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Patterns of Power

In its most general sense, power is the production of causal effects. It is ‘the bringing about of consequences’ (Lukes 1978: 634; Lukes 1986). The power of a river, for example, is manifest in its causal effects: it erodes a bed, transports rock material from one place to another, and produces a delta or a flood plain. Similarly, the power of electricity is manifest in the illumination of light bulbs, the heating of cooker elements, and the operation of underground railways. This idea of power as *causal power* is also integral to the very idea of human agency: to be an agent is to exercise causal powers that produce specific effects in the world. These human powers comprise the ‘transformative capacity’ possessed by human agents (Giddens 1976: 110; Giddens 1982). To act is to have causal powers, and these powers constitute the ‘potency’ that defines an organism as a human agent. Power is ‘an actor’s general ability to produce successful performances’ (Wrong 1979: 1).¹

To talk or to write about *social* power involves a move beyond this basic causal vocabulary. Social power is a form of causation that has its effects in and through social relations (Isaac 1992; see also Isaac 1987). In its strongest sense, it is an agent’s intentional use of causal powers to affect the conduct of other participants in the social relations that connect them together. In this book, my concern is with social power in this sense and, unless anything is stated to the

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contrary, the word 'power' will be used exclusively in its social sense.

At its simplest, power is a social relation between two agents, who may usefully be called the 'principal' and the 'subaltern'.² A principal is the paramount agent in a power relationship, while a subaltern is the subordinate agent. The principal has or exercises power, while the subaltern is affected by this power. Concretely, of course, such relations are rarely so one-sided as this implies. A principal in one relationship may be a subaltern in another, and subalterns often exercise countervailing power to that of their principal. Analytically, however, the dynamics of power relations can initially be understood in terms of this relatively simple relation of principal to subaltern.

The intentions or interests of principals have been central to many discussions of power. To qualify as a social power relation there must be more than simply a causal influence between agents. It is for this reason that Wrong (1979) holds that it is a form of causal influence that involves the production of intended effects. An exercise of power, he argues, typically involves an intentional intervention in a chain of causal effects. An accidental or incidental effect of an agent's actions cannot be regarded as an exercise of power unless it is a foreseen consequence of these actions (1979: 4). A power relation, then, involves the intention to produce a particular effect or the desire to see a particular effect occurring. Power is an intended or desired causal effect; it is an effect that realises a purpose (Beetham 1991: 43). A power relation cannot, therefore, be identified unless there is some reference to the intentions and interests of the actors involved and, especially, to those of the principal (Wartenberg 1990: 65). An intention or a desire rests upon a felt or perceived interest that the principal believes will be furthered if he or she brings about particular kinds of causal effects in the field of social relations.

As agents, both principals and subalterns are, in crucial respects, free: they have a degree of autonomy in shaping their actions, which are never completely determined by external factors. This is not to say that individuals must be seen, in classical liberal terms, as sovereign individuals making perfectly informed and unconstrained rational

choices on the basis of their pure 'free will'. It is, rather, to recognise that agents always have the ability to *choose* among alternative courses of action, however constrained these choices may be. Lukes (1974) has stressed that the most important implication of this is that social power has to be seen in relation to the possible resistance that others can offer to it. The subaltern must be thought of as being able to act otherwise than in conformity with the wishes of the principal, as having the capacity to resist. In Foucault's words, 'Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only in so far as they are free' (Foucault 1982: 229). The power of a principal consists in the ability to freely pursue intentions and interests; the power of a subaltern consists in their freedom to resist (Benton 1981: 296). Social power, in its most general sense, then, involves the socially significant affecting of one agent by another in the face of possible resistance.

The exercise of power and the possibility of resistance to it establish a dialectic of control and autonomy, a balance of power that limits the actions of the participants in their interplay with each other. In power relations, then, 'individual or collective subjects . . . are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse compartments may be realized' (Foucault 1982: 229). Acts of power occur when principals are able to restrict the choices that subalterns are able to make: the greater this restriction (the more limited the range of choices available to subalterns), the greater is the power of the principal (Wartenberg 1990: 85). As Lukes has put it:

To use the vocabulary of power . . . is to speak of human agents separately or together, in groups or organisations, through action or inaction, significantly affecting the thoughts or actions of others. In speaking thus, one assumes that although agents operate within structurally determined limits, they none the less have a relative autonomy and could have acted differently. (Lukes 1977: 6-7)

Power relations involve the possibility of conflict because of this choice among alternatives, but resistance is not always

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expressed in overt conflict or struggle. Consider, for example, a factory manager who orders an employee, on the threat of dismissal, not to smoke at work. If the worker has no intention of smoking – and is, indeed, a non-smoker – then there will be no conflict and the manager has clearly not had to exercise any actual power to prevent the worker from smoking. The manager does, however, still hold the power of dismissal, which is ready and waiting to be exercised should this or any other worker choose to smoke at work. Power relations involve the possibility of conflict, but only the exercise of power need involve actual conflict, however minimal.

These considerations show how important it is to distinguish between *exercising* power and *holding* power (Dahl 1968). At its fullest, a power relation involves the deliberate, intentional intervention of a principal in the course of interaction so as to produce a specific and particular effect on a subaltern. Such an exercise of power comes closest to the everyday understanding of social power. An agent who has this capacity to affect others may, however, be able to achieve this without actually having to do anything at all. This occurs when others anticipate their intentions and their likely actions and act in relation to these. Such ‘anticipated reactions’ (Friedrich 1937) are apparent when agents act in a certain way because they believe that, if they do not, they will be affected in some socially significant way by another who has the capacity and the intention to do so.

Action on the basis of an anticipated reaction is an effect of a principal’s power, even though he or she does nothing directly to make this power effective. Indeed, anticipated reactions may even increase a person’s power. The leaders of a political party, for example, may believe that a business leader is wealthy enough to grant or withhold financial favours, and so may formulate policies that accord with his or her wishes. They may, however, misunderstand the true extent of the person’s wealth, his or her actual financial power being amplified by the mistaken beliefs of the party leadership. Such reputational power should not be overstated, but neither should it be ignored:

If an actor is believed to be powerful, if he [*sic*] knows that others hold such a belief, and if he encourages it and resolves to make use of it by intervening in or punishing actions by the others who do not comply with his wishes, *then* he truly has power and his power has indeed been conferred on him by the attributions, perhaps initially without foundation, of others. (Wrong 1979: 9)

Power can be effected, then, without being exercised. This conclusion is central to the argument that power is, at root, a capacity. To have a capacity is to be in a position to do something (Morriss 1987: 81), and any capacity may remain latent without thereby ceasing to be a capacity. As Haugaard (1997) has succinctly put it, a Ferrari racing car has the power to travel at 120 miles per hour, even when it is parked in a garage with its engine switched off. Any disposition can persist without being exercised. Someone may, for example, know how to ride a bike even though they are not currently cycling. Their knowledge does not suddenly come into existence when they get on a bike and disappear again when they dismount. A principal may, therefore, have a capacity to act in some way without actually doing so. To have power is to have an enduring capacity or disposition to do something, regardless of whether this capacity is actually being exercised.

It could be suggested that an unexercised capacity might as well not exist, as it might not seem to make sense to describe someone as 'powerful' if they never do anything with their supposed power. However, a powerful person who does not exercise their power is like a miser who hoards a fortune but lives as a pauper. The miser retains the capacity to spend and could escape his or her poverty in an instant. Similarly, the actor with the potential to exercise power can, at any moment, choose to realise this potential by affecting the actions of others. Power – like knowledge and money – can be held in readiness for use whenever it is needed. The anticipation of its use, furthermore, means that power can have significant social consequences even when there is no explicit and overt intervention by the principal.

Mainstream and Second Stream

This core idea of power has been developed in two broad directions, forming two streams of power research (Ball 1975; Ball 1976; Clegg 1989). The mainstream tradition has been principally concerned with the episodically exercised power that one agent has over another. The second stream of power research focuses on the dispositional capacity to do something. It is the ability that actors have to facilitate certain things that lies at the centre of attention. Mainstream views concentrate on what in French is called '*pouvoir*', while the second stream has concentrated on '*puissance*'.³

The mainstream view of power takes the sovereign power of a state as its exemplar (Macpherson 1962; Abercrombie et al. 1986). The classic statement of this is in Weber's analysis of the structuring of authority and administration in modern and pre-modern states (Weber 1914). While later work on sovereign power has continued to focus on states and the political power of individuals and groups in relation to states, it has also followed Weber's recognition that power exists in other sovereign organisations, such as businesses and churches. Economic power, for example, has been studied in national and multinational enterprises and in the actions of the individuals and groups involved in their ownership and control, and in similar 'stakeholder' relations. A key area of research has been the relationship between economic power and political power, as explored in elitist and Marxist theories of ruling classes and power elites (Mosca 1896; Mills 1956; Miliband 1969).

Weber saw power as manifested in the chances that an actor's will can be imposed on the other participants in a social relationship, even against their resistance (Weber 1914: 942). According to this point of view, actors seek to make others do what they would otherwise not do, and they resist the attempts of others to make them act in ways contrary to their own preferences. In this 'constant sum' or 'zero sum' view, power relations are seen as asymmetrical, hierarchical relations of super- and sub-ordination in which one agent can gain only at the expense of another. They must be seen in terms of the conflicting interests and goals of the par-

ticipants and the abilities of some to secure the compliance of others. There is a given distribution of power within any society, and some agents have more of this power than others. Struggles over the distribution of power will always involve both winners and losers.

This view of power was forged into a formal model by Lasswell and Kaplan (1950) and was given mathematical form by Simon (1953), Dahl (1957), and Polsby (1960). These writers, however, limited their attention to the behavioural and intentional aspects of the actual exercise of power. They saw power as the exercise of causal influence within the decision-making processes of sovereign organisations. Powerful actors are those who make decisions or who participate in the decision-making apparatuses of sovereign organisations. Dahl, for example, saw a principal having power over subalterns because he or she is able to make decisions to which subalterns conform.

This approach has largely been developed through a reliance on an individualistic and rationalistic view of action that stresses the autonomy and rationality of agents as they choose from among alternative courses of action. The paradigm example of such action is Weber's type of instrumentally rational action ('*zweckrationalität*'). In this framework, individuals have preferences, appetites, desires, or interests, and they pursue their own interests at the expense of those of others. Each agent is a maximiser, or satisficer, of advantages. Drawing on the rational-choice theories of market behaviour produced by economists, power relations in and around sovereign states have been investigated as if they formed a 'political market' (Downs 1957; Buchanan and Tullock 1962).

Thus, Dowding (1996) has argued that power should be seen as the capacity of one agent to deliberately change – in line with his or her own interests – the 'incentive structure' of costs and benefits faced by another agent. In a similar vein, Wartenberg (1990: 85) holds that an agent becomes a principal in a power relation if, and only if, that agent can strategically constrain the action alternatives available to a subaltern. The constrained alternatives form an integral element in the subaltern's strategic calculations about future courses of action, and their consideration of the rewards and

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costs attached to particular alternatives may lead subalterns to act contrary to certain of their own interests. What is important, Dowding argues, is that an altered incentive structure allows a principal to achieve desired outcomes by means of the actions of others.

This purely individualistic and rational-choice version of the mainstream view is more limited than Weber's own ideas on power, and this led writers such as Wrong (1967–8) and Bachrach and Baratz (1962; 1963) to emphasise a whole second face to the exercise of power. The first face of power, studied by Dahl and his followers, comprises the most obvious and overt processes of formal decision-making. The second face of power, on the other hand, comprises the hidden, behind-the-scenes processes of agenda setting that Bachrach and Baratz termed 'nondecision-making'. For Bachrach and Baratz, a principal has power over a subaltern to the extent that he or she can prevent the subaltern from doing something that they would otherwise do or that they would like to see happen. This can be achieved, for example, by preventing an issue from coming to the point of decision, thereby excluding the subaltern from any effective say about it.

Lukes's (1974) important critique of power studies was mainly concerned with the problems that he identified in this mainstream of power research. While he recognised the validity of distinguishing between the two facets of power – though he rather misleadingly described them as two 'dimensions' of power – he argued that it was also necessary to add a third facet to the analysis. This aspect of power took more seriously the importance of the 'real interests' of which actors may normally be unaware. From this point of view, Lukes argues, the power of a principal can be manifest in the ability to make a subaltern believe that their interest lies in doing something that is, in fact, harmful to them or contrary to their deeper interests.

This argument has generated much critical discussion about the nature of interests, but Lukes (1977) and some other contributors to this discussion (for example, Giddens 1982) have extended the argument to raise a matter that points beyond the bounds of the mainstream approach. In addition to the need to incorporate real interests and 'false

consciousness' into the model of power, they pointed to the need to take social structure more seriously. Power is not limited to the 'discrete intervention by a social agent in the life of another social agent' (Wartenberg 1990: 72), but may also involve the existence of enduring structured constraints over actions. Lukes holds that this is most clearly apparent in what he calls the 'facilitative power' that may be held by classes and other collective actors. Though there are problems in Lukes's distinction between structural constraint and forms of structural determination that do not involve power (Layder 1985), he made the duality of structure and agency central to discussions of power.

In raising these issues, Lukes and Giddens were echoing ideas that had emerged as central themes in the second stream of power research. This second stream of research has not been so tightly defined as the mainstream, and it has no equivalent founding statement to that of Weber. It has, nevertheless, been an important source of critical commentary on that mainstream. The second stream begins from the same core idea of power, but it takes this in a different direction. Its focus is not on specific organisations of power, but on strategies and techniques of power. It sees power as diffused throughout a society, rather than being confined to sovereign organisations. According to this view, power is the collective property of whole systems of cooperating actors, of the fields of social relations within which particular actors are located. At the same time, it stresses not the repressive aspects of power but the facilitative or 'productive' aspects. Of particular importance are the communal mechanisms that result from the cultural, ideological, or discursive formations through which consensus is constituted. This is a 'variable sum' or 'nonzero sum' view of power: all can gain from the use of power, and there need be no losers.

A key figure in the development of this second stream is Gramsci (1926–37), whose concept of hegemony highlighted a mechanism of power through which a dominant class can secure the *consent* of subaltern classes without the need for any direct use of coercion or repression. Through the cultural formation of individuals in schools, churches, factories, and other agencies of socialisation, a dominant class can secure a

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more stable position for itself than it could possibly enjoy simply through exercising the repressive powers of a state. Althusser (1971) employed this idea, arguing that the 'repressive apparatuses' of a state work alongside its 'ideological apparatuses' to sustain social control. It is through ideology, he argued, that individuals are 'interpellated' – called out – as subjects with the specific characteristics and desires that commit them to the very actions that are required of them by their class position.

Working from a different theoretical basis, Arendt (1959) also stressed the collective capacities that are inherent in political communities. Power relations, she argued, are formed through communicative actions in discursive communities. People communicate with each other through their speech acts, and the shared symbols that they use allow them to co-ordinate their actions and so to act in concert. Power comes into existence wherever the members of a group are forged together through such bonds of solidarity and organise themselves for collective action. Such a group acquires an identity and purpose and enables or 'empowers' its constituent individuals to act in the name of, or on behalf of, the community as a whole (see also Lindblom 1977).

Habermas (1981a; 1981b) shares this view and adds that it is the discursive structures of the socio-cultural life-world that are the bases of such power. Habermas draws on the ideas of Parsons (1963), as well as Arendt, as it was Parsons who saw power as resting on a framework of communal trust and shared values within a 'societal community'.⁴ According to Parsons, power is rooted in the shared values that define the goals and purposes of a community. Societal communities are seen as organised around those values in which individuals have trust or confidence, and that define positions of leadership whose occupants are endowed with the legitimate right to issue commands and to make policy in relation to the values and purposes that the members of the community hold in common. Parsons further argues that the diffused character of power makes it a circulating medium analogous to money. It is not confined to sovereign organisations but is something that all individuals can hold, in varying degrees, and can use or exchange in their actions.

Parsons has been criticised for overemphasising value consensus and for implying that societies are generally characterised by the perfect socialisation of their members into this consensus (Wrong 1961). In order to avoid this tendency in Parsons' work, Barnes (1988) has proposed an approach to power that opens up this argument and takes it in a more acceptable direction. For Barnes, the basis of social order is to be found in shared cognitive meanings – not shared values – and power, therefore, has to be related to the symbolic orders of meaning that underpin particular bodies of knowledge. Power is, he argues, a capacity for action that someone has by virtue of the social distribution of knowledge: an individual's power is their portion of the collective power of the community as a whole, the community whose knowledge they bear and share (1988: 57). It is particularly closely associated, he argues, with those communal structures of meaning that Weber saw as associated with social status and the social estimation of honour (1988: 144).

The most influential statement of this second-stream view of power in recent years has been that of Foucault (1975; 1976), who argued that analysis of the repressive powers of command within states and other sovereign organisations provides only a part of the full picture.⁵ Power exists throughout the social sphere that surrounds and penetrates the public, political sphere of sovereign power. What Foucault called 'discursive formations' operate through mechanisms of socialisation and 'seduction' – to use a term from Baudrillard (1981) – that bring about the cultural formation of individual subjects. They bring particular kinds of mental orientation and routinised actions into being. Where Arendt and Parsons saw discursively formed power in a positive way, as a form of collective empowerment, Foucault stressed its negative face. For Foucault, it remains a source of social control, of 'discipline'. Discourse constitutes people as subjects who are authorised (as experts) to discipline others, but the most effective and pervasive forms of power occur where people learn to exercise self-discipline. Foucault studied, in particular, the asylums, prisons, schools, armies, and factories that helped to establish disciplined populations.

Foucault's argument, of course, owes much to both Gramsci and Althusser, though he stressed that power was

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not to be seen as the monolithic possession of a class or any other social agency. Disciplinary power is dispersed through all the groups, organisations, and agencies of a society, and there is no master plan of indoctrination at work. Societies tend to be highly fragmented, forming dispersed ‘archipelagos’ of localised discursive communities, each of which is the basis of its own specialised forms of power. Power is pluralistic and circulates through the whole society, though there may be certain common principles of power running through large parts of a society.

Lukes, Giddens, and others have sought to incorporate elements of this second stream into the mainstream. This does not mean – as is sometimes suggested – that the mainstream view must be completely replaced with, say, a Foucauldian view of power. The arguments of Foucault and others from within the second stream also have their flaws. The central task for research into power is to build an account that synthesises the two streams, using each to enrich the other. This is not to say that they are equally valid in all respects, nor is it to suggest that our aim should simply be an eclectic bolting together of disparate ideas. Rather, it is to claim that a work of synthesis that draws, in varying ways, on the two streams is a fundamental priority.

The Elementary Forms of Social Power

Mainstream and second-stream approaches have each highlighted different aspects of the core idea of power. Using ideas from these two streams of research, it is possible to distinguish two complementary modes of power. Mainstream research has highlighted what can be called corrective causal influences, while second-stream research has emphasised persuasive causal influence. Corrective influence and persuasive influence are the elementary forms of social power. While each depends on the use of resources, the type of resource and the ways in which they are used differ. The resources that are involved in these forms of influence are those that can be put to use as sanctions or that can be offered as reasons for acting. Concrete patterns of power combine corrective and

persuasive influence in various ways, forming both stable and enduring structures of domination and more fluid structures of interpersonal power.

Corrective influence operates through the use of resources that can serve as punitive and remunerative sanctions that are able to work directly on the interests of subalterns in power relations. At their simplest, these resources may be tied to the physical strength and immediate physical possessions that a person can use in face-to-face encounters, but social power arises from the ways that they are socially structured and involves a more extended range of rewarding and punishing resources. The two sub-types of corrective influence are force and manipulation. Force is the use of negative physical sanctions to prevent the actions of subalterns, the key resources being weapons, prisons, and similar instruments. Manipulation, on the other hand, is a use of both positive and negative sanctions of various kinds, including such things as money, credit, and access to employment, in order to influence the interest-oriented calculations of agents. It is through force and manipulation that subalterns can be caused to act or be prevented from acting by direct restraint or by influence over the conditions under which they make their calculations.

Persuasive influence, on the other hand, operates through the offering and acceptance of reasons for acting in one way rather than another. At its simplest, this may rest upon a person's strength of personality and their attractiveness to others, but persuasiveness depends particularly on socially structured cognitive and evaluative symbols. Shared cognitive meanings and shared value commitments are bases on which intrinsically appropriate reasons for action can be offered to others and be regarded as plausible by them. A particular course of action comes to be seen as morally or emotionally appropriate. These resources are those that Bourdieu (1979) has called 'cultural' and 'symbolic capital'.

Force is the most basic and direct way that one agent has of altering the action alternatives open to another. It involves imposing physical restrictions or emotional suffering on another person. As such, it relies on the physical abilities of principals or on their ability to mobilise physical effects. Examples of force include inflicting pain or death, denying

food, destroying property, and giving insults or abuse. In a force relationship, a principal physically or emotionally restrains a subaltern from pursuing a course of action that he or she would prefer to pursue, or behaves in a way that the subaltern would avoid if at all possible (Wrong 1979: 24–8; Wartenberg 1990: 93). Force can take both violent and non-violent forms. While violence consists of a direct force exercised on the body or mind of another person, non-violent force involves placing physical restraints on their freedom of action. The ability to make another's nose bleed by punching them in the face, for example, is an exercise of raw violence that significantly affects the other. Such an exercise of force, however, is at the limits of social power, as the subaltern has no choice of action. It is not possible for the subaltern to choose whether or not to have a nosebleed; it is an automatic physiological response to a hard punch on the nose. Force is a particularly negative or restrictive form of power that prevents a subaltern from doing something. It cannot so easily be used in positive ways to make a subaltern act in one way rather than another. This negative character of sheer force means that it tends to be experienced by subalterns in an alienating way and is especially likely to arouse feelings of hostility and acts of resistance.

What I have called manipulation occurs where a principal alters the bases on which a subaltern calculates among action alternatives, ensuring that the subaltern's rational choices lead him or her to act in ways that the principal desires. The intentions of the principal are hidden from the subaltern, yet the subaltern acts on the basis of conditions that have been set by the principal (Wrong 1979: 28–32). Examples of manipulation include advertising, propaganda, and price adjustment, where information, ideas, or prices are adjusted in order to secure particular outcomes. What is commonly described as 'brainwashing' can be seen as a mixture of manipulation and emotional force.⁶

Where corrective influence depends on rational calculation, persuasive influence depends on arguments, appeals, and reasons that cause subalterns to believe that it is appropriate to act in one way rather than another.⁷ In this form of power subalterns are convinced of the need to follow a particular course of action through the building of emotional

commitments that limit their willingness to consider action alternatives in a purely instrumental way. This may involve a commitment to or recognition of ideas or values that are accepted as beyond question, as providing intrinsically appropriate reasons for acting. Where persuasion operates through cognitive symbols – ideas and representations that lead people to define situations in certain ways – it takes the form of signification. Where it operates through the building of value commitments to particular ideas or conditions, it takes the form of legitimation (Giddens 1984: 29). In the former case, subalterns are drawn into a principal's interpretative frame of reference, while in the latter case they accord a normative character to the views of their principals. Those who are committed to a particular set of values are likely to defer to the views of those whom they regard as especially fitted to speak on behalf of these values, and so subalterns may build up a commitment to these agents themselves. Persuasive influence may also involve a commitment to those agents whose views are treated as especially compelling because of their particular character or competence. Trust in the superior medical knowledge of doctors, for example, is likely to lead their patients to accept diagnosis and advice. In yet other situations, persuasive influence may rest on an emotional attraction to a particular individual and may be sustained by rhetoric and demagoguery that reinforces this attraction.

Force, manipulation, signification, and legitimation are elementary forms of power. They are the elements from which more fully developed power relations may be built. They are not, in themselves, persistent and enduring relations of power, and they often lack some of the features of the more developed forms. In situations of force, for example, there are no real alternatives open to subalterns: options are physically blocked or prevented by the principal. In situations of manipulation, on the other hand, knowledge or awareness of the intentions of the principals is missing. In this case, and in some situations of persuasive influence, anticipatory reaction is not possible. Fully developed power relations, then, go beyond these elementary forms to include, to varying degrees, intentionality, resistance, and anticipated reactions.

<i>Elementary forms of power</i>	Corrective influence		Persuasive influence	
	Force	Manipulation	Signification	Legitimation
<i>Developed forms of power</i>	Domination			
	Through constraint		Through discursive formation	
	Coercion ('lions')	Inducement ('foxes')	Expertise ('owls')	Command ('bears')
	Counteraction			
	Protest		Pressure	
	Interpersonal power			

Figure 1 A map of power relations

Developed power relations, whether based in corrective influence or persuasive influence (or – as is more usual – on some combination of the two), can be seen at a number of levels. There are, first, those patterns of power that form structures of *domination*. Secondly, there are patterns of power that occur as forms of *counteraction* to domination. In addition to domination and counteraction, however, it is possible to distinguish the more amorphous but enduring patterns of *interpersonal power* that have their roots in proximal, face-to-face locales. These and related distinctions are set out in Figure 1.

Structures of Domination

Domination exists where power is structured into the stable and enduring social relations that make up large-scale social structures. It is ‘canalised’ power (Mannheim 1947: 48–9), working through institutions to produce regular and persistent patterns of action. Weber explored some aspects of domination in his investigations into patterns of social strati-

fiction. I shall not look in any detail at what he said on this as I have examined it in an earlier book where it was the central topic (Scott 1996). My interest here is with domination as the basis of *leadership* rather than social stratification. It is through leadership that some agents are constituted as principals with enduring powers over particular subalterns. While stratification and leadership cannot – and should not – be separated, the distinction is important to keep in mind.

Leadership within structures of domination occurs through specific extensions to the elementary forms of power that have been discussed. In most concrete structures of domination, of course, these forms of power will operate in combination, and they generally depend upon each other in complex ways. It is important, nevertheless, to understand their specific and distinctive features if we are to understand their concrete combinations.⁸

Force and manipulation, based on instrumentally rational or calculative forms of motivation and the use of material resources, can be organised into more complex structures of coercion and inducement (Giddens 1981: 57). These embed force and manipulation into larger and more complex alignments of interest through the threat of force and the promise of rewards. Together, coercion and inducement comprise what Weber (1914) described as structures of ‘domination by virtue of a constellation of interests’, and that Giddens (1979: 100–1) has called ‘allocative domination’. They are structures of constraint, where principals can influence subalterns without using formal orders or directions. Subaltern action alternatives are shaped by the constellation of interests set by a principal’s resources.

Persuasive influence, on the other hand, involves processes of legitimation and signification that can be organised into complex structures of command and expertise. These embed persuasive influence into larger and more complex structures of commitment, loyalty, and trust, using means of information and communication. They comprise what Weber called structures of ‘domination by virtue of authority’ and Giddens has called ‘authoritative domination’. They are structures of discursive formation.

It is difficult to sustain a structure based on pure force for very long, as it requires the constant use of physical energy and resources. The establishment of a structure of leadership through coercion, however, allows a more economical use of these facilities, as it rests on a *threat* of force and on a belief on the part of the subalterns that the principal has both the capability and the willingness to use it. Coercion was seen by Machiavelli (1513) and Pareto (1916) as characteristic of those they called the 'lions' of political life – those who maintain their hold on power through repressive measures. A threat to use force alters the action alternatives open to a person by changing the reward and cost outcomes that are associated with particular courses of action. At its most extreme, coercion involves a threat to use violence, as in the case where a subaltern chooses to act as directed in order to avoid a punch in the face or a bullet in the head.⁹ Submission to threatened violence is at the margins of social power.

Coercion need not involve the constant use of actual force, so long as subalterns continue to believe in the possibility of force. Threats of force can be combined with the occasional use of actual force to reinforce their credibility. Punishment, suppression, torture, and other forms of force, then, can be employed as a last resort, exercised mainly when the threat of force is challenged (Wrong 1979: 41; Wartenberg 1990: 96). The need for the occasional use of force shows that a structure of power based on threats alone cannot be fully effective. Subalterns must believe in the willingness and ability of a principal to use the threatened force, and a coercive structure of leadership cannot be sustained unless a principal does occasionally exercise some actual force.

The actual capacity to exercise force may not, of course, match the threats that are made – a principal may lack the necessary physical resources or be unwilling to use them to the full. This points to the fact that coercion, which rests on a pattern of threat and credibility, may become very unstable in the face of a direct and concerted challenge. Continued obedience by subalterns depends not so much on the perceived severity of the force, as on a belief in the certainty that it will be used. If subalterns believe that force will not be used, or will not be used on the scale that is threatened, then they

will be more likely to mount a challenge to the principal's power (Wrong 1979: 43–4). Conversely, threats may be very effective if subalterns have an exaggerated impression of the principal's ability to act. Subalterns may, for example, overestimate the physical resources that are available or the willingness of their principals to use them (Wartenberg 1990: 101).

While force is predominantly negative, coercion can be positive as well as negative. Through coercion it is possible to get a subaltern to do something as well as to prevent them from doing it. This is because 'the logic of a threat is precisely its positing action that an agent is able to forestall by acting in an appropriate manner' (Wartenberg 1990:101; see also Tilly 1990: 19). Coercion shares with force, however, the likelihood that it will be experienced in alienating ways, and so it is especially likely to engender resistance. Thus, Etzioni (1961) holds that coercive structures of power are especially likely to be associated with an 'alienative involvement' on the part of subalterns, and he cites the examples of economic exploitation, slavery, and prison regimes.

Leadership through inducement involves the manipulation of agents through the offering of rewards for conformity. People are offered varying incentives to act in one way or another, leaving subalterns with a deliberately constrained choice of action alternatives. Inducement was seen by Machiavelli and Pareto as characteristic of the 'foxes' of political life, those who rely on cunning and intrigue to sustain their power. Where coercion rests on threats and may have a limited degree of stability, even without the occasional use of force, a reliance on the promise of rewards can be effective only for so long as there are, in fact, regular pay-outs of these rewards. Unless the promised rewards are forthcoming, obedience will not continue. For this reason, a stable structure of inducement requires the constant replenishment of the resources that make the rewards possible or, more unusually, a complete monopoly of a virtually inexhaustible resource. Etzioni (1961) sees such 'remunerative' power as generating a 'calculative involvement' on the part of subalterns: involvement in the maintenance of the power relationship is intrinsically neither negative nor positive, but depends upon a recurrent calculation of the advantages and disadvantages

that it offers. Arendt (1970) saw coercion and inducement as forms of the negative, destructive type of power that she called 'violence', using the word in a broader sense than is usual.

The non-delivery of any promised rewards is likely to be experienced by subalterns as a deprivation of what they have come to regard as an entitlement, and a relation of inducement may all too easily switch over into one of perceived coercion. In this respect, coercion and inducement can be seen as complementary aspects of a strategic, instrumental usage of resources. They operate, respectively, through the punishments and the rewards that can be attached to alternative courses of action, and they depend on the willingness of actors to calculate the profits and losses that are associated with these alternatives.

Domination through command rests on the idea of the *right* to give orders and a corresponding *obligation* to obey. There is willing compliance on the part of a subaltern because of a commitment to the legitimacy of the source of the command, not because of an independent and autonomous evaluation of its content. While coercion and inducement are characteristic of those whom Pareto describes, using the language of fables and fairy tales, as the lions and the foxes, command might be said to be characteristic of the domineering but benign 'bears'. Power is legitimate because it is accepted as being right, correct, justified, or valid in some way (Held 1989: 102; Beetham 1991: 10–12). This legitimacy flows from the internalisation of significant cultural meanings and an identification with those who are seen as their guardians or guarantors because of the positions that they occupy through election, appointment, or some other accepted procedure. The values to which principals and subalterns orient themselves underpin the norms that define the various institutionalised social positions to which rights and obligations are attached. What is usually called 'authority' exists 'whenever one, several, or many people explicitly or tacitly permit someone else to make decisions for them for some category of acts' (Lindblom 1977: 17–18).

Some analysts have seen command as requiring that there be a value consensus between principals and subalterns (Lipset 1959; Almond and Verba 1963). Where there is such

a shared moral commitment to the substantive values that lie behind particular commands, rather than simply to the formal procedural principles through which the commands are issued, a structure of authority is, of course, likely to be particularly strong. This is, however, at the margins of command, which can exist with much lower levels of consensus.

Although command rests on the willing compliance of the subalterns, they do not accord or deny legitimacy to particular commands at will. The normative framework is – from the standpoint of any individual subaltern – both mandatory and compulsory. It is, in Durkheim's (1895) sense, a social fact. Individual agents may, therefore, act altruistically in the interests of others, and contrary to their own interests, despite the fact that they disapprove of the contents of the particular commands that they have been given. This relative detachment from the consequences or outcomes of acts of legitimate domination is the principal reason why coercion or inducement will normally underpin the patterns of command that are found in particular societies.

The relationship between command and corrective influence has been highlighted by James Scott (1990) in his elaboration of Mosca's idea of the political formula. He argues that relations of domination can secure a legitimacy through the particular 'public transcripts' that both justify and mask the realities of coercion and inducement that underpin political leadership. A public transcript is a narrative or account constructed in accordance with a 'script' that is provided by the particular form of discourse that underpins a power relationship. Domination is strengthened to the extent that subalterns accept this narrative as a rationalisation of their reasons for acting:

The theatrical imperatives that normally prevail in situations of domination produce a public transcript in close conformity with how the dominant group would wish to have things appear. The dominant never control the stage absolutely, but their wishes normally prevail. In the short run, it is in the interests of the subordinate to produce a more or less credible performance, speaking

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the lines and making the gestures he [*sic*] knows are expected of him. (James Scott 1990: 4; see also Newby 1975)

In a situation of command, then, the public transcript is systematically skewed towards the interests of the principal, reflecting the incorporation of the subaltern into the dominant discourse. The coexistence of command with coercion and inducement is apparent in the existence of what Scott calls the 'hidden transcripts' through which subalterns, in private, contradict or inflect what appears in the public transcript. Such hidden transcripts are produced by subalterns for an audience of friends and intimates who they regard as equals, or who are not directly involved in the power relationship.

Positions of command require explicit, overt, and sustained action on the part of the principal, as the dominant agent must, at the very least, make the order known to those who are expected to obey. What I shall call constraint, however, brings together inducement and anticipated coercion, and it may occur without any explicit intervention by a principal. A constraining actor has superior resources and is able to restrict the autonomy of others by limiting the range of options that can be considered as feasible courses of action. This restriction may occur without the constraining actor showing any direct intent to influence the others. A monopoly supplier of credit, for example, can limit the power and autonomy of those who seek to borrow, simply because they have few alternative sources of capital open to them. The interests of the participants converge around a structure of power in which a constraining principal faces a tightly constrained subaltern. There is, of course, a fuzzy boundary between constraint and command, especially where actors obey through an anticipatory reaction. In such a situation, those in command may not have explicitly voiced an order, but their subordinates obey their anticipated wishes nevertheless.

The final form of domination to be considered is what I have called expertise. This occurs when cognitive symbols are structured into organised bodies of knowledge in terms of which some people are regarded as experts and others defer

to their superior knowledge and skills. This type of power is based on trust in a principal's specialised knowledge or skill rather than the specific social position that they hold in a structure of command. Employing the language of fable and fairy tale once more, expertise might be said to be characteristic of the wise 'owls'. It is a form of domination that rests upon specific knowledge or wisdom accepted on trust by a subaltern. The authority of a doctor over a patient, for example, is, ideal typically, based on their possession of a specialised technical competence in medical matters to which the patient defers.¹⁰ Rational deliberation, free from power, occurs when a person's acceptance of an order is based on an independent, knowledgeable, and reasoned assessment of its content. Expertise, however, is a form of persuasive influence and rests on a substantive *trust* in the competence of the person issuing an order (Wartenberg 1990: 54) and a corresponding acceptance of one's own lack of competence. Patients, for example, typically have no significant technical knowledge about their medical conditions and so cannot be persuaded of the truth of what a doctor says simply through rational dialogue and debate. This is why they are 'patients', passive agents. They must have faith in the competence of the expert, because they have not personally evaluated the particular grounds for the advice they are given. The expert, for his or her part, may try to ensure that their technical knowledge remains an esoteric monopoly, seeking to avoid the possibility that subalterns may challenge them. This may involve combining expertise with manipulation.

Structures of command and expertise involve a degree of 'moral involvement' by subalterns in their own subordination. Subaltern involvement, Etzioni (1961) argued, is both intense and positive, and this relationship is epitomised by the devoted party member or the loyal follower. This moral involvement contrasts with the alienative involvement that typically occurs in structures of coercion and inducement.

Coercion, inducement, command, and expertise rarely appear in their pure forms, they are ideal typical forms of domination. The power relations of any actual society are organised through its institutional structures into a variety of concrete combinations of power that combine these types

in complex ways. States, business enterprises, universities, churches, families, and gangs, for example, combine the different forms of power to form the concrete patterns of power that give them their specific characteristics.

Empirical studies of power have commonly distinguished between economic, political, and ideological domination as the most distinctive combinations of these forms of power (Mann 1986b: 22–3; Gellner 1988; Runciman 1989: 12). Political domination has its particular focus in state institutions, its core elements being the processes of authoritative domination that give rise to structures of command. As a sovereign organisation of command within a particular territory, a state is organised around the specialised structure of coercive agencies and mechanisms that Althusser (1971) called ‘repressive apparatuses’, but it is also closely associated with what he called ‘ideological apparatuses’. It is through these ideological apparatuses that state legitimation occurs. Mann has separated the coercive aspects of state institutions from their command aspects in his distinction between ‘military power’ and the narrower civil form of political power. It is principally in the modern societies of the West that this structural separation of the military and the civil aspects of political domination has been developed to any extent (see also Giddens 1985: 288).

Command relations themselves, however, are not confined to states and their political institutions. Business enterprises, churches, schools, and other associations of modern societies are all organised around the exercise of command. Managerial hierarchies of command are the means through which these organisations control their members and relate to other organisations through inter-organisational coalitions and alliances. Inter-enterprise relations in business, however, may also be organised as ‘economic’ relations of inducement. The offering or withholding of credit, for example, is a means through which one enterprise can influence the options that are open to another. The activities of business enterprises are the basis of the economic relations through which economic domination is produced. This economic domination is rooted most directly in processes of allocative domination in so far as it involves the calculative use of material resources, generally in the form of the ‘wealth’ possessed by economic

agents, in exchange and market relations. While economic domination, operating through relations of inducement, rests on what Weber called 'domination by virtue of a constellation of interests', the latter is not exclusively economic in character and I will show that it is important to recognise a number of forms of such constraint.¹¹

What is often called 'ideological domination', finally, involves the symbolic resources that enter into signification and legitimation, and that are the bases of conceptions of social status. Some have described this as 'symbolic power' (Thompson 1995: 16–17), 'cultural and social power' (Jessop 1972: 58), or 'normative power' (Etzioni 1961: 11). This form of domination is rooted in those ideological apparatuses that Althusser saw as central to the generation of legitimacy.

This distinction between economic, political, and ideological domination, then, is a useful basis for empirical investigations of concrete configurations of power, and I shall make many references to economic and political domination, in particular, in the course of this book. In developing my argument I will emphasise the interdependence and combination of forms of power in specific acts of power. Although they can, for analytical purposes, be discussed in isolation from each other, they generally occur in specific, concrete combinations. As the argument of the book develops, therefore, the later chapters explore common patterns of articulation while focusing on particular forms of power. I do not discuss each aspect of power as a separate analytical dimension, but in relation to the concrete structures of power in which it occurs. Command cannot be considered in isolation from coercion, and constraint can only be understood if seen in relation to legitimation and consent.

Counteraction

I have argued that power always involves resistance, and particularly important forms of resistance arise in and around structures of domination. Elementary forms of counteraction may be purely individual responses to domination, as occurs with inchoate resentment, hostility, or withdrawal, or in

isolated acts of disruption or sabotage. Fully developed counteraction, however, is co-ordinated or collective action against the leadership. It occurs where resources and commitments are mobilised for the pursuit of shared goals and interests and put to use in struggles against the established leadership (Tilly 1978: 7). Such counteracting power derives its strength from the number of subalterns that it involves and the solidarity that they are able to achieve in mobilising their resources. It results from a shared sense of opposition or contention and is a collective attempt to influence the holding and exercising of sovereign power. It is, in one sense, power from below rather than power from above.

Counteraction takes two principal forms. When oppositional action is institutionalised and counteracting groups are recognised by the established leadership, they are seen as legitimate 'members' of a larger system of action around the structure of domination. Charles Tilly holds that, in the case of state power, 'At any point in time, some (and only some) of the contenders have achieved recognition of their collective rights to wield power over the government, and have developed routine ways of exercising those rights. They are *members of the polity*' (Tilly 1978: 125). That is, they are members of the political system, but not of the state itself. They are a part of the recognised and legitimate political process, but they are not an integral part of the state. They do, nevertheless, have a routine and institutionalised place in the making of decisions, competing with other such groups for influence in relation to state policies. This form of counteraction can best be described as 'pressure'. Modern states have increasingly come to be surrounded by structures of pressure that mediate between them and their citizens and that constitute the complex polities or political systems within which authority is exercised.

Those counteracting groups that do not become a part of the institutional structure of established power, on the other hand, are not 'members' of it. They 'contend without routine or recognition' (Tilly 1978: 125). These are the 'challengers' that seek to restructure a pattern of domination and to enhance their own power position, either through a claim to recognition for themselves, or through more radical reorgani-

sations of power. Challengers may oppose the existing members of the established power structure, or they may work with some of them to secure their own larger goals. They exercise protest rather than pressure, relying on coercion and inducement to make their views felt.

What have been called social movements are complex alliances of member and challenger groups that are organised for counteraction. While many social movements do embrace both member and challenger groups, others are movements of protest that rely almost exclusively on challenger groups rather than those that seek to operate through conventional pressure politics.

Pressure and protest, then, are the two principal forms of counteraction. Counteraction, like domination, is at its most effective when it draws on and makes explicit the hidden transcripts employed by subalterns. Protest, for example, is organised as effective collective action through the construction of autonomous identities and forms of consciousness that overtly challenge the public transcripts of the principals. These public transcripts may define protesters in derogatory terms as, for example, a 'mob' or a 'rabble'. At its strongest, protest must involve the construction of what Gramsci (1926–37) called a 'counter hegemony' to the dominant discourses and their transcripts.

Pressure, understood as an assertion of the wish or demand to be heard by those who dominate, is to be seen as a recognised or institutionalised form of counteraction against those with the power of command. Those who attempt to exercise pressure have no right to command others to take their views into account or to have their preferences translated directly into action. Nevertheless, they use persuasive influence and forms of inducement in order to push for their views to be taken into account by those who do have the power of command, and they have resources to make this pressure more or less effective. Command and pressure may, of course, shade over into one another. Corporatist practices on the part of a government, for example, may involve the delegation of certain powers of command to pressure groups, so incorporating them into a formal structure of authority. This was, for example, a key feature of the fascist regimes of Europe in the 1930s.

Protest is subaltern resistance that is exercised as a counter-mobilisation to the existing structure of domination. Where pressure on state power involves the attempt to influence and lobby for a particular outcome from within a political system, protest involves entering into a contest or trial of strength that challenges an existing structure of domination and attempts to restructure it in some way. This protest is expressed most effectively as the collective action of organisations and social movements.

Interpersonal Power

I have, so far, concentrated on large-scale structures of power and resistance, of domination and counteraction. Power also exists, however, in a whole range of interpersonal situations where individuals significantly influence each other. This is the form of power that Weber recognised as occurring throughout society ‘in the drawing room as well as in a market, from the rostrum of a lecture-hall as well as from the command post of a regiment, from an erotic or charitable relationship as well as from scholarly discussion or athletics’. It is the power inherent in the relations of parents to children, the relations of playmates, lovers, friends, and acquaintances (Weber 1914: 943; see also Mannheim 1947: 49–51).

Interpersonal power is rooted in face-to-face contexts of interaction. It is based not on the content or source of an order, but on the personal attributes of the individual making it as these are perceived by individuals who have a direct knowledge of one another. People are able to relate to each other as individual selves, and not simply as the occupants of social positions with authorised or delegated powers. Interpersonal power operates through the personal resources of physique and personality that individuals bring to their encounters and through the various resources on which some depend and to which others can give access. It is in this way that one person can make another bend to her or his will and so become a principal in an interpersonal power relationship.

Self and identity are *embodied* phenomena, and it is their bodily characteristics that allow individuals to enter into social relations or that lead to their social exclusion. At the same time, however, individuals are able to monitor and, therefore, to control, their bodily actions: they are able, within limits, to choose the ways in which they present their body – and, therefore, their self – in everyday encounters. Self-presentations are constructed through the shared cultural meanings available to people and so tend to be more or less conventionalised within a society (Goffman 1959). What is commonly called ‘body language’ is but a partial recognition of this wider process of self-presentation.

What Goffman called the ‘interaction order’ arises from the mutual self-presentations of embodied individuals as they construct and reconstruct their identities and life plans in response to each other. It consists of a complex of everyday encounters that may become more or less routinised. Once negotiated, individual encounters do not usually need to be renegotiated. They are, rather, subject to constant marginal transformations of reciprocal expectations that are largely taken for granted by the participants. One part of the expectations that people share may be the institutionalised roles that they occupy and the authority that this gives them, but Goffman’s point is that all such role relationships involve the proximal dynamics of self-presentations from which they can, for analytical purposes, be distinguished.

Virtually all social relations are manifested through the face-to-face relations of particular individuals, and it is here that the myriad and diffuse power relations that Weber identified have their effect. Weber did not, however, provide a systematic or even useful account of interpersonal power, and the work of Foucault has been particularly influential in providing a basis for this. In his concern for the body and subjectivity as the objects of power relations, Foucault has complemented the work of Goffman and provided the basis for a sophisticated reformulation of a long-standing line of research on micropower.

Interpersonal power is at its strongest in the proximal contexts of face-to-face encounters, but it is not limited to these. More important than physical presence is the temporal and spatial availability of others in a locale, even though they may

not currently be physically present (Giddens 1979: 207). Interpersonal power does, nevertheless, become more attenuated as time-space distancing alters. The introduction of writing and of the means of distributing it physically and electronically increases the scope of interpersonal power. Electronic media of communication make it possible to sustain some forms of interpersonal power over greater distances, while reducing the time that this takes to the virtually instantaneous scale of face-to-face encounters. At the same time, interpersonal power is assimilated ever more into structures of domination: individuals encounter one another more as the 'disembodied' occupants of social positions than as concrete and particular individuals. What Weber called 'charismatic power', for example, is rooted in the strength of individual personality and is more difficult to sustain as the size of a group increases and the opportunities for direct face-to-face encounters diminish. Charisma loses many of its distinctive characteristics and is embedded in more routine structures of power.

Personal traits and capacities, and the subjective assessments that are made of them, cannot be separated from the forms of domination and counteraction that I have discussed. A parent exercises interpersonal power over a child, but also has certain legal rights that the child may grow up to accept and that will be recognised by others. Equally, the interpersonal power relations between a husband and a wife are affected by the legal rights and responsibilities of each of them in the wider political and economic structures in which they are involved. Similarly, it is important to recognise that the relations between nation states or large business enterprises are manifested in and through the interpersonal encounters of their presidents, chief executives, and other holders of authority. This interpersonal power has to be seen in relation to the production and reproduction of structures of domination. As Foucault recognised: 'If we speak of structures or mechanisms of power, it is only insofar as we suppose that certain persons exercise power over others' (Foucault 1982: 225).