The Structuralist Dilemma in Negotiation

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Negotiation takes place when neither party in a conflict is strong enough to impose its will or to resolve the conflict unilaterally. In those negotiations, the parties are formally equal, since each has a veto over an acceptable outcome. Yet two-party equality produces deadlock. Yet obviously there are power differences between the parties, asymmetries which can be used to break the deadlock. But these asymmetries then raise the structuralist dilemma: How can weaker parties negotiate with stronger parties and still get something? Expecting to lose, a weaker party should want to avoid negotiation with a stronger party at all costs, but it cannot; and, expecting to win, a stronger party should have no need to negotiate to get what it wants, but it must. Yet weak parties not only engage stronger ones in negotiation, they usually emerge with payoffsÑand often with bigger payoffsÑin the end. How does one account for the structuralist dilemma, and what is the effect of power symmetry or asymmetry on negotiation?

The dominant schoolÑincluding the author of this work (Rubin & Brown 1975; Zartman & Berman 1982; Morgan 1994, 14l; Young 1967)Ñhas long maintained that power symmetry is the condition most propitious for mutually satisfying negotiations and efficient attainment of optimal results; if asymmetry favors the more powerful, it indisposes the less powerful and delays joint agreement. An opposing argument that, to the contrary, it is asymmetry that is productive of faster, better agreements has rarely been made and the reasoning behind it is not intuitively obvious. This question is examined here, with some surprising results.

The Many Concepts of Power

Much of the answer hangs on the notion of power itself. The traditional definition equates power with force, as in the "realist" school in international politics (Waltz 1954; Dahl 1976, 47-48). The equation of power with force (in the social, not natural, science sense) is so pervasive that any discussion of power is "forced" to first clear the air by pointing out that force is a narrow aspect of power that changes the other party's positions by eliminating or threatening to eliminate the other party. It is thus distinct from the larger exercise of power involving persuasion, influence, leverage, and pressure.

Power as force alone is a definition that is ideological, reductionist, inaccurate, and narrowing; and this definition has done much to weaken a sound, thorough discussion of power. Conceiving of power as force alone is ideological because it becomes a justification for violence and a devaluation of non-violent means of causation. It is reductionist because it equates cause with its ultimate expression alone. It is inaccurate since it denies the power of other causes. And it is narrowing in that it divides political science from its own subject, since force as power is of no help in analyzing intra-state as opposed to interstate politics. Force is indeed an element of power, a factor of importance, but it stands with others in producing the same

effect. Power as force does not fit with the structuralist dilemma, neither resolving it nor relating to it.

Another standard way of defining power is to relate it to resources, leading to the "neo-realist" view of power as a possession (Organski 1968; Knorr 1970). The definition is logical and specific, since it gives a precise and direct, even quantifiable, measure. It also lends itself to comparative analysis, since both sides can have power through the resources they control, and the more powerful can easily be calculated in these terms. Unfortunately, resources come in many shapes and sizes, destroying the ability to aggregate them in a single measure. Resources also come shapelessly, in such items as leadership or moral sources of power, which cannot be measured at all (except tautologically, by their effects).

Power as possession or resources has its place in the concept of aggregate power or position power, referring to the total resources held by an agent, as contrasted with relevant power or issue power, which refers to those resources that can be directed toward a particular conflict or concern in the exercise that produces movement (Habeeb 1988; Lockhart 1979). The problem behind power as a possession is that it fails to take into account the use of the resources through will and skill. It takes more than brushes and paints to paint a picture, a point that seems curiously lost on the neo-realists. For size or possession alone is not ability; indeed, the two may be inversely related, as noted in the structuralists' dilemma. In fact, if size were power, parties could calculate ahead of time and decide (like dogs or baboons) to avoid certain social encounters, notably negotiation, because they could figure out who would lose. Yet the small and weak often do very well in negotiation, and the explanation of why is one of the tasks of this study.

Power can also be defined in such a way as to eliminate the structuralist dilemma completely, by making power synonymous with or measured by payoffs, so that the strongest always wins. Indeed, the common social-science or behavioral definition of power embodies such a tautology. Since the early 1930s (and possibly before), social scientists have had at their disposal a good working definition of power as the ability of one party to move another in an intended direction. As formulated by R.H. Tawney (1952, 159), it was related to, but significantly different from, Weber's definition in Economy and Society as the probability or chance of an actor's realizing his own will even against resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests (Roth & Wittich 1968, 53; Gerth & Mills 1946, 180). The definition was adopted by spokesmen for a number of disciplines in the 1950sÑ decision theorists such as Herbert Simon (1953), political scientists such as Robert Dahl (1957), and social psychologists such as John Thibaut and Harold Kelley (1957)Ñwho sought a definition identifying power with its effects and separating it from its sources, as in earlier definitions.

This definition contains a number of important elements. First, it focuses on social power, the relation between parties abstracted from other causes of movement. Second, by extension, it implies the notion of applied and net power, recognizing that although both parties may apply pressure or power on each other, net power in the relation is registered by the resultant movement. Third, by further extension, power is conceptualized conclusionarily in terms of its results, that is, the movement of the target. It is not measured in terms of output, and so or because there is as yet no standard conceptÑlet alone measurementÑof effort or "force" (in the physics sense).

Indeed, even movement is not standardized, since there is no single measure of "weight" and "speed" in social science.

It is this third implication that creates conceptual problems. For example, if one party (the agent) prevails over another (the target), does that mean that the target had no power? The concept as stated is unable to distinguish between an agent that prevails against no resistance (power) and one that prevails by a hair with tremendous effort; Weber at least recognized resistance. Or if it can make that distinction, as between net and applied power, it has no criterion by which to evaluateÑlet alone measureÑthe competing applications. It tells who wins but does not tell the score! Or again, if the target decides to give in, for its own moral or tactical reasons (such as to buy a counterconcession from the agent), does that mean that the agent has power, whereas it has none if the target is willing or able to hold that same amount of effort in check?

Or even more problematically, consider the assertion of Crozier (1964, 55), "If the two parties are completely free and the exchange is equal, neither party would be said to be in a position of power vis-ˆ-vis the other. But if the terms of trade are definitely biased in favor of one or the other and if that inequality corresponds to the respective situation of the two parties and not to chance or to error, then one can speak of a power relation." This view would exclude consideration of situations where parties have the power to hold each other in check or to obtain equal value from each other, that is, in relations where the parties or their outcomes are symmetrical. In sum, the definition is weakened by an inability to handle notions of competing power(s), resistance as well as pressure as power, and applied as distinct from net power.

The element of intention creates additional limitations. Movement produced in an intended direction defines power, but movement somewhere else is evasion or blunder. Similarly, movement that was unintended by the target shows power, but movement intended anyhow annuls it. In the end, the target is at least partly in control of the definition of the agent's power when power is defined as results. The target can deny, refuse, or co-opt the power as well as resist it.

More troublesome yet, this social science definition has serious tautological difficulties, in that the operative element of the defining phrase is the very term being defined (Zartman 1974, 394-397). Power is defined as the ability to move another, but power and ability are synonyms, and power becomes the power to move another. Rather than serving as a definition that helps researchers to analyze and explain, the phrase returns to its social setting and becomes merely a qualifier, specifying social power rather than all sources of movement. In other words, to look for power is merelyÑbut importantlyÑto pose the causal question (Dahl 1976, 29-30, 37-39; Simon 1957, 5; Zartman 1974, 396-397).

New Concepts of Power

To avoid this problem and to provide a usable definition of the concept, power here is define as an action"by one party intended to produce movement by another." Thus power is defined neither as a component (resources) nor as a result (cause) but, in between the two, as a purposeful action, leaving the analysts' hands free to study the relationship of power with both its components and its results. This definition includes

the elements in the Tawney concept, while taking care of many of the above noted deficiencies. It is closer to (but more succinct and less conclusionary than) Habeeb's definition of power as "the way in which actor A uses its resources in a process with actor B so as to bring about changes that cause preferred outcomes" (Habeeb 1988, 15). Focussing on a particular type of move opens the way to useful sub-categorizations and causal distinctions.

One way of categorizing the exercise which produces movement is as pressure (negative), inducement (positive), and resistance (negative or positive response). Contingent moves can be further divided into threats and warnings (negative) and promises and predictions (positive), depending on whether the source of the move is the agent or an external force (Schelling 1960; Zartman 1987) In Habeeb's definition (1988, 21ff), the "way" resources are used to bring about changes and cause preferred outcomes relates to three variables: alternatives, commitment, and control. Raven and Kruglanski (1970), as well as Raven and Rubin (1983), write in the same vein of informational, referent, expert, legitimate, reward, and coercive power.

Conceptualizations such as these have the strength of breaking down the exercise of power (a single concept, not two) into a number of alternatives, closer to the notion of different types of energy used in the physical sciences. They have the weakness of not constituting different points along a single dimension, so that it becomes impossible to identify missing forms or to establish whether the components comprise a universe or not. The fact that the components do not lend themselves to quantification is probably less important than the fact that they differ among themselves in nature, that fruit is defined as apples plus oranges plus....N rather than as different forms of a single characteristic (such as flesh-covered seeds, for example).

A variant conceptualization, stemming from a rational choice approach, considers power as the value added to a particular outcome (Schelling 1960; Zartman 1971). One agent exercises power in its relations with another when its moves can negatively or positively alter the value of a particular action's outcome for the target. This approach retains the bilateral relational notion of power, and provides a common dimension along which to compare and aggregate different exercises of power. A stronger party is one who can add (or subtract) more value to the other's outcome. Although the concept is quantitative in nature, it is obviously not easily quantifiable, neither in the base value of outcomes nor in the increments related to power. It does not per se indicate the sources of the ability to move the target in an intended directionÑthe "how" of the "what"Ñbut it does provide a comprehensive identification of cause and effect. It also allows for further research and conceptualization on those sources, providing the link between the previous conceptualization and the central concept. It translates both the simplicity and the difficulties of a real situation for the target, who must aggregate all the relevant apples and oranges, including the dissuasions and inducements provided by the agent and the counters to them, into a single decision.

Power as ways of using resources and power as added value are two complementary conceptualizations which permit theoretical generalizations and propositions about power as an exercise in negotiation. Habeeb's (1988) and Raven and Kruglanski's (1970) elaboration of ways in which the agent can move the target can be used as a basis for testing and further generation of types, in the search for a

prominent, unifying, and comprehensive dimension. Using decision analytic techniques, concepts and measures of value can be developed for use in a modification of Schelling's (1960) diagram as a simple portrayal of improved and weakened outcomes:

For example, if A has the ability to reduce the valueÑor its perception of the valueÑof option r for B (from r to r'), and to increase the value of option s for B (from s to s'), then A has the power to obtain a more favorable outcome for itself. Thus, comparative effects of power can be measured. Such attempts open up the reality of power and causality in social encounters, and allow a more useful statement of the analytical question, as follows: What types of actions are deployed by an agent to cause the target to move in the direction the agent intends in a social encounter, on the basis of what resources, and with what success? This becomes the basic question to pose in the analysis of the specific social encounters known as negotiation.

Power and Negotiation

Negotiation is joint decision making under conditions of conflict and uncertainty, combining divergent positions into a single outcome. Each of two or more sides attempts to obtain what it wants through the exchange of information, typically in the form of offers and counteroffers. As conflict theorists have observed, negotiation is only one of a family of approaches to the settlement of conflict; the others are domination, capitulation, inaction, withdrawal, and the intervention of third parties (Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim, 1994). As decision theorists have noted, negotiation constitutes one of three modes of social decision making, where the others are adjudication and coalition formation (Zartman 1974). A vast literature on negotiation has emerged over the last several decades, and the present volume builds on this substantial foundation to look more closely at the meaning of power in the context of international negotiation.

Refinements in the conceptualization of power, as discussed above, are necessary if the concept is to be useful in the analysis of negotiation as a social encounter. Power as force and power as a possession provide little insight and slim basis for analysis of negotiation. Instead they set up the structuralists' paradox, that the most powerful party in terms of force or resources does not always win at negotiation. But when power is conceptualized as an exercise using resources and adding value, it is hard to define the most powerful party other than in tautological or conclusionary terms as the one who wins. Since winning is rejected as a component of many definitions of negotiationÑas a win-win rather than a win-lose proposition, or as an encounter in which both parties are better off or they would not agreeÑthe tautological definition is misleading as well as inadequate. The definition adopted here, of power as an action, allows conclusions on the effectiveness of different types of power (actions) over a number of cases, but does not permit a conclusive judgment as to the most powerful party in an individual case until the contest is over. It does allow a better formulation of the specific question of this inquiry, Do unequal power sources (as an estimate or as resources) produce dissimilar behavior (as action) yielding unequal results?

This formulation relates questions of power structures to power behaviors (action). But in reality, it is not the fact of symmetry or asymmetry that can be related to behaviors but its perception, or power as a perceived relation. Part of any social

interaction is a matter of perception, a problem that natural scientists need not worry aboutÑwhen one object acts upon another, neither has any perception to distract it. Perception mediates objective reality, although of course reality imposes certain limits on the implications of perception; if one party perceives itself to be better armed, richer, or more skilledÑthat is, more powerfulÑ than the other, when in fact it is not, that party may act on the basis of its perception but most likely will fail, tripped up by reality. Much of power is a matter of perception, which may help the party produce its intended results or may stymie it. Of course, perception is not immutable either: the target may have the ability to change the agent's perception. Therefore, the symmetry or asymmetry of a perception is related to such elements as force and resources, as well as to the reputation and prospects of a party to produce past and future movements on the part of its targets.

Investigating asymmetry through perceptions of power rather than seeking an objective reality has several advantages. It approaches power as the parties do, through their own eyes, instead of relying upon some apparently scientific standard that they might not use. It registers the element that governs behaviorÑthe parties' perception of their own power, the other's power, and the relative standing of self and otherÑwhether these are "objectively correct" or not. And it obviates all problems of tautology, with the causative element highlighted in the focus on motivating perceptions. It is to perceptions of power, therefore, that this inquiry turns.

Negotiating Perceptions of Asymmetry

Common wisdom holds that perceptions of equal power among negotiators tend to result in more effective negotiation and more satisfactory outcomes than perceptions of unequal power. Effectiveness refers to the frequency of mutually cooperative behavior and positive-sum outcomes, and satisfaction refers to parties' judgments about the results. The basis for this hypothesis stretches from the dialogue between the Athenians and the Melians as recorded by Thucydides to recent experiments. Its logic comes from two basic principles of negotiation, the ethical norm of reciprocation, suggestion equality, and the structural position of the parties as veto holders, also implying equality. It also comes from the inherent notion of respect in social dealings, where the maximum amount of deference each can give to the other and still not be caught in an Alphonse-Gaston dilemma or in a loss of face and satus is equality.

Furthermore, common wisdom also holds that in situations of perceived asymmetry, the stronger party tends to act exploitatively while the weaker acts submissively, an unpropitious situation for effective and satisfying negotiations.

When the weaker do overcome their submissiveness, their behavior is no more productive of good procedures (effectiveness) and results (satisfaction). They resort to organization or ideology, the weapons of the weak (Michels 1962). When enough weak parties are present, they will organize a union to provide them with strength, particularly if it produces a winning coalition. Ideology as well as organization can be the basis of an attitudinal coalition and lead to assertiveness, rather than submissiveness, even (or maybe especially) if the coalition of the weak is not winning. Under these circumstances, coalitions are likely to form in an effort to offset the initial power disadvantage and transform submission into resistance. There is no

common knowledge as to when the weaker will act submissively and when they will be ideologically or organizationally insubmissive.

Ten case studies from recent history permit an examination of this common knowledge. Seven cases are asymmetrical: The US-Canada free trade negotiations of 1986-87, the U.S.-Indonesia diplomatic exchanges over aid conditions in the early 1950s, the U.S.-Egyptian aid and reform discussions of the 1980s and early 1990s, the European-Andorran free trade negotiations between 1979 and 1990, the India-Nepal negotiations on water resources between the 1960s and the 1990s, and the North-South negotiations at the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development in 1990-92. Three other cases were symmetrical: The Mali-Burkinabe negotiations in 1986 over disputed territory constitute a low perceived power case, while the U.S.-Chinese negotiations to end the Korean War in 1952-1954 and the U.S.-Japanese negotiations over the FSX fighter in 1985-89 constitute high cases. Finally, the Arab-Israeli negotiations over peace and territory in 1949, 1974, and 1977-1979 have further implications as an ambiguous case in which the relative power level of the parties varies according to perceptions, expectations, resources, and dynamics. A disproportionately large number of asymmetrical cases was chosen for analysis, for two reasons: first, because in international relations the number of asymmetrical encounters vastly exceeds more symmetrical relations; and second, because these are the most theoretically interesting cases.

The Effectiveness of Asymmetry

Contrary to received knowledge and experimentation, it appears that perceived asymmetry is the more productive condition for negotiation, whereas perceptions of equality actually interfere with efficient processes and satisfying results. Asymmetrical negotiations in the cases studied often went more smoothly than their symmetrical counterparts and produced more mutually satisfactory outcomes.

Symmetry produces deadlock because the behaviors associated with the particular power status produce impasse rather than an effective process to satisfying results. High-power symmetry brings together two parties experienced in dominating behavior; it allows each party to hold the other in check; and therefore it makes them primarily concerned with maintaining their statusÑlocking in their side of the symmetryÑrather than reaching an agreement. Low-power symmetry brings together two parties that act in the reverse way-symmetricallyÑto produce the same result. They deadlock because they do not have the power to make the other move, and this therefore makes them primarily concerned with defending whatever little status they haveÑlocking in their side of the symmetryÑrather than reaching an agreement. Symmetry in conflict situations tends to produce and reinforce hostility and prolong negotiations. As a result, it calls for a mediator, a role that is possible among Low-power parties but much less so between High-power opponents (Bercovitch and Rubin, 1993; Touval and Zartman, 1991). Faced with each other, Mali and Burkina Faso acted not like two weak states but like apprentice strong powers, trying by all their meager available means to dominate each other. Unlike typical self-perceived strong or weak parties, they did not even care about their relationship as neighbors or as members of several regional communities; the only relationship that was an effective concernÑand that finally brought the negotiations to a conclusionÑwas with the foreign, formal colonial patron.

This finding should not be overextended. One of the implications of the original notion of symmetry was that, therefore, parties should try to convey to each other a sense of equality, to facilitate effective negotiations, and this implication still holds. The point of the new finding is that precisely because parties in the symmetrical relation were more or less equal, they were afraid of losing that equality to any small edge of advantage that the other might produce. In this delicate situation, it would have been useful for the parties to spend some energyÑin fact, probably alot, in the atmosphere of suspicion which reignedÑto assuring the other of its equality.

All this is not to say that asymmetric negotiations were always easy. Perceptions of inequality delayed negotiations, either by causing their breakdown as in the U.S.-Canada case, or by inserting considerations of feelings, face, and status that required extra time to handle, as in the UNCED negotiations or the U.S. negotiations with Indonesia and with Egypt, where status became one of the principal issues. Furthermore, equalizing actions, rather than simple status equality, were often required before the parties could get on with their business. The Canadian walkout, the Chinese and American meticulous (sometimes ridiculous) concerns for equal treatment, and various incidents in the Arab-Israeli negotiations are cases in point. In a dynamic rather than a static sense, the sense of the hypothesis about power symmetry finds support in the need for an enabling atmosphere of equality, even if that atmosphere or its detailed translation into action is not sufficient alone to assure efficiency.

Perceived asymmetriesÑbased on such things as gross national product, military strength, physical size, and other objective indicesÑdo indeed produce different attitudes and actions in the exercise of power. The more powerful do indeed attempt to dominate in their exchanges with less powerful counterparts. The North imposed its concerns over environment on the South at UNCED and largely ignored the South's concerns for development. The U.S. opened prenegotiations with Canada with antidumpting and countervailing duties measures as pressure and it imposed its notion of a free trade agreement to resolve a series of irritants rather than a set of fundamentally changed set of trading rules between the two countries. The U.S. brought significant pressures on Indonesia and on Egypt to impose its conditions for aid, on Indonesia's foreign trade policy with China and on Egypt's domestic economic practices. France and Spain turned their attentions to Andorra's trade and labor practices with heavy-handed domineering. India continues to treat Nepal with dominance and disdain, as it did throughout the extended negotiations. Only in the UNCED negotiations did the North allow the South to set the agenda, in order to draw it into the process that the North considered important, but then dominated the remainder of that process as it produced agreement on items and in terms the North considered important. (As a result, less than half a decade later, the South is making plans to scuttle the deal because its part of the tradeoff is not being honored.)

It is unclear whether the strong act High-handedly because of their self perceptionÑtheir sense of their own strengthÑor their relative perceptionÑtheir feelings of bilateral asymmetry. The one case that would test the hypothesis, the High-High case of negotiations between the U.S. and China, does suggest that the parties acted on their self-perception and that they locked themselves so obstinately into their impasse because both acted "Highly" toward the other. This incompatibility was couched and justified in Cold War terms but was caused by the each party's sense of its High-ness. The Japanese-American case did not provide the same proof

because the parties were held together by their cooperative relationship, whereas the U.S.-China relationship was a hostile one.

The party perceived as the stronger on the basis of undeniable power possessionsÑthe United States, the European Community, India, and the entire developed "North"Ñadopted forms of a take-it-or-leave-it strategy toward its negotiating partner located along a spectrum of weaknessÑ Canada, Egypt, Indonesia, Andorra, Nepal, and the G-77 South. On first encounter (except in the UNCED case), these dominating strategies were dominant. The weaker party was interested enough in a positive outcome to the negotiations not to want to "leave it" because its security point (position without an agreement) was uncomfortable, and so it felt obliged to take it. If the weaker party hesitated, the stronger added a second strategy of pressure: take-it-or-suffer, in effect, worsening the target's security point even further. The stronger parties regarded themselves as having more important things to do, since they were strong, and although they valued the bilateral relationship, they often found their weak partners annoying with their lesser concerns and narrow interests.

In no case did the weaker states act submissively. Their behaviors were a combination of ingratiatingly cooperative and knavishly clever, sometimes even ideologically aggressive, but in no case submissive. Rather than remaining in their submissive role, as the asymmetry (and buttressing data from laboratory experiments) would have predicted, the weaker pulled a number of tricks out of their bag. Contrary to their structural position of powerlessness, they took actions appropriate to that position and so gained power over their opponents and the outcome. They blustered, dawdled, cajoled, borrowed power, vetoed temporarily (by walking out) or longer (by at least threatening withdrawal), and generally made a nuisance of themselves over an issue that mattered much more to them than to the distracted strong partner busy with other problems. In this way, they increased their (effective) power far more than initial asymmetry would have predicted. While the dominant party was standing tall, the smaller party was dodging between his legs. Often the big party set the framework or the principles for the agreement, and the little party gnawed away at the details.

The weaker parties' diverse efforts to level the playing field can be best understood through categories of low-power influence tactics (Rubin and Salacuse 1990; Deutsch 1985; Zartman 1987).

Power, says Foucault (1984, 311), "...is a collection of actions on possible actions....An action on actions." For every action taken by the stronger in the case studies, the weaker develops an action of its ownÑan action on an action. And there were many such actions to be taken. The feisty Canadians, the ideological Indonesians, the bureaucratic Egyptians, the intriguing Andorrans, and the clever Nepalese all find their own ways to challenge, circumvent, upstage, or outmaneuver their supposedly stronger negotiating partners. These ways of exercising power include:

Appeals to principle: Egypt arguing with the U.S. for increases in annual economic assistance on the grounds that their counterpart, Israel, is receiving more aid than Egypt, or the South arguing justice for the underdeveloped at UNCED.

Appeals to relationship: Nepal arguing that, as India's long-standing neighbor, it deserves special consideration; Canada's admonition to the U.S. to preserve the special North American relationship; Indonesia played on theÔ American position of world leadership and its own position of neutrality to create a delicate relationship that tied the US hands.

Anticipated renegotiation: Egypt's assertion that it is requesting a temporary increase in U.S. economic aidÑnot an indefinite commitment.

Appeals to the future: The G-77 nations of the South appealing to the industrialized North during the UNCED negotiations on the grounds that resources will be distributed in the former's favor in the future.

Appeals to (national) interest: Indonesia's appeal to the United States on the grounds that it is in the latter's interest to have a strong political ally; to push the Indonesians too hard would risk driving them to regard the U.S. as an enemy.

Appeals to rules: Canada's effort to set up dispute settlement procedures as the price of its agreement; G-77 insistence on using U.N. procedures which allowed it to comment on secretariat proposals.

Appeals to a higher authority: Mali's and Burkina Faso's efforts to draw in the Organization of African Unity; Andorra's appeals to the EC over the heads of France and Spain.

Trade-offs and linkage: South's agreement to support environment in exchange for North's support for development as goals; Canada's demand for a dispute-resolution procedure in exchange for an agreement that removed minor irritants for the U.S.

Using intermediaries:

Stonewalling: Canada's walking out during negotiations with the United States; Indonesia's continued secret sales of rubber to China.

Threat to worsen the status quo: Nepal's threat to withhold waters.

Searching for internal dissension: Andorra's efforts to play off France against Spain; the Israeli lobby in the U.S. pressuring for a favorable mediation.

Coalition formation: Attempts to maintain G-77 solidarity at UNCED; Indonesia's repeated attempts to rally neutralist support.

Joining one's enemy's enemy: Mali's efforts to form an alliance with France (traditionally an adversary of Burkina Faso); Indonesia's very act of cooperating with China.

Threatening to go public: South's use of the media in the press-sovered and NGO-attended UNCED sessions; Syngman Rhee's attempt to take the prisoners issue to public opinion.

Appeals to common concerns: Entire strategy of both North and South at UNCED based on efforts to make the other see environment and development as common sources of danger and opportunity.

Appeals to seize ripe moments: Use of anti-GATT feeling to create bilateral trade agreements and creation of fast track procedures to give specific deadlines and a window of opportunity

Limits on agreements: Attempts to restrict the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) to non-sensitive exchanges.

Through such actions, constituting power, most of the weaker partners in the case studiesÑwith the exception of the South at UNCEDÑwere able to work out results that were not to their disadvantage, and often in their favor. The initial asymmetry was not played out to the end but was righted in the course of the exercise. It is this righting action that overcomes the structural dilemma and allows perceived weaker parties to engage in negotiations to obtain a fair outcome. Rarely if ever does the weaker turn the tables totally and emerge the winner; it would not be in its capability or interest to do so, lest the stronger power refuse the unfavorably and unexpectedly asymmetrical outcome. The stronger party's agreement must be bought by some part of the outcome just as must the weaker party's.

Often it is through the invocation of contextual benefits for the stronger that the weaker can make off with incidental benefits of its own. Such benefits may be found in the relationship itself, which the stronger wants to preserve (Stein and Pauly 1993). This relationshipÑa geographic imposition of neighborliness (U.S.-Canada, E.C.-Andorra, India-Nepal) or a geopolitical imposition of dependency (U.S.-Egypt, U.S.-Indonesia, North-South, even in the otherwise symetrical US-Japan case)Ñis something precious enough to the stronger power that it does not want to lose it. Dependencies is not one-sided in such cases, if ever (Bacharach and Lawler 1980); instead, there are interdependencies at different levels, serving as the basis for the exercise of power in both directions (Elias 1970, 93-4, 107-9). Relations of interdependence at different levels, giving rise to power exercise through different tactics, serve to equalize initial asymmetries in the exercise and the resource structure of power.

In coda, it should be noted that when these interdependencies no longer obtain, the equilibrating structure falls apart. The Cold War gone, if the U.S. no longer were to care about maintaining good relations with Egypt or Indonesia, the latters' tactics or counterpower would be likely to be met with increasing impatience and decreasing effect. Thus, the blandishments of the South at UNCED, designed to press the North into giving equal attention to development as much as to environment, fell on the same deaf ears as did even sharper blandishments by the same weaker side two decades earlier in the negotiations on the New International Economic Order (Rothstein 1979; Zartman 1985); indeed, the softening of Southern tactics in the 1990s was a harbinger of the melting importance of the relationship between the First and the Third Worlds. The symmetrical cases reinforce this finding: China and the U.S. had no positive relationship to restrain them, and Mali and Burkina Faso, despite their common membership in West African organizations of "cooperation," cared more about their relationship with France than with each other.

Geographic impositions are less vulnerable; the U.S. and the European Community continued to care about maintaining good relations with their weaker neighbors, Canada and Andorra, respectively, although India sometimes did take its neighbor, Nepal, for granted, knowing that Nepal had its back against the mountain and was unlikely to borrow power from China on the other side.

Another major source of powerÑseen as means of controlling outcomesÑ was the ability to bring in support from external actors. This calculation was not a constant element in the initial preparations for the negotiations, and even when it was it was a very subjective estimate. For the most part, parties engaged in negotiations on the basis of positive estimates of their capabilities and then, as the negotiations proceeded, worked to overcame their difficulties through the acquisition or materialization of external support.

It is interesting that this element of asymmetry, which proved critical in negotiations, is the one carryover from the elements identified in the study of asymmetry in the initiation of war (Paul 1994, 31-3), and it relates directly to an established understanding of the process of escalation (Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim 1994). Parties run through their estimates of domestic sources of power, both material and intangible, making necessarily subjective evaluations. They enter into negotiations when they feel that they have a favorable edge in some relevant aspects of issue power, whatever the larger aggregate power position may be. In the military context, Paul writes:

...the weaker challenger can initiate war against the relatively stronger adversary if its key decision-makers believe that they can achieve their political and military objectives through the employment of a limited aims/faits accomplis strategy...Superior aggregate military and economic power of the defender need not deter a challenger...The support of a great power ally and the possession of short-term offensive capabilities can increase the probability of such war initiation (1994, 35).

Negotiation has no equivalent to short-term offensive capabilities, but, differences can straighten out faulty perceptions of relative power. However, in negotiation, external involvement in negotiation is mediation, and the crucial conclusion about biased mediators is that they can be effective in assisting negotiations only if they deliver the party toward whom they are biased (Touval and Zartman 1985). In negotiation, external intervention rides the diplomatic equivalent of a Trojan horse.

Conclusions to Power and Equality

In sum, targets that appeared to be comparable in power to oneself occasioned symmetrical negotiations that were painful and inefficient because all the parties' efforts went into assuring that the playing field keep the appearance of being level. It is this analysis that contains the key to the apparent disparity between experiment and reality. In experiments, conditions were so controlled as to isolate and focus on a single variable, whereas in the real world reality is more complex and ambiguous. In fact, experiments have been conducted which specify that near-equality is the most unstable condition of all, and that equality combined with a competitive Motivational Orientation and a sensitive Interactive Orientation is explosive (Rubin & Brown 1975,

246, 256). Those are exactly the conditions filled by reality in international (and other) politics.

On the other hand, targets that appeared less powerful than oneself occasioned exploitative behaviorÑwhether from high power or low power agentsÑwith the targets, as we have seen, responding rather creatively and effectively, in an effort to level the playing field. In negotiations, particularly within a relationship established over time, the parties know their role and play them complementarily. High-power parties may try to dominate initially, but they are restrained by three factors. One is the clever tactics of the weak who know how to handle their bigger partner, like the mice and the elephants, the children and their parents, the workers and their employers, and so on. Second is the distraction of the powerful by many other issues, faced with the concentration and commitment of the less powerful on the issues that matter to them. And third is the constraining effect of the relationship itself, which limits the crushing effects of High-sided dominance and gives the Low side a threat, an appeal, and a chance. Asymmetry, the most common structural setting for international negotiation, brings better results more efficiently than we tend to think possible.

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