed specifically in the present age and thereby affect the agent's perception of the social world, thus shaping the sociological character of our time.
5. Not least because the rise of science and especially literacy provides means by which to counter long-established norms and claims around sexuality and intimacy propagated most notably by religious faith. Giddens, of course, stands in considerable contrast here to Foucault (1976), who attributes a more damaging role to science in relation to sexuality. Yet, it is worth noting that the two positions are not mutually exclusive: whilst science can be a tool to classify and standardize sexuality, it can likewise be the vehicle through which formally constraining norms in this domain are overcome. The two authors each make salient points in their own right, and Giddens' structuration theory can provide us with a rationale where the two are not contradictory. Scientific knowledge can be viewed as a structural feature of modern societies, which has been drawn on to both positive and destructive effect in relation to sexuality and intimacy.
6. It has been argued that Giddens' reading of Foucault is poor in this respect. For a more detailed account of what some critics may indeed term 'misrepresentation', see Boyne (1997). However, although the charges of misrepresentation are significant, they do not matter for the point here: whether he is misrepresenting Foucault or not, it is evident that he is designing his theory explicitly in opposition to a structure-centred theoretical approach. This misrepresentation of Foucault is unfortunate nevertheless: as

I noted in Chapter 1, structuration theory is in fact capable of accommodating a Foucauldian dimension, and, as noted earlier, Giddens' and Foucault's positions are not as adversarial as they may at first seem. More broadly, in my view the two figures could be combined to fruitful effects, in a framework that might, for instance, respectively expose and then connect enabling and disempowering facets of discourse, information and social reality. This, however, would be the topic of a separate book altogether.

7. For further discussion of various postmodernist criticisms of Giddens, see Tucker (1993).
8. This line of argument can, to a certain extent, be made of telecommunications as well, in part due to the dominance of the English language not just in top-down information distribution (news media, TV, films) but also in many peer-to-peer communication channels.
9. Both Giddens and the critical literature often use these two terms interchangeably, but we can ascertain from Giddens a distinction between the two: in 'post-traditional' societies, traditions no longer play a central role in consolidating the social order and are forced to justify themselves in dialogue with other lifestyles (Giddens, 1994: 5), whilst de-traditionalization implies their disappearance altogether (ibid: 6, 13). I note this distinction here for the sake of clarity. Given the interchange of the two terms throughout the literature, I deal with them simultaneously.
10. Some studies are quite specific, for instance, Bretthauer's study on televangelism (2001). Others are more general, discussing the rise and/or continued significance of traditional religious beliefs in both empirical and theoretical dimensions. Edited volumes by Heelas (1998) and Flanagan and Jupp (1996) provide further substantiation of the above claims.
11. On the widespread desirability of marriage and child rearing within marriage, see Gross (2005), Waite and Gallagher (2000), Smith (1999), Fields (2004), Gerson (1993), Townsend (2002), Orenstein (2000), Thornton and Young-DeMarco (2001) and Amato and Booth (1997). On widespread adherence to traditional gendered division of labour, see Blair-Loy (2003), Hochschild (1997), Sigel (1996), Smith (1999), Jamieson (1998), Coltrane (1996), Townsend (2002), Bianchi et al. (2000), Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001) and Sanchez and Thomson (1997). On persistence of traditional views on sexual practices, including in relation to attitudes on monogamous vs promiscuous practices, see McNair (2002), Laumann et al. (1994), Berger (2002) and Radway (1984). Though not a major feature in Giddens' more general texts on late modernity, the concept of romantic love is acknowledged as a key site of tradition in *Transformation of Intimacy*. On this issue there are also several studies, which show romantic love to still be a widely held ideal, and emphasized heavily in popular culture (Simpson et al., 1986; Smith, 1999; Whitehead and Popenoe, 2001; Hochschild, 2003; Shumway, 2003).
12. Tivadar and Luthar (2005) provide a particularly clear example of this on the topic of food consumption.
13. A strikingly similar conclusion on this matter is also reached by Ailwood (2006).
14. The close connection, bordering on the tautological, is also noted by Adkins (2003) and Elchardus (2009: 153).

15. I occasionally mention Beck in conjunction with Giddens, as their theories are similar on several issues. Giddens in fact notes:

> I've become so close to Ulrich Beck over the past few years that I can no longer easily disentangle which ideas are his and which are mine.
>
> (Giddens, in Bryant and Jary, 2001a: 247)

16. Some of which Elchardus cites himself: the noted study on vote choice (Andersen et al., 2006) as well as Tillekens and Mulder (2005), van Eijck (2001), Hakanen and Wells (1993), van Eijck and Bargeman (2004) and Chan and Goldthorpe (2005). Illustrating the point especially clearly, Gerhards and Hackenbroch (2000) look into the practice of naming children. Having shown that there has indeed been a 'detraditionalization' in the way in which children's names are picked, they show, based on a case study in the city of Gerolstein in Germany, that there is no significant weakening of the relationship between social position and the choice of first names between 1894 and 1994 (ibid; see also Elchardus, 2009: 150).
17. See, for example, Chen and Wellman (2004), Cruz-Jesus et al. (2012), Doong and Ho (2012), Bonfadelli (2002), Dickinson and Sciadas (1999), Jung et al. (2001), Loges and Jung (2001) and Reddick (2000).
18. Much of the research cited in this chapter could form a basis of such a structural understanding. Additionally, the study of intersectionalities might well provide critically important input to such an approach (McCall, 2005; Collins, 2009; Walby et al., 2012).

3 The Political Consequences of Late Modernity

1. In *The Consequences of Modernity*, his discussion of politics begins as part of his discussion on utopian realism (1990: 156), providing further evidence that there is a strong connection between the two.
2. Giddens also gives us a table, detailing a range of further issues and questions relating to life politics (1991a: 227).
3. By Giddens' own admission (see 1991a: 230; see also Butler, 1990).
4. McCormick's (2007) account of interest in the Japanese business and welfare models and subsequent calls for western businesses to adopt Japanese practices in the 1980s provides an illustrative example of exposure to existing alternatives leading to change.
5. I accept that there may well be conflicting scientific evidence on this example. However, it illustrates the point well. A deeper discussion would be squarely beyond the realm of my expertise and would not aid the illustrative purposes here.
6. Of course, as noted, we do not need Giddens for this conclusion in and of itself. See, for instance, Marx and Engels (1848).
7. I use the term 'dialectic' loosely here: it is not intended to allude to a Hegelian teleology but simply denotes the idea that, in some form, life-political issues can highlight emancipatory issues, which then in turn may or may not highlight new life-political issues, and so on. No linear or predictable sense of development is inferred.

8. Social movements, social networking, lobbying, political activism and participation, often through use of communication and information technology, are key examples here.
9. Giddens himself also mentions the 'defensive' character of the European left (1994: 8).
10. I stress again here that I refer to the politics consistent with structuration theory, his analysis of late modernity and his utopian realist outlook, not to his Third Way.

4 Globalization and Capitalism

1. This is an inferential point: Hirst and Thompson do not explicitly consider these links.
2. The term 'western nations' has of course become more problematic since first publication of Giddens' seminal works on late modernity through the rise of the 'BRIC' economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China). However, as a countertrend to this, we can also note that even within developed and emerging economies, prosperity and economic power tend to be concentrated in particular regions or cities (Friedmann, 2001; Sassen, 2001). Though the term 'western' is thus no longer a fully satisfactory descriptor, I take it to denote geographically exclusionary distribution of economic power, for which there is so far no adequate alternative shorthand. As the term featured heavily in the debates around Giddens and globalization in the 1990s, I furthermore continue its use here to better represent these debates.
3. For further discussion on the political economy of communication and the case and prospects for disembedding communication technology from economic inequality and power structures, see McChesney and Schiller (2003).
4. He makes this point particularly clearly in an address to USC Annenberg on 'Globalization and Communication' (Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-9rDFN2zPU; accessed 07/07/2015).
5. This is also the case in New Labour's Third Way (see Blair, 1998).
6. As in the previous chapter, the policy positions noted here are in principle nothing new. Hirst and Thompson, for instance, argue for more international cooperation and global governance in order to bring about a more equitable notion of globalization (1998: 199–200).
7. Martell (2007) observes this status of finance as a favourite argument across a broad range of the globalization literature.
8. Sassen also notes some figures on the observable scale of growth in significance of finance capitalism, coinciding with the rise of digital communication and information technologies:

> From 1985 to 1995, the period that launches a new global phase, the total stock of financial assets increased three times faster than the aggregate gross domestic product of the twenty-three most highly developed countries that formed the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for much of that period, and the volume of trading in currencies, bonds, and equities increased about five times faster .... This aggregate GDP stood at 30$ trillion at the end of the 1990s, whereas

> the worldwide value of international trades derivatives was over $65 trillion. By 2004, that value had risen to $290 trillion. To put these figures in perspective, it is helpful to compare them to the value of other major components of the global economy, such as the value of cross-border trade (approximately $11 trillion in 2004) and foreign direct investment stock ($8 trillion in 2004). Foreign exchange transactions were ten times as large as world trade in 1983 but seventy times larger in 1999 and over eighty times larger by 2003 even though world trade had itself grown sharply over that period.
>
> (Sassen, 2007: 92–3)

Similar figures are also given by other authors (Moon, 2000: 66–7).

9. See Brenner and Theodore (2002), Friedmann (2001), Sassen (1999, 2001), Taylor (2004) and Wójcik (2013).
10. See Singh (2001), Held (2004), Clapp and Helleiner (2012) and Germain (2012).
11. Holton makes a case for this, noting that there have already been movements to achieve this (2005: 171).
12. These points are of course not dissimilar from those made at the end of the previous chapter. Yet, far from being a simple re-iteration, this shows that a strong redistributive character is important in a Giddensian political project from several lines of argumentation.
13. These suggestions might seem overly generic. However, it is worth pointing out that some school curricula do respond to these issues, notably the International Baccalaureate (IB), which features a mandatory 'Theory of Knowledge' course, as well as the subject option 'Information Technology in a Global Society' (ITGS). See www.ibo.org.

5 The Third Way – A Utopian Realist Critique

1. In his introduction to *The Progressive Manifesto* (2003), Giddens notes some shortcomings of his Third Way, but the importance of these points is re-affirmed.
2. See, for example, Barrientos and Powell (2004).
3. For another of the very few examples of this type of engagement with the Third Way, see Mouzelis (2001).
4. This point is substantiated by reference to Lindbeck (1995).
5. I am not implying here that everyone would have to participate in Giddens' version of civil society. Elsewhere, he notes in the context of civil society and the public sphere that 'democracy . . . is not defined by whether or not everyone participates in it, but by public deliberation over policy issues' (Giddens, 1994: 114). However, it is clear from the context of Giddens' theories, and indeed uncontroversial to say that everyone ought to be able and have the opportunity to participate.
6. For further discussion on the moralizing character of the Third Way, see Jordan (2010), who discusses this partly in relation to Giddens but also highlights this as a key failing of New Labour.
7. An alternative term to use could be 'non-adversarial'. However, I opt against this term, as this has been used to great effect by Mouffe, who makes an

ontological argument that politics is inherently adversarial: conflict between different positions is what constitutes the political. Further, Mouffe adopts a post-Marxist position and criticizes the politics of Giddens, Beck and New Labour, noting that they fail to take clear sides or even acknowledge the polarizing effects of capitalism (Mouffe, 2007: 35–63). Therein, it follows from her argument, would lay the scope for truly radical politics, the aim of which must be 'the establishment of a new hegemony' (ibid: 52). Whilst this has been a fruitful line of inquiry, my argument on the self-ascribed singularity of the Third Way does not relate to ontological concepts. It does not derive from the supposed fusion of previously distinct doctrines (neoliberalism and social democracy) but from Giddens' rejection of both: regardless of whether politics is inherently adversarial or not (see also Bobbio, 1987), the Third Way fails to take its demonstrably existing adversaries seriously, which in turn affects its own programmatic character. I mention Mouffe's argument here mainly in order to note that 'singularity' denotes something different from Mouffe's 'non-adversarialism', though this would otherwise have been an equally descriptive term to use.

8. The acknowledgement of the importance of nation-specific adaptations of the Third Way incidentally reflects the importance of particularities already stressed by structuration theory: contextuality matters, so catch-all agendas are unlikely to be fully feasible.
9. Anderson reflects specifically on a short political commentary preceding first publication of *The Third Way* itself (Giddens, 1995). Giddens' shortcoming is derived mainly from his notion of dialogic democracy, which is also already discussed in *Beyond Left and Right* (1994). Reflecting on Giddens, Anderson points out specifically:

> It is a mistake to imagine there is a quick route to universal goals, to which all can rally without loss.
>
> (Anderson, 1995: 43)

10. This problem is compounded by little agreement on the substantive meaning of these terms in and of themselves – Beck in fact refers to them as 'metaphors' (1997: 149). For an especially poignant contrast of what the terms 'left' and 'right' are taken to mean, see Laver and Budge (1992) on one hand and Bobbio (1996) on the other.
11. For further discussion on representation of interests in relation to impartial representation, see Bobbio (1987).
12. These critiques are documented in detail by Leggett (2005: 79–92).

6 Conclusion – Integrated Policymaking and the Transformation of Capitalism

1. Held's (2004) outline of global social democracy as an alternative to the Washington Consensus is closely analogous to the Giddensian perspective here; significantly more so than the Third Way.
2. Writing at the time when debt cancellation was being mooted, Giddens speaks favourably of these possibilities (2000: 132). Shah (2005) recounts how these

plans failed and, interestingly, notes that 'moral hazard' was used as a reason for decisions against debt cancellation.

3. It is precisely points of this kind that have been used to criticize the other models of capitalism I mention (McCormick, 2004).
4. The name, though not the content, is analogous to Giddens' notion of 'positive welfare' (1998a).
5. How much revenue could be generated by such measures is virtually unknown. Murphy (2010) reports HMRC estimating the UK 'tax gap' to be approximately 40 billion GBP but also mentions that Tax Research LLP puts this estimate considerably higher at 95 billion GBP (ibid: 1). Aside from these disagreements about the amount lost through tax avoidance and evasion, it is additionally unlikely that any measures would be able to retrieve the entirety of that figure. Stating exact levels of taxation cannot be done based on Giddens' work and would be outside the scope of this book. Nevertheless, I find it important to mention this issue, as it is a key element of any political agenda, and also because financing an expansion and improvement of public services is a demonstrably important feature of any politics consistent with Giddens' analysis.
6. I take this general definition from Erikson et al. (1987) and Esping-Andersen (1997), who himself rarely uses the term, but sees it instead as a distinct subcategory of what he calls the social democratic welfare model. Giddens refers to the Scandinavian model on several occasions, though usually in passing, when comparing his Third Way to other incarnations of social democracy. In his Third Way texts he is generally critical of many of its aspects, noting for instance that its high unemployment benefits are undesirable due to 'moral hazard' (1998a: 114–15) and its disincentivizing character (2000: 98–9). When he voices agreement, it tends to be on those few details that place the Scandinavian model close to his own Third Way position, for instance, pursuit of 'active' labour market policies (2000: 17). However, in an interview on AlJazeera's Riz Khan programme on May 1st 2007 (available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejPDcjFxqA8, accessed 15-07-2015), he explicitly praises the Scandinavian model. Where exactly Giddens himself stands on the Scandinavian model is therefore somewhat unclear, though within his Third Way there is generally an unfavourable stance.
7. Castells (2010), writing from a premise broadly similar to Giddens but with significantly greater focus on the intricacies of the information age, might well be a useful author to integrate into a wider Giddensian political project capable of addressing the issue of a renewed public sphere more satisfactorily than Giddens' work would permit on its own.
8. This relationship between environmental issues and issues of class and wealth is especially evident in Germany, where the Green Party's appeal is strongly centred on high-income sections of the electorate (Walter, 2010).
9. The DESERTEC project seeking to generate significant amounts of solar power in the Sahara desert was a recent attempt at such endeavours. Despite its failure to come to fruition, it indicates that these may well be realistic opportunities (Samus et al., 2013).

List of Anthony Giddens' Works, 1960–2015

During the making of this book it became apparent that there is no full and up-to-date record of Anthony Giddens' publications. Given his high level of productivity spanning over 50 years, alongside the technological changes in research information systems and the rise and fall of various publication platforms, a fully exhaustive record without omissions is not feasible. However, below is the fullest possible list of his contributions from 1960 to the present (excluding short pieces such as book reviews, editorial letters, short forewords and texts only published in languages other than English).

This list was compiled through exhaustive searches of the British Library catalogue, Google Scholar, Scopus and Web of Science as well as a range of other, more specific search facilities. Following extensive cross-checking, it therefore acts as a reference tool and represents a near-comprehensive account off all writings produced by Giddens readily searchable through present-day information systems. Given the focus of this book on the political dimensions of his work, the list also includes a substantial share of his commentary pieces in the news media, as well as transcripts of speeches, interviews and policy reports where these are available in the public domain.

All efforts have been made to identify first publication dates, acknowledge editors and co-authors where applicable and ensure fully correct wording of titles. However, given some cases of conflicting information from different search engines, some minor omissions or errors are possible. I apologize unreservedly for these.

1960

Article

- Aspects of the social structure of a university hall of residence (*The Sociological Review*, 8(1): 97–108)

1964

Articles

- Notes on the concept of play and leisure (*The Sociological Review*, 12(1): 73–89)
- Suicide, attempted suicide and the suicidal threat (*Man: A Record of Anthropological Science*, 64: 115–16)

1965

Articles

- Georg Simmel (*New Society*, 4(112): 24–5)
- The present position of social psychology (*British Journal of Sociology*, 16(1): 365–72)
- Profiting from a comprehensive school: A critical comment (with Holloway SWF; *British Journal of Sociology*, 16(1): 351–3)
- The suicide problem in French sociology (*British Journal of Sociology*, 16(1): 3–15)
- Theoretical problems in the sociology of suicide (*Advancement of Science*, 21: 522–6)

1966

Articles

- Personal and social identity (*Common Factor Monograph, Vol. 2*)
- A typology of suicide (*European Journal of Sociology*, 7(2): 276–95)

1968

Article

- Power in the recent writings of Talcott Parsons (*Sociology*, 2(3): 257–72)

Book chapter

- Founding Fathers of Sociology: Georg Simmel (Ed.: Raison T; *Founding Fathers of Sociology*, Harmondsworth: Penguin)

1969

Article

- The social meanings of suicide (*Sociology*, 3(2): 265–6)

1970

Articles

- Durkheim as a review critic (*The Sociological Review*, 18(2): 171–96)
- Marx, Weber, and the development of capitalism (*Sociology*, 4(3): 289–310)
- Recent works on the position and prospects of contemporary sociology (*European Journal of Sociology*, 11(1): 143–54)

Book chapter

- Introduction (Ed.: Masaryk T; *Suicide and the Meaning of Civilization*, Chicago UP)

1971

Book

- Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber (Cambridge UP)

Edited volume

- The Sociology of Suicide: A Selection of Readings (London: Frank Cass)

Articles

- Durkheim's political sociology (*The Sociological Review*, 19(4): 477–519)
- The individual in the writings of Emile Durkheim (*European Journal of Sociology*, 12(2): 210–28)
- Marx and Weber: A reply to Mr. Walton (*Sociology*, 5(3): 395–7)

Other

- Reflections on Durkheim (with Lukes S and Poggi G; *Archives Européennes de Sociologie, Paris*)

1972

Book

- Politics and Sociology in the Thought of Max Weber (London: Macmillan)

Edited volume

- Emile Durkheim: Selected Writings (Cambridge UP)

Articles

- Elites in the British class structure (*The Sociological Review*, 20(3): 345–72)
- Four myths in the history of social thought (*Economy and Society*, 1(4): 357–85)
- Social stratification: elites (*New Society, Art. 7*, 22(258): 389–92)

1973

Book

- The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies (New York: Harper and Row)

1974

Edited volumes

- Elites and Power in British Society (with Stanworth P; Cambridge UP)
- Positivism and Sociology (London: Heinemann)

1975

Articles

- American sociology today (*New Society*, 33(676): 633–4)
- The high priest of positivism: Auguste Comte (*The Times Literary Supplement*, 14-11-1975)
- The modern corporate economy: Interlocking directorships in Britain, 1906–1970 (with Stanworth P; *The Sociological Review*, 23(1): 5–28)

1976

Book

- New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies (London: Hutchinson)

Articles

- Classical social theory and the origins of modern sociology (*American Journal of Sociology*, 81(4): 703–29)
- Functionalism: apres la lute (*Social Research*, 43(2): 325–66)
- The rich (*New Society*, 38(732): 63–6)

Book chapter

- Hermeneutics, Ethnomethodology, and Problems of Interpretive Analysis (Eds: Coser L and Larsen ON; *The Uses of Controversy in Sociology*, New York: Free Press)

1977

Book

- Studies in Social and Political Theory (New York: Basic Books)

Article

- Habermas's social and political theory (*American Journal of Sociology*, 83(1): 198–212)

1978

Book

- Durkheim (London: Fontana)

Articles

- Class and classless society (*Partisan Review*, 45: 133–45)
- The prospects for social theory today (*Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 23: 201–23)

Book chapters

- Elites and Privilege (with Stanworth P; Ed.: Abrams P; *Work, Urbanism and Inequality*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson)
- Positivism and its Critics (Eds: Bottomore T and Nisbet R; *History of Sociological Analysis*, London: Heinemann)

1979

Books

- Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis (London: Macmillan)
- Emile Durkheim (New York: Viking Press)

Articles

- An anatomy of the British ruling class (*New Society*, 50(887): 8–10)
- Schutz and Parsons: problems of meaning and subjectivity (*Contemporary Sociology*, 8: 682–85)

Book chapter

- Habermas' critique of hermeneutics (Ed.: Freiburg JW; *Critical Sociology – European Perspectives*, New York: Irvington)

1980

Article

- Classes, capitalism, and the state (*Theory and Society*, 9(6): 877–90)

Book chapter

- Time and space in social theory: critical remarks upon functionalism (Eds: McNall SG and Howe GN, *Current Perspectives in Social Theory*, London: JAI)

1981

Book

- A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism Vol.1: Power, Property and the State (Berkeley: University of California Press)

Article

- Modernism and post-modernism (*New German Critique*, 22: 15–18)

Book chapters

- Agency, institution, and time-space analysis (Eds: Knorr-Cetina K and Cicourel AV; *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology*, London: Routledge)

- Sociology and philosophy (Ed.: Secord P; *Action, Theory and Structural Analysis*, Oxford: Blackwell)
- Trends in the philosophy of social sciences (Ed.: Lawton D; *Current Perspectives in Education*, London: Methuen)

1982

Books

- Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory (with Dallmayr F; London: Macmillan)
- Sociology: A Brief but Critical Introduction (London: Macmillan)

Edited volumes

- Classes, Power, and Conflict: Classical and Contemporary Debates (with Held D; Berkeley: University of California Press)
- Social Class and the Division of Labour: Essays in Honour of Ilya Neustadt (with Mackenzie G; Cambridge UP)

Articles

- Marxism, functionalism, game theory: commentary on the debate (*Theory and Society*, 11(4): 527–39)
- Reason without revolution? Habermas's 'Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns' (*Praxis International*, 2(3): 318–38)
- A reply to my critics (*Theory, Culture and Society*, 1(2): 107–13)

Book chapters

- Labour and interaction (Eds: Thompson JB and Held D; *Habermas*: *Critical Debates*, London: Macmillan)
- On the relation of sociology to philosophy (Ed.: Secord P; *Explaining Human Behaviour*, London: Sage)

Other

- Historical materialism today: an interview with Anthony Giddens (Bleicher J; *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1(2): 63–77)

1983

Articles

- Comments on the theory of structuration (*Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 13(1): 75–80)
- Four theses on ideology (*Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, 7: 18–21)

1984

Book

- The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration (Cambridge: Polity)

Article

- The body, reflexivity, social reproduction: Erving Goffmann and social theory (*Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, 25(3): 369–400)

Book chapters

- Hermeneutics and social theory (Eds: Shapiro G and Sica A; *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press)
- Nation states and violence (Eds: Powell WW and Robbins R; *Conflict and Consensus: Essays in Honour of Lewis Coser*, New York: Free Press)

Other

- Space, time and politics in social theory: an interview with Anthony Giddens (Gregory D: *Environment and Planning: Society and Space*, 2(2): 123–32)

1985

Book

- A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism Vol.2: The Nation State and Violence (Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- Liberalism and sociology (*Contemporary Sociology*, 14: 320–2)
- Marx's correct views on everything (*Theory and Society*, 14(2): 167–74)

Book chapters

- Jürgen Habermas (Ed.: Skinner Q; *The Return of Grand Theory in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge UP)
- Time, space and regionalisation (Eds: Gregory D and Urry J: *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*, London: Macmillan)

1986

Edited volume

- Durkheim on Politics and the State (Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- Action, subjectivity, and the constitution of meaning (*Social Research*, 53: 529–45)
- The politics of taste (*Partisan Review*, 53(2): 300–5)

Other

- Social theory and the problem of macroeconomics (Research series from the *Economic and Social Research Institute, ESRI*)

1987

Book

- Social Theory and Modern Sociology (Cambridge: Polity)

Edited volume

- Social Theory Today (with Turner JH, Cambridge: Polity)

1988

Book chapters

- Globalisation and modern development (Ed.: Bartocci E; *Social Change and Conflict in Neo-industrial Society*, Rome: Institute of Sociology)
- Goffman as a systematic social theorist. (Eds: Drew P and Wootton A; *Erving Goffman: Exploring the Interaction Order*, Cambridge: Polity)

1989

Book

- Sociology (1st edition; Cambridge: Polity)

Article

- States of emergency (*New Statesman and Society*, 19-05-1989)

Book chapters

- The orthodox consensus and emerging synthesis (Eds: Dervin B, Grossberg L, C'Keefe BJ and Wartella E; *Rethinking Communication*, Newbury Park CA: Sage)
- A reply to my critics (Eds: Held D and Thompson JB; *Social Theory of Modern Societies: Anthony Giddens and his Critics*, Cambridge UP)

1990

Book

- The Consequences of Modernity (Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- Gazza's goal slump (*The Times Higher Education Supplement, 21-12-1990*)
- Modernity and utopia (*New Statesman and Society*, 02-11-1990)
- Sociology's role in addressing society's problems is undervalued and misunderstood in academe (with Boden D and Molotch HL; *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 21-02-1990)

Book chapters

- Introduction (Ed.: Scheff T; *Microsociology*, Chicago UP)
- R.K. Merton on structural analysis (Eds: Clark J, Mogdil S and Mogdil C; *Robert K. Merton: Consensus and Controversy*, London: Falmer Press)
- Structuration theory and sociological analysis (Eds: Clark J, Modgil S and Modgil C; *Anthony Giddens: Consensus and Controversy*, London: Falmer Press)

1991

Books

- Introduction to Sociology (with Duneier M, Appelbaum RP and Carr D; New York: WW Norton)
- Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age (Cambridge: Polity)

Book chapter

- Structuration theory: Past, present and future (Eds: Bryant C and Jary D: *Giddens' Theory of Structuration*, London: Routledge)

1992

Book

- The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies (Cambridge: Polity)

Edited volume

- Human Societies: An Introductory Reader in Sociology (Cambridge: Polity)

Article

- Uprooted signposts at century's end (*The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 17-01-1992)

Other

- Review symposium: Anthony Giddens on modernity (Various; *Theory, Culture and Society*, 9(2))

1993

Articles

- Dare to care, conserve and repair (*New Statesman and Society, 29-10-1993*)
- Modernity, history, democracy (*Theory and Society*, 22(2): 289–92)

Book chapter

- Post-modernity or radicalized modernity (Ed.: Lemert C; *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings*, San Francisco: Westview Press)

Other

- The Giddens Reader (Cassell P, Stanford UP)

1994

Books

- Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics (Cambridge: Polity)
- Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order (with Beck U and Lash S; Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- Agenda change (*New Statesman and Society*, 23-10-1994)
- Out of the red (*New Statesman and Society*, 14-10-1994)
- What's he up to? (*New Statesman and Society*, 24-02-1994)
- What's left for Labour? (*New Statesman and Society*, 30-09-1994)

Book chapters

- Brave new world: the new context of politics (Ed.: Miliband D; *Reinventig the Left*, Cambridge: Polity)
- Industrialization, ecology, and the development of life politics (Eds: D'Antonio WV, Sasaki S and Yonebayashi Y; *Ecology, Society and the Quality of Social Life*, New Brunswick: Transactions)
- Institutional reflexivity and modernity (Eds: Held D, Hubert D, Seymour P and Thompson J; *The Polity Reader in Social Theory*, Cambridge: Polity)
- Men, women and romantic love (*The Polity Reader in Gender Studies,* Cambridge: Polity)
- The nation as power-container (Eds: Hutchinson J and Smith AD; *Nationalism*, Oxford UP)

1995

Book

- Politics, Sociology and Social Theory: Encounters with Classical and Contemporary Social Thought (Stanford UP)

Articles

- Government's last gasp? (*The Observer*, 07-07-1995)
- In defence of sociology (*New Statesman and Society*, 07-04-1995)
- The new context of politics: new thinking for new times (*Democratic Dialogue, Report 1: Belfast*)

Book chapters

- The growth of the new middle class (Ed.: Vidich AJ; *The New Middle Classes: Life-styles, Status Claims and Political Orientations*, London: Macmillan)
- Notes on the future of anthropology (Eds: Ahmed A and Stone C; *The Future of Anthropology and its Relevance to the Contemporary World*, London: Athlone)

Other

- Affluence, poverty and the idea of a post-scarcity society (*United Nations Research Institute for Social Development*)

1996

Book

- In Defence of Sociology: Essays, Interpretations and Rejoinders (Cambridge: Polity)

Book chapters

- Affluence, poverty and the idea of a post-scarcity society (Ed.: De Alcantara CH; *Social Futures, Global Visions*, Oxford: Blackwell)
- Risk society: the context of British politics (Ed.: Franklin J; *The Politics of Risk Society*, Cambridge: Polity)
- T.H. Marshall, the state and democracy (Eds: Bulmer M and Rees AM; *Citizenship Today: The Contemporary relevance of T.H. Marshall*, London: UCL Press)

Other

- The influence of sociology in post-war Britain: Anthony Seldon interviews Anthony Giddens (*Contemporary British History*, 10(1): 144–51)

1997

Edited volume

- Sociology: Introductory Readings (Cambridge: Polity)

1998

Book

- The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy (Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- After the left's paralysis (*New Statesman, 01-05-1998*)
- The future of the welfare state (with Novak M; *Choice In Welfare: IEA Health And Welfare Unit*)
- On globalisation (*Forests, Trees And People Newsletter, 36/37: August 1998*)
- Post-traditional civil society and the radical center (*New Perspectives Quarterly*, 15(2): 14–20)

Book chapter

- Marx and Weber: problems of class structure (Ed.: Levine RF; *Social Class and Stratification: Classic Statements and Theoretical Debates*, Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield)

Other

- Conversations with Anthony Giddens: making sense of modernity (Anthony Giddens in conversation with Christopher Pierson, Stanford UP)

1999

Book

- Runaway World: How Globalisation is Reshaping our Lives (Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- Better than warmed-over porridge (*New Statesman*, 12-02-1999)
- Risk and responsibility (*The Modern Law Review*, 62(1): 1–10)
- Why the old left is wrong on equality (*New Statesman, 25-10-1999*)

Book Chapter

- Political theory and the problem of violence (Ed.: Savic O; *The Politics of Human Rights*, London: Verso)

Other

- Director's lectures (London School of Economics)
- Runaway World (BBC Reith Lectures)

2000

Book

- The Third Way and its Critics (Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- Global economy and political governance (*European Forum for Management Development*, 02-09-2000)

- Is globalization Americanization? (With Hutton W; *Dissent*, Summer 2000)
- Still a third way for Europe? (*New Perspectives Quarterly*, 17(1): 50–1)
- A third way budget (*The Guardian,* 29-02-2000)

2001

Edited volumes

- Global Capitalism (with Will Hutton; New York: New Press)
- The Global Third Way Debate (Cambridge: Polity)
- On the Edge: Living with Global Capitalism (with Will Hutton; London: Vintage)

Articles

- Just carry on being new (*New Statesman, 11-06-2001*)
- The third way: where we have got to (*Korea Observer, 01-10-2001*)

Book chapter

- Durkheim's writings in sociology and social philosophy (Ed.: Pickering WSF; *Emile Durkheim: Critical Assessments*, London: Routledge)

2002

Book

- Where Now for New Labour? (Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- Talking to the planet (*The Guardian*, 16-12-2002)
- There is a third way (*The Guardian*, 05-12-2002)
- The third way can beat the far right (*The Guardian*, 03-05-2002)

Book chapter

- Public policy changes in a globalised world (Eds: Bertucci G and Duggett M; *The Turning World: Globalisation and Governance at the Start of the 21st Century*, Amsterdam: OS Press)

2003

Edited volume

- The Progressive Manifesto: New Ideas for the Centre-left (Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- Is three still the magic number? (*The Guardian, 25-04-2003*)
- Two wests (with Huntington S; *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 20(4): 37–43)

Book chapter

- Modernity under a negative sign: ecological issues and life politics (Eds: Pepper D, Webster F and George Revill; *Environmentalism: Critical Concepts, Volume 1*, London: Routledge)

2004

Articles

- Beneath the hijab: a woman (*New Perspectives Quarterly*, 21(2): 9–11)
- Did they foul up my Third Way? (*New Statesman*, 07-06-2004)
- Does New Labour deserve a third term? (with Marquand D; *Prospect, March 2004: 22–7*)
- The left must open up more clear water between itself and its opponents (*New Statesman*, 01-11-2004)
- There is a law of the Labour back benches: if they do it in Sweden, it must be all right (*New Statesman*, 06-09-2004)
- We can and should take action if the earnings of the rich set them apart from society (*New Statesman*, 27-09-2004)

Other

- The Future of World Society: The New Terrorism (Paper delivered at the London School of Economics and Political Science)

2005

Edited volume

- The New Egalitarianism (with Diamond P; Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- Blair and the constitution (*Progressive Politics*, Vol. 4.2, Regional African Progressive Governance, 01-07-2005)
- Inheritance is a form of brute-luck inequality (with Diamond P; *New Statesman*, 27-06-2005)
- Nationalism has now become the enemy of Europe's nations (with Ulrich Beck; *The Guardian*, 04-10-2005)
- Scaring people may be the only way to avoid the risks of new-style terrorism (*New Statesman*, 10-01-2005)
- The world does not owe us a living! (*Progressive Politics*, Vol. 4.3, 01-09-2005)

Other

- Modernity and Self-Identity Revisited (ESRC Identities and Social Action Programme Launch)

2006

Edited volume

- Global Europe, Social Europe (with Diamond P and Liddle R, Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- Big Britain (*The Guardian*, 20-11-2006)
- A call to arms (*The Guardian*, 26-11-2006)
- Climb every mountain (*The Guardian*, 17-11-2006)
- The colonel and his third way (*New Statesman*, 28-08-2006)
- Democracy on hold (*New Statesman*, 18-09-2006)
- Europe: teaching us a lesson (*New Statesman*, 25-09-2006)
- French riots show need to reform European social model (*New Perspectives Quarterly*, 23(1): 44–6)
- From edge to centre (*New Statesman*, 11-09-2006)
- Misunderstanding multiculturalism (*The Guardian*, 14-10-2006)
- The new globalisation (*The Guardian*, 07-11-2006)
- Poland needs a third way (*The Guardian*, 26-10-2006)
- Politically illiterate Britain (*The Guardian*, 23-11-2006)
- So much for the new Rome (*The Guardian*, 15-11-2006)
- We should ditch the green movement (*The Guardian*, 01-11-2006)

Book chapter

- Fate, risk and security (Ed.: Cosgrave J; *The Sociology of Risk and Gambling Reader*, Oxford: Routledge)

Other

- Debating the social model: thoughts and suggestions (*Progressive Politics, Policy Network, London*)

2007

Books

- Europe in the Global Age (Cambridge: Polity)
- Over to you, Mr Brown: How Labour can Win Again (Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- All addictions turn from pleasure to dependency (*The Guardian*, 16-10-2007)
- Blog of all blogs [response to frequent comments received in Guardian articles] (*The Guardian*, 21-07-2007)
- Calculating risk (*The Guardian*, 18-06-2007)
- Changing for the better (*The Guardian*, 17-10-2007)
- Debating diversity (*The Guardian*, 30-10-2007)

- Desert the island mentality (*The Guardian*, 14-10-2007)
- Doubting diversity's value (*Foreign Policy/ Scandinavian Political Studies*, 30(2), June 2007)
- Embracing change (*The Guardian*, 12-03-2007)
- Far-reaching improvements (*The Guardian*, 01-05-2007)
- Growth and development (*The Guardian*, 23-05-2007)
- It really is the economy, stupid (*The Guardian*, 31-07-2007)
- It's all to play for (*The Guardian*, 11-01-2007)
- Labour doesn't need to be coy about its egalitarianism (*The Guardian*, 15-03-2007)
- Let Bush go now, Blair (*The Guardian*, 21-05-2007)
- Liberty in the balance (*The Guardian*, 26-07-2007)
- My chat with the colonel (*The Guardian*, 09-03-2007)
- New Labour: Tony Blair and after (*British Politics*, 2: 106–10)
- Sarkozy has half of what France needs (*New Perspectives Quarterly*, 24(3): 40–3)
- Speech marks (*The Guardian*, 05-10-2007)
- Taking risks (*The Guardian*, 25-07-2007)
- Treading carefully (*The Guardian*, 01-06-2007)
- Understanding terror (*The Guardian*, 11-09-2007)
- Why the rich should now be made to pay (*New Statesman*, 02-04-2007)
- Winning them over (*The Guardian*, 23-03-2007)
- You need greater equality to achieve social mobility (*The Guardian*, 24-05-2007)

Book chapter

- Globalization and the European social model (Eds: Anheier H and Isar RY; *Cultures and Globalization Series: Conflicts and Tensions*, London: Sage)

Other

- An Intellectual in Politics: A Talk by Professor Lord Anthony Giddens (*21st Century Society*)

2008

Articles

- Author's response to reviewers (*Political Studies Review*, 6(3): 308–13)
- Get Over it (Giddens et al; *New Perspectives Quarterly, Commentaries*, 25(1): 66–9)
- The moral fog of progress (Giddens et al; *New Perspectives Quarterly, Commentaries*, 25(1): 38–41)
- New Labour is very alive (*The Guardian*, 01-12-2008)
- Spit and tell (*The Guardian*, 20-05-2008)
- This time it's personal (*The Guardian*, 02-01-2008)
- Turkish crisis: the biggest test since 9/11 (Giddens et al; *New Perspectives Quarterly, Commentaries*, 25(1): 82–5)

- When Janet Jackson meets Ayatollah Al Sistani (Giddens et al; *New Perspectives Quarterly, Commentaries*, 25(1): 44–5)

Book chapter

- The reflexivity of modernity (Ed.: Kivisto P; *Social Theory: Roots and Branches*, Oxford UP)

Other

- The Politics of Climate Change (Policy Network Paper)

2009

Book

- The Politics of Climate Change (Cambridge: Polity)

Articles

- Climate change and the everyday (*The Guardian*, 23-05-2009)
- Climate change: the policy gaps (*The Guardian*, 31-03-2009)
- This climate crunch heralds the end of the end of history (*The Guardian*, 11-03-2009)
- On rereading 'The Presentation of Self': some reflections (*Social Psychology Quarterly*, 72(4): 290–5)
- Recession, climate change and the return of planning (*New Perspectives Quarterly*, 26(2): 51–3)
- Walking the climate talk (*The Guardian*, 04-09-2009)

Book chapters

- The economic crisis and climate change (Eds: Hemerijck A, Knapen B and Van Doorne E; *Aftershocks: Economic Crisis and Institutional Choice*, Amsterdam UP)
- Response to Atkins and Leggett (Eds: Griffiths S and Hickson K; *British Party Politics and Ideology After New Labour*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)

2010

Articles

- Big players: a positive accord (*Policy Network*, 05-01-2010)
- Can climate change modernize Russia? (*New Perspectives Quarterly*, 27(4): 54–6)
- Climate change meets geopolitical reality in Copenhagen (*New Perspectives Quarterly*, 27(2): 58–60)
- The rise and fall of New Labour (*New Perspectives Quarterly*, 27(3): 32–37/*New Statesman*, 17-05-2010)
- Start the world, we want to get on (*New Statesman*, 08-02-2010)

2012

Articles

- Europe's existential crisis (*New Perspectives Quarterly*, 29(2): 24–6)
- In Europe's dark days, what cause for hope? (*The Guardian*, 25-01-2012)

2013

Other

- Personal view: a fresh approach to climate (Transparency International; *Global Corruption Report: Climate Change*)

2014

Books

- Essential Concepts in Sociology (with Sutton PW, Cambridge: Polity)
- Turbulent and Mighty Continent: What Future for Europe? (Cambridge: Polity)

2015

Article

- The politics of climate change (*Policy and Politics*, 43(2): 155–62)

Book chapter

- Why sociology matters (Eds: Twamley K, Doidge M and Scott A; *Sociologists' Tales: Contemporary Narratives on Sociological Thought and Practice*, Bristol: Policy Press)

Bibliography

Ackroyd S and Blatt R (2012) *Austerity for Some? The Impact of Financialization on Management and Labor*. Plenary speech given at the British Sociological Association's 2012 annual conference: 13-04-2012.

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Adkins L (2003) 'Reflexivity: Freedom or habit of gender?' *Theory Culture Society*, 20(6): pp 21–42.

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Atkins J (2010) 'Assessing the Impact of the Third Way' In: Griffiths S and Hickson K (Eds) *British Party Politics and Ideology After New Labour*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp 39–52.

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