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What is This?

Power and the Battle for Hearts and Minds

Steven Lukes

The concept of power, according to Professor Gilpin, is 'one of the most troublesome in the field of international relations'[1]; its proper definition, according to Professor Waltz, 'remains a matter of controversy'.[2] Quite so. I want to begin by suggesting three reasons for both the trouble and the controversy.

The first is that the concept of power is *primitive* in the specific sense that its meaning cannot be elucidated by reference to other notions whose meaning is less controversial than its own. ('Truth' is another such primitive concept.) In particular, although, as I shall argue, the concept of power is intimately linked to the notion of 'interests', how 'interests' are to be understood is certainly no less controversial than how 'power' is to be understood. The second reason is that the concept of power is *essentially contested.* By this I mean that when some judgment is made about the presence or absence of power or the extent of some agent's power, what counts as having or exercising power, as being more or less powerful or powerless, and so on, cannot be disconnected from various controversial assumptions, among them assumptions about what is important or significant. In other words, it cannot be disconnected from what we commonly call the 'value assumptions' of the person making the judgment.

Moreover, thirdly, the contestedness of 'power' – the fact that what counts as power and being powerful is controversial – matters. For, as Stefano Guzzini argues in his contribution to this issue, the concept of power has a *performative* role in our discourse, and, more particularly, in our political discourse: how we conceive of power makes a difference to how we think and act in general, and especially in political contexts. As Guzzini puts it, 'what it does when it is used'[3] can have significant con-

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1. Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 13.

2. Kenneth N. Waltz, 'Reflections on *Theory of International Politics:* A Response to My Critics' in Robert O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 333.

3. Stefano Guzzini, 'The Concept of Power: a Constructivist Analysis', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 3 (2005): 495-521.

sequences. For example, in the recent US election, the evidence suggests that many voters based their choice of the President in part on the basis of their judgments about two separable questions that were put to them: which of the candidates appeared to be the 'stronger' leader, and which would keep American 'strong'. Obviously enough, what 'strong' means is inseparable from what 'powerful' and thus 'power' mean.

To see why and in what ways 'power' is essentially contested, it is helpful to recall John Locke's very general definition of power. To have power, he wrote, is to be 'able to make, or able to receive, any change'[4]. Even that, however, is not general enough, for it excludes the power to resist change in face of a changing environment. So let us say, extending Locke's definition, that having power is being able to make or to receive any change, or to resist it. Though extremely general, this has several specific implications. It implies that power identifies a capacity: power is a potentiality, not an actuality – indeed a potentiality that may never be actualised. As Anthony Kenny observes, failure to see this has frequently led to 'two different forms of reductionism, often combined and often confused, depending on whether the attempt was to reduce a power to its exercise or to its vehicle'.[5]

Among present-day social scientists, the 'exercise fallacy' has been committed by those for whom power can only mean the causing of an observable sequence of events. This has led behavioural political scientists to equate power with success in decision-making. To be powerful is to win: to prevail over others in conflict situations. But such victories can be very misleading as to where power really lies. Raymond Aron was rightly critical of 'the kind of sociology that prides itself on being strictly empirical and operational' and that 'questions the utility of the term "power" to the extent that it designates a potential that is never made manifest except through acts (decisions)'.[6] The 'vehicle fallacy' is committed by those tempted by the idea that power must mean whatever goes into operation when power is activated. This idea has led sociologists and strategy analysts, for example, to equate power with power resources; the former equating it with wealth and status, the latter with military forces and weaponry. But having the means of power is not the same as being powerful. As both France and the United States discovered in Vietnam, having military superiority is not the same as having

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4. John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Civil Government and A Letter concerning Toleration,* ed. J. W. Gough (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946), 111.

5. A. J. P. Kenny, *Will, Freedom and Power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975), 10.

6. R. Aron, 'Macht, power, puissance: prose démocratique ou poésie démonaique?', *Archives européennes de sociologie* 5 (1964): 25-51, reprinted in *Power,* ed. Steven Lukes (Oxford and New York: Blackwell and New York University Press, 1986), 256.

power. In short, observing the exercise of power can give evidence of its possession and counting power resources can be a clue to its distribution, but power is a capacity, and neither the exercise nor the vehicle of that capacity.

These points are elementary, though they have led many distinguished minds astray. The trouble and the controversy begin when we seek to apply the concept of power to social life and social relations. Note, to begin with, that nothing in the extended Lockean definition requires that an exercise of power be either *intentional* or that it involve an *active* or positive intervention in the world – and yet very many thinkers have insisted that power be so conceived. So, for instance, Bertrand Russell defined power as 'the production of intended effects', Max Weber and C. Wright Mills connect power with the realisation of the 'will' of the powerful, and many think that power involves 'getting what one wants'.

Obviously, some abilities are abilities to bring about intended consequences. If I possess such an ability, I can, given the appropriate resources, under favourable circumstances, bring about the consequences I intend. And if I have such an ability, you can normally count on me to bring about the desired result if I so choose. Yet most of our actions bring in their wake innumerable chains of unintended consequences; some of these are highly significant and seem obvious instances of power. Powerful people, for example, induce deferential or compliant behaviour in others but may not intend to (and are often more successful if they do not). Pollsters can unintentionally influence the outcomes of elections. Routine rule following can have unanticipated consequences as the environment changes. And indeed unintended consequences of power can be unforeseen (though to count as power they must be foreseeable). The field of economic power abounds in such instances where decisions – to raise prices, say, or to invest – foreclose or enable opportunities and choices for unknown others; creditors have power over debtors. What actors intentionally do always generates chains of unintended consequences and it is implausible to deny that some of these manifest their power. Of course, those which frustrate their intentions may signify a lack of power to control events, but we can, as Mills argued, properly hold responsible, or accountable, those who have the power to advance or harm others' interests but fail to realise or attend to this.

Must power be 'active' rather than 'inactive'? To *exercise* power is to perform actions. Indeed the very phrase 'exercising power' suggests such activity, while the phrase 'exerting power' suggests even more strenuous activity. There are three points to be made here. First, the distinction can be merely verbal: a vote is a failure to abstain; an abstention is a failure to vote. But second, and more deeply, 'negative'

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actions – or failures to act – can sometimes properly be seen as actions with consequences (indeed they can only be specified in terms of their consequences). Sometimes, therefore, abstention or non-intervention can be a form of power. Whether we count an absence of action as an action depends on a judgment as to whether such action has significant causal consequences and on whether we are disposed to regard the actor who fails to act as responsible, in one or another sense, for so failing. But this is precisely what is at issue in deciding the question of whether negative actions can instantiate power. There is no good reason for excluding failures to act from the scope of power on principle. Of course, there must be some criterion for selecting the relevant non-events or failures positively to 'intervene' as actions; a baseline of expectation against which, counterfactually, the putative intervention in question can be seen as both feasible and one for which the agent could be held responsible. Of course, the power exemplified by not acting thus implies the ability to act (and vice versa). But in the analysis of power, therefore, positive actions have no special significance. To act can be a sign of weakness (for instance, conforming to the demands of repressive regimes – such as voting in a Communist election in Soviet times) and the index of an actor's power can be his ability to avoid or resist performing positive actions. Thus the US under the Bush Administration shows its power by not ratifying the Kyoto protocols on climate change and not participating in the International Criminal Court.

Thirdly, the features of agents that make them powerful include those that render activity unnecessary. If I can achieve the appropriate outcomes without having to act, because of the attitudes of others towards me or because of a favourable alignment of social relations and forces facilitating such outcomes, then my power is surely all the greater. It may derive from what has been called 'anticipated reactions' where others anticipate my expected reactions to unwelcome activity (or inactivity) on their part, thereby aiming to forestall overt coercion: a clear example is the self-censorship practiced by writers and journalists under authoritarian regimes. The inactive power accumulated by such regimes is, of course, often the residue of past uses of active power, often coercive and sometimes on a massive scale. But not all inactive power results from previous active power in this direct way. Sometimes indeed the anticipated reactions can be misanticipated reactions: that is, mistaken because deriving from misplaced fears. Moreover, inactive power can derive from powerful agents' properties rather than from their actions, as with the power of attraction. Charismatic power, like magnetism, exemplifies this (though in reality charismatic leaders usually work hard and with skill to achieve their effects), and the inactive power that derives from status, inducing deference, relieves those who are secure in their positions from the need to focus on acting

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to preserve them. So James Scott suggests that 'the impact of power is most readily observed in acts of deference, subordination and ingratiation' and comments that power means 'not *having* to act or, more precisely, the capacity to be more negligent and casual about any single performance'[7]. The distinction between active and inactive power can be thought of in terms of the relation between power and costs. If my power declines as the costs of exercising it increase, and if having actively to exercise power is itself regarded as such a cost, then one can say that inactive power reduces this cost towards zero.

Power and Interests

But there is a further, and intractable, source of the trouble and the controversy. Of course we can always ask and sometimes answer the question, 'how much power does this or that agent have over some given issue?' (The question typically asked by lobbyists deciding on whom to focus, or businessmen deciding on whom to bribe.) But typically judgments about the locus and extent of power are comparative and range across different issues. Most commonly, we are comparing the power of different agents over different issues. We are interested in comparing their overall power in cases where the scope of their respective power is non-coincident and often non-overlapping. How do we make comparative judgments of the extent of power?

I suggest that the answer is that I will have more (overall) power than you if I can bring about outcomes that are more 'significant' than those you can bring about. But how do we judge the significance of outcomes? The most natural answer is: we look at their effects upon the *interests* of the agents involved. The concept of 'interests' points us towards what is important in people's lives. This can be interpreted purely 'subjectively', so that what is in my interests is decided by what is important to me; or else it can be interpreted in a way that incorporates 'objective' judgments concerning what benefits and harms me, where what counts as benefit and harm is not decided by my preferences or judgments. In comparing the power of agents across different scopes, or sets of issues, we unavoidably introduce judgments about the extent to which and ways in which their power furthers their own interests and affects the interests of others. Normally, we assume that the power of the powerful furthers their interests, though this power can backfire (Susan Strange has an interesting discussion of the ways in which the US's financial power can ricochet back on the US to

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7. James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 28-9.

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its ultimate disadvantage[8]). Aside from that assumption, it is the impact of power on others' interests that provides the basis for judgment concerning its extent.

Thus, most would be inclined to say that a judge with the power of sentencing to life or death has greater power than a judge without that power: the second judge might have a wider range of lesser sentences, but the first would have greater power. Similarly, the Mafia, where it holds sway, has greater power than other influential groups, organisations and governmental agencies, in part by virtue of the greater harms it can inflict and the greater benefits it can bestow. The power of multi-media magnates is greater than that of, say, advertisers or rock-stars. If I can affect your central or basic interests, my power (in relation to you) is greater than someone who affects you only superficially. But, of course, the question of where people's interests lie, of what is basic or central to their lives and what is superficial, is inherently controversial. Any answer to it must involve taking sides in current moral and political, and indeed philosophical, controversies. It follows that, for this reason, comparisons of power, involving as they do such assessment of power's impact on agents' interests, can never avoid value judgments.

There are alternative ways of conceiving of agents' interests. One way is the purely subjective way of straightforwardly identifying them with *preferences* (as opposed to passing wants or whims). Such preferences may, as economists say, be 'revealed' in actual choice situations – as in market behaviour, or in voting behaviour. Call such preferences *overt.* Alternatively, preferences may be more or less hidden from view, unrevealed in actual choice situations: they may take the form of half-articulated or unarticulated grievances or aspirations which, because of the bias of the dominant political agenda or the prevailing culture, are not heard and may not even be voiced. Call such preferences *covert.* Behind the equation of interests with preferences, overt or covert, lies the Benthamite view that everyone is the best judge of his or her own interests: to discover where people's interests lie, either you observe their choice behaviour or else you infer, from a close observation of what they say and do, what they would choose were choices available that are currently unavailable.

An alternative way of conceiving interests is to see them as the necessary conditions of human welfare: what individuals generally need in order to live lives that are satisfactory by their own lights, whatever those lights may be. Here I have in mind what political

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8. See Susan Strange, 'Finance, Information and Power', *Review of International Studies* 16 (1990): 259-274.

philosophers variously call 'primary goods' (Rawls), or 'resources' (Dworkin) that satisfy 'basic needs' (of which there are various alternative accounts) or else endow people with 'basic human capabilities' (Sen) or 'central capabilities' (Nussbaum). These are all various ways of specifying conditions that enable people to pursue their various purposes and conceptions of what makes life valuable, and without which that pursuit is frustrated or severely impeded. Among such welfare interests are such basic items as health, adequate nourishment, bodily integrity, shelter, personal security, an unpolluted environment, and so on. Some, notably John Rawls, point to 'rights and liberties, opportunities and powers, income and wealth', and thereby raise the question of cultural specificity. Which of these welfare interests can be treated as universal human interests and neutral between ways of life, and which are internal to particular regions of culture? But, whatever the final answer to this question, welfare interests, thus conceived, are not preference-dependent, and so they can be thought of as objective. Their status as interests of persons does not derive from their being desired by them; in this sense, conditions that damage your health are against your interests, whatever your preferences, and even if you actively seek to promote them.

A third way of conceiving interests is to see them neither as preferences nor as the necessary conditions of leading any worthwhile life, but rather as constitutive of well-being: that is, comprising the leading of such a life itself. Thus your interests may be manifest in the focal aims or long-term goals in terms of which you seek to shape your life, or in the 'meta-preferences' or 'strong evaluations' in terms of which you judge which desires and preferences would make your life go better, or in the whole network of desires, preferences and meta-preferences that living such a life involves, which you may or may not endorse. Here one's interests are given by the content of leading a worthwhile life. Of course, what counts as worthwhile or valuable and what counts as worthless or wasteful remains a deep, central and controversial ethical question – as does the question of how it is to be answered. All I mean to do here is to draw attention to the point that interests understood this way are also not straightforwardly preference-dependent, since this view of interests as well-being allows, indeed assumes, that people can in fact prefer to lead lives that are against what they may recognise to be their well-being.

So, contestable judgments of significance partly determine one's assessment of the extent of an agent's overall power, and in a variety of ways. As Peter Morriss observes, '[p]eople are the more powerful the

more important the results they can obtain are'.[9] Furthermore, if I can affect others' interests more than you can, on some view of interests, then that, other things being equal, is a ground for supposing that my power is greater than yours. But, as we have seen, there are various views of interests. And how must I affect their interests? Favourably or unfavourably? Must I further them or harm them? Many writers on power just assume the latter: that to have power is to act against others' interests.[10] This assumption may well derive from a focus on the view of power as power over others, though this can also be interest-favouring. But there is really no reason for supposing that the powerful always threaten, rather than sometimes advance, the interests of others; sometimes, indeed, the use of power can benefit all, albeit usually unequally. And is my power the greater if I can *either* favour or disfavour your interests? And when seeking to assess an agent's overall power comparatively, how do we weigh the ability to favour others' interests with the ability to disfavour them? And how do numbers count? How many persons must I affect, in respect of their interests, to have more power? How do I compare affecting many persons' interests superficially and few persons' interests deeply? The truth is that the concept of power as such furnishes no decision rules for answering such questions.

Power in International Relations

So far I have sought to show that the concept of power is troublesomely controversial and to explain why and how. How does all this bear upon the understanding of power within the field of International Relations (IR) and, in particular, upon our approach to the present international scene?

I am aware that the discipline of IR has long been characterised by overarching debates between competing 'dominant paradigms' – notably between adherents of 'realism', and then 'neo-realism' and their critics, who advocate 'liberal institutionalism' or 'neo-liberalism'.[11] (I leave aside world system theories and international political economy.) Explanations, and thus explanatory approaches, are always answers to questions – to some questions rather than other questions. My suggestion is that both the realists and neo-realists and their various

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9. P. Morriss, *Power: A Philosophical Analysis,* 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 89.

10. Including the present writer in the first edition of *Power: A Radical View* (London: Macmillan, 1974).

11. See, for example, R. O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); and David A. Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: the Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

critics all share an identifiable explanatory approach, which addresses certain questions and not others; distinctive questions that arise out of the characteristics of the field, most notably the question: given persisting conflicts of interests, what prevents and what promotes international co-operation? The contending paradigms share in common an approach that focuses on collective actors of various kinds, strategically pursuing their interests within a distinctive kind of environment. All are concerned with the agents of power (those who possess and exercise it), with the distinctive structures within which these agents interact in pursuit of their respective interests, and with the relations between such agents and structures.

Of course, within this framework, participants in these debates differ about how these various elements are to be interpreted, and thus on a range of issues. Which are the most salient agents? States, or non-state actors such as international organisations, transnational social movements, private industry and epistemic communities? What are the interests motivating actors, and, in particular, states? Under what conditions does co-operation among states occur? Is it just a temporary phenomenon, driven by states' self-interest, and what is that? Within which structures do these actors act and interact – and how are these structures to be conceived? As 'distributions of capabilities among units' (Waltz)? Or as also incorporating rules and norms, even ideas – or indeed as also including the relationships among the formal rules, informal customs and conventions, and the patterns of interaction among the players? Both neo-realists and neo-liberals give the (paradoxical) answer that the international structure is one of *anarchy* – but then the question arises of how anarchy is to be understood: if it is the absence of government, which features of government are taken to be absent? Neo-liberals focus on international institutions and regimes as sometimes favouring the prospects for co-operation, whereas neo-realists focus on states as predisposed toward conflict and competition: states in instrumentally rational pursuit of their vital interests, preoccupied with maximising their relative gains vis-à-vis others states and their own security.

Rather than entering into these debates, I want to focus on one piece of theorising they have generated; partly for its intrinsic interest, partly because I take it to exemplify the limits of this general strategic agents-interacting-within-structures explanatory approach and partly because of its apparent but deceptive similarity to arguments I have made elsewhere. I refer to Joseph Nye's reflections on 'soft power'[12] – which, in

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12. See Joseph. S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Succeed in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

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Nye's conception, might seem to be a cousin of what I have called power's 'third dimension': the power to shape, influence or determine others' beliefs and desires, thereby securing their compliance.[13]

Soft power, for Nye, contrasts with hard power, notably economic and military power, which 'can rest on inducements (carrots) or threats (sticks)'. Nye thus proposes three kinds of power: 'military, economic and soft power'. This suggests a threefold schema of coercion, inducement (both 'hard') and a third term, labeled 'soft'. Soft power 'rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others'. It is, he says, 'getting others to want the outcomes that you want'; it 'co-opts people rather than coerces them'.[14] Soft power is

> not merely the same as influence. After all, influence can also rest on the hard power of threats or payments. And soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument, though that is an important part of it.[15]

Soft power, he writes, 'is the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to acquiescence'. Its resources are those 'that produce such attraction', such as 'an attractive culture, ideology and institutions'.[16] When, he writes,

> you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction. Seduction is always more effective than coercion, and many values like democracy, human rights and individual opportunities are deeply seductive.[17]

Nye's central practical and political concerns, both immediate and more general, are clear. Observing that the 'sharp drop in the attractiveness of the United States' after the attack on Iraq 'made it difficult to recruit support for the occupation and reconstruction of Iraq', he comments that '[w]inning the peace is harder than winning a war, and soft power is essential to winning the peace'.[18] In the context of the war on terror,

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13. See S. Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). Adding to the confusion, Nye also refers to soft power as power's 'third dimension'.
14. Nye, *Soft Power,* 5.
15. Ibid., 30.
16. Ibid., 5-6.
17. Ibid., x.
18. Ibid., xii.

the means the Bush administration chose focused too heavily on hard power and did not take enough account of soft power. And this is a mistake, because it is through soft power that terrorists gain general support as well as new recruits.[19]

More generally, Nye argues that

the countries that are likely to be more attractive and gain soft power in the information age are those with multiple channels of communication that help to frame issues: whose dominant culture and ideas are closer to prevailing global norms (which now emphasize liberalism, pluralism and autonomy) and whose credibility is enhanced by their domestic values and policies.[20]

In short, to

cope with a world in which the soft power of others is increasing, the United States will have to invest more in its own   soft power resources, and learn to wield its own soft power more effectively.[21]

In considering the 'soft power of others', Nye turns his attention to 'the soft power of Wahhabism', which he calls a 'sorcerer's apprentice that has come back to bedevil its original creator',[22] the Saudi government. In the context of a 'civil war between radicals and moderates within Islamic civilization', he writes, 'the soft power of the Islamists is a disturbing symptom and a warning of the need for Americans and others to find better ways of projecting soft power to strengthen the moderates'.[23] Notice that Nye makes no distinction between different ways in which soft power can co-opt, attract and entice those subject to it; between the different ways in which it can induce their acquiescence. In short, he draws no distinction between modes of persuasion or ways of 'shaping preferences'. He simply says that the US, as an agent with power, must be more strategically effective in wielding its soft power and 'projecting' its values.

In order to bring the limitations of this conception into view, let us focus on this example of 'the soft power of Wahhabism' in the context of a 'civil war between radicals and moderates within Islamic civilization'.

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19. Ibid., 25.
20. Ibid., 31-32.
21. Ibid., 98.
22. Ibid., 96.
23. Ibid., 97.

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The Soft Power of the Wahabists

In his recent book, *The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the West* (whose original French title, oddly enough, is *La Guerre au coeur de l'Islam,* 'The War for the Heart of Islam'), Gilles Kepel focuses on that very context. (The war in question is, obviously, a war for what the British in Malaya christened 'hearts and minds'). In Kepel's view, the crucial battleground on which this war is being fought is Western Europe, where ten million immigrants from Muslim countries live, whose children were born in Europe and hold citizenship in a European nation. These children 'were educated in European schools, they speak European languages, and they are accustomed to European social practices'. Kepel offers us both a positive and negative vision of the future. His 'positive, optimistic vision of the future' is to see

> the vast majority of these young people as the ideal bearers of a modernity bestowed on them as Western Europe's newest citizens. By the example they provide, they are potential purveyors of these values to the Muslim countries from which their families emigrated. They offer an alternative to increased religiosity, which has served as both ideological shield for corrupt authoritarian regimes and as an outlet for social rage of a dispossessed population. In this reading of the future, Europe's young Muslims will become the international vectors of a democratic project whose success they themselves embody – by blending innate Arab or Muslim traits with acquired European ones.[24]

If this is to happen, Kepel writes, 'it is imperative to work towards full democratic participation for young people of Muslim background, through institutions – especially those of education and culture –that encourage upward social mobility and the emergence of new elites'.[25]
The war of which Kepel writes is 'a battle over the right of self-definition',[26] in which the other side employs quite different means of shaping young Muslims' preferences, or conceptions of their interests – a different way of inducing them to define themselves. His negative reading of the future focuses on the growing phenomenon of young people, living in housing projects in the outskirts of Paris and other cities,

> whose rigid Islamic identity leads them to reject cultural integration into the European environment and to embrace cultural separatism.

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24. Gilles Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the West,* trans. Pascale Ghazaleh (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 249.
25. Ibid., 295.
26. Ibid., 287.

Some – a minority – will pass from voluntary secession into violence, expressing social resentment through hatred that they justify on religious grounds. Others, more numerous, will be satisfied to turn inwards, or to dreams of emigrating from the land of unbelief back to the land of Islam. Both of these separatist attitudes have their roots in the salafist teachings and influence of some Saudi Arabian preachers.[27]

These offer 'instant legal opinions (fatwas) on the behaviour of devout Muslims wherever they may happen to be, accessible through telephone numbers and email addresses posted on salafist websites'.[28] The

intense indoctrination preached by the sheikhists reduces their flock's capacity for personal reasoning, which makes these followers easy prey for a clever jihadist preacher. Young people who were born in Europe tumble into jihad and are later jailed often follow a typical trajectory. The first stage of brainwashing occurs at the hands of a pietistic salafist imam. Later they encounter a jihadist recruiting sergeant who offers to quench their thirst for absolutes through a bracing activism.[29]

For Salafists, Kepel writes,

all Europe is a land of unbelief, and they are obsessed by the threat of 'Christianization' and other deviations that might affect their offspring, such as singing, dancing, co-ed schooling, sports or even biology textbooks that contradict divine revelation. The salafists see women in terms that defy any form of legal equality: this is clear from their declarations in favour of women's seclusion and their predilection for violence against women as a means of imposing correct behaviour. (Women, on the other hand, are not allowed to beat men for the same reason).[30]

The freedom of conscience enshrined in European countries' laws is here

undermined by closed community identities that keep a tight rein on liberty or pit the different components of Europe's new pluralistic society against one another on ethnic, racial or religious grounds. In the early twentieth century, the Vatican brought the weight of the Index and excommunication to bear on the souls of its flocks in Catholic countries. Today, in much the same way, salafist, Hasidic

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27. Ibid., 250.
28. Ibid., 251.
29. Ibid., 256.
30. Ibid., 283.

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> Jewish communalism, and some charismatic or evangelical Christian movements – as well as various hybrid sects – endeavour to wedge their congregations into enclosures where indoctrination undermines the basic foundations of individual citizens' freedom of conscience [31]

The Need for Distinctions

I am far from suggesting, by discussing this example, that there is a freedom-friendly 'Western' way of winning hearts and minds that contrasts with a freedom-suppressing 'Islamic' way. As this last quotation indicates, indoctrination is not unknown in the West. Indeed, there is in the West massive and continuous indoctrination, some of it strategically manipulative, much of simply routine, that coexists with freedom of conscience, communicating racist, sexist and other stereotypes and shaping agendas, national and international, especially during times of war, including the present 'war on terror'. But to explore and confirm the extent to which this is so, and the mechanisms by which it occurs, we need, as I shall now argue, distinctions that a strategic conception of power, even in its 'soft' version, fails to draw.[32]

Nor do I want to make an argument that assumes that it is ever possible in real-world social and political contexts to draw an *empirical* contrast between indoctrination and that ideal form of persuasion that consists in securing conviction through the freely exercised judgment of others. Jürgen Habermas has written of the distinction between domination and 'the unforced force of the better argument'. In real-life situations, of course, there are always inequalities of power, advantages and opportunities, to which people adapt their preferences, and hearts and minds are rarely if ever won by pure argumentation without recourse to the black arts of rhetoric. Induction and deduction are usually accompanied by seduction.

Nevertheless, I think Kepel's examples and his discussion of them illustrate the need to distinguish between different ways of securing compliance through persuasion. It is worth reflecting on the ambiguity of the term 'persuasion', which can either mean the securing of conviction or inducing of assent by non-rational means. There is a distinction to be drawn between different modes of cooptation, different ways in which preferences can be shaped and 'self-definition'

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31. Ibid., 285.

32. See, for example, Diego Gambetta's excellent discussion of the ways in which official post-9/11 rhetoric has made it 'hard to think straight'. Diego. Gambetta, 'Reason and Terror', *Boston Review* 29, no. 2 (2004). On a similar theme, see Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

induced. There are, indeed, two distinctions that need to be drawn here. First, a distinction between changing the incentive structures of agents whose (subjective) interests are taken as given, on the one hand, and influencing or shaping those very interests, on the other. And second, a distinction between the conditions under which and mechanisms by which such shaping and influencing occurs – conditions which may, on the one hand, favour 'personal reasoning' and rational judgment, and, on the other, may not.

Foucault

Suggesting the importance of these distinctions leads me to consider a prevalent – and currently massively influential – way of conceiving of power; a central point of which is, indeed, to put these distinctions, or at least their significance, into question. Namely, the way deriving from the writings of Michel Foucault. Foucault's view of power is subject- rather than agent-centered and its central claim is, rather characteristically, expressed by means of a play on the very word 'subject'. The acting, choosing subject, says Foucault, is constituted through subjection (*asujetissement*) to power. Power, in Foucault's view, is productive as well as controlling. It produces, indeed 'constitutes', subjects: it forges their characters and 'normalizes' them, rendering them able and willing to adhere to norms of sanity, health, sexuality, and other forms of propriety. Foucault says that these norms mould the soul and are inscribed upon the body; they are maintained by policing the boundary between the normal and the abnormal and by continuous and systematic surveillance and self-surveillance. Power, in Ian Hacking's suggestive phrase, is at work in 'making up people'.[33]

Now, my view is that there is a valid and very fruitful idea here that is, however, clothed in extravagant Nietzschean rhetoric. The idea is that if power is to be effective those subject to it must be rendered susceptible to its effects. So, for instance, in contemporary societies, within interlacing networks, magistrates, teachers, social workers, psychiatrists and so on contribute to people's understandings of their various roles and interests, as active citizens, good mothers, psychiatric outpatients, and so on. The trouble is that Foucault, in his characteristic rhetorical-cum-theorising mode, says things like this: that power 'is co-extensive with the social body; there are no spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of its network' and that there are alternative 'regimes of truth' within different 'types of discourse', each with its own 'mechanisms' which 'enable one to distinguish between true and false statements' and

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33. Ian Hacking, 'Making up People', in *Reconstructing Individualism,* eds. T. Heller, M. Sosna and D. Wellbery (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986).

'the means by which each is sanctioned', determining 'the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true'[34]. So it is not surprising that many readers of Foucault have drawn the conclusion (which some embrace and others decry) that on this view of power, there can be no liberation from power – that, as one writer has put it, 'power is ubiquitous and there can be no personalities that are formed independently of its effects'[35] – and, moreover, that rationality itself, enabling one to distinguish between what is true and what is false, is itself internal to alternative 'regimes of truth'.[36]

I call this rhetorical version of Foucault his 'ultra-radical' view of power and observe that it has been influential in various departments of our culture, increasingly including, it seems, the study of IR. There are really profound and far-reaching insights to be gleaned from Foucault's studies of power at work, not least into the ways in which people can actively participate in their own subjection to prevalent myths, seeing what is contingent as natural and failing to see the sources of what they take to be purely individual preferences. (Not that these insights are original with him, though his extensive application of them is[37]). The problem is that the rhetorical, ultra-radical view of power strips the subject of power of both freedom and reason. In short, on this view it is no longer possible to distinguish between the exercise of power as (to use an old-fashioned term) *indoctrination* and the exercise of power that leaves or renders those subject to it free - in Spinoza's phrase - to live according to the dictates of their nature and judgment.

Both the agent-centered view of Nye and the subject-centered view of Foucault lack this distinction; the first by failing to draw it and the second by refusing to do so. I want to conclude by suggesting that it is essential to draw this distinction and to do so in the right way. To do this, we need to focus on both agents and subjects and ask the question: exactly how do agents succeed in winning the hearts and minds of those subject to their influence? How exactly do those with power shape the preferences of those subject to their power? Or better, because more precise: to what extent, in what ways and by what mechanisms do

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34. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-77* (Brighton: Haverster), 142, 38.

35. Barry Hindess, *Discourses of Power: From Hobbes to Foucault* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 150.

36. For a fuller discussion and references to Foucault's writings, see Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* 2nd edition, 88-99.

37. For example in his study of disciplinary power in *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1978) and in his account of the rise of 'bio-power' in his *History of Sexuality*, 3 vols. (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), especially the discussion of 'care of the self' in volume 3.

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powerful agents influence others' conceptions of their own interests? And which mechanisms work to widen and which to narrow the scope for 'personal reasoning' and 'self-definition' of those subject to such power? Behavioural political science, rational choice theory[38] and the discipline of IR have all been largely content to deploy narrow conceptions of power that preclude raising and exploring such questions. But on the present international scene their urgency does not seem to be in decline.

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38. See K. M. Dowding, *Rational Choice and Political Power* (London: Edward Elgar, 1991), and *Power* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). For a critique, see S. Lukes and L. Haglund, 'Power and Luck', *Archives européennes de sociologie* 15, no. 2 (forthcoming 2005).

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