

# Preface

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In *The Kid* (1921), Charlie Chaplin's little tramp finds an ingenious way to earn his living as well as that of his little kid. The tramp and the kid go to a middle-class district. First, the kid throws a stone and breaks the window of an apparently well-to-do apartment and then makes his escape. Then the tramp appears as a glazier and is hired to repair the broken window. In this way, the deliberate destruction of a window by the kid creates an outlet for the tramp.

Deprived layers of population are not only ones that may use their destructive power to create an outlet for their living. Strong states sometimes pursue imperialist policies to dominate other countries. The destruction of colonized countries may create new markets for the 'civilized' states. However, there are crucial differences between Chaplin's story and the imperialist policy. In the former case, only windows are broken, whereas in the latter one, people are usually killed and the states are broken. Many companies could be hired to reconstruct the windows (economy), but who can repair broken states? This was and remains as yet an unresolved puzzle. However, destruction can create outlets both for creating income (or *property*) and *sovereignty*; a fact that is often ignored by economists. The reason should be sought in the fundamental orientation of our discipline.

From its inception, political economy has been interested in analysing the value that agents, individually or collectively, can produce or exchange at national or international level. What is examined in this book is the exact opposite: how much can an agent *destroy*? This question is no less important than the traditional central question of political economy, since it is easier to *destroy* than to *create*. In fact, we are able to destroy a hundred or even a thousand times more than we can create. Destructive power bears many forms, violent as well as non-violent. Warfare, revolution, crime, strikes and demonstrations are some examples of destructive power.

Destructive power has two different functions. It can be used as a *means* to take or appropriate the value created by others. In its *appropriative* function, destructive power redistributes the social amount of created wealth without the mutual consent of all participants. Rational conflict theory has focused on this aspect of destructive power. However, destructive power has a second function, namely *rule producing*. The social product of destructive power as an *end* in itself is *sovereignty*. This aspect of destructive power has been neglected in

classical and neoclassical approaches, since these schools of economic thought are based on a strict separation of property from sovereignty.

Rational conflict theory considers real destruction and violence as manifestations of irrationality generated by lack of information, randomness and unpredictability. Consequently, models of rational behaviour exclude real destruction and treat it as a deviation from equilibrium. However, real destruction is not just a symptom of temporary crisis or disequilibrium. It is an integrative part of collective action and social development.

The focus of this book is to integrate both functions of destructive power into political economy. My objective is to bring together the question of sovereignty with that of property. In doing so, I have to concede that my intentions are devoid of economic imperialism for at least two reasons. First, I do not find the application of the present standard assumptions of economic analysis such as rationality and optimization appropriate for my goal. Second, the integration of destructive power in economic analysis requires economics to come closer to other social sciences, such as philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology and military science. Nevertheless, I think that in analysing the *value of destructive power*, economists have something to say, since they have been addressing the issue of value over the last three centuries. As a student of social science, I have tried, although not always successfully, to profit from all social sciences that are relevant to my subject in order to contribute to the *political economy* of destructive power.

My insistence on social science in general will become more obvious as we scrutinize the meaning and the place of destructive power in collective action. In Chapter 1, I shall argue that collective action involves three forms of power, namely creative (economic), destructive (military) and moral–ideological (including religious) powers. Although, these three forms of power will be separately defined on a theoretical level, they are embedded in reality. And even their separation is a historical process that will be discussed in the first chapter.

Since my study concentrates on destructive power, I shall discuss the other forms of power only in relation to it. Destructive power is also part of moral and creative power. Thus its frontiers and meaning should be clarified. Chapter 2 is devoted to this task. In gleaning the meaning of destructive power, I shall review different economic, political and sociological theories on conflict. Thus, this chapter will also provide an exhaustive critical survey of the existing literature on this topic. But it is not in any way limited to a survey, since different theories are discussed in relation to what I regard as relevant in defining destructive power. I shall underline the limits of both a moralistic conception of destructive value and a rational conflict perspective. I shall then argue that destructive power should be analysed as a social, deliberate process involving real destruction and conflict.

The social character of destructive power will be examined in Chapter 3. In

doing so, the following questions will be addressed. What is the role of destructive power in creating a social order? How does it contribute to the enforcement of rules? To what extent is it involved in the change of rules? What is its relation with communication? Finally, is destructive power a public or private good? I shall also show the historical significance of destructive power in furthering extensive and intensive social integration. While destructive power in its *appropriative* function, depending on the striking force of military weapons, develops the *extensive* integration through domination (empires of domination), destructive power in its *rule-producing* function decides on the zone of *intensive* integration or nation-building (territorial empires). In investigating the relationships between destructive power and rule enforcement, I shall develop two different concepts, namely ‘legality preference’ and ‘violence preference’. In doing so, I compare destructive power with money, and suggest that the two different functions of destructive power resemble the two different functions of money as a means of circulation (fiat money) and as a store of value (liquidity preference). Accordingly, violence preference alludes to destructive power in its rule-producing function. Uncertainty and transaction costs will be invoked as two factors that determine the comparative advantage of legality preference over violence preference.

Furthermore, destructive power will also be viewed both as a driving force of communication means (for example, sea power) and as a form of expression (for example, a scream). In the former case, destructive power leads to more extensive integration, whereas in the latter case it enhances protest and opposition movements. Destructive power as the source of sovereignty defines the frontiers of private and public order, and thus it should be regarded both as a private or appropriative activity and as a public or rule-producing activity.

The value of destructive power will be the subject of my inquiry in Chapter 4. I shall first emphasize the non-equivalency principle and the higher productivity (or ‘destructivity’) of destructive power compared to creative power. Subsequently, I shall contend that the value of the two different functions of destructive power cannot be measured in the same way. While there is a unique value for destructive power in its appropriative function, the value of destructive power in its rule-producing function is the sum of many different valuations hinging upon the perception of the social subject. Furthermore, I shall highlight the limits of marginal utility theory and cost–benefit analysis in measuring the value of destructive power.

Finally, Chapter 5 will be devoted to the sources of destructive power. Elaborating on these sources, I shall show different tensions existing between the sources of destructive power in its appropriative function, and those of destructive power in its rule-producing function. In particular, I shall stress the growing autonomy of the military–industrial sector from both society and

democratic institutions of the modern state. I shall associate this process with the commercialization and privatization of the military sector and the weakening of public order.

This book substantiates the political economy of destructive power. It opens the door to future research exploring the relationships of destructive power with creative and moral powers.