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THEORY OF GAMES AS POLITICAL THEORY:

A NON-MATHEMATICAL EXPLORATION

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I GAME THEORY, POWER AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

II THE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL POWER

PART II

THE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL POWER

7. THE POWER OF RULERS

I. A Simple Model

The simplest depiction of the way in which state power works is that shown in Figure 7.1. For now, let us treat the process by which decisions intending to be binding on the collectivity are made as a black box. (I shall open it in the next chapter.) The output of this box (labelled 'Ruler(s)') is, then, decisions, which form an input into another black box, labelled 'State Apparatus'. This is, needless to say, very complex internally, with actors of many different kinds (judges, bureaucrats, police forces, armed forces, prison administrators and guards, and perhaps also people running schools, housing, hospitals, and so on) all of whom are hierarchically arranged. There are thus power relations within this box giving rise to strategic interactions that can be analysed with the help of game theory. However, understanding these relations is not a high enough priority from the point of view of political theory for me to treat them systematically.

I shall also leave unexplained for the moment the nature of the arrow that runs down from the top box to the middle one, though I shall return to it later in this chapter. For now, let us just take it that the rulers' decisions form the basis of the activities of the state apparatus, with the implication that generals can control

armies, superior courts control inferior ones, bureaucrats control their subordinates, and so on. This assumption is never, of course, perfectly realistic. At the least, laziness and incompetence are bound to produce some slippage between the decisions sent down by the rulers and their implementation by the state apparatus. It is also likely that policy will be derailed more seriously by a certain degree of corruption – that is to say, by some actors pursuing private advantage rather than following the roles prescribed for them. The gap between the decisions of the ruler(s) and what gets implemented by the state apparatus may be much wider than this, needless to say. Some decisions may not be carried out at all, and this may amount to virtual paralysis of the state machine if passive resistance gets great enough. This is, however, an obviously unstable situation and it is likely to lead to the toppling of the leader(s). I shall abstract from all of this, and analyse only cases in which the decisions of the ruler(s) bear some recognizable relation to the laws and policies that are actually enforced.

We are now left only with the arrow running down from the middle box ('State Apparatus') to the bottom one ('Subjects'). Power is relevant here, though it is by no means the whole story.The ability of the state apparatus to secure (an adequate degree of) compliance from the state's subjects rests ultimately on the state's capacity to invoke sanctions against those who fail to comply. (Note that in the present context, it is appropriate to write of 'subjects': it will be time to talk of 'citizens' when the discussion moves to ways in which the ordinary members of a polity can affect decisions, either directly or via power over rulers, in chapter

9.) The implication is that the analysis of 'power over others' in chapter 4 can be brought to bear here. In particular, of course, the analysis of the state's apparatus as a machine fits in precisely what has been said there. To repeat: power over others is not the whole story. Most people most of the time obey the law without having to be coerced into it. But no state manages to do without coercion altogether.

2. How Do Rulers Rule?

Let me now return to the arrow running from the ruler(s) to the state apparatus. Within the present framework, the nature of the relation between the outputs from the ruler and their adoption as inputs by the state apparatus is somewhat opaque, since it does not lend itself to a game-theoretical analysis. What is clear is that the relation cannot be understood at all as one of power over others. A government (whether composed of one or many people) is incapable of enforcing its own decisions by making threats. To go no further than a ruler's immediate entourage, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by one of her Sikh bodyguards, in response to perceived wrongs done to the Sikh people by her government, and there were periods in the later Roman Empire during which the Praetorian Guard made and unmade emperors. As Hume wrote in his essay 'Of the First Principles of Government' (Liberty Press edition, pp. 32-3): 'It is . . . on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as the most free and most

popular. The soldan [sultan] of EGYPT or the emperor of ROME, might drive his harmless subjects, like brute beasts, against their sentiments and inclination: But he must, at least have led his mamalukes, or praetorian bands, like men, by their opinion.' In this, as in so much else, Hume was echoing Hobbes without acknowledgement: 'If men know not their duty, what is there that can force them to obey the laws? An army, you will say. But what shall force the army?' (Behemoth, ed. Stephen Holmes [U of Chicago Press, 1990], p. 58.)

We can say, if we like, that the explanation of the government's ability to secure obedience for its laws and decrees from the state apparatus is that those operating this apparatus acknowledge the government's authority and thus attribute binding force to its laws and decrees. But this is not to do much more than express the explanandum in different words. Digging deeper, we can surmise that in many cases a sense of the government's legitimate title to govern is important, whether this refers to the Divine Right of Kings or the mandate given by the electorate in a representative system. (Democratic governments, if they are prudent, put a lot of effort into socializing their armed forces into norms of professionalism, which include the norm that the civilian authorities have the last say, as Morris Janowitz illustrated in The Soldier and the State.) This is no doubt in many countries the main answer to the question that S.E. Finer posed in The Man on Horseback: given that the military everywhere have the power to rule, why is military rule not universal? The answer in full generality has to be: because they don't choose to. One reason for not choosing to is that they think

they ought not to. But, even where this restraining feature is weak or absent, we can still ask, why should they want to? Soldiers make notoriously poor politicians. As long as they are satisfied with what they get from the government, why overthrow it and take on the grief of trying to run a country?

Thus, rulers rule by a combination of authority and power. Authority comes in at two points. First, as I have already argued in part 1, edicts of rulers are accepted by most people most of the time as authoritative: that is to say, as providing reasons for action. Even Hobbes and Hume, who sought to rest compliance on individual self-interest, recognized that, if the account is to be plausible, self-interest must take the form of a basis for the predisposition to obey and not in the first instance fear of punishment for disobeying. Second, the relation between the rulers and the state apparatus must be one in which those who operate the state apparatus recognize the rulers' authority, for the reasons I have just given. Power is relevant only in the relation between the state apparatus and the subjects, to provide a sanction against disobedience that can be effective provided that disobedience is not too widespread.

8. POWER TO DETERMINE DECISIONS ABOUT LAWS AND PUBLIC POLICIES

1. What Kind of Power?

Imagine that a country has a dictator. This means that the outputs from the top box in figure 7.1 correspond to his choices. In as far as the state apparatus transmits these outputs (which are inputs to it) down to the subjects, we can say that the dictator has power over the subjects via his ability to determine the inputs to the state apparatus.

Notice that to say the dictator is free to choose the decisions to be implemented is not to say that his choices are without consequences. It may be that the people in the capital city will riot if he reduces the bread subsidy, and if things look as if they are getting out of hand the army may step in and depose him. The city populace then has power over him in that they can act in ways that increase the chance that the sanction of removal from office (if not worse) will be deployed against him. As long as the dictator stays in office, however, it remains true that he has the power to determine the laws and policies to be enforced by the state apparatus. The outcomes are the ones he chooses, even if his choice is taken in the light of a calculation of the likely consequences of making one choice rather than another. A constrained choice is still a choice: coactus voluit, as Hobbes put it: he willed it, though coerced. The ruler is free in the same sense as we are free to break the law if we choose to, despite the prospect of a penalty that we thereby face.

This point is significant for the analysis of democratic politics. In the next chapter, I shall add election of rulers to the model. If the electorate can

determine the identity of the rulers by choosing between rival candidates for their suffrage, rulers who take unpopular decisions may well be ousted at the next election. But this does not mean, any more than it does in the case of a dictator, that those who currently hold office do not have the power to take decisions that are (as long as they remain in office) binding on the state apparatus.

For the purposes of this book, I am taking it as given that, for whatever reason, the apparatus does in fact take as authoritative the decisions about laws and public policies taken by the ruler(s). Let me now ask what may at first sight seem like a curious question. This is as follows: What is the relation between the ruler(s) and decision-making outcomes? Where there is only one ruler, at any rate, it may appear that there is nothing to say. The ruler decides, and that is all there is to it. But it is not quite as simple as that. We can follow Hobbes in saying that, even though the dictator is a 'natural man', he is in his dictatorial capacity an 'artificial person'. In the alternative terms proposed by H.L.A. Hart in The Concept of Law, we can say that even a dictator needs a 'rule of recognition' so that those who need to can distinguish between the decrees he hands down as dictator and, for example, the order he gives his cook to give him a boiled egg for breakfast. In the second case, he is giving orders in his capacity as an employer, and their status is exactly the same as those of any other employer.

In absolute monarchies, the monarch typically had a special place in which he operated qua monarch: the lit de justice or (more commonly) a special

chair – the throne. The Roman Catholic Church, which is the closest thing to an absolute monarchy extant today, singles out rulings that the Pope makes ex cathedra from others. 'Ex cathedra' means literally 'from the chair of office', and the actual throne is in the Consistory. Since 1870, pronouncements made by the Pope ex cathedra have been infallible. The Supreme Pontiff also pontificates about other matters, and these pronouncements also have a binding force distinct from any demands for boiled eggs and the like. We can, however, collapse the two categories of binding pronouncements for the present purpose and simply emphasize that even an absolute dictator has to have a procedure for producing the decisions that form inputs to the state apparatus.

We can now go back to our original question and ask: how is the dictator related to these decisions? We can, if we like, say that the dictator has the power to make the decision come out the way he wants. But this is a limiting (and in fact degenerate) case of power. We can see this if we ask what is the overarching concept of power that unites power over others and decision-making power. The answer is, I suggest, that the general idea of power is the ability to get what you want by overcoming resistance. (This follows Max Weber's well-known definition of power as the chance [opportunity, not probability] of asserting one's will against opposition.) In the case of power over others, the ability to get somebody to do what you want involves the ability to mobilize a sanction if the other person does not do what you demand. In the case of power to determine the outcome of decision-making, a dictator can get the outcome he wants but

does not have to overcome resistance because he has the sole right to decide. Anticipating the next stage of the discussion, suppose that there are three people each of whom has one vote and decisions are taken by majority vote. Then we can say that each has, in virtue of the rules, a third of the decision-making power. And we can introduce the notion of overcoming resistance by observing that, when A and B vote together, they can overcome the resistance of C if C is on the other side, and so on.

Since I shall be focusing on cases of multiple decision-makers, it will not hurt to throw in the case of the dictator as an example of power to determine the decision, though ascribing to him the ability to determine the decision would be more precise. Could we also say that those who take the decision (one or more) have power over the decision? There is nothing positively wrong with this. I believe, however, that it is much more perspicuous to reserve 'power over' for the use that has already been assigned to it: power over others. If we say that the dictator has power over decisions, we are very liable to elide the role of the state apparatus in taking these decisions as authoritative and enforcing them, thus equating decision-making power with power over the population. A great deal of confusion is liable to flow from confusing power to take decisions with power over people.

Before moving on, let me tie up (or at least poke at) a loose end. I said that power is, generally, the ability to get outcomes you want by overcoming

resistance – and, in the degenerate case, simply getting the outcome you want by taking a decision. But what about the ability to get outcomes you don't want? Our intuitions are driven two ways here – and a parallel conflict of intuitions obtains in the analysis of the concepts of freedom and opportunity. On one hand, why should anybody care about the ability to get unwanted outcomes? On the other hand, though, if I can get what I want but could not get anything different, it looks as if I am lucky to want what I can get rather than powerful enough to get what I want. I think that both intuitions have some validity. Suppose a general can get his troops to fight his country's enemies. Is it much of a derogation from his power that cannot get them to fight for a foreign country against his own government? Conversely, a government that could not decide to do something new if its members changed their minds about what would be a desirable law or public policy could not be said to have any decision-making power at all. Fortunately, there is no need to come up with a complete resolution of this problem. In practice, all the cases in which I have ascribed power to people or shall ascribe it to people in the rest of this book are ones in which they have the power to bring about a much wider range of outcomes than those that they currently want. I shall leave aside, as unnecessary to settle for my purposes, the question of what to say about power-holders who are unable to bring about outcomes that they are very unlikely ever to want to bring about.

2. Power and Numbers

Let me now shift the analysis to decisions taken by more than one actor. Let us take first the case already mentioned, and imagine now that, in place of a sole ruler, a three-man junta rules the country, taking its decisions by majority vote. Since each member of the junta is symmetrically placed in relation to any given decision, each has the same power (under the prevailing rule for determining decisions) as the others. Each has, as I have already suggested, one third of the power to determine the decisions emanating from the junta collectively. The 'rule of recognition' is that whatever option a majority votes for is the one that forms the decision. We might imagine the members of the junta sitting on a divan (as the Sultan used to do when acting in his official capacity as Sultan), with an official counting their votes and transmitting the outcome to the state apparatus. We may, to avoid cumbersomeness, say that the three members of the junta have equal voting power, as long as this is understood as saying exactly the same as saying that they have equal power to determine the outcome of the collective decision-making process. Any symmetrical decision rule generates equal voting power. Thus, if each member of the junta had a veto, like permanent members of the Security Council, that would also give rise to equal voting power. For the present purpose, I shall stick to the case of majority voting, though I shall come back to decision-making by consensus at the end of the next chapter.

If decision-making power is the ability to overcome resistance, it will not necessarily correspond exactly to votes. Consider a system in which different

actors have different numbers of voters. With only a little simplification (which is legitimate, given the way in which the system actually works), we can think of the Electoral College prescribed by the U.S. Constitution as a body in which each State plus Washington D.C. has a certain number of votes all of which are cast for the same candidate for president. The number of votes assigned to each State is related to (though not strictly proportional to) its population. If we treat each State's block vote as if it were cast by a single voter, we can analyse the Electoral College as a 51-member body whose members have differently weighted votes.

I shall, in keeping with the modest intentions of this book, eschew the analysis of any body as complex as that and look at a three person voter case. Suppose that A has 10 votes, B 10 votes and C has 1 vote. Then, as long as they all vote, A, B and C have equal power even though C has only less than 5% of the total number of votes. For a majority can be made up of A and B, B and C and A and C. Of course, C's weakness emerges if A or B abstains from voting, since the decision will then go in the direction preferred by the other whether C agrees or not. But it seems reasonable to say that this still leaves C with very little less power than A or B. Notice that the power of the actor with few votes stems from the peculiarity of voting as a method of decision-making: the way in which one vote can transform a proposal from a losing one to a winning one. In other methods of decision-making (fighting, for example), a small accession of strength to one side will improve its chances of winning a little, but will not

automatically make it win rather than lose, as can happen with voting. Voting is important in contemporary societies, so it is worth analysing for its own sake. But it is worth bearing in mind that it has built-in peculiarities that make it an unreliable guide in other contexts.

Usually, in legislatures and committees, a voter with relatively few votes is even less powerful than its proportion of the total number of votes would suggest. Consider a body with four members in which A has 36 votes, B has 30 votes, C has 24 votes and D has 10 votes. Any pair made up of A and B, A and C, and B and C can get the outcome they want, however the remaining one out of A, B and C votes and however D votes. Thus, whenever two out of A, B, and C vote the same way, D will not be able to make any difference to the outcome and is a 'dummy'. However, D is not entirely powerless. If B abstains from voting, A will get what he wants, regardless of how C and D vote. But if C abstains from voting, D can make the outcome correspond to the one preferred by B by voting for it, whereas if D did not have a vote the outcome would correspond to that preferred by A. Similarly, if A abstains, D can make the outcome come out in favour of the one preferred by C rather than that preferred by B. We need not waste time on asking exactly how to characterize the distribution of power in this body. (I discuss power indexes in my 'Is it Better to be Powerful or Lucky?' in Democracy and Power.) What is clear enough is that, despite their unequal numbers of votes, A, B and C have equal voting power whenever all three vote, because they are symmetrically placed (i.e. any two can form a majority). Only

when A or C abstains can D make a difference to the outcome, so D has very little power. We can also say that, in cases in which one of A, B or C abstains from voting, A has a little more power than B or C, and B has a little more than C. However, it would be a quite satisfactory first approximation to say that A, B and C share the power equally between them.

We can recast the previous analysis by reinterpreting the unequal numbers of votes that A, B, C and D are granted by the rules in a more familiar way. Let us now suppose that there are 100 members of the body that takes the decisions, and each has a vote. Each of them has one-hundredth of the power a priori. But now let us say that these voters are divided into four blocs whose members always vote together. If these blocs are of the size that we attributed to the four individual actors before, the same analysis can be carried out with blocs as the units of analysis. (This gets us back to the actual situation in the Electoral College, in which States have different numbers of electors but each State's electors vote as a bloc.) In the rest of this book, I shall drop any further reference to weighted voting schemes and discuss voting blocs. For now I shall assume that bloc members invariably vote together, though I shall relax that assumption in chapter 10.

It is important to distinguish power from success, in the sense of actually obtaining the outcomes you want. The members of bloc D might conceivably agree with all the outcomes of voting, even though in the example given that bloc

has very little power to overcome the resistance of the other blocs. Even if this meant that members of D were more satisfied with the overall run of the decisions than any other voters, that would do nothing to alter the fact that their bloc has very little power. What we can say is that it has a lot of luck. We should still resist tying power to success where an actor does (in association with others) bring about a desired outcome. Thus, if A and B vote for x and C votes for y, and each has one vote, A and B have got the outcome they wanted, and they got it by using their voting power. But neither of them has exercised any more power than C. Each has the power to overcome the opposition of one voter with the assistance of one other voter, and all that has happened in this case is that A and B have provided assistance to each other.

3. Power and Position

On similar lines, we should not confuse positional luck with power, even when it enables the lucky voter to cast a decisive vote in each case. Suppose the preferences of A, B and C for outcomes are arrayed along a single dimension (e.g. left-right), as in Figure 8.1. Then, unless the vote is unanimous, A and C will always be on opposite sides of any binary issue, leaving B in the fortunate position of always being able to make the outcome go in the direction he favours. But this does not mean that B has more power than A or C. As before, any of A, B or C can overcome the opposition of one voter with the assistance of one other. B is simply lucky in that, whichever side of a binary issue he favours, he

will always find one other voter on his side. To see that B's success depends on luck rather than extra power, we may notice that B's success is predicated on his position at the median. Suppose that A is replaced by D (or changes his mind and moves to position D), as in Figure 8.2. Then, C becomes the median voter and becomes the invariably successful member of the body – until there is some other change in relative positions.

The point that being in the middle is simply lucky can perhaps best be brought home by giving a literally spatial interpretation to Figure 8.1. Suppose that a town is made up of three population settlements of a hundred people each, located along a single road at the locations marked A, B and C. An agency of the national government decides to open a branch (say, a post office) to serve the town. If it wishes to site it where the average travel distance to it is minimized, it will put it in settlement B, since that contains the median user. In Figure 8.1, the settlements were symmetrically disposed either side of B, so that siting the facility also minimized the maximum distance anybody had to travel. The case for the median position does not depend on that, however. In Figure 8.3, siting the facility in settlement B makes those who live at C travel further than they would need to if it were sited half way between A and C in a stretch of open country. But siting it at B still minimizes the average travel distance. (This can be seen if we notice that moving it in either direction from B makes it further away from more people than it makes it nearer to.)

On the assumption that the technical criterion adopted by the government agency is minimizing average travel distance to the facility, we can say that those who live in settlement B are lucky: their median position simply means that, when the criterion is applied, it works out so that they get the facility. Now change it to a decision about locating a public library, and this is to be taken by the townspeople themselves. They might take a Rousseauan decision that the public good requires it to be located where average travel distance to it is minimized. The local council will then implement that decision by siting it at B, and those who live in settlement B will again be lucky.

Finally, suppose that there is a vote on alternative locations in which everybody votes in a self-interested way to get the library as close to themselves as possible. Location B, as the one where the median voter lives, is the Condorcet winner in this situation. This term (which honours the Marquis de Condorcet's remarkable contributions to the study of voting) simply refers to an outcome that is supported by a majority of voters against all alternatives. Moving the library's location away from the median position, as we have already seen, will move it away from more people than it will move it towards, so the median position can beat all proposed alternatives in a pairwise vote. Suppose that location B does indeed emerge from voting between alternatives. Surely, there is no reason for changing what we say about the decision: those living at B were lucky because the procedure (in this case voting) came out in their favour.

The tendency to equate positional luck with power often arises because two ideas are run together. One is that a small bloc may have power disproportionate to its voting strength if there are (say) two other blocs that are bigger but neither of them disposes of a majority of votes, whereas either can win with the support of the small bloc. The other is that it one bloc may be positioned between the other two and is thus pivotal: that is to say, it is able to swing the outcome in the direction that it favours. If it is assumed that the pivotal block is also small, this helps to create the illusion that positional luck is to be analysed as a form of power rather than luck.

The notion of pivotality is often illustrated, for example, by imagining a Supreme Court in which justices A, B, C and D form one bloc, justices F, G,H, and I form another bloc and justice E takes a position between them, as in figure 8.4. (See Dowding Rational Choice and Political Power, pp. 59 – 60.) Similarly, the objection voiced (by Tony Blair among others) to proportional representation in Britain is that it would make the Liberal Democrats (assumed to be smaller than the Labour or Conservative parties and between them in position) unfairly powerful. In both instances, the notion that pivotality is a source of power is given spurious support by mixing it up with the point that, under some conditions, three blocs may have (more or less) equal power despite differences in size. If the smallest bloc is also pivotal, it is true that it has voting power disproportionate to its voting numbers. But this is in virtue of size, not position. To get rid of this bias in the analysis let us substitute the set-up shown in Figure 8.5 for that in

figure 8.4. Here the largest bloc constitutes the 'pivot', and all we can say is that it is lucky, not that it has power disproportionate to its numbers.

Similarly, it is quite plausible that the Liberal Democrats are actually to the left of the Labour party in its current Blairite incarnation. In that case, an electoral system typically generating a parliament in which any two parties but no one could form a majority would make the Labour party the 'pivot' and keep it in government permanently – as long as the blocs stayed in their same relative positions. Compare Figures 8.6 and 8.7. If we are tempted to say that the pivotal party has more power than the others, we shall have to say that between 8.6 and 8.7 the Liberal Democrats gain power, while Labour loses it. This seems to me an unhelpful way of viewing the change. My alternative proposal is to say that the Liberals have lost the good fortune of being the median party and Labour has acquired it, but that the power generated by parliamentary arithmetic stays the same.

Georg Simnel probably had the best brain that has ever been devoted to sociology, and his brilliant analysis of the triad said a large proportion of the things that there are to say in the abstract about relations between three entities (individuals, groups, countries or whatever). In his discussion of the tertius gaudens ('the third who enjoys'), he looked at ways in which the deadlock produced by two conflicting groups can enable a third that stands apart to extract concessions from them in return for support. So far I have considered cases in

which the tertius gaudens is able to take advantage of an ideological position between the others to get the outcome it wants on the issue in dispute between the two conflicting blocs. But what Simmel emphasized is that the tertius gaudens may simply put its vote on the issue up for auction, promising its vote to whichever party makes the best bid. (See Kurt H. Wolff, ed., The Sociology of Georg Simmel (New York: The Free Press, 1950), pp. 154 – 62.)

What is the currency in which bids might be made by the two parties that do have a stake in the outcome? We can usefully distinguish between policy payoffs and non-policy payoffs. In the first case, the party that does not care about the outcome trades its vote for a favourable vote in the future on some issue it does care about. This is what logrolling is all about: if you roll my logs and I roll yours, we both get our logs down the river. An example from Congress is the way in which representatives from farming areas vote for food stamps in return for support from representatives of urban areas for farm subsidies.

Alternatively, the tertius gaudens may go for non-policy payoffs. These could be actual bribes or they could be political office. Simmel gives the example of the Centre Party in Wilhelmine Germany, which had no line on many of the issues that were of most importance to the other parties. 'It can pronounce for or against protective tariffs, for or against legislation favourable to labor, for or against military demands, without being handicapped by its party program. In all such cases, therefore, it places itself as tertius gaudens between the parties,

each of which may try to win its favor' (p. 158). Thus, its 'non-commitment on [the] question enables it to make its own price' (ibid.). Another example was the Radical party in the Third and Fourth Republics in France. As an opportunistic party of the parliamentary type (that is to say, one subject to little extra-parliamentary party control), its deputies could form part of government coalitions with somewhat different ideological complexions in return for a share of ministerial positions (quite often including that of prime minister).

Has the tertius gaudens exerted extra power in this case? Simmel would say so. According to his analysis, 'the power position' of the Centre Party 'is very much strengthened by the fact that its principles commit it to only a very small portion of the parliamentary decisions.' (p. 157). But this focuses only on the payoff that the Centre party gets in return for its vote. It overlooks the fact that the party with which the Centre party makes a deal gets the outcome it wants on the issue. This may be far more momentous than whatever it gives the Centre Party in return for its support in the vote. Instead of saying that the Centre Party has additional power in this case, we should think of it as exchanging its voting power – the power it has to affect the outcome that flows from parliamentary arithmetic – for some other benefits. The underlying strategic situation is the same in all the cases that have been discussed. In all of them one party is lucky that the other two are deadlocked. The only difference is that, in these two last cases, the tertius gaudens, instead of turning its luck into getting the outcome it wants on the issue, transforms it into getting the outcome it wants on some other

issue or into getting some non-policy payoff. Its power is still simply its one third of the voting power. The difference lies in what it gets in return for deploying it.

4. Power and Manipulation

All this might be conceded but subjected to one final challenge. What, it may be said, happens to the analysis when we throw in the possibility of manipulating the outcome of the voting process by casting your vote in a way that does not correspond to your true preference between the alternatives? Manipulation of this kind can occur only when there are more than two options to be voted on. To illustrate it, we can look at the situation set out in Table 8.1. A, B and C have one vote each and their preferences over three proposals are as shown: A prefers x to both z and y and prefers z to y; and so on for B and C. This set of preferences makes x a Condorcet winner, since A and C prefer x to y and A and B prefer x to z. Between y and z, A and C prefer z to y. This gives us a consistent majority preference ranking with the order x, z, y. Despite this, it is possible for one of the voters to shift the outcome away from x in a direction he prefers by voting strategically. Voting over a pair of alternatives for the one that you like less, with an eye to the next vote, is usually described as voting 'insincerely'. I shall employ the word but put it in scare quotes to caution against misplaced moralizing.

Let us say that, of the three options in Table 8.1, z corresponds to the status quo, while x and y are alternative proposals for change. The voting rule familiar to American and British people (and no doubt others, though it is not the only possible one and is not universally employed) is to hold a vote between x and y, the winner of which is then pitted against the status quo. If everybody votes 'sincerely', A and C vote for x in the first round and it then beats z in the second round. Let us suppose, however, that C knows the preferences of A and B. He can therefore construct the decision tree shown in Figure 8.8, from which he will see that, if the second-round vote is between y and z rather than between x and z, z will win. Since z is his most preferred outcome, whereas x only comes second, backward induction tells him that if, at node 1, he could divert the second-round vote to node 3 rather than node 2, he will be ahead of the game. As we see, he can achieve this by voting in the first round for his least preferred option, y. This (as long as the others vote 'sincerely') will cause y to beat x, leaving y to be beaten in the second round by z.

We can certainly say that C has changed the outcome in a direction he prefers by voting 'insincerely', and has, incidentally, prevented the Condorcet winner from being the decision. But all he has done is choose how to cast his own vote by taking account of strategic considerations. It remains true that he has only used the resources allotted to him in the form of his one vote, and that he had (just as he would have done had he voted 'sincerely') one third of the voting power.

It is worth noticing that, as long as everybody votes 'sincerely', the Condorcet winner (x) will emerge as the outcome regardless of the order in which the proposals are paired for voting. We have already seen that, if x is put up against y, x wins and then goes on to beat z. Similarly, if x is put up against z, x wins and then goes on to beat y. And, finally, if y is put up against z, z wins and is then beaten by x. With different preference orderings from these, the way in which the vote is conducted can determine the outcome, on the assumption, again, of 'sincere' voting. Consider the array of preferences given in Table 8.2. This set of individual preferences gives rise to cyclical majority preferences. A and B prefer x to y, A and C prefer y to z. A consistent collective preference ordering would then require that there should also be a majority for x over z, thus giving the ordering x, y, z. But in fact B and C prefer z to x. This is a cycle in the sense that, in the absence of a stopping rule, the three voters could go from x to y, from y to z, from z back to x, and so round again and again indefinitely.

As I mentioned in chapter 3, the phenomenon of cyclical majorities is often referred to as the 'paradox of voting'. But, as with the fact that Defect is the dominant strategy in a Prisoner's Dilemma, there is nothing paradoxical about it. Why should we be surprised if the pursuit of self-interest sometimes turns out badly for all concerned? (Looking around the world, it would surely be far more surprising to discover that this is not so.) Similarly, there is no particular reason for expecting that the aggregation of consistent individual preference orderings

must produce a consistent majority preference ordering within the group made up of these individuals.

Voting between one pair of options and then pitting the winner against the remaining one will always produce a single outcome where there are cyclical preferences. But which outcome it is depends on the order of voting. If the first round is x versus y, x wins and is beaten by z. If the first round is y versus z, y wins and is beaten by x. If the first round is x versus z, z wins and is beaten by y. There is an obvious pattern to these results: the winner is always whichever option was left out of the first round vote.

The implication of this is that whoever decides on the 'division of the question' – the order of voting among more than two options – can determine the outcome. This is true, to repeat, only with 'sincere' voting all round. Even with this proviso, however, this right can still be regarded as a form of power. If the chair decides on the 'division of the question' and in addition makes a point of finding out the preferences of the committee members before the meeting, whereas they just turn up and vote, he may be able to make quite a difference to the outcomes.

If the chair can actually keep items off the agenda, that is clearly a much greater degree of control over the agenda. (A notorious example of this is the abuse of this privilege by the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Jesse

Helms, to prevent nominations to the federal judiciary coming up for a vote.) Even the right, which a chair normally has, of determining the order in which items are discussed can be used to bury issues that the chair does not want decided. This technique, known to every academic politician, is to put the item in question after something controversial (which may be entirely trivial) and rely on the members of the committee to run out of time before getting to it. What sort of power is this? It is not power over the other members of the committee. In that sense it is akin to the power in relation to the decision that is given by having a vote. But the right to set the agenda in any of these senses is quite genuinely power in relation to the outcomes of the decision-making process in exactly the same way as voting power is.

My reason for taking up agenda manipulation is that quite often the term 'manipulation' is used indifferently to refer to it and also to 'insincere' voting, which is sometimes described as 'preference manipulation' – misleadingly, since everybody's preferences are assumed to stay the same: what is managed (by some of them) is the way in which they vote. This can only sow confusion, since the first is a form of power and the second is not.

9. POWER TO DETERMINE DECISIONS ABOUT THE IDENTITIES OF RULERS

1. Power by Voters over Rulers

Let us now go back to our lone ruler but now add the feature that every year on New Year's Day he has to submit himself to an election. A number of other candidates will then challenge him and the winner will in turn become dictator. To simplify matters to the greatest degree, let us stipulate that there is only one voter. Call the ruler R and the voter V. Then, in the same (degenerate) sense as we can say that R has the power to determine the decisions about laws and public policies, we can say that V has the power to determine the identity of the ruler. And, just as the connection between decisions and their implementation was left mysterious (why should the generals obey the dictator?), so here the connection between the voter's decision and its translation into an actual transfer of dictatorial office is left mysterious. Why do political leaders who lose an election ever vacate office? They don't always, of course, but (by definition) they do in a democracy and democracies (defined in this minimal way) do exist. What is more, they persist over long periods of time. Even where R really is (to all intents and purposes) a dictator, he may leave office if defeated in an election: Milosevic is a perfect illustration, even if he had to be pushed.

Let us posit, anyway, that whoever is chosen by V to become dictator does indeed assume office and acquire all the power to take decisions about laws and public policies that his predecessor had. This power <u>to</u> determine the identity of the next dictator then gives V power <u>over</u> the present dictator, provided the present dictator attaches value to the prospect of remaining in the office past

the next election. If R has no interest in being re-elected, V has no power over him. Similarly, V has no power over R if the rules stipulate that R cannot be re-elected – because, for example, he can be elected only once (like the President of Mexico) or twice (like the President of the United States). This is, at any rate, true if R has no interest in the identity of his successor. If he does, this may give him an incentive to behave in ways that will make it more likely that V will vote for one candidate rather than others. This, however, is best discussed in the context of political parties, since that is the obvious context in which the phenomenon occurs. I shall therefore postpone any further mention of it until chapter 10, when parties make a formal appearance.

Although I shall be concerned primarily with the power over rulers that the right to vote for them gives the electorate via the rulers' wish to be returned at the next election, it is important to recognize that there is an alternative way in which the right to choose among candidates makes for a connection between the policy preferences of voters and the decisions of rulers. This alternative route is so obvious that it is liable to be overlooked if we focus exclusively on voters' power over leaders. What may happen is, quite simply, that rival candidates announce different platforms and do their best to carry out their promises if they win. This could be because they think that it would be dishonest to do anything else or just because what they say they will do is what they want to do anyway.

This mechanism provides another illustration of the point made about power in chapter 4: if what somebody wants to do, and will do if left to his own devices, coincides with what you want, there is no occasion for trying to exercise power, since you will get the outcome you want anyway. If you could count on this fortunate state of affairs continuing indefinitely, you would find no advantage even in having power over this other person: the only reason for wishing to have it is the fear that this happy condition of congruence between what you want him to do and what he wants to do may some time cease to obtain.

Let us follow up the case in which R is re-electable and would in fact like to be re-elected, for whatever reason. (For the present purpose, it makes do difference if he is mainly concerned to enjoy the perks of office, or to enjoy the exercise of power for its own sake, or to pursue policies to which he is committed.) In any event, if he wants to be re-elected he has an interest in taking account of V's preferences for laws and public policies. Notice, however, that there may well be some room for manoeuvre on the part of R if V's vote is not solely determined by the correspondence of R's decisions with V's policy preferences. Suppose that R has been in office for some years and has built up a good track record for competence. V may then vote for R again even in preference to some other candidate who promises to hew closer to V's policy preferences if elected.

If we are going to say that V has power over R, this implies that V has control over some sanction whose use against R he can make contingent on R's behaviour. What is this sanction? Clearly, removal from office, under the condition already stipulated that R values continuation in office. Notice that V does not have to make explicit the threat to vote against R next time around. All that is necessary is that R knows what V's preferences are and believes that V's vote will depend (to some degree at least) on the extent to which R has taken decisions in accord with them. This kind of control of another's behaviour via the other's expectations of the consequences of acting one way or another has been called 'the rule of anticipated reactions'. It will play a large role later (in chapter 10), but all we need to note now is that the phenomenon is quite general.

Now let us add some more voters. If a million people have the right to vote for R, each has one-millionth of the power to determine the identity of the ruler, in exactly the same way as each of the triumvirate of rulers has one third of the power to determine the content of laws and policies. If there is a secret ballot, nobody can exert power over any voter because nobody can make a sanction contingent on the way the person voted. (This is consistent with threats against the voters collectively in their capacity as subjects, but I shall leave that complication until chapter 10.) And, just as before, 'insincere' voting is not a form of power, though it can alter the outcome. Consider a first-past-the-post or plurality system in which the candidate with the most votes wins. If the candidates take up the positions on a single ideological dimension shown in

Figure 9.1, and the one million voters are uniformly distributed along that dimension as shown, then, if each votes for the closest candidate, A will win with 45% of the vote. But if more than 300,000 supporters of C vote for B, they can bring about an outcome that they prefer: B now wins instead of A. As in the previous chapter, we can say here that these supporters of C have deployed their resources (their votes) intelligently to improve the outcome of the election, from their point of view. But they have not increased their power, nor have they decreased that of the supporters of A. This example, incidentally, illustrates why 'sincerely' and 'insincerely' need to be put in scare quotes. The point is that first-past-the-post is an irrational voting system. A happens to get more votes if everybody votes 'sincerely' , but it is not the Condorcet winner: that is B. (Against C, supporters of A and B prefer B; against A, supporters of B and C prefer B.) Moreover, the alternative vote, in which the candidate with fewest votes is eliminated and its second preferences transferred, would throw the victory to C. This too is, from a democratic point of view, a preferable outcome to A's winning, because in a straight vote C beats A.

Why did V (assumed to be a single voter) care about the decision taken by R? He might have a purely disinterested concern for the subjects of R without being one of them. But the normal case is one in which there are millions of voters and most of them are subjects, while at the same time most of the subjects are also voters. The voters therefore care about the decisions taken by the rulers because they are also the people who will gain and lose when those

decisions are implemented. This situation is illustrated in Figure 9.2, which is an extension of Figure 7.1. The voters and the subjects are shown as partially overlapping and partially not. If there were a perfect overlap, so that all the subjects were voters and all the subjects voters, we would have the ideal Rousseauan set-up in which 'the people' (indirectly, contrary to Rousseau's stipulation) gives itself the laws which it is obliged to obey, and is thus 'self-governing'. In practice, children (even of citizens) do not have the vote, and there may well be many permanent residents who are not citizens. Conversely, there will normally be some citizens who have a vote but are permanent residents of another country. This will be a smaller proportion than residents (including children) without a vote but may still be significant in countries many of whose citizens live abroad. However, this feedback loop is what underlies the claims of representative government to be a form of democracy.

Needless to say, the notion that 'the people' decides what laws and public policies 'it' wants to have implemented, via 'its' control over representatives, is extremely simplistic. One obvious point is that a majority in the collective R may not correspond to a majority in the collective V. To illustrate this, go back to our three-man decision-making body but now imagine that each member of it is elected out of a constituency of a million voters. (If you want a bigger country, make it ten million or a hundred million instead.) And suppose that there is only one issue – whether to do x or do y – that anybody cares much about. Candidates take their stands on that one issue and each voter votes for

whichever candidate takes his or her preferred position. Let us now say that A and B both win by healthy majorities, taking position x and each getting 60% of the vote in their constituencies. And let C win with 100% of the vote by taking position y. A and B will then form a majority in the executive (as we may now call it) for the implementation of x, even though (on the assumption already specified that all voters cast their votes in accordance with the preferences on x and y), there are only 1,200,000 supporters of x to 1,800,000 supporters of y.

A system of proportional representation in multi-member constituencies could solve this problem. Another way in which it would disappear, even with majority voting in single-member geographically-based constituencies, would be if each constituency was solid for x or y. Suppose A and B win on a platform of x with 100% of the votes and C wins with a platform of y with 100% of the votes. Then the distribution of votes in the executive in relation to policy x and policy y corresponds to that in the population. What this entails is that A and B form a bloc with two-thirds of the votes. In accordance with the analysis in the previous chapter, we may say that this bloc has all the power, since it can always overcome the resistance to C. Whatever the A+B bloc is in favour of (in this case policy x) becomes the decision, thus putting this bloc in the same position as the sole ruler with whom we began the chapter.

There are real world cases in which geographically-based constituencies return candidates with opposed positions on a single basic issue by lopsided

majorities. These are typically cases in which each constituency contains mainly members of one ethnic group (or nationality) and the overriding issue that divides parties is policy on interethnic relations. Pakistan before the breakup that created Bangladesh was an example, with almost no overlap between the parties of candidates returned for West Pakistan and the parties of candidates returned for East Pakistan. Cyprus before its de facto partition illustrated the same pattern, as did Sri Lanka before the civil war that still rages there. Fiji before the recent coup similarly exhibited voting by native Fijians and citizens of Indian descent along fairly strict ethnic lines. Elections in sub-Saharan Africa typically divide the electorate on ethnic lines. Before the partition of Ireland in 1921, the Roman Catholic majority returned a solid bloc of nationalist MPs to Westminster, and since partition Northern Ireland has voted for parties along pretty strict ethnic lines. As these examples suggest all too clearly, implementing the majority preference in such cases is typically a formula for repression, exploitation and quite often civil war.

2. Consociational Democracy

It is possible to have a system of electoral politics in which the voters have strongly conflicting policy preferences of the kind found in the countries just mentioned but these are not translated into oppressive or polity-destroying public policies. The condition for this is simply that the political parties predominantly supported at the polls by each group do not pursue the policies preferred by most

of those who voted for them. Strictly speaking, it is not essential that all major parties should be more moderate than the groups to which they owe their election. In principle, all that is necessary is that the party or parties forming a legislative majority should be more moderate than most of those who voted for them and should form the government. However, it is easy to see that this is more likely to occur if the other parties in the legislature are also more moderate than those who voted for them.

A much-discussed case is that in which the leaders of all the major groups form an 'elite cartel' whose members act by consensus – sometimes but by no means invariably symbolized in governments including parties whose votes would not be necessary for a simple majority of votes in the legislature. The term 'consociational democracy' was introduced in The Politics of Accommodation by Arend Lijphart for this form of politics. The primary example offered in this book was the 'pacification' of 1917 in the Netherlands: a comprehensive settlement between the 'spiritual families' of Calvinists, Roman Catholics and secularists. In the wake of Lijphart's book, consociationalism had quite a vogue and political scientists claimed to find it almost everywhere. In my own view, however, the only remotely plausible other example combining popular division and elite cartel is the concordat between the (conservative) People's Party and the Socialist Party in Austria following the Second World War.

On the basis of the analysis of electoral politics offered in this chapter, however, even a single case of consociational democracy would appear to be anomalous. We are asked to believe that voters persistently (if consociational democracy is to be stable) vote for parties that carry out policies other than those that they would prefer. Why should they? On the fact of it, there is something deeply puzzling about the claim that consociational democracy can be a stable form of government over periods measured in decades.

What led to the idea that there was a lot of consociationalism about was the identification of consociational democracy with the institutional devices that Lijphart said embodied it: 'oversized' governments, distribution of appointive positions according to some principle of proportionality (proporz), giving powers and resources to groups to enable them to govern themselves in some matters (Dutch 'pillarization'), and so on. But the point about the concept of 'consociational democracy' in Lijphart's formulation was that it incorporated an explanatory theory: it was not simply an institutional description. The theory was the one I have attributed to Lijphart: deeply conflicting policy preferences among voters need not lead to conflict-creating outcomes as long as political parties form an 'elite cartel' whose members agree on policies other than those preferred by those who voted for them. Conservatives have always argued, of course, that ordinary people – 'the masses', 'the mob', or 'the crowd' (in Le Bon's classic treatment) are driven by irrational passions. (Shakespeare's plays are full of such sentiments, for example.) But the normal conclusion has been that they

should be denied political power. What the theory of consociational democracy suggests is that conservatives can have their cake and eat it: the ordinary people are given power over their representatives but somehow this power is not translated into any correspondence between the policies they prefer and those carried out by their representatives.

Suspicion about the feasibility of consociational democracy, on this understanding of it, should be aroused simply by contemplating the implications of Lijphart's description of it as an 'elite cartel'. Cartels in markets face two threats. One is undercutting to gain more customers. This is unlikely to have an analogue in the political case, because there is little chance that the Roman Catholic party, say, will make a bid for Calvinist votes. Provided the sociological conditions underlying consociational democracy hold, there are deep divisions between the different electoral blocs over policy. For the Roman Catholic party to appeal to Calvinists, it would have to make even more concessions to the Calvinists than are necessary to secure a consensual policy, and this would put an even greater strain on the Roman Catholics' loyalty to it. But the other threat to market cartels – the entry of new firms – certainly has an analogue in the form of the entry of new parties. If the party that gets the votes of the members of some group does not pursue the policies most of them would like, what is to stop a new party from challenging it? The answer is: nothing, as long as there are no barriers built into the electoral system to prevent new parties from entering. (In that case, the voters can no longer determine the identity of the rulers, so the

system is not even minimally democratic.) Notice, incidentally, that it is not essential for the new party to displace the existing one entirely or even win over a majority of its adherents. All it needs to do is to start winning enough seats by outbidding on policy to give the leaders of the old party a strong incentive to shift in a more hard-line direction.

The second threat to consociational democracy would have an analogue in market cartels only if a firm's customers (or some of them) also had a vote on its pricing policy or on the membership of the board of directors. Not all political parties allow their members to vote on the party's policies (and in far fewer are such votes accepted by leaders as binding), nor does every party allow the members to vote on the identity of the leader(s). But within those that do, the moderate policies espoused by the leaders can be voted down and the leaders who support them replaced by more hard line candidates.

Where the leader of a party that is the major representative of a group is more moderate than the group as a whole, both kinds of threat may be realized at once. Thus in Northern Ireland at the time of writing (October 2000), the Ulster Unionists, who support participation in the 'power-sharing' executive (of which more in a moment) has just lost one of its safest seats in a by-election to Ian Paisley's rejectionist DUP, while its leader, David Trimble has twice only narrowly survived a challenge to his position by a hard-liner and most recently (at the end of October) has done so only by himself adopting a position that is itself

so hard-line that it makes the continuation of the government extremely precarious, because the conditions it sets for its continuance are unlikely to be met.

This brings me back to the basic question. How can consociational democracy be a stable form of governance if it really means that the parties pursue policies that their voters dislike? There is, as far as I can see, only one way in which this can occur. Suppose the voters who belong to a group are subjected to influence of this kind: they are told by a source they accept as authoritative that they should vote for a certain party, whether they agree with its policies or not. Thus, in the Dutch case, it may be that the Roman Catholic Church and the Calvinist churches were able to exert some influence on their members by instructing them to support the approved parties. And in post-war Austria, it may be that the Roman Catholic church was able to stabilize support for the People's Party. On the other side, Austro-Marxism (politically frozen since the Anschluss) may have encouraged the belief that the leaders were best placed to understand the mysteries of Marxist dialectic and its application to the present moment in history. In addition (and probably more important), the Socialist Party, especially in Vienna, probably still had some remnants of the solidaristic methods of stabilizing support described by Michels in relation to the turn-of-century Socialists in Germany: an elaborate network of all-encompassing social organizations. This could have generated loyalty to the party which

discouraged any tendency to transfer allegiance to some more radical breakaway party.

If this were the whole answer, we could say that the circle has indeed been squared. In effect, we attribute to the voters two kinds of political preference. One is a preference for certain policies, based on their own views about what they would like to see happen. The other is a preference for certain parties, based on the belief that it is right to vote for these parties. Such beliefs may in turn rest, as we have seen, on deference to the authority of a church that instructs its congregation to vote for a certain party, belief in the superior wisdom and insight of party leaders, or a sense of loyalty to the party growing out of solidarist relations among its members. Consociational democracy, if this is how it works, satisfies the minimal criterion of representative government in that the identity of the representatives is determined collectively by the electorate. In consequence of this right to choose representatives, the voters have power over them. However, they do not (and this is what makes consociational democracy distinctive) use this power to get those they elect to take their preferred policy positions. Nevertheless, we can say that they voluntarily eschew the use of power over representatives, and that this is good enough to enable us to call consociational democracy a form of democracy.

I am strongly inclined to believe, however, that this kind of self-denying ordinance among voters is of only relatively small significance as an explanation

of the stability of consociational institutions. It seems to me that these institutions were sustainable primarily because of the conditions postulated by the theory of consociational democracy were not really present in either the Netherlands or Austria. What I mean by this is that in both cases most of the voters, even if their ideal outcomes diverged from that embodied in the consensus policy and its institutional embodiments, recognized its virtues in preventing civil war: they appreciated, in other words, what Rawls describes in Political Liberalism as 'the great values of the political'. Moreover, the survival of both countries as independent entities was plausibly at stake when consensus policies were adopted. In 1917 the First World War was raging, and national disunity could have threatened the survival of the Netherlands. In 1945 Austria was a defeated country within which Vienna was under indefinite occupation by the forces of the victorious powers. The virtues of having a government that could present a united front were pretty obvious. Other countries that have consociational institutions are not even remotely plausible exemplifications of the conditions required by the theory of consociational democracy. Switzerland, for example, which is often put forward as exemplifying the consociational model, far less plausibly fits the required assumptions to even a small degree. There is simply no reason for thinking that the parties that take part in federal executive represent ideological groups that would like to be at one anothers' throats but for the moderating efforts of the parties.

In a pair of articles published over a quarter of a century ago ('Political Accommodation and Consociational Democracy' and 'The Consociational Model and its Dangers', both in Democracy and Power) I argued that consociational devices were much more likely to succeed where the groups were divided on religious or ideological grounds than where they were divided on an ethnic or national basis. It is not difficult to see why this should be so, if we reflect on my two explanations of the survival of consensus policies. 'Spiritual families' and adherents of ideologically-based parties lend themselves best to appeals to authority, while religious and ideological division are compatible with a sense of common nationality and thus make members of all groups susceptible to an invocation of the overriding priority of maintaining the independence and integrity of the country. The proviso that must be attached to this is that religion may be a marker for ethnicity or nationality, as in ex-Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland and many other cases. We should analyse these cases as ones of ethnic or national division, with the pessimistic prognosis that follows from this.

Consociationalism has been recommended as a 'solution' to ethnic conflict, by Lijphart and many other political scientists. But it has never worked, and the reasons are the obverse of those in the relatively favourable cases. It is almost impossible to play the authority card in relation to ethnic or national groups, because anybody can claim to be a better representative of the group's interests, and there is nothing arcane about such a claim: each voter can make up his or her own mind about it. Countries that are internally divided along ethnic

or national lines are also much less likely than 'spiritual families' or ideological groups to attach overriding importance to the integrity and independence of the polity within its present boundaries. Frequently, indeed, the main demand of at least one group in a conflict based on ethnicity or nationality is for a change in the boundaries.

3. Compulsory Consociationalism

Classic consociationalism of the Dutch and Austrian kind, it is important to notice, is constructed by elites within the usual rules of parliamentary democracy, according to which a government needs only a bare majority of votes in the legislature in an investiture vote or a vote of no confidence to take office and remain in office, and legislation requires only a bare majority of votes in the legislature. The conventions about 'oversized' cabinets, legislation by consensus, a proporz rule for filling appointive positions and delegation to groups simply depend on an agreement to maintain them. They can be cancelled at any time by a bare majority – as they have been in Austria and to a large extent in the Netherlands. By contrast, what many political scientists have proposed in their discussions of consociational democracy is constitutionally mandated consociationalism. Under this, the constitutional rules actually stipulate that a government can be formed only if it has the support of a majority of the representatives of the communities (however constituted) that are in conflict.

This is an entirely diffferent idea, and it is misleading to give it the same name as agreement on consociational devices within a majoritarian constitutional framework. Indeed, it is misleading to call it democracy at all, since it denies the representatives with a majority of votes the power to determine the outcomes. (The Security Council is not a democratic decision-making body.) Moreover, nothing in the experience of consociational institutions resting on general agreement carries over to constitutionally imposed consociationalism. For the point of imposed arrangements is that they are supposed to work where there is no consensus among the representatives of different communities. The fallacy that is committed by advocates of compulsory consociationalism is the same as that embodied in the following claim: couples who stay married get along better than couples who get divorced; therefore, if divorce were rendered impossible, those who now get divorced would get along better.

None of this entails that constitutionally mandated consociationalism will never be compatible with agreement among the major political parties on a package of policies. But the conditions under which this occurs must be ones in which consociational devices could be introduced by agreement within a majoritarian constitutional framework. If these conditions are lacking, compulsory consociationalism must fail. The record bears this out.

The British government tried it in Cyprus, with so little success that the Turks invaded to defend the minority and instituted a <u>de facto</u> partition that still

survives. The British government has also introduced the institution of a 'power-sharing' executive in Northern Ireland. Under this, a majority of representatives from both Protestant and Catholic communities must endorse the composition of the executive before it can come into operation, and the representatives of either community can bring it down if a majority vote against it. Currently it is supported by both parties – the SDLP and Sinn Fein – that represent the Catholic community, but the Protestant community is split down the middle, and (as I mentioned earlier) it looks as if a majority is in the process of forming against the 'power-sharing' arrangement. My prediction is that, if the Protestant representatives repudiate the 'power-sharing' system, Sinn Fein will do so too and will pick up votes among the Catholic community from the SDLP – as it has already been doing in recent years.

The logic of polarization is, in my view, unstoppable. If this analysis is right and majority rule cannot be returned to because it would be (rightly) unacceptable to the minority, one obvious possibility is to continue indefinitely with the direct rule by the British government that has been in place for most of the past quarter century and simply accept that democracy is an unviable form of government in Northern Ireland. The only move compatible with the restoration of democracy is, it appears to me, a repartition of Ulster to get as many Catholics as possible into the Irish Republic. This would entail making West Belfast an enclave with guaranteed road and rail links to the south. This would be inconvenient, but the precedent of West Berlin before German reunification

illustrates its feasibility in far less favourable political conditions. The general point to be derived from this is that whether democracy brings about peace and contentment or violence and the repudiation of the regime by a minority may have little to do with the presence or absence of a 'democratic culture' and far more to do with the composition of the polity.

I believe that the only non-imposed case of constitutional consociationalism among ethnic groups was provided by the Lebanon. Under the arrangement that divided decision-making power in that country, offices were allocated to groups under a formula which was unchangeable despite population changes (so no censuses were carried out) and allocated offices to members of specific groups. This produced paralysis and corruption but was no doubt better than the alternatives, such as those that have succeeded it. It broke down under the pressures exerted by Israel and Syria, with horrific consequences, but perhaps few states could have survived under these external pressures.

How did it work at all? If my analysis is on the right lines, we may surmise that, as long as the system lasted, leaders agreed in supporting it and voters accepted their lead. In other words, the conditions for the stability of consociational devices within a majoritarian constitutional framework must have held to an adequate degree. One condition, we may recall, was that leaders who favoured agreement could carry their supporters with them, even if this did not correspond to their supporters' polity preferences. The fulfilment of this condition

may have been facillitated by the fact that the ethnic groups were also demarcated by religion and in addition had elements of traditional authority structures to keep the followers in line (especially the Druze). The second condition was that voters saw the advantages of compromise, and here we may surmise that the Lebanese had an unusually sophisticated understanding of the fate that awaited them if the consociational arrangement broke down. I take this to support the point that consociational devices have a possible role in moderating ethnic conflicts, but only if the situation is not one in which the members of the groups would really prefer to upset them – in other words only if the specificied conditions for the 'consociational' model' do not hold.

10. POWER OVER RULERS, CITIZENS AND SUBJECTS

1. Blocs and Parties: Power among Rulers

How do blocs work? A bloc may have no internal power structure: blocs on the Supreme Court do not, plausibly, rest on the ability of some justices to exercise power over others. In chapter 8, I assumed, for purposes of exposition, that a bloc formed of like-minded individual voters could be assimilated to a political party. I also assumed that a bloc – however its cohesion came about – could be analysed as if a bloc with n members each with one vote were equivalent to one voter disposing of n votes in a system of weighted voting. This could be denied. We could, alternatively, analyse blocs on the Supreme Court at

the level of individuals rather than blocs. We could then say that each justice has one-ninth of the power. A bloc of five justices, which at the bloc level of analysis has all the power, would then appear simply as five individual justices each one of which is lucky enough to find on each vote that there are available the four additional votes he needs to be able to overcome the resistance of the four justices who vote the opposite way. The point is that both analyses are correct. Furthermore, both in the end say the same thing: that five justices are always successful and that their success comes about as a result of the way in which each one casts his vote.

We can similarly reanalyse the simple case of three voters. Suppose that A, B and C cast their votes independently and on some particular occasion A and B vote together. We should not say, I argued in chapter 8, that A and B exercised more power individually than C on this occasion: all that happened was that A and B, using their one third share of voting power, beat C. Now say that A and B vote together all the time. The point I now want to make is that we can if we choose treat this simply as a series of single votes, and say that A and B are very lucky to find themselves in agreement all the time. Alternatively, we can move to the bloc level of analysis and say that the coalition of A and B has all the power because it can always prevail over C. What should influence our choice of the level of analysis? Surely, the relations between A and B make a difference here. Suppose that B has signed an irrevocable declaration of indefinite duration giving A his proxy. Then we surely feel no qualms about

saying that, to all intents and purposes, A has two votes to C's one and thus has all the power. At the other extreme, if A and B never do anything to co-ordinate their votes but simply happen to find themselves on the same side, we may be much more tempted to treat them as two lucky individuals.

We have a similar choice if A and B vote together but with less than perfect regularity. Suppose they find themselves in agreement 80% of the time. Should we call this a quasi-bloc that (considered as a bloc) has more power than C but not all the power? Or should we simply say that A, B and C have equal individual power but that A and B are fairly lucky – though not as lucky as they would be if they spontaneously agreed all the time? Again, both are true and the only question is which is the more illuminating. And the relations between A and B again make a difference. If A and B are a political party with (by the standards of parliamentary democracies) weak cohesion in voting, we are much more inclined to talk about the voting power of the party made up of A and B than if A and B just happen to be fairly like-minded individuals.

If we imagine a lower level of congruence between the votes of A and B, the presence or absence of organization is likely to be crucial in guiding our analytical choice. If A and B simply happened to agree, say, two-thirds of the time, we would be strongly inclined to say that all voters have equal individual power, while A and B are somewhat lucky. But if A and B have a common party

organization, we are much more likely to say that they form a bloc, albeit a fairly weak one.

From now on, I want to talk about political parties, so I shall take it that they are to be analysed as voting blocs. A party differs from a set of individuals who happen to be of like mind by having an internal power structure. This means (among other things) that there is some method of deciding on the party's position on any given issue and some way of applying sanctions to those members of the party in the legislature who do not vote in accordance with the party's position. At a minimum, parties can always expel members. (This is not to say that the sanctions must always be applied, but there must be at least this sanction available.) A party must thus have power to take decisions, and the leaders must have power over the followers to implement those decisions in actual voting.

Leaders control things valued by followers. In parliamentary systems, they control government positions or (for a potentially governmental party which is currently out of office) shadow ministerial positions with an implicit or explicit promise that these will be translated into ministries in the event that the party forms or takes part in a government. Even in non-ministerial parties, there is still the sanction of expulsion from the party. In a country in which voters cast their ballots almost entirely on the basis of the party labels, this means virtually certain loss of one's seat at the next election. In systems that have proportional

representation with closed party lists, the party leaders also have the more subtle power to move candidates up and down the list. In the United States, the primary system gives party leaders virtually no control over the identities of its candidates, though leaders can still reward loyalty and punish disloyalty through control of committee assignments in Congress. Clearly, however, party leaders have much less power in this system than in other systems and it is scarcely surprising that this is reflected in much less cohesive party voting.

For my present purposes, it is not necessary to say any more about the relations between leaders and followers in political parties. In as far as power enters in, the analysis of power over others in chapter 4 seems straightforwardly applicable. Even this simple analysis is sufficient, however, to throw further light on a couple of points that came up in chapter 9. Here is the first. I wrote that in the case of one voter and one ruler, the power of the voter depended on the ruler's either valuing election for himself or caring about who got elected in his stead. Even with a single ruler, as in this case, parties make the ruler more likely to care about the identity of his successor. In recent months, for example, President Clinton has taken a number of decisions designed to improve Gore's chances (for example, releasing oil from the strategic reserve), presumably because he would prefer to be replaced by a Democrat. Once we introduce the party as a disciplined body, however, we can shift the whole level of analysis up from the individual member of the legislature to the party. If voters go by the party label, the identity of the party's standard-bearer(s) in any constituency

makes very little difference. The party, in effect, guarantees that the product will perform according to the specifications. No such guarantee can, of course, be ironclad: it is noticeable, for example, that in Britain party discipline is less effective among MPs who have either given up hope of ministerial office or are not interested in it than among the young (or even middle-aged) hopefuls who are anxious to keep their noses clean. Nevertheless, taken all in all, parties appear to be able very largely to overcome the danger that the power of electors will be undermined by prospects of retirement. For the proportion of any party's representatives who are immune to sanctions at any given time is not normally sufficient to undermine the party's credibility as a body committed to certain lines of policy. The party is like the Ship of Theseus all of whose planks had been replaced over time but was still the same ship. Individual members of parliament come and go but it is still the same party.

This brings me to the second point from chapter 9 that is relevant here. This is that it is not necessary to exercise power to get somebody to do what you want if they want to do it anyway. Plausibly, people join one political party rather than another because they find its principles more congenial. If they are elected to the legislature, we may therefore expect them to support the party's position most of the time simply because they prefer it to the politically feasible alternatives. Obviously, this congruence between the party's position and that of its individual representatives is liable to break down if the party abandons the principles that attracted them in the first place. The British Labour Party is a Ship

of Theseus in terms of organizational continuity, but the captain and his chief officers are sailing it in such a different direction from that which would have attracted anybody to join it more than a decade ago that it is scarcely surprising that many of the crew are in a constant state of more or less overt mutiny.

2. Power over Rulers by External Actors

So far, I have discussed power over people who are elected that is exercised by other people who are (for the most part) themselves elected – to wit, party leaders. But power can also, it need hardly be said, be exercised by people who are not elected. Suppose the city council has nine members one of whom is the employer of the other eight or is in possession of unsavoury information about each of them. This one member of the council then, we may reasonably say, has power over the others. Now simply change the scenario so that this person with the power over the council is not himself a member of it. The analysis of the situation to all intents and purposes remains the same: the person who has the sanctions at his disposal has power over the council members, which means in turn that he can control the decisions about laws and policies that they take. If these then become inputs to the local state apparatus, we can say too that he has power over those in the council's jurisdiction. In Figure 10.1, this situation is illustrated by the box labelled 'External Actors' which has an arrow labelled 'Power over ruler(s)' running into the 'Ruler(s)' box.

As I am defining power, the scope of the concept of power is limited to the ability to make people worse off contingently on their behaviour. The ability to make people better off contingently on their behaviour counts for my purposes as the possession of (one form of) influence. It is worth extending the discussion for a moment to include incentives as well as threats, however, because of the large role that bribes and campaign contributions ('side-payments' in the antiseptic language of game theory) play in politics. Promises of gain, like threats of loss, are intended to change the recipients' behaviour from what it would otherwise have been. To the extent that what legislatures and governments would otherwise do is driven by the logic of electoral competition laid out in chapter 9 and elaborated earlier in this chapter to accommodate political parties, threats and promises offered by external actors subvert democracy. To the extent that they are successful, they divert political decision-makers from the policies that they believe would maximize their chances of electoral success, because of their congruence with the policy preferences of voters, and press them towards policies that are more advantageous to those making the threats or promises.

2. Power over Voters by External Actors

The other two arrows from 'External actors' in Figure 10.1 also subvert democracy, but in different ways. I begin by looking at the arrow labelled 'Power over Voters'. The possibility of such power, we should notice, is eliminated by the secret ballot. (For this to be true, the ballot not only has to be secret but has

to be generally believed to be secret.) Political parties (whether in government or not) have to take public positions on policy questions, and voting records in a legislature are published. This is what makes it possible to tie the threats of sanctions or the promise of rewards to the future actions of either parties or individual representatives. But if there is no way of knowing how somebody voted, there is no way of making sanctions or rewards contingent on the way anybody votes.

With open voting, of course, power and influence (in the form of bribery) could come into play. Thus, in the English countryside, tenant farmers had the vote in parliamentary elections and, not surprisingly, voted in the way preferred by their landlord – who might well, indeed, be a candidate. Bribery was also notoriously rife, as in Charles Dickens's account of the election in the borough of Eatanswall in The Pickwick Papers. 'A small body of electors remained unpolled on the very last day [of voting]. They were calculating and reflecting persons, who had not yet been convinced by the arguments of either party although they had had frequent conferences with each. One hour before the close of the poll, Mr Perker [the agent for one of the candidates] solicited the honour of a private interview with these intelligent, these noble, these patriotic men. It was granted. His arguments were brief, but unsatisfactory. They went in a body to the poll; and when they returned, the Honourable Samuel Slumkey, of Slumkey Hall, was returned also.' (Penguin ed., p. 206.) In terms of the analysis in chapter 8, these hold-outs were lucky: because the election was still undecided at the end, they

were able to occupy (considered as a group) the position of the tertius gaudens. Notice, however, that theirs was a high-risk strategy. If it worked, they got bigger bribes than those who voted earlier, because they could determine the result. But if Mr Perker or his opposite number had managed to gain a decisive advantage earlier on with more modest bribes, the hold-outs would not have been able to sell their votes at any price, because they could not make any difference to the outcome.

With the secret ballot, political parties have no way of knowing how individual voters cast their votes. What they can know is whether or not somebody has voted. Thus, in Britain, a well-organised party will identify its supporters by intensive canvassing before the election. It can therefore focus on attempting to get out its own vote on election day. This involves each party in offering to drive its supporters to the poll and making the rounds of those supporters who have not yet voted to urge them to do so. To the extent that being interrupted by party workers knocking on the door counts as a sanction (and it certainly does), we may say that the parties have some degree of power to get those who have declared in their favour to go to the polling station. What they still cannot do is exercise any power over the way the vote is cast – or over its being cast at all, since there is the alternative of spoiling the ballot paper. My mother, a staunch Labour voter, always made a point of being taken to the polls in a Tory car, so as to save the time of a Labour one and waste that of a Tory one. (As a bonus, The Tories also had more comfortable cars.)

It is hardly possible to avoid noticing at the moment of writing that money can buy influence over voters in the form of advertising and the staging of media events. Game theory can be deployed to analyse the optimal strategies of parties in distributing their funds over constituencies. (See for example Robert Erikson et al in a recent APSR.) But the actual process of influencing falls outside the remit of the theory of games, because it is a matter of changing what it is that people see as best for the country, most advantageous for themselves, and so on. Game theory, as I have remarked in a number of contexts already, takes as given underlying beliefs and preferences of this kind. Thus, in the previous chapter, I assumed that an elector has a certain preference ordering over three candidates which put C first, B second and A third. This elector was simply faced with the possibility of voting strategically for B in order to help get B elected instead of A. Similarly, in chapter 8, I assumed that each committee member had a preference ordering over possible decisions x, y and z. The only question facing a committee member was how to vote, given his preferences over outcomes, in order to get as high up his ordering as possible.

I shall therefore say no more about influence of the preference-changing kind, important as it is in politics. Let me conclude this section, however, by pointing out that the threat to influence voters can operate as a source of power over politicians. After Gladstone lost the election in 1874, he said that the Liberals had been 'borne down in a torrent of gin and beer' as a result of their

introducing measures to address the drink problem. Ever since then, the brewing and distilling trade has been the most reliable source of funds for the Conservative party. Perhaps the brewers, distillers and (no doubt most important) publicans didn't really have enough influence to swing an election – a question which cannot, of course, now be decided and perhaps could not have been decided at the time even with contemporary techniques. But if the Liberals had believed in advance that the drink trade did have this influence over the electorate, this would clearly have given it power over the government. For it could have made its anti-Liberal propaganda contingent on the government's policies. Readers will no doubt be able to supply more up-to-date examples of their own.

In the next section, I shall show how power over rulers via power over subjects merges into power over rulers via the application of sanctions against subjects, which is in itself a form of influence. The most important point that I want to make in this chapter is, in fact, that most of what is usually thought of as power exerted over governments by external actors takes one of these two forms.

4. Other Countries' Power over Subjects

Let me begin by narrowing down the scope of this section. I am concerned here not with all kinds of power over subjects but with one specific

kind: that which is related to the identity or policies of a government. Thus, there are many ways in which people can exercise power over the individual members of a society by threatening sanctions for non-compliance. Many of these are illegal, but some are legal: for example, an employer can threaten an employee with the loss of his job unless he does what the employer wants. I am interested here, however, in the exercise of power over subjects for political ends.

Let me begin with the kind of case in which the exercise of power is most blatant. These are cases in which other countries attempt to change the identity of the rulers or their policies by lowering the welfare of the subjects of those rulers. I have already discussed one form of this in the context of the idea that nuclear weapons make each superpower's subjects hostages for the good behaviour of their government. To the extent that the government's utilities depend on the utilities of its subjects, threats to their welfare can be counted as threats to the government, because if the threat is carried out the government's utility will be lowered. What I am concerned with here is a different relationship between the subjects and the rulers – one in which the subjects, in their capacity as citizens, may act politically – by making a revolution, for example, or by voting for a different government at the next election. Let me illustrate how this may (or may not) produce results.

Clearly, Saddam Hussein is not personally suffering from sanctions. Nor does it seem likely that his utility is negatively affected by the sufferings of his

people. If there is any point in economic sanctions against Iraq, therefore, it is presumably that this increases the chance that citizens, suffering in their capacity as subjects, will overthrow Saddam. Similarly, the American boycott of Cuba (and the illegal attempt to impose it on other countries) presumably has as its rationale that this will make Fidel Castro unpopular and lead to his overthrow. (In this case, there may also be a fear of the unsettling effect, in the United States and further south, of a regime that has, I believe, had a better infant mortality rate and literacy rate than the United States.) Both of these cases suggest, however, that this use of sanctions is not very effective, and may actually be counterproductive by rallying support for the regime – in terms of the present framework, by changing the preferences of the population in a pro-regime direction.

Where the government can be thrown out in an election, power over subjects is exercised in the hope that they will vote the government out next time. The sanctions against subjects are accompanied by the (explicit or implicit) promise that these sanctions will be lifted if the electorate puts in office a government that is more to the liking of whoever is imposing the sanctions. Quite apart from the support for the Contras (which counts as an attempt to overthrow a democratic government by proxy), American efforts to disrupt the Nicaraguan economy (including the mining of Managua harbour, condemned by the International Court) were attempts to make the Sandanistas unpopular with the electorate. Similarly, quite apart from the role played by the CIA in the coup

against Allende, the United States government had been attempting to sow disaffection with the government by, for example, abusing its position in the World bank to block loans to Chile. Economic sanctions against Yugoslavia were similarly intended to lead to Milosovic's being voted out of office. In all of these cases, sanctions may have had a positive effect (from the point of view of the country or countries employing them), at any rate in the first two cases, in which they exacerbated an existing polarization along class lines. Yugoslavia is probably more like Iraq and Cuba: the rejection of Milosevic and his replacement by a less demagogic nationalist seems to have turned on the perception that it was a severe failure (from a nationalist point of view) to have gratuitously engineered an outcome that reduced Serbia from its status as the dominant unit in a federation to its current
position.

5. Domestic Actors' Power over Subjects

The 'External Actors' in Figure 10.1 need not be literally external, as in the cases so far discussed. They may simply be groups or organizations within the country in question that have the ability to impose sanctions on the subjects in that country. These sanctions may, as in the cases discussed in the previous section, be aimed at inducing subjects to change the identity of the government. In a system of representative government (I shall confine my discussion from now on to this case), this means, as we have seen, that the subjects are the

victims of sanctions (actual or threatened), with the proviso that they will cease to be injured if they vote in a different government at the next election.

More commonly, however, domestic external actors are not concerned with the identity of the government per se but with its policies. We have already seen in section 2 that external actors may attempt to change government policy by offering rewards and threatening punishments contingently on the policies of the government. What I want to emphasize is, however, that most attempts to change government policy are indirect: they proceed via the ability of groups and organizations to lower the welfare of subjects. These cases are like the hostage case in that the threat to lower the subjects' welfare is aimed at the government: it is, after all, the government that can change the policy in virtue of its decision-making power (see chapter 8). But their modus operandi is different: even if the government's utilities do not depend on its subjects' utilities, their utilities will be of concern to it if they value being returned to office at the next election and fear that this is less likely to happen if the subjects, in their capacity as voters, hold the government responsible for some reduction in their welfare that has occurred during its term of office.

A good recent example of this process at work was the campaign undertaken by truck drivers in a number of Western European countries to disrupt the flow of oil to consumers in order to bring pressure to bear on the government to lower fuel taxes. The point of this was not to inconvenience

ministers personally: no doubt their ministerial vehicles would still have been supplied with fuel, and, if anything, the absence of other vehicles on the roads would make it easier for them to get about. The point was, rather, to create chaos among the subjects, so that the government would lose electoral popularity unless it acceded to the truckers' demands. This manoeuvre was successful to the extent that the French government caved in, and the other governments that stood firm did lose support. The British government, for example, lost its lead in the public opinion polls for the first time since the last election and is now making promises of significant concessions.

On the basis of this analysis, I take issue with Keith Dowding's claim in Power (echoed by many others – for example Donald Wittman in The Myth of Democratic Failure) that in a capitalist democracy capitalists do not have power. According to Dowding, what capitalists have is systematic luck, in that governments have to take their interests into account. But to be lucky is to get what you want without exercising power. If governments have to take account of the interests of capitalists, on pain of being thrown out at the next election, capitalists are exercising power over governments via their ability to lower the welfare of subjects if the government does things contrary to their interests.

It is, of course, true that we do not see capitalists doing anything if their exercise of power is successful. But this is equally true of all exercises of power that successfully deter change: if your threat is successful what we shall see is

precisely that nothing happens: things go on before. (This point, incidentally, explains why the Dahl 'behavioral' study of power in New Haven was irremediably flawed: the view that if we don't see things happen there can't be any exercise of power simply fails to understand the most elementary fact about the way in which power works.)

We also do not have capitalists constantly reminding governments of the damage they can do, by closing down plants, not building new ones, and taking their money out of the country. This is not necessary, because governments know it very well. An occasional demonstration, like the capital flight by French (and other) capitalists that brought the Miterrand government to its knees in 1982-3, is quite enough to demonstrate that the threat (whether stated or not) is no idle one. Thus, a number of firms (especially foreign-based ones) have said that they will not expand in Britain unless it joins the Euro. But it does not make any difference to the strategic choice facing the government whether they make this threat or not. If it believes that firms will not invest in Britain unless it joins the Euro, that gives it an electoral reason for joining the Euro, however it arrives at that belief. (It also has an electoral reason for not joining it, in that most voters are against; but it is certainly a reason for joining.) Conversely, the government would not have a reason for joining even if the firms made these statements if it believed they were bluffing and that, even if they preferred the Euro, they would still find it advantageous to invest outside it.

Dowding suggests that capitalists exercise power only where they concert their efforts. But I can see no reason for accepting this. Consumers have power over producers, in the standard defence of markets, by their ability to exercise the exit option. They do not vary often write to manufacturers threatening to switch to a rival product. Still less do they have to organize. They just switch. Similarly, I have analysed a system of representative government as one in which voters have power over politicians via the electoral sanction. This is, again, an exercise of 'exit' rather than 'voice', in Hirschman's terms. Not many voters write to the government complaining about its policies, and this is certainly not the main way in which voters exercise power. Nor do they have to organize: only a minority belong to political parties, and in any case parties often do not (as I noted in chapter 9) allow members to determine the party's policy, especially when it is in government. Once again, the threat is to exit: to vote for a different party at the next election.

Ironically, then, those who are most anxious to reassure us about the credentials of market-based liberal democracy are hoist with their own petard. If they want to say that consumers have power over producers via the exit option, they cannot deny that capitalists have power over governments via the exit option. Conversely, if they want to erect some stipulative definition of power such that capitalists do not have power via the (implicit or explicit) threat to sabotage the economy unless they are given a 'good business climate' (i.e. a

chance to make big profits), then they have to admit that consumers and voters are also powerless.

One final point. It may be said that capitalists are not exercising power in virtue of possessing the exit option because, if profits fall (or look as if they are going to fall), it really will pay them to decamp. But it is equally true that, if a consumer decides a product is defective, it is in his interest to switch to another brand. Similarly, a voter who thinks another party would be better than that he voted for last time regards himself as gaining (if only psychically) by voting for it. Thus, again, if we arbitrarily stipulate that we do not have an exercise of power when it pays to inflict the damage, the rationale of markets and voting goes down the tubes as well.

There is, in any case, absolutely no reason for adopting this stipulation, except for the bad reason that the implications make some people uncomfortable. I made it clear in chapter 4 that we have no basis for saying that there has to be a cost to the carrying out of the sanction. In fact, I began by pointing out there that power is at a maximum when it costs nothing to carry out the sanction. I can now simply extend that by observing that the case in which it is advantageous to carry out the sanction can be analysed in exactly the same way.

Thus, sadistic schoolmasters are the stuff of both memoirs and novels about British public schools [i.e. high-status private boarding schools] , and there can be no doubt that the phenomenon existed of schoolmasters whose main pleasure in life was administering corporal punishment. Suppose such a schoolmaster threatens his pupils with the cane unless they get their homework right. Are we supposed to say that this is not really a threat because he would prefer, if the contingency arises (i.e. the homework is not done right), to carry out the threat?

Robert Nozick says (Anarchy, State and Utopia, pp. 85 – 6) that it is wrong to threaten somebody that you will publish damaging information about him merely to extract money in return for doing so, but that it's perfectly all right if it would pay you to publish it, because then you need to be compensated for a loss. (Nozick primarily envisages loss of monetary advantage, e.g. not putting the information in a book that you expect would sell better with it in; but he admits that loss of the personal gratification of making the other person suffer would count just the same, since here too you lose utility by refraining from publishing.) From the point of view of the recipient of the demand for money, however, it makes no difference whether or not the blackmailer would sooner publish the information or whether he is neutral about it. What the victim knows is that he is being threatened with a loss, compared with the status quo, unless he pays over some money. On my analysis, he is subject to a threat, and to an exercise of power, either way.

11. IS POWER ZERO-SUM?

Is the number seven orange? Is virtue square? Is this question like those? Yes and no.

Alain Sokal has documented the way in which ideas in physics and mathematics are borrowed for their prestige value but with no understanding of their meaning by the likes of Kristeva, Lacan, Derrida and Baudrillard. Game theory, as one of the more abstract bits of social science, has attracted some of the same unwelcome attention – though nowhere near as much. Even if an elementary comprehension of game theory were of no positive use, it would still have value as an immunization against pseudo-scientific bullshit.

Steven Lukes's anthology Power (NYU Press, 1984) is a compendium of bullshit – even Robert Dahl is represented not by his classic paper on power but by his most waffly paper – but I want to focus here on the particular form of it taken by the abuse of the concept of zero-sumness. Talcott Parsons, whose essay 'On the Concept of Political Power' is mysteriously and misleadingly retitled 'Power and the Social System', writes of 'what, since the Theory of Games, has widely come to be called the "zero-sum" problem' (Lukes, p. 95). In fact, what Parsons turns out to have in mind (if that's the right word) is, as usual, intensely banal once one penetrates the conceptual fog – and to have nothing

whatever to do with game theory. This way of talking about power as either zero-sum or not is picked up by Habermas in his essay (in the same volume) comparing Weber and parsons with Hannah Arendt. The point here equally has nothing to do with game theory and could be much more perspicuously expressed without using the term 'zero-sum' at all.

In the rest of the chapter, I shall pull together some ideas that have emerged in the preceding chapters to answer the question: in what senses can we say that power is or is not a zero-sum phenomenon?

1. Power and Zero-Sum Games

If we link the terms 'zero-sum' and 'game theory', as Parsons does, the natural way of interpreting the claim that power is or is not zero-sum is to take it as meaning that power relations do or do not flow from a zero-sum game. The answer to that question is very easy and has been stated in chapter 4: the power of one person over another can arise only in a non-zero-sum game. This is the only legitimate question that can be asked about power as zero-sum or not within the framework of game theory. It is also about the only one that Parsons definitely did not intend to ask – no doubt because he could not even have understood it.

2. Is There a Fixed Sum of Power?

One idea that floats around a great deal (Parsons at least gestures at it) is that there is some sort of 'conservation of power', so that, if one person's power increases, the power of everybody else put together must decline. This is clearly nonsensical. If A acquires more power over B, that does nothing to change the power that C has over D (and so on). Even if we just look at A and B, it is still not true that the power of A and B must sum to a fixed amount, so that if A gains power B loses it. The United States has power over countries such as Libya, Iraq, the Sudan, Serbia and Afghanistan in that it can (and does) drop bombs on them in an attempt to modify their governments' policies, and those countries have no power over the United States. If the United States increases its power (by acquiring better bombs, for example), that does not change the amount of power of the other countries, which remains at zero.

The overall amount of power reflects (roughly) the degree of interdependency. In Rousseau's pre-social stage (in The Discourse on the Origins of Inequality), human beings lived asocial lives, so that nobody had much power over anybody else. With the development of economic relations, dependency and therefore power relations arose. The social contract is designed to get rid of personal dependency and to replace it with equal power to determine the content of the laws (see chapter 8 above) backed by power exercised equally over everybody to enforce them (see chapter 7 above). Power thus goes from being virtually non-existent to existing in an obnoxious form as

personal dependence to existing in a form that (in one sense) gives the citizens of the state equal power.

Finally, we should resist the notion that reciprocal power somehow cancels out. If A has power over B and B has power over A, that is a quite different situation from one in which neither has any power over the other. The United States and Russia have power over one another in that each could inflict immense damage on the other. This certainly makes the American power over Russia different from its power over the other countries I listed. But it would be analytically obfuscating to assimilate its relation to Russia to the relations between any pair out of the list of those countries, neither of which could do anything to injure the other.

3. Are the Payoffs from the Exercise of Power Zero-Sum?

Parsons says C. Wright Mills and Harold Lasswell 'maintain explicitly or implicitly that power is a zero-sum phenomenon, which is to say that there is a fixed 'quantity' of power in any relational system and hence any gain of power on the part of A must by definition occur by diminishing the power at the disposal of the other units, B, C, D . . . ' (p. 95). This sounds like the idea that I have just dismissed. But if we ask what sort of ideas might be attributed to Mills and Lasswell that could connect up with the concept of zero-sumness, I think we can come up with something more sensible. This is the claim that the successful

exercise of power never does anything except transfer some source of utility from one party to another. Thus, Parsons was probably thinking of the title of Lasswell's book Politics: Who Gets What, When and How, which suggests (though it does not, of course, entail) that politics is simply a matter of dividing up a cake of fixed size. Political power is, in this understanding of it, unproductive: all it does is determine who wins and who loses. Similarly, a very crude version of Mills's notion of the 'power elite' might be that it simply exploits the rest of the population, transferring resources from them to itself by its control over political power.

In the case of bilateral power relations, it is reasonable to say that the payoffs are zero-sum in the following sense: there will be a negative correlation between the utility to A (the demander) of having his demand met (as against the status quo) and the utility to B (the addressee) of complying with A's demand (as against the status quo). This does not, of course, affect the earlier point that power over people requires a non-zero-sum game, because these payoffs are embedded in the non-zero-sum game involving the cost to B of suffering the sanction threatened by A. What we are saying is, in effect, that, if A and B have already exhausted any mutual benefits they can achieve, they are on the Pareto frontier: one cannot gain unless the other loses. Attempts to exercise power will therefore take the form of trying to shift along to the Pareto frontier in an advantageous direction. (See my 'Power: An Economic Analysis', in my

Democracy and Power, for an (over-)elaborate analysis of power along these lines.)

However, as soon as we move away from the two-person case, it ceases to be true that there cannot be any net gain from the exercise of power. The prisoners would have no problem if a third party could exercise power over both of them to make it less profitable to confess than not to confess. The two farmers could avoid the spoilage of their crops if they could invoke a third party to enforce a covenant making it worth the while (on balance) of the farmer whose crops ripen first to help the one whose crops ripen second in return for his help. The entire notion of the social contract, as we saw in chapter 5, turns on the idea that we all gain (ex ante, anyway) from having a state that makes Co-operate pay better than Defect. It is often said that power is something you would always prefer not to have exercised over you, because it involves trying to get you to do something you would sooner not do. This is true in as far as it goes. But it ceases to be necessarily true once we extend our view to the case in which having power exercised over you comes as a package with power being exercised over others.

Ironically, C. Wright Mills's idea (if it were his idea) that political power is purely a matter of shifting around a fixed amount of resources is echoed on the right by William Riker. In his Theory of Political Coalitions, he simply assumes that the payoffs from any public policy necessarily sum to zero – in other words

that the gains and losses from any public policy cancel one another out. If politics were entirely about the distribution of the spoils of office, this might be a reasonable approximation to the reality. Riker's conclusion that majorities will be of the minimum size necessary to win then follows. For if all that is at stake is spoils that can be allocated to individuals (money, sex or whatever), the fewer people there are to share them the more there is for each. But politics is primarily about public policies, and the whole point of public policies (as we saw in chapter 5) is that their benefits cannot be appropriated only by those who voted for them. If the death penalty is abolished, all of those who are against the death penalty 'consume' the public good of no more death penalty (and all those in favour consume the public bad, from their point of view, of its abolition). If the abolitionists have a two-thirds majority and need only a simple majority to win, Riker's theory implies (and he actually draws this conclusion) that they should try to get rid of some supporters. This is obviously absurd.

4. Is There a Fixed Scope of Government?

I think that, in his woozy way, Parsons wanted to include the zero-sum payoffs as well as the zero-sum power in his criticism of Lasswell and Mills, even though his statement clearly points to the latter. However, his official account of the way in which power is not zero-sum is different from either of these. This is the observation that I described at the beginning of this chapter as crushingly banal. What Parsons tells us is that the scope of government is sometimes more

and sometimes less. This is obviously true: its scope is greater in some countries than in others at any given time, and changes from time to time within a country. The New Deal and the Second World War, to give an obvious example, massively expanded the scope of the federal government in America.

Parsons analyses the phenomenon within a system of representative government (though he does not himself call attention to this limitation) along the lines of chapter 9 in this book. The government takes initiatives, and these are either accepted or rejected by the voters at the next election by voting for it or for its opponents. This all seems perfectly straightforward. The only puzzle is that Parsons could have thought he was saying anything anybody would want to disagree with. (On either interpretation of their views offered in sections 2 and 3, neither Lasswell or Mills would have been committed to denying it, and I can see no conceivable reason for thinking they would have wanted to.)

5. Is Compliance with Government Zero-Sum?

Parsons develops a lengthy comparison between political power and money, emphasizing in particular that a bank cannot meet all its obligations simultaneously and nor can a government: both rest on promises that cannot be met if everybody demands their fulfilment at the same time. However, he wastes the value of this analogy by tying it to the ideas discussed in section 4, suggesting that a government has to be trusted to a certain degree by the voters.

A far more interesting way of pressing the analogy between a bank and a state is to liken a bank's cash reserves to a state's power over subjects. A bank can meet its customers' demands for cash as long as most of them at any given time are content to leave their money with the bank. Similarly, a state can punish those who break the law only if most people do not break the law. The state's coercive power (see chapter 7) is essential as a last resort, in the same way as a bank's ability to produce cash when a customer demands it is essential to its staying in business. But a state cannot coerce all its subjects at the same time any more than a bank can pay out cash to all its customers at the same time. Napoleon's dictum that the only thing you cannot do with bayonets is sit on them refers to this fact.

No serious political theorist has ever denied this. Hobbes and Hume, as we have seen, insisted that government is founded on opinion. I emphasized their claim that the ruler must gain the obedience of the state apparatus by opinion. But both also insisted that the obedience of subjects at large cannot depend on coercion except as a last resort. Hume wrote, in 'Of the First Principles of Government' 'that as FORCE is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion' (p. 32), echoing Hobbes's statement (Behemoth, p. 16) that 'the power of the mighty hath no foundation but in the opinion and belief of the people.'

Where Hobbes and Hume were unusual was in maintaining that a sense of the long-term benefits of peace should, if people were rational, lead them to want to keep the laws without having to be coerced into doing so. I have argued (in chapter 6) that this claim is implausible. (Hobbes might get away with it if he could count on the proposition that even a small risk of violent death in the future outweighs any amount of certain and immediate gain in any other form. But how compelling is it to say that anybody who weighs things differently is irrational?) The point here is, however, that they accept, as much as any other writer, that no government can rest on the coercion of more than a minority of its subjects at any given time. Bentham and Austin talked about a 'habit of obedience', while the mainstream analysis, from Weber to Hart and Raz, has talked about the normative authority attributed to the state. But they are all referring to the same phenomenon: that most of the time most people accept the existence of a law as a reason for doing what it requires.

In terms of the formal analysis of power in chapter 4, the question is one of the relation between the size of the threatened sanction for noncompliance and the cost to the addressee of the threat of complying. Against a background of general compliance not based on power, the state can threaten each individual with sanctions for noncompliance with the laws. But it cannot plausibly threaten any individual subject in the absence of that background condition.

6. Is Decision-Making Power Zero-Sum?

Let me conclude this chapter by looking at the kind of power analysed in chapter 8. If A, B and C have one vote each in a committee and the committee takes decisions by majority vote, it makes sense to say that there is a fixed amount of power distributed among them, and that in this case they have one third of the total each. Decision-making power is, in other words zero-sum (or more generally fixed-sum), adding up in the standard power indexes to 1. The rationale for saying that there is a fixed amount of decision-making power in the committee is simply that an increase in one member's ability to get the outcome he wants by overcoming the resistance of others must go along with an overall decrease in the other members' abilities to do so.

This illustrates why I have been concerned to insulate the analysis of decision-making power from the analysis of other forms of power. Thus, it does not assume that the decision-makers are autonomous: A, B and C could each be acting on the orders of different governments in an international body, for example. It still remains true that, if they have one vote each, they each have a third of the decision-making power. Obviously, too, we are saying nothing about the power of the committee collectively, that is to say the importance of the measures that it can get implemented by deciding on them, as a result of its decisions being accepted as binding. To say that the power of the members of a committee always sums to unity is just an implication of its deciding things at all. What things they are is irrelevant to that necessary truth.

Finally, notice that there is no equivalent to a fixed sum of committee members' power when we shift the focus to success. Imagine a five-member committee. If all decisions were taken by three votes to two, the average success rate of the committee members would be three-fifths: on the average each wins three times out of five. (It makes no difference to the truth of this if three members always vote together, if there is no association at all between the members' votes, or anything in between.) If all decisions were taken by four votes to five, the average success rate would be four-fifths. And if all decisions were taken unanimously, the average success rate would be unity.

If people care only about the outcomes of decision-making, it follows that there will be more average satisfaction with a decision-making system that produces a higher level of success – on the assumption that on average winners are as satisfied with winning as losers are with losing. Three politically important implications flow from this. The first is that majority voting maximizes average satisfaction with outcomes. The second is that, the nearer a polity approaches consensus, the higher the level of average satisfaction there will be with it. The third is that average satisfaction is at a minimum in a majority-rule system where there is a minority on each issue that is only just short of fifty per cent. Of course, the underlying assumptions may not hold. People may care not just about how successful they are but how successful they are in relation to others – the collective version of Hobbesian 'eminence'. (The Banzhaf power index,

which takes expected success rates and then constrains them so that they sum to unity, makes sense only on the assumption that relative success is what matters.) Alternatively, the assumption built into Riker's theory of political coalitions could be true in some cases, so that the losers lose more per head than the winners win. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing again that not too much is to be read into the zero-sum nature of decision-making power.

12. CONCLUSION

A reviewer once unkindly claimed that Herbert Simon was incapable of saying that a man walked down a street: it would have to be that a man M walked down a street S. Is game theory just a more elaborate example of the same thing? In principle, maybe, game theory is no more than applied common sense. But in that sense so is algebra. Some people can work out the puzzles in the Sunday papers without resorting to simultaneous equations but most people cannot. Similarly, Hobbes and Hume had an extraordinary ability to sort their way through complex strategic interactions, but few writers since have been able to follow them, let alone do it for themselves. This is evidenced by the tendency in the critical literature (at any rate until it became suffused with game theory, as in the work of David Gauthier, Gregory Kavka and Jean Hampton) to make the most elementary blunders. A common complaint (made for example by John Plamenatz in his textbook Man and Society) was that, if people were as warlike

as Hobbes depicts them in the state of nature, how could they ever live in peace? You might as well say that the prisoners in the prisoner's dilemma who confess must like serving long jail sentences. The point about game theory is that it emphasizes the way in which the nature of the strategic setting determines rational behaviour: one situation leads to conflict, another to peace. Moreover, even Hobbes and Hume, superb as they were at the intuitive analysis of strategic interaction, made moves whose logic we can criticize once we take what they said and express it within the framework provided by game theory.

At the end of my doctoral dissertation, published as Political Argument in 1965, I wrote that I saw the future of political theory as lying in a union with what I called 'analytical politics' (pp. 290 – 1). I gave in a footnote as examples The Calculus of Consent by Buchanan and Tullock (criticized at length in Political Argument), Schelling's The Strategy of Conflict, Downs's An Economic Theory of Democracy, Banfield's Political Influence, Simon's Models of Man and Riker's Theory of Political Coalitions, which were just about all the books then in existence. The ideas in these books and, far more, their successors have underlain (though often not explicitly) much that I have written since. However, it has taken me thirty-five years to get round to making anything like a systematic attempt to explore the ways in which familiar themes in political theory may be illuminated by the theory of games. I need hardly point out that, as it stands, this is all pretty rough. I only started work on it in the middle of September and wanted to have something to circulate during the semester while it could still be

useful. I hope, nevertheless, that readers will think it is worth further development. If so, I should be very grateful for comments, either on the content or the comprehensibility of the exposition.

BIT THAT'S BEEN KEPT

Notice, however, that parallel to this is another arrow marked 'power over subjects', which runs likewise from 'Powerful actor(s)' into the 'Subjects' box. Why should you care about power over subjects, from a political point of view? (You might, of course, be interested in power over them as a way of getting things you want them to do directly, but that is outside the scope of the present survey.) The answer is that there is (we are assuming) a large overlap between subjects and voters. If power over subjects translates into voters' decisions about the identity of rulers, then power over subjects is also indirectly power over rulers. For the voters' power to determine the identity of decision-makers is, as I government would lose electoral popularity unless it acceded to the truckers' demands. This manoeuvre was successful to the extent that the French government caved in, and the other governments that stood firm did lose support. The British government, for example, lost its lead in the public opinion polls for the first time since the last election and is now making promises of significant concession. government would lose electoral popularity unless it acceded to the truckers' demands. This manoeuvre was successful to the extent that the French government caved in, and the other governments that stood firm did lose support. The British government, for example, lost its lead in the public opinion polls for the first time since the last election and is now making promises of significant concession.