state will restructure the public sphere, intervene in the private sphere and rectify any imbalance between the two. As necessary, it will also reduce the relative degree of advantage enjoyed by the minority benefiting most from the unequal distribution of private property. In both respects, the state's actions are intended to provide rights and rewards which compensate for market failures and unjust patterns of economic distribution through the market.

The *minimalist* form of capitalist democracy assumes that the regulatory function of government will not involve compensatory activity (which is regarded as counter-productive for all involved) but will be restricted almost entirely to enforcing a body of law. The laws enforced by the state will maximise the freedom of private individuals within a stable environment thus optimising the chance for achieving the goals of minimum social tension and optimum growth as predicated in the regulatory model.

Piven and Cloward anticipated that the people (or at least the poor) would engage in conflict with big business through the medium of the state. In this way the state could be stopped from drifting towards a minimalist model and pushed back towards a compensatory model. Miliband believed that the model of hegemonic capitalist democracy continued to apply beneath the surface of the regulatory model whether in its simple form or in its compensatory and minimalist variants. The repressive potential of hegemonic capitalist democracy might, he thought, get worse as the capacity of the state to keep its promises or meet demands upon it was stretched beyond its limit. Brittan also bore witness to the authoritarian potential inherent in the regulatory model.

The distinctive models of mid twentieth-century capitalist democracy are built upon a legitimisation of the acknowledged vices of the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century system. Acknowledged as vices, that is, by commentators at the time such as Tocqueville, Mill, Carnegie, Chamberlain, Bryce, Ostrogorski, Veblen and Hobson. The emphasis upon private affluence, the encouragement of passivity in the public sphere except for making an occasional choice between two or more sets of packaged policies, the wholesale organisation of political life through a party system, the systematic management of public opinion, and political appeals to the lowest pecuniary motives: that these values and practices should now be regarded as the essence of capitalist democracy rather than its perversion would presumably have horrified our predecessors.

Chapter twelve

Three phases of capitalist democracy

Ten types of capitalist democracy

In conclusion, it may be helpful to summarise in a relatively formal way the book's conclusions regarding the logic expressed in the sequence of models of capitalist democracy which have been encountered.

The nine models so far introduced are listed here with the addition of a further model whose significance will be explained later (see Diagram A, p. 194):

1. The *participatory* model of capitalist democracy assumes that individuals will invest their time and energy as fully in the public as in the private sphere and that private property will not provide the basis for domination by a powerful minority.
2. The *mediatory* model of capitalist democracy assumes that an educated and propertied minority will complement its dominance in the market with intelligent and humane leadership in the public sphere.
3. The *paternalistic* model of capitalist democracy assumes the priority of the private over the public sphere but recommends that the most successful business people should use their superior judgement and wealth to provide services to the community.
4. The *manipulatory* model assumes the improper and generally covert dominance of private interests, especially business people, within the public sphere. This influence is exercised partly through the promise of jobs and favours.
5. The model of *hegemonic* capitalist democracy assumes that the public sphere is managed by agents who use their relative autonomy to advance, directly or indirectly, the interests of capital at the expense of the interests of the people as a whole, especially the working class.
6. The *elitist* model of capitalist democracy assumes that the public sphere is legitimately and quite overtly dominated by influential minorities – including organised political parties and pressure

groups representing vested interests – who seek to advance their interests by applying persuasion to the government and/or the citizenry.

7 The *regulatory* model of capitalist democracy assumes that the task of government is to use expert knowledge in order to minimise social tension and optimise economic growth. The object is to generate feelings of economic security (preferably prosperity) and psychological contentment among the population at large, especially those sections who are most closely connected to the current political establishment and those most capable of threatening the position of that establishment.

8 The *compensatory* model of capitalist democracy assumes that the state will restructure the public sphere, intervene in the private sphere and rectify any imbalance between the two. As necessary, it will also reduce the relative degree of advantage enjoyed by the minority benefiting most from the unequal distribution of private property. In both respects, the state's actions are intended to provide rights and rewards which compensate for market failures and unjust patterns of economic distribution through the market.

9 The *minimalist* form of capitalist democracy assumes that the regulatory function of government will not involve compensatory activity (which is regarded as counter-productive for all involved) but will be restricted almost entirely to enforcing a body of law. The laws enforced by the state will maximise the freedom of private individuals within a stable environment thus optimising the chance for achieving the goals of minimum social tension and optimum growth as predicated in the regulatory model.

10 The *conservatory* model of capitalist democracy assumes that strategies with respect to economic growth and individual or group behaviour within the market should be made compatible with the acceptance of a shared responsibility for proper management of ecological resources. This includes the task of maintaining or improving the environment's capacity to sustain a healthy and civilised lifestyle for citizens.

Before discussing the dynamic interplay between the various models the particular meanings of four terms to be used – elaboration, delegitimisation, relegitimisation, and transformation – will be briefly indicated. A preliminary point is that a distinction may be made between two aspects of a model: the interconnected structures, processes and strategies to which a model refers (the 'facts' asserted by the model) and the attitude towards them expressed in the model (the 'values' it asserts). With respect to their incorporation of facts and values, the different models may be related to each other in one or more of three ways:

First, the facts and values specific to model X may be incorporated within the more complex intellectual structure of model Y. In this case, model Y involves an *elaboration* of model X.

Second, model Y may emphasise the same facts as model X but embody a negative critique of model X's values. As a consequence, facts (structures, processes, strategies) that were regarded as legitimate in model X are regarded as illegitimate in model Y (or *vice versa*). In this case, model Y has either *delegitimised* or *relegitimised* the facts of model X.

Third, model Y may accept the special significance of the structures, processes and strategies incorporated in model X but assert that these facts are related to each other in a different way. In this case, model Y entails a *transformation* of model X.

Three sequences of ideological development

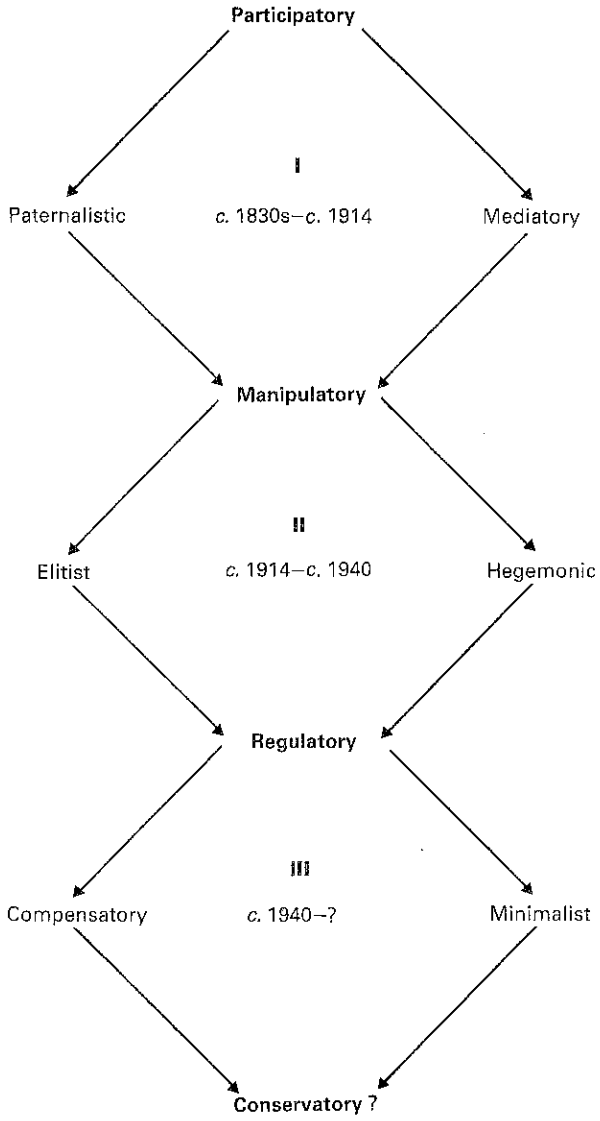
Diagram A represents the models of capitalist democracy encountered in this book in terms of their participation in three successive sequences of ideological development. During the *first* sequence, from approximately the 1830s to the early 1900s, a spiralling process of delegitimisation occurred. A series of models were produced, each one challenging the claims of its predecessor and being in turn challenged. The participatory model was unreservedly accepted by none of the writers or politicians studied. Even Tocqueville wanted it to be combined with the mediation of the judiciary. No one supported complete political and social equality. Apart from the judiciary, the strategic groups in the different versions of the mediatory model included industrialists and successful professionals (Chamberlain), bureaucrats and intellectuals (Mill) and strong-minded 'independent citizens' (Bryce).

The participatory and mediatory models were both undermined by the two assumptions of the paternalistic model as set out by Carnegie: that the public sphere was of low worth; and that a high proportion of the population were unfitted to share in the management of society's business. It should be added that 'softer' forms of paternalism, more respectful of the public sphere, existed, especially in Britain, where they complemented rather than contradicted the mediatory model. The work of the Quaker manufacturer George Cadbury, especially at Bournville to the south west of Birmingham, is a well-known example.

Both the mediatory and paternalistic forms were, in turn, delegitimised at the hands of the manipulatory model of capitalist democracy developed by Ostrogorski and Bryce. The manipulatory model accepted the facts as represented in the mediatory and paternalist models – especially the great influence over British and American government and politics enjoyed by wealthy business people – and declared them evil.

During the *second* sequence, from about the First World War to the

Diagram A Three sequences of ideological development



1940s, two cycles of transformation, elaboration and relegitimisation occurred, both leading from the manipulatory model to the regulatory model.

One route led by way of the elitist model. Theorists such as Lasswell and Schumpeter acknowledged the special significance of the political domination exercised by powerful minorities but did not condemn the situation. On the contrary, the facts were relegitimised. The point was to accept the reality and find out how it worked. In pursuing their enquiries, the exponents of the elitist model subjected the facts of the manipulatory model to a transformation which demoted business people to just one elite among a number. Business people were no longer the omnipotent wirepullers of politicians, bureaucrats, labour leaders and so on. Instead, controllers of different resources – capital, votes, organisational capacity, charisma and so on – competed with each other for advantage.

Turning for a moment to the other route from the manipulatory model, the hegemonic model (Veblen, Hobson) accepted both the facts and evaluation of this earlier model. However, Veblen and Hobson both elaborated the manipulatory model by locating it within a more comprehensive system. This was based on the assumption that business interests were relatively successful in imposing policies upon the state which served the needs of capitalism at the expense of the people. The hegemonic model incorporated a function for advertising as a means of shaping the motivation and behaviour of the population.

The two routes subsequently converged upon the regulatory model. The elitist model was elaborated and made part of a more dynamic system. This system was the hegemonic model transformed and relegitimised. The central triad of big business, government and the people remained in place. So did the role of propaganda. However, the initiative switched from capital to government. Its tasks were three: to shape the behaviour of business in ways which generated rewards for the population; to shape the behaviour of the population in ways which maintained economic growth; and to monitor points of tension and conflict in order to minimise their consequences for the system as a whole.

The incorporation of the elitist model into the regulatory model made government the focal point for a bargaining process over the distribution of rewards and penalties. The trade unions found a place in this model which they were denied in the hegemonic model. Schumpeter and Lasswell had made a start at writing the job descriptions for professional economists and political scientists as government advisers under the regulatory scheme of things. The techniques of economic management recommended by Keynes or used in his name were also available.

The *third* sequence was under way as soon as the regulatory model was established and has not yet been resolved. Two contrary pressures

were exerted from the 1940s onward. One was towards elaboration of the regulatory model to permit a much greater degree of intervention in the affairs of business and the people at large. This compensatory model was designed to achieve an optimum combination of economic growth, social justice and civilised decency. Galbraith and Crosland have been prominent exponents of variations of this approach.

Minimalism, the competing approach, denies legitimacy to the compensatory model, objecting both to the values implanted within it and the factual understandings upon which it is based. Minimalists accept the aims of the original regulatory model but believe that the compensatory approach makes it more difficult to achieve these. Instead, they propose a regulatory model transformed in two ways. First, as far as possible regulation is restricted to the enactment and supervision of a legal framework providing stability and guaranteeing individual freedom. Second, the sharp distinction between big business and the people which is central to the regulatory model becomes much less clearcut. The business corporation tends to disappear from view. The foreground is occupied by [to use Galbraith's term] the market sector. The latent image is of a free market populated by active entrepreneurial individuals.

After nearly a decade of minimalist rule in both Britain and the United States there is some justification for believing that another downward spiral of delegitimisation is under way. There has been a sustained attack upon the compensatory model in both societies. Memories of inflation, high taxation and unsuccessful policies of income restraint have been battered into the public mind and associated, however unfairly, with the past performances of the British Labour party and the American Democratic party. It will be difficult to go back down this road.

Ironically, the implementation of minimalist policies has involved a considerable amount of governmental intervention, especially in Britain, in order to dismantle or restructure institutions in accordance with the ruling idea. In Britain, this high-profile activity has helped maintain the authority of central government; it is seen to be doing things. In the United States, the personal popularity of Ronald Reagan, studiously achieved through a masterly performance, sustained the prestige of the White House in spite of numerous accusations of incompetence and even worse.

There has been unemployment, higher than for decades and, in some localities, of horrifying proportions. The drug problem, one index of social despair, has got much worse in both societies. Britain had very serious urban riots in 1981. However, a large proportion of the people have been rewarded for their political support by a consumer boom which has induced a feeling of prosperity.

The minimalist regimes have apparently destroyed their ideological

rival, the compensatory model, and left themselves alone in the field. The central theme of the Reagan years was that America had found itself again and re-established contact with a vital spirit. This spirit had made it great in the past and would do so in the future. Minimalism in America claimed the authority of national tradition.

National culture re-examined

However, American national culture also supplied a powerful critique of the individualist pursuit of material wealth at the expense of other values. A wave of self-criticism swept across America in the later Reagan years, perhaps encouraged by the dramatic changes in international relations – the impact of *glasnost* and *perestroika* on the Cold War and the resurgence of South-East Asia – discussed at the beginning of this book. Two widely-read critiques of contemporary American culture from the latter part of the 1980s both drew inspiration from a much earlier commentator. In *The Closing of the American Mind*, subtitled 'How higher education has failed democracy and impoverished the souls of today's students', Allan Bloom acknowledged that 'Tocqueville taught me the importance of the university to democratic society' (Bloom 1987: 246).

In a nutshell, Bloom believes that American universities have imbibed the moral and cultural relativism (or indifference) of the wider society. The opposing ideal asserted by Bloom is represented by Plato's *Republic* with its evocation of 'The real community of man [which] . . . is the community of those who seek the truth' (281). The universities had, unfortunately, forgotten their duty to teach students to inquire into the nature of the true and the good. Such a failure heralded great danger for 'when there are no shared goals or visions of the public good, is the social contract any longer possible?' (27).

Robert Bellah and his colleagues took the very title of their book – *Habits of the Heart* (subtitled 'Middle America observed') – from Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. They strongly opposed the contemporary tendency to think about American society solely in terms of political economy. As a result of their inquiries into love and marriage, therapeutic practices, voluntary associations and campaign organisations Bellah's team concluded that there was both a need and a desire to revive 'civic virtue in order to mitigate the tension [between private interest and public good] and render it manageable' (Bellah 1988: 270). Public virtue had to be revived for the good of the survival of the American nation as 'a free people'. The big question was: 'Is it possible that we could become citizens again and together seek the common good in the post-industrial, post-modern age?' (271).

The issue of post-modernism will be taken up shortly after noticing that in Britain also the 1980s were a time of reflection upon national

identity. The focus was upon the interplay between tradition, political ideas and institutions, geography and ethnicity: specifically Englishness – and, of course, Scottishness, Welshness and Irishness. Some aspects of these themes had been broached decades earlier by, for example, Raymond Williams in *Culture and Society* (1963). In his *The Break-Up of Britain* (1981), originally published in 1977, Tom Nairn carried forward 'a gathering movement of historical revisionism' (1981: 303). During the mid 1980s the flood tide broke with the appearance of works such as *The Invention of Tradition* (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), *The Great Arch. English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Corrigan and Sayer 1985), *On Living in an Old Country. The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (Wright 1985), *Englishness, Politics and Culture 1880–1920* (Colls and Dodd 1986) and, with an Anglo-American focus, *Class and Space. The Making of Urban Society* (Thrift and Williams 1987).

The new debate on Englishness is still in its early stages, but one tentative conclusion is that, unlike being an American, being English does not embody an ideological commitment to some version of the high ideals of citizenship to which Bloom and Bellah refer. American-ness embodies a programme, both individual and collective. For the sake of legitimacy, this programme has to retain visible links with the founding principles of the American Republic. Within those limits battle rages. To be American is to belong to what Louis Hartz has called 'the liberal tradition' (Hartz 1955).

Englishness is equally a historical product but its ideological content is more flexible. For a few generations – during the half-century following the act which gave the vote to all Englishmen (1918) – liberalism was a constituent element in Englishness. In *Modern Democracies* Bryce wrote:

> Abiding foundations of policy glide . . . into principles which have come to so inhere in national consciousness as to seem parts of national character. Such, for the English, are the respect for law, the feeling that every citizen is bound to come forward in its support . . . . The traditional love of liberty, the traditional sense of duty to the community, be it great or small, the traditional . . . wish to secure reforms by constitutional rather than violent means – these were the habits ingrained in the mind and will of Englishmen.
>
> (Bryce 1921a: 156–60)

This view – shaped by the moral interests of middle-class Christianity and upper-class paternalism – became the stock in trade of both the Conservative party and the infant Labour party (Smith 1987). Indeed, the very success of the Liberal party in establishing its central principles in national political life may have been partly responsible for its inter-war decline.

During the past two decades the main institutional supports for this liberal version of Englishness – the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Church of England, the universities and the Chamberlainite tradition of local government – have been seriously undermined. It is by no means dead. However, a more atavistic form of Englishness has emerged, expressed at its worst in football hooliganism and the more extreme manifestations of chauvinism evident during the Falklands War of 1982.

The balance between the two forms of Englishness might shift back in favour of the former – or a quite different type of Englishness might eventually emerge. However, most likely is that the Americanisation of British culture which is under way will reinforce the selfish and parochial element in Englishness. If this is correct it would be an ironic counterpart to the reverse process – the export to America of English middle-class materialism and individualism – which John Stuart Mill observed during the mid nineteenth century.

To summarise: capitalist democratic ideology is currently subject to a process of delegitimisation. Some indications of a moral revolt against minimalism in the United States have been indicated. Englishness does not supply equivalent tools for critique. However, despite its evident cultural power, minimalism does not yet dominate the British national psyche to the same extent.

Post-modernism and its antecedents

Some clues to the cultural character of minimalism may emerge from a brief consideration of post-modernism. Post-modernism, as analysed by Jean Braudillard, is consumer capitalism dominated by signs, messages and images (Poster 1988). For Frederic Jameson it is the abandonment of narratives and the loss of our historical sense, for example in architecture and film (Jameson 1979; Jameson 1981; Jameson 1984). For Daniel Bell it is the loss of old anchorages in time and space (Bell 1978). For Lasch its essence is narcissism (Lasch 1980). For Lash and Urry, post-modernist sensibility includes the denial of the separation of art from life and of high from low culture; culture is to be consumed in a state of 'distraction' for the purpose of immediate enjoyment (Lash and Urry 1987: 287).

These analyses lead back, yet one more time, to Tocqueville and his fascination with the contrast between aristocratic, class-ridden Europe and democratic, individualistic America. He found in the 1830s that Americans were, in cultural matters, devoted to 'the hypocrisy of luxury[;] . . . the arts [he added] have recourse to every kind of imposture' (1968: 600). The image or representation of a precious stone was as well valued as the real thing. Instead of a taste for the lofty and enduring,

> They like facile forms of beauty, self-explanatory and immediately enjoyable; above all, they like things unexpected and new . . . lively emotions, sudden revelations, brilliant truths, or errors able to rouse them up and plunge them, almost by violence, into the middle of the subject.
>
> (Tocqueville 1968: 608)

In their theatres, 'Democratic peoples have but little reverence for learning and scarcely bother at all what happened in Rome or Athens. They want the talk to be about themselves and to see the present world mirrored' (630).

Immediacy, enjoyment, narcissism and a preoccupation with signifiers (e.g. paste diamonds) rather than with things of real and lasting value: Tocqueville was describing a bourgeois culture released from aristocratic supports or restraints. Veblen analysed a later version of this culture around the turn of the century. Conspicuous consumption had become a complex charade signifying social aspirations. Architectural styles, whether at world fairs such as the Columbia Exposition of 1893 or in the mansions of Chicago plutocrats, showed scant regard for history or geography, happily juxtaposing ancient Egypt with absolutist France.

Insofar as post-modernist culture recalls these earlier manifestations, the reason may be that it expresses a new release of capitalism – iconoclastic, subversive, disrespectful and individualistic – from social restraints. If that is the case then minimalism and post-modernism are well matched. However, the latter is less a source of moral support for minimalism than a cultural emanation, a sort of glow around it.

As Schumpeter predicted, in the 1980s a larger proportion of the population is able to share the material fruits of capitalism than was the case in the 1890s. The property-owning, property-enjoying part of society now includes a large number of white- and blue-collar employees and their families. As tax-payers they are likely to resist a shift back to compensatory capitalist democracy but their support for minimalism is, it may be suggested, dependent upon its practical success. Specifically, minimalist regimes must maintain low inflation, sustain high rates of economic growth and compete effectively in the global economy if they are to survive in their present form. Their credit, both political and financial, depends upon this.

The conservatory model

Two dragons stand in the path of minimalist regimes. One is the possibility of a widespread recession, perhaps triggered by a repetition on an even larger scale of the stock market crash of late 1987. It was the great crash of 1929 which brought to an end the glittering era described and

condemned by Veblen. Another very sudden and massive collapse might presage a revival of sentiment in favour of compensatory strategies. However, governments might be able to control the impact of such a recession so that it hit certain groups unequally and at different times. In such circumstances, a minimalist regime might continue, coexisting with a more authoritarian strategy with respect to law and order.

Ironically, a recession would put back the evil day when the second dragon might have to be faced. This is the threat to the environment posed by continuing industrial development. Even with present rates of economic growth in the advanced industrial societies, there appears to be a serious threat to the ecological system. Anxieties about the 'greenhouse effect' and damage to the ozone layer are only two aspects of the impact environmental issues are having on the mainstream politics of capitalist democracy. A systemic ecological crisis would put all stakes at risk.

It is unrealistic to expect 'green' parties to achieve majority positions within the British or American legislatures in the near future. However, in the medium term campaigners upon ecological issues are likely to achieve strategic positions within major parties or multi-party coalitions. The sensitivity of the public to this issue was dramatically shown late in 1988 when Edwina Curry, junior health minister in the British government, suggested that egg production was widely infected with salmonella. Within a short period of time sales of eggs in Britain dropped by 50 per cent. Mrs Curry was forced to resign but, whatever the facts of the case, she clearly hit a very sensitive spot.

People feel very threatened in their relationship with nature: water pollution, nuclear leaks, acid rain, food irradiation, skin cancer, Aids – and so on. Concern is growing that the industrial economy is beginning to burst out of its ecological container. The concern of the 1970s was that occupational and consumer interests were 'overloading' the political system. By contrast, during the 1990s the talk will probably be of 'growth machines' (Molotch 1976) 'overloading' the environment. At worst we could be in for a period of deep anxiety reminiscent of the millenarian 990s when bishops and abbots prophesied the imminent demise of mankind.

A time might come when ordinary people are persuaded that it is in their interests to forsake the prospect of further material gains in order to protect the value of what they already have. They would have to be shown a practical strategy for doing this. Whatever the content of such a strategy, it would probably have to be legitimised in terms of what might be labelled a 'conservatory' model of capitalist democracy:

> The *conservatory* model of capitalist democracy assumes that strategies with respect to economic growth and individual or group behaviour

within the market should be made compatible with the acceptance of a shared responsibility for proper management of ecological resources. This includes the task of maintaining or improving the environment's capacity to sustain a healthy and civilised lifestyle for citizens.

Were such a model to be seriously implemented it would pose severe difficulties for existing patterns of capitalist democracy. Would capitalism be able to find sufficient investment opportunities in the context of such constraints? Would a conservatory strategy be able to avoid 'overload' on government due to well-organised pressure from below for immediate material rewards? No definite answers can be given to those questions but at the very least major tensions would be generated by a serious attempt to implement a conservatory model.

Despite the innovative thinking of some socialists (e.g. Cook 1984), the shift to a conservatory ideology would create immediate problems for politicians previously committed to a compensatory ideology. The search for justice and the pursuit of growth appear inseparable within this approach. The skepticism of Tony Crosland towards conservationists has already been noticed.

Minimalism also pushes for growth but politicians of this school are tactically better placed, in the short run at least. While the compensatory strategy boils down to 'growth as a precondition of justice', the minimalist approach can be summarised as 'freedom and stability leading to growth'. If a minimalist regime runs into very serious trouble either due to a failure to achieve balanced growth (overheating in the economy?) or due to severe environmental dysfunctions (overheating in the ecology?), it has at hand the beginnings of an alternative line of action and propaganda.

The earlier phases of the minimalist programme – liberty and stability – could be retained, though probably with a more authoritarian cast. The virtues of lowering the rate of growth could then be preached. This might be increasingly acceptable to an electorate learning the hard way that when the environment is overburdened dirt and disease are no longer the prerogative of the poor and weak. The 'good housekeeping' rhetoric of minimalism – with which the British, at least, have become familiar – could in such circumstances be adapted smoothly to the world ecology: humankind as a whole must learn to 'keep its global house in order', we all have a responsibility to leave the world in as good a condition as when we found it, and so on.

The international dimension of a conservatory approach would be crucial. Its objectives would be well served if the United States, Britain and other potential conservatory regimes increased the practical support they gave to bodies such as the United Nations. The Western powers might even take the opportunity, for highly 'moral' reasons, to focus

international disapproval and diplomatic pressure upon the fast-growing economies of South-East Asia. In a world edging towards ecological overload too much industrial vigour would not be a good thing.

The advantage enjoyed by minimalist politicians would be short term only. Their claim to office ultimately depends upon making people – enough people – feel prosperous and secure. The bedrock of minimalism is the responsibility of the individual to look after him or herself combined with the individual's right to enjoy the fruits of private property. The security offered by minimalism is based upon individual possession within a stable environment. However, the environment is becoming radically destabilised. Individual property rights will have no more sway over the course of global ecological deterioration than did King Canute over the waves. The rules of the game are changing very quickly.

In conclusion, these speculations will be given a more formal character. A shift from compensatory and minimalist models towards a conservatory model of capitalist democracy would involve further processes of delegitimisation, transformation, and elaboration.

First, legitimacy would be denied to the unrestrained pursuit of economic growth and to interpretations of freedom which allow individual selfishness to damage our shared interest in a habitable world.

Second, the framework in terms of which justice is sought within the compensatory model would be transformed. To be specific, the compensatory model assumes that increased exploitation of nature, through economic growth, will facilitate social engineering in favour of the less privileged and thus make a decent standard of living available to more people. The conservatory model also assumes that a readjustment of the relationship between society and nature will optimise the possibility for decent human lives. However, not only does it assume that the pressure for growth should be put into reverse gear, but it also requires that material demands should be restrained by rich and poor alike.

Third, the search for stability characteristic of minimalism would be elaborated and given a much broader character. Specifically, it would extend beyond the need to guarantee the rule of law within society, encompassing the far greater task of preserving, as far as possible, the global ecological balance.

The conservatory model would pose serious problems for politicians and citizens attached to its compensatory and minimalist antecedents. Would the pursuit of survival wipe out all hope of improving the relative position of the worst-off within society? Would a commitment to ecological concerns be at the expense of individual freedom? Capitalist democracy remains on trial.