FIVE REASONABLE PEOPLE
THE UNDERLYING STRUCTURE OF MORALITY

CHAPTER 11 POWER II: *INFLUENCE, EMPATHY, DOMINATION* (2500 words)

The previous chapter identified six kinds of power and found their places on the WOLT axes: the three widely accepted kinds, namely *power-with*, *power-to* and *power-over* on X, Y, Z, along with three forms of power-over, not known in the standard literature, *empathy*, *influence* and *domination* on X, Y, Z.

Our main interest is in power-over and this chapter we compare the realities of 1-ist influence and 3-ist empathy and consider how 2-ist domination resolves their conflict.

I also show how the problem of understanding power illustrates the general inadequacy of social science theorising.

CHAPTER 11 CONTENTS

Y *INFLUENCE* VERSUS X *EMPATHY*

The incompatibility of *influence* and *empathy* is the essence of the power conflict—the *power-over* conflict— between 1-ism and 3-ism. As far as the 3s are concerned, empathy is the only reasonable way for people to live together, and it would plainly be spoilt by competitive bargaining with the aim of creating inequality. From the 1s' perspective, being free to negotiate and associate with others, influencing and being influenced, is the only worthwhile life and it cannot be genuine if interaction is biased to favour the like-minded or limited to foster equality.

The only way *influence* and *empathy* can operate simultaneously is with rules to decide which applies where—and rules require hierarchy and *domination* for their enforcement. If the 2s had their way everyone would have his or her place in the hierarchy; senior ranks would dominate subordinates, specialist experts would influence their seniors and pervasive empathy would ensure that all pulled together for the common good. But in the real world the 2s are only part of society, usually a minority.

So the 1-ist minority competes for influence and the 3-ist minority preaches empathic equality. Both 1s and 3s accept that some domination has a place but otherwise get on with their own ways of life. The 4s see domination everywhere. Pioneer sociologist Max Weber famously said the defining attribute of the modern state is holding the "monopoly of violence"— only the government may have domination power.

One of the tasks of a 2-ist government will be to use its dominance to confirm Weber and ensure that the 1s, 3s, and 4s do not exercise any dominance. In the real world the government enforces commercial law to curb any tendency of businesses to anticompetitive *domination* and cronyist *empathy*. Currently the USA's Trump administration is using force to try to stamp out "wokism" whereby 3-ist empathy is viewed as domination through conformity.

In principle, the 1s want only *influence* and the 3s only *empathy* and neither 1s nor 3s see their position as actually exercising power over people. On the contrary, they see it as the opposite of power, the whole idea of power-over being anathema to both.

In the real world, Type 1s should have no problem concurring with *influence* as a descriptor since the 1-ist way involves regard for successful people and openness to opportunities to get ahead. They would insist that influencing is free choice, that no one is compelled to accept any deal and therefore that no actual power-over is exercised or implied; interaction

is a negotiation between parties who have equal opportunity to accept or decline. Should they not have equal opportunity, that would be improper for it would mean some compulsion—i.e., domination—is being exerted.

For their part, the 3s see the 1s' competitive negotiations as a struggle for advantage—a power struggle, and typically an unequal one as between employer and employee or a seller with knowledge and a buyer without. Regarding *empathy*, 3s should be content with the word on the grounds that if everyone is on the same wavelength agreeing with each other, where no one gets ahead of anyone else, that must surely be the antithesis of power. The 1s, however, will say that this is domination in that it compels people to be equal and prevents them from freely interacting and freely developing their individual talents.

So each sees the other as insidious power. To the 3s, 1-ist *influence* is domination through inequality; to the 1s, 3-ist *empathy* is domination through insistence on equal status.

As with every issue involving the face-off between 1s and 3s, they both have a point. When does *influence*— free negotiation—shade into domination through offering or withholding benefits? When does *empathy*, where all are in agreement, turn into pressure to conform or mind control?

Empirically, there is much evidence to support the 1s' and 3s' sceptical views of each other. Historic 1-ism in the West drove colonialism and includes subjugation and suffering so pervasive it would be easy to argue it provoked modern 3-ism as a reaction. In the less industrialised countries today 1-ist "free-market" economic relations involve domination of the poor, exploitation of women, and enslavement of children comparable with nineteenth-century Europe.

Marxism postulated a "false consciousness" whereby the proletariat are so indoctrinated they are not aware

they are being exploited. Correspondingly, in modern societies 3s see commerce causing social alienation and fragmentation, and see "consumerism" as 1-ist manipulation where "hidden persuaders" and overt "influencers" lure people into buying unnecessary and unhealthy products and services which are not in their interests, not in society's interest, and not in the interest of the physical environment. In short, the 3-ist concern that *influence* power is coercive has substance.

For their part, modern 1s say that ultimately the only way to know what people really value is to see what they are prepared to pay; dollars are votes, as Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises used to say, and from this perspective any interference with the freedom to buy and sell constitutes domination.

At its least intrusive, such interference involves restricting trade in some products and services through regulation and licensing. At its worst, 3-ist convictions of having the whole truth can be devastating. 3-ist ideology drove communism's internal exile programs of re-education through labour and the Soviet Union's purges, famines and Gulag, the Chinese Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, and the Pol Pot's killing fields. Contempt for individual worth brought death to tens of millions and suffering to hundreds of millions.

In modern industrialised countries, extreme 3-ist ideologies capture a few people and the difficulty of "deprogramming" cult members is legendary, the strength of that empathic power being graphically demonstrated by suicide cults. In short, the 1-ist concern that *empathy* power is coercive has substance.

It is likely that the respective proponents would argue that the regrettable consequences of historical 1-ism or 3-ism stem from a lack of purity, that the failures occurred because the 1-ism or the 3-ism (e.g., the free market or the idealistic community) was not properly and thoroughly realised. But they never can be, for (a)

no theory is ever perfectly realisable; in human relations as in physics, there are always other factors and (b) WOLT tells us social human beings come in four ideological shapes which ensures that any position will experience some countering, disrupting, and undermining by antipathetic ways of life.

2-IST RESOLUTION THROUGH *DOMINATION*

To the extent a society that fails to resolve the 1-ism versus 3-ism conflict, it will be dysfunctional. Resolution is via 2-ism. Historically, 2-ist *domination* has been very physical and threatening but in democracies domination is mainly rule-based.

The ideological colour of the democratic resolution is indeterminate for, in principle, 2-ism is agnostic to ideology. 2-ism's priority is order and, being positive on all three axes, it employs all three kinds of power-over. *Domination* is the 2-ist specialty and it works downwards within the hierarchy through respect for senior rank.

Influence power in a well-functioning hierarchy will stem not from rank (for rank provides *domination* making *influence* redundant—senior ranks don't do deals with lower) but from the legitimacy of recognised expertise. This must flow mainly upwards. Influence is 1-ist and its appeal in the hierarchy will be partly to the self-interest of the senior rank as well as to the official common interest.

For such a common interest to be recognised there must be *empathy*. Empathy will pervade, rather than flow, and will arise from the purpose of the hierarchy along with members' conviction that the hierarchy is legitimate and from their socialised, internalised acceptance of the common goals, norms and practices. Examples of modern 2-ist societies where empathy is strong are Japan and Korea.

> ### 2-ist order and fair play requires democracy
>
> The political concern of the 2s is order. At its most basic, this means the 1-ism versus 3-ism contest should not escalate to slaughter.
>
> It is also 2-ism which has the task of ensuring *non-rational* allegiances and antipathies such as nationalism, ethnicity and religion not escalate to slaughter.
>
> Such non-rational conflict is historically widespread and for a stable polity, not wracked every generation or so, all identities should feel they are fairly treated, a deciding factor of which would be that the dominating 2s not play favourites. This requirement for fairness would apply to the rational WOLT types as well; that is, for stability, all types should feel part of the society.
>
> But the 2s *will* play favourites, suborned by 1-ism or commandeered by 3-ism, unless checked by democratic exercise of free speech, free assembly, and fair elections.

The acme of 2-ism is the military. With the interplay of all three forms of power, the theoretical soldier advancing into enemy fire should be (1) seeking a medal or (2) supporting the noble cause or (3) in solidarity with his comrades or (4) fearing court martial. 2-ism copes with and supports all four positions. In less dire situations, these distinctions would apply in milder form. Soldiers usually say they do it because their comrades are doing it—a striking example of effective *empathy*.

For 2s, *power-over* is an end in itself and the prerequisite for other agendas.[1] The ideological

---

[1] Prince Metternich: "The word 'freedom' means for me not a point of departure but a genuine point of arrival. The point of departure is defined by the word 'order.' Freedom cannot exist without the concept of order."

content of social goals and practices—the ends to which 2-ist power and order is bent—depends, not on 2-ism per se, but rather on the relative strengths of the other three social types and *their* influence, empathy, and domination.

POWER: VIGNETTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE THEORISING

Every complex thing is understood by seeing how its parts interrelate. Whether it is the weather, or a motor car, or a living cell, or a church organ, understanding requires seeing what its parts are and how they function together to make up the whole object or whole system. It does not suffice just to identify the parts; indeed, it is only by working out the parts' interactions that you can be confident you have correctly identified the parts.

Yet naming parts is what the social sciences do and the power literature is a case study of the general approach to what passes as theorising in social science.

Here are some examples of names found in the academic power literature: soft power, hard power, legitimate power, referent power, expert power, reward power, coercive power, economic power, social power, political power, knowledge power, military power, ideological power, distributional power, collective power, traditional power, legal power, charismatic power, power as a perception, power as resource-based, power as a relational concept, power as enabling or disabling, power as a prerogative … and on and on, the verbiage multiplying endlessly. For more terms see the Wikipedia page on social power.

In the social sciences, theorising consists of specialist discussion, usually quite abstract, where concepts are invented and argued about. The inventions and argument are based on perceptions of reality, on definitions, and on the literature that has gone before. Scholars come up with angles and nuances, point out

what has been overlooked, debate the relative importance of concepts, suggest one is subsidiary to another, and generate new vocabulary. On the concepts *power-to* and *power-over*, Pansardi and Bindi (2021: 2) say, "the distinction between power-over and power-to was, at least at the time of its inception, developed in the attempt to 'discover' or clarify the 'real' meaning of the concept of power." Yes, and it seems to have helped. However, making a distinction does not show how the two worked together, does not explicate a relationship. Two concepts imply four truth values; each concept is examined for itself; no one seems to have thought about the implications of the possible combinations of *both* concepts.

This process in social science and philosophy of describing and comparing concepts one at a time is effective sometimes and to some extent. Out of the mass of esoteric literature, the discussion may eventually settle on distinctions such as negative and positive freedom, equality of opportunity and equality of condition, just process and just outcome, and other oppositions that WOLT confirms. Power has been a particularly knotty struggle yet among the piles of terms are the three kinds, power-over, power-to and power-with, which according to Pansardi and Bindi (2021) "…appear to have crystallized and institutionalized themselves into three different, freestanding, concepts." Since WOLT validates these terms, we can say they got it right.

The academic process of looking at reality and ruminating and comparing is meandering and slow (Thomas Hobbes initiated the modern discussion of power with *Leviathan* in the mid 1600s) and to this day the power literature is unaware that *power-over* may itself be split into *influence*, *domination* and *empathy*. These words might be used but the three-way split will never be discovered unless scholars do what science does and what Knoke (1990) did: ignore reality and hypothesise theoretical relationships.

Where this arguing over interpretations of reality sometimes does eventually find wide agreement on useful categories, there is still no way to tell if they are correct—no one can say what "correct" means—and so even well-established categories are seen as aids to understanding rather than as approaching the truth, and they are forever grist to the endless academic mill as new generations of scholars notice deviations, amend definitions, and elaborate new nuances.

It is a creaking, groaning process and the results are meagre. Moreover, the various mills grind away within different academic fields and sub-fields, each expressed in a specialist literature from which its findings tend not to escape. For example, psychologist Milton Rokeach (1973) put *freedom* on one axis and *equality* on the other and tried to discern the four types so generated. The result was confusion. He was not aware that philosophy had found both concepts to be vague and had, generations earlier, split each into a contrasting pair. Had he set the two standard categories of freedom, or the two of equality, on his axes, he would have obtained clear results and joined Douglas and the other theorists (Appendix 4) who deduced the four WOLT types.

Rokeach was one of many social scientists who have set out the four combinations of two concepts. The precept of philosophical logic that two propositions yield four truth values has been formally known for centuries yet no philosopher—none at all—ever acted on it. Social scientists do it occasionally but, like the theorists of Appendix 4, they always figure it out for themselves. This is astonishing considering that, outside of economics, setting out the four truth values from two concepts seems to be the *only* way a theoretical relationship can be constructed in the social sciences.

General acceptance of a categorisation forms a common benchmark or touchstone (or a fashion) for academic discussion. But even for initiates within the specialist field there is little to develop from the

vocabulary. Scholarly discussion of concepts is to a great extent based on definitions of the meaning of words, as is any contemplation of their connection to concepts in other fields. In short, learned rumination based on reality and word meanings may produce insights but real, explanatory theory has to be genuinely theoretical—that is, made by hypothesising relationships between theoretical concepts.☐

REFERENCES TO CHAPTER 11

Allen, Amy, "Feminist Perspectives on Power", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)

Dahl, Robert. 1957. "The Concept of Power." *Behavioral Science* 2(3), 201-215.

Dowding, Keith. 2012. "Why should we care about the definition of power?" Journal of Political Power, 5(1)

Knoke, David. 1990. *Political networks: the structural perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Morriss, Peter. 2002. *Power: A Philosophical Analysis*, 2nd Ed. Manchester University Press.

Pansardi, P. and M. Bindi (2021). "The new concepts of power? Power-over, power-to and power-with." *Journal of Political Power* **14**(1): 51-71.

Rokeach, Milton. 1973. *The nature of human values*. New York, Free Press.