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Metamorphoses of Power: From Coercion to Cooperation?

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In probing metamorphoses of power and changing understandings of power, this treatment examines the question of whether there is a general trend from coercive towards cooperative and consensual forms of power over time. This reflection unpacks power in its various dimensions, considers the contributions of Gramsci and Foucault, and then examines the hypothesis of a growing trend towards cooperative forms of power in domestic politics and civil society, and in international politics.

Power is a complex metaphor. As the philosopher Bertrand Russell notes, "Of the infinite desires of man, the chief are the desires for power and glory" (1938:11). In sociology, for instance according to Talcott Parsons, power is viewed as a generalized means for attaining whatever goals, or in Michael Mann's words, "an efficient organizational means of fulfilling other drives" (1986:6). Since power fulfils every desire, it is the desire of desires. As the supreme means, power is also sought as an end in itself, as in Nietzsche's will to power.

Power is a formidable and profound subject, yet the relevant literature explicitly concerned with power is fairly limited. There is, of course, a large body of literature concerned with forms of power — the state, political systems, international relations, etc. Several approaches in sociology deal with forms of power: Hobbes on the state and the sovereign, Pareto on the circulation of elites, Robert Michels on the "iron law of oligarchy". Marxist approaches usually think not in terms of power but of capital; the central notion is exploitation rather than domination or repression. If power is referred to, it concerns the state, which in the last instance derives from capital (with the state as "the executive committee of the bourgeoisie"). The emphasis changed with Max Weber, who defined power as the chance of A to change the behaviour of B even against her will. Weber identified three modes of power: party (state), class (position in the labour market) and prestige (position in the status hierarchy); and three sources of power: tradition, bureaucracy and charisma. Modernization in Weber's view meant the retreat of tradition and the shift to bureaucracy as a source of power, and modern bureaucracy was viewed as a vehicle of rationalization. This is a multidimensional and historicist approach to power — forms of power are multiple and change over time — and a correction on the conventional statist view of power. Yet the angle through which Weber looks at power and his definition of power essentially refers to a form of control.

For some time power as a terminology and a problematic has been prominent in cultural, media and gender studies, discourse analysis, anthropology, geography (as in Zukin's *Landscapes of Power*) and development studies (with notions such as *The Power of Development*). It has also been prominent in everyday discourse — as in power tie, power dress, power breakfast and power talk. William Roseberry (1992), however, notes that with all this ubiquity of power talk we learn little about actual relations of power, about the state, colonialism, etc. According to Jean Baudrillard: "When one talks so much about power, it's because it can no longer be found anywhere. The same goes for God: the stage in which he was everywhere came just before the one in which he was dead" (1987:60).

This reflection is concerned with transformations and changing understandings of power over time. Is there a general trend over time in the exercise of power from coercive towards cooperative consensual forms of power? A related question is how changing forms and understandings of power affect forms and understandings of empowerment.[1]

How has the exercise of power changed over time? Specifically, is there a trend for the use of power over time to change from coercion to persuasion and cooperation? What leads me to this question is an argument of John Kenneth Galbraith (1983) that over time, coercive power has become archaic. One of his examples is that in World War I, many US army deserters were executed, but in World War II, only one American soldier was executed for desertion. Galbraith notes an overall decline in the use of the death penalty, torture, flogging, starvation, and a shift towards the use of rewards or incentives (such as government fiscal policies, wage, labour, subsidies) and persuasion. In other words, in this view, political systems have become relatively more democratic over time, at least in a limited sense.

Has the character and exercise of power changed over time in the direction from coercive towards consensual power, from domination to authority (or legitimate power)? This is a profound thesis for it concerns the question of whether or not there is to history an overall democratic or emancipatory trend. It is also a very difficult hypothesis to examine and this brief treatment is sketchy and incomplete. A general trend that would confirm this idea is that the exercise of power tends to be increasingly normatively regulated. Another general indication is the "Gramscian turn" in thinking about power in the course of the twentieth century.

A related assumption is that this metamorphosis would parallel broad changes in the politics of empowerment: when the exercise of power becomes more democratic and consensual, so does the politics of empowerment. Thus, in recent decades, a trend in many societies is that progressive social forces turn from armed struggle for the control of state power to democratic struggle, from the bullet to the ballot — in El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Argentina, the Philippines, Burma, Thailand, and so

forth. Clearly, this is not a uniform trend. Ethnic and religious strife in many societies continues to take violent forms and armed struggle persists or has been taken up in, among others, Palestine, Peru, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, the Philippines and Nepal.

As an optimistic reading of historical trends, this kind of argument may now have few takers. The more one thinks it through, the more problematic it seems. The first problem is the *conjunctural* nature of this reasoning. We would not argue this at the time of the Vietnam War or during the bloody struggles of decolonization. The open-ended war on terrorism and the American policy of preventive war, and the unilateral and coercive turn in American foreign policy in the wake of September 11 have radically changed the political horizon.[2] In addition, to what extent is this optimistic assessment a *provincial* reasoning, one that looks valid only from the point of view of one context, region or class? Clearly what Galbraith has in mind is developments in western countries, and the international domain hardly figures in his treatment. To what extent does this resemble the shallow proclamations of Fukuyama on "the end of history", and Michael Mandelbaum's argument on the obsolescence of war among the major powers (discussed in Nederveen Pieterse, 2002b)? It would be more challenging to extend this argument to the international domain and to try to overcome the "two worlds" thesis that characterizes most depictions of world politics (see O'Hagan and Fry, 2000).

Another problem is that power itself is such a complex metaphor that sweeping generalizations are apt to be problematic. For a deeper understanding we must take into account the different dimensions or the biodiversity of power. What if the exercise of political power becomes more democratic in form but real power shifts to economic forces, which are unaccountable? A general argument such as this would make sense only across the board, across all manifestations of power; but does power exist "across the board" or is it in the nature of power to be segmented, diverse and flexible and, thus, inherently oblivious to generalization? Yet, if this is the case then what warrants the current generalizing about power in so many fields?

Hence, this treatment becomes a complex probing of power and the metamorphoses of power over time that seeks to raise questions rather than to settle them. By way of analytical preliminaries, I first consider the diversity of power — the dimensions of power. Next, I turn to changing understandings of power, in particular, Gramsci's hegemony and Foucault's power/knowledge. Then, we turn to metamorphoses of power over time.

Unlocking Power

Discussions of the "faces of power" by Galbraith, Boulding, Mann and others place different emphases.[3] All distinguish between political, economic

and ideological power. Michael Mann (1986) distinguishes four dimensions of power — ideological, economic, military and political power. Mann's neo-Weberian approach is transhistorical, crosscultural and multidimensional. Ideological power refers to meaning, knowledge and norms; influencing or monopolizing norms is a route to power. Ideological power further includes aesthetic and ritual practices. Ideology "surpasses experience". As Ernst Bloch remarked, "You cannot argue with a song." Economic power comprises circuits of production, distribution, exchange and consumption. It is latent, extensive and symmetrical, and refers to political class structures. Class is an economic grouping; social stratification is a distribution of power. Military power is effective for the exercise of concentrated, intensive, authoritative power. It has limited reach, a concentrated core and an extensive penumbra. Political power centres on state power, is centralized, territorial, and heightens boundaries.

Galbraith (1983) distinguishes coercive power (which he calls threat power), economic power (which he calls reward power) and ideological power (or conditioning power). In Galbraith's view, economic power can be a form of coercion, or a positive sanction, or a form of persuasion or engineering consent. Economic power and ideological power are interrelated for economic power can buy propaganda, advertising, PR, media time, political campaigns, etc. Hence in this view, there would be ultimately two forms of power: power based on coercion and on consent (carrot and stick, persuasion/reward or punishment). This is reminiscent of Dennis Wrong's distinction between three forms of power: force, manipulation and persuasion (1979), which essentially break down in force and fraud. Fraud and manipulation, however, can be regarded as forms of covert persuasion.

Kenneth Boulding's approach is phrased in normative terms and his key contrast runs between threat power (or destructive power) and the integrative power of legitimacy, respect, community, identity, or love (1989 and 1998).

Political and military power differ in nature but are both forms of state power and since states have the monopoly over the legitimate means of coercion, they may be grouped together. In combination with subsequent understandings of power, this generates the following schema of forms of power (Figure 1).

This schema is only a boxy approximation. It does not represent the full register of political power, which includes the role of law, the legislature and judiciary, bureaucracy, surveillance and standard setting. The distinction between political and economic power glosses over their intermingling as in "money politics" (a standard term in the Philippines and Thailand), rent seeking, corruption, corporate power, and so forth. Power structure research (for example, Domhoff 1979/1980) is concerned with mapping these connections.

Figure 1. Forms of Power

Source	Political	Economic	Ideological/Cultural
Weber	Party	Class	Status (prestige); charisma
Mann	State & military	Class	Norms, knowledge, aesthetics, rituals
Gramsci	State	Class	Civil society; hegemony
Galbraith	Threat power	Reward power	Conditioning power
Wrong	Force		Fraud, manipulation
Boulding	Threat power	Economic	Integrative (legitimacy, identity)
Freud			Repression
Foucault	Discipline		Power/knowledge, discourse
Said			Representation
Feminism			Patriarchy, masculinism, phallocentrism
General	Domination, control	Capital	Persuasion, propaganda, consent, stereotypes

Clearly these various classifications follow diverse principles. Some are conceived in terms of intentions (threat, reward, conditioning) and others in terms of outcomes (destructive, integrative). Some understandings aim to apply throughout history, while others focus on a particular period (such as Foucault's focus on modern times). Some aim to be comprehensive, while others focus on a particular domain of power (such as Edward Said's concern with representation).

Several understandings of power just do not follow the conventional boxes of political, economic and ideological power but run across them. Thus, Foucault's disciplinary power is not merely a matter of state agencies but is epistemic and discursive in nature and internalized by modern subjects. Feminist understandings of power such as phallocentrism and masculinism run across the political-economic-ideological spectrum and into the sphere of the family. We might add culture as an arena of power, where power takes the form of "race", ethnicity, language, or "civilization".

Edward Said (1986) criticized Foucault for an imagination of power that is "with power" rather than "against power". With the exception of feminism, most classifications view power from the point of view of the powerful. In addition, this schema is inadequate in dealing with power in civil society. Thus, understandings of power such as Scott's "infrastructure of power" and hidden texts of power (1991) cannot find a place in this schema.

The lengthiest and least obvious category in this schema is under the column "ideology"; but ideology is a limited nineteenth-century notion. Repression in psychoanalysis, Freud and Marcuse is not simply an ideological extension of political oppression and domination but a matter of

cultural ethos and guilt. As a term, ideology may be too cerebral, too ratio-nalistic to convey the range of games of power play and the emotional and non-rational resources that are deployed. The cultures and aesthetics of power involve the aura of power, the uses of glamour, theatre, rituals, the general wizardry and snake charming of the powerful — from divine kingship to voodoo politics and voodoo economics and the "magic of the market place".[4] Rituals serve both elite cohesion and to intimidate and exclude outsiders; they serve to cultivate and enhance the gap between the powerful and the powerless. The relationship between power and the sacred involves claims to divine sanction, the various ways this can be negotiated and the emperor's clothes when he is naked. The aesthetics (or the pornog-raphy) of power ranges from Nazi Party celebrations at the Nuremburg stadium to Imelda Marcos's 1700 pairs of shoes. Excesses expose the vacu-ity of power and the dream-like character of the will to power.

Familiar discussions in political science concern the way different polit-ical systems rely on particular forms of power (Figure 2). These discussions are easily schematic and ideological. Totalitarianism, then, makes use of all forms of power including heavy doses of propaganda (as in *1984* and *Brave New World*); authoritarianism relies mainly on coercion (as in general Pinochet's Chile) and the selective application of rewards (for cronies, as in the regimes of Mobutu and Ferdinand Marcos). Democracy is based primarily on persuasion (hence, the manufacture of consent) and possibly on reward (social democracy), with coercion as an instrument of law and order and in external relations. Social stability can also be considered one of the rewards of democracy. Yet, "money politics" (as in campaign financing) and the legitimacy crisis of contemporary democracy intervene.

Figure 2. Forms of Power and Political Systems

Forms of power	Totalitarian	Authoritarian	Democratic
Coercion	+	+	(+)
Reward	+	(+)	+
Persuasion	+	-	+

This observation on communist policies illustrates that the exercise of power is multidimensional:

> In their efforts to mold public opinion, Communist parties did not choose between cognition and imagination, intellectual and emotional communica-tion, between *credenda* and *miranda*, between reformist continuity and revolu-tionary breaks, or between traditional, charismatic, and rational authority; they cover the whole spectrum. Their style of political legitimation is *cumu-lative* rather than selective; they hammer at the whole keyboard (Tarschys, 1987:175).

Using the full register of power has become increasingly common in all forms of governance, so that the neat distinctions among totalitarian, authoritarian and democratic politics now seem old-fashioned. More precisely, these distinctions belong to the ideological apparatus of the Cold War era, and arguably, actual power has been a cumulative mix of all forms of power all along.

All these considerations are only variations on the theme of *power over*. Another part of the story is *power to*, that is, capability, competence and skill. "Power to" is a key variable affecting "power over"; "power over" is embedded in "power to or capacity: domination cannot exceed the capacity to dominate and control; secondly, it is relational for it is a function of the capability of others to outflank control. Domination is embedded in capability, in the capabilities of both the dominant and the dominated. Moreover, both "power over" and "power to" are, in turn, a function of power in the fundamental sense of *energy* (as in *shakti*, horse power, power company). This yields a further representation of dimensions of power (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Dimensions of Power

Power	Energy, strength
Power to	Capability, capacity, ability, skill; mandate (authorization)
Power over	Rule, domination (Herrschaft), control, authority

Michael Mann defines power as the *ability to organize collective action*, through ideological, economic, military or political means. Organization is a central category of "power to" and itself a form or dimension of power. It has been termed the ultimate source of all power. Galbraith considers organization as one of the sources of power, along with personality and property. He argues that organization as a source of power involves three features: bimodal symmetry (external power is a function of internal power); access to the other sources of power (personality and property); and diversity of purposes (the more diverse, the weaker the impact; the exception to this logic is the state).[5] In this light, this discussion is all about capacities and strategies of organization.

Technology illustrates the fundamental importance of capability or "power to". A familiar saying of Marx is that the windmill gave us feudalism and the steam engine gives us industrial capitalism. Here, technology is a stand-in for human capability and capability is the key variable that affects the capacity to organize. Geoff Mulgan (1995) makes the point that since the nineteenth century, there has been a change from heavy to light power technologies — from the steam engine and the locomotive to contemporary light, touch-button technologies — and that the exercise of social and political power changes in accordance with technological capa-

bilities. Party systems and organizational bureaucracies that are run from the top are increasingly old-fashioned. The bullying mode of power is making place for lighter modes of power centred on persuasion, talk and the flow and circulation of information. The premises of physics itself, a "heavy science" and a foundation of engineering and technology, have changed from the nineteenth-century "laws of nature", the bedrock of positivism, to more open-ended perspectives — as in quantum physics, relativity theory, new science and chaos theory. The "butterfly effect" is an instance of light power in action.[6]

Hegemony and Knowledge

These reflections on forms of power and broad changes in the exercise of power have been paralleled by profound changes in the sociological and political understandings of power. Gramsci and Foucault are major turning points in this regard.

With Gramsci, hegemony is a concept both of power and empowerment rolled into one: moral leadership. The notion of hegemony originally emerged in Russia in the 1880s. With Plekhanov, it refers to a strategy for overthrowing the Tsarist police state by means of the hegemonic leadership, which the proletariat and its political representatives should give in alliance with other groups, including the bourgeoisie, peasants and intellectuals (Bocock, 1986:25). In *What is to Be Done* (1902) Lenin proposed an alliance of all groups seeking change including the petit bourgeoisie, teachers, peasants and industrial workers. In Russia, this led to the strategy of the vanguard party and a direct assault on the state, and then the use of the state apparatus to outflank other sectors.

According to Gramsci, this was possible because civil society in Russia was weak. Gramsci's famous observation in the *Prison Notebooks* runs as follows: "In Russia the state was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between state and civil society; and when the state trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The state was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks..." (Gramsci, 1971:44).

Insurgency, or in Gramsci's terms "war of manoeuvre", is not possible in Western Europe. For Western Europe, Gramsci developed a different strategy — the war of position. The proletariat is to exercise hegemonic leadership and develop a historic bloc, a system of alliances. This move involves a critique of economism: to exercise hegemony, the interest of the whole bloc or the whole society should prevail over the narrow class interests of the leading group, whether bourgeois or proletarian. This approach is not Machiavellian, not a matter of machinations or manipulations; it seeks active consent. Hegemony is ethical-political, moral and philosophical

leadership. Gramsci attributes a key role to intellectuals, especially "organic intellectuals", in forging the historic bloc. He also recognizes the importance of the popular, of addressing the people, of passion, feeling, emotional communication and popular religion.

When Gramsci's *Notebooks* was translated into English in the 1950s, it brought about a revolution in Marxism and became the keynote of "Western Marxism". It breaks with Marxist determinism, materialism and reductionism. It breaks with the sole preoccupation with the state: now there is a central concern with civil society. Previously all the emphasis was on the party, the trade union and the state; now also schools, media, the church, cultural industries and the arts come into view. This has been a founding inspiration of "cultural Marxism" and influential in cultural studies (as in the Birmingham school). Gramsci's approach has been historically significant in the communist parties of Italy (in the Compromesso Storico), Spain (Eurocommunism) and Britain (in the journals *Marxism Today* and *New Times*); and in India outside the Communist Party, in Subaltern Studies. The Gramscian approach has been criticized by orthodox Marxists for departing from economism and, thus, for lapsing into idealism, and for departing from determinism, towards historicism. At the other end of the spectrum it has been criticized for serving as a "messiah of Marxism in crisis", for traces of Leninism and for attributing a self-congratulatory role to intellectuals (Femia, 1981).

Figure 4. Gramsci and Hegemony

	Target	Methods	Objective
War of manoeuvre	State	Insurgence, Blanquism, vanguardism, political revolution	State power
War of position	State and civil society	Ideological, cultural, political struggle, historical bloc.	Active consent

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) developed the Gramscian approach in their work on hegemonic politics. In Laclau and Mouffe's politics of articulation, identities are not given or fixed but are constructed in the process of articulation and coalition. Another difference with Gramsci is that in their view, there is no longer a single centre of hegemony. Gramsci had overcome statism to some extent, and also determinism and economism, but remained Leninist in his view of a centre of hegemony that was occupied either by ruling or subaltern forces, and this was practically the state. Thus implicitly, hegemony theory remained a theory for the slow, indirect capture of state power in those societies where civil society is strong.

Gramscian strategies can be used in right-wing as well as left-wing politics. In fact, Gramsci's approach is patterned on the model of dominant right-wing strategies in his time, especially on the part of the Catholic Church. Since the nineteenth-century culture wars there has been a merry-go-round of influences across the political spectrum. By the 1920s, the Church had stopped resisting "modernism" and opted for active political strategies to use its popular cultural influence for political gain by sponsoring a political party, the Centre Party in Italy (and eventually in Germany and Austria). In *Notebooks*, there are extensive sections on the Church and on popular religion. Facing the task of forging a worker-peasant alliance, Gramsci in effect recommended that the left imitate these popular strategies (discussed in Nederveen Pieterse, 1992).

Later, we find the right — for instance, the extreme right in France (such as GRECE and the Front National) — deliberately using Gramscian strategies. The politics of Thatcherism and Reaganism may be interpreted as Gramscian in an implicit sense — seize the central symbols of the nation, identify your project in national terms and drape yourself in the national flag, as in Reagan's "Good morning America" and Maggie Thatcher's appeals to British character (Hall, 1988). There has been a race among centre and right forces as to who can best appeal to collective popular fantasies, as in Francois le Pen's claims to represent the nation, France for the Frenchmen, and starting a demonstration with a ceremony at the statue of Jeanne d'Arc in Orleans as a procession that claims the "national" religion and claims to be more Catholic than the Church. The Front National also claims the heritage of socialism, to provide jobs and welfare for the French and, thus, tries to forge a historic bloc. Strategies for capturing the popular/national imagination are now standard fare on the part of virtually all political forces — from dictators to insurgents.

In international relations, hegemony originally referred to a state influencing the foreign policy (but not the domestic policy) of another; hence, United States hegemony during the Cold War. Similar dynamics, as in domestic society, now increasingly apply in international affairs: questions of international legitimacy, persuasion and the manufacture of consent, and coalition-building. Robert Cox (1991) extended Gramsci's hegemony to international relations. As recent developments show — such as the buildup to the Iraq war and the international debates surrounding the WTO, IMF and World Bank — this is a far more difficult terrain in which to achieve active consent than domestic arenas.

Foucault's power/knowledge (1990) views power as epistemic discourse and regime of truth. This locates power in the dimension of knowledge, cognition and language and implies a post-Enlightenment distrust of truth claims. A schema that places Foucault's views on contemporary power in the context of his (conventional) views on power in previous historical settings is given below (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Foucault and Power/Knowledge

Historical formation	Forms of power		Forms of struggle
Feudalism	*Domination*		Ethnic, religious
Capitalism	*Exploitation*		Class struggle
Modern	*Subjection*	Disciplinary power in asylum, prison, hospital, orphanage, army. Docile bodies, society of normalization.	Identity struggle, local resistance

There are stark differences between power conceived as sovereign or state power à la Hobbes, conceived as hegemony à la Gramsci, or viewed as disciplinary power and discourse à la Foucault. Gramsci's hegemony locates power also in civil society and culture, and as active consent it has a demo-cratic content.

The trajectory from Hobbes to Foucault runs across premodern, mod-ern and postmodern views on power. According to standard views, a key difference is that sovereign power, unlike hegemonic and discursive power, does not reach the soul of subjects. But is that true? Doesn't power in any guise always tend to include symbolic resources and projects and seek to encompass and penetrate people's souls? (See, for example, Wilentz, 1985.)

Trends over Time

We now turn to metamorphoses of power over time and the hypothesis that over time, power has become less coercive and more cooperative and consensual.

Addressing this question involves several methodological assumptions. The argument concerns not fragments or episodes but the overall pattern. It concerns the trend or overall direction of change over the *longue durée* and not merely current outcomes. It does not concern conditions in 2004 but conditions in 2004 in relation to 1904, 1804, 1004, etc. It does not concern a regional or provincial assessment of conditions in the West or in particular countries but overall human conditions. Since it concerns not only power over but also "power to", it concerns the capacity for organi-zation and the factors affecting organization over time, including values and ethics that shape organization. This means that we should observe these trends not merely in politics but also in civil society. Although some changes are changes in rhetoric, there is no sharp distinction between rhetoric and reality for rhetoric is part of reality, so also changes in rhetoric count and need to be measured.

The main arguments should concern domestic politics and civil society and next, international affairs. Since a detailed account would easily be a book-length treatment, this is only a sketchy treatment that briefly considers the pros and cons of the thesis under each heading.

1. Over time the exercise of power is increasingly *normatively regulated.* Political and military power, generally since the era of the French revolution and the "age of the democratic revolution", have been increasingly subject to constitutional and legal strictures. A case in point is the formation of standing armies and the professionalization of armed forces, and the establishment of political control over armed forces virtually throughout the world.

On the downside, with the routinization of bureaucratic authority, power shifts to managers and administrators and the role of intellectuals shrinks from legislators to interpreters (Bauman, 1992, in a variation on Weber's rationalization process leading to an "iron cage"). In addition, with constitutionalism comes a legal and procedural turn in social intercourse; legalism is particularly pronounced in the United States. Nevertheless, normative regulation has been on the increase worldwide. That this also prompts non-compliance, simulation and a search for loopholes does not cancel out the trend itself but rather confirms it. The salience of countertrends does not necessarily disconfirm the trend itself. Thus, human history has witnessed thousands of years of warlords, but in the contemporary landscape warlords stand out and promptly give rise to prophecies of doom (such as Kaplanism).

2. In most countries there is a shift from government to governance and towards interactive decision-making and decentralization in public administration (a detailed discussion is in Nederveen Pieterse, 2001).

This trend clashes with the existing institutions of representative democracy. It also clashes with the trend towards greater international cooperation and the pooling of sovereignty, as in regional forms of cooperation such as the European Union, which comes with growing democratic deficits. Nevertheless, even if in many places they are ideals only, decentralization and greater citizen consultation are worldwide trends. A countertrend is the growing global and domestic economic inequality and concentration of incomes and power at the top, which in the United States increasingly takes the form of plutocracy (see Nederveen Pieterse, 2004).

3. Since the early twentieth century, there has been growing interest in forms of persuasion by the state and corporate actors: propaganda, the manufacture of consent, mind control, PR, impression management, advertising, corporate image building, and so forth. This trend can be interpreted in several ways. It contrasts with ideology as "false consciousness", as a nineteenth-century preoccupation. It indicates a Gramscian turn in that, apparently, consent is increasingly more important than coercion. This affirms the overall thesis. By the same token it follows that control becomes

more knowledge-intensive. As consent becomes central so does the manufacture of consent, which is one of the main theses of Noam Chomsky. With the character of power shifting from coercion to consent, new technologies for the manufacture of consent emerge (Chomsky, 1990; 2001). The media and representation become major domains for the exercise of power.

The gradual shift from coercion to consent (and manufacture of consent) should be observed not only in relation to political and state power but also in civil society. New terrains of contestation are culture and consumption (Lasn, 1999; Seabrook, 2000).

4. In studies of organization, the emphasis has shifted from vertical, top-down leadership to horizontal, network structures of organization, as in the "learning organization". In studies of management and leadership, the discourse shifts from dictatorial styles of leadership to coordination of information flows and facilitation of collective decision-making.

While this has been the rhetoric of management gurus for some time, actual trends in corporate governance indicate several sets of variations. First, management under conditions of economic growth tends to be more democratic than under conditions of economic contraction. Second, in the United States, the predominance of Wall Street financial engineering since the 1980s leading to an emphasis on short-term gains, in combination with a general profit squeeze for companies in the late 1990s, have led to a return to authoritarian management styles in many firms. The authoritarian General Electric style of management popularized by Jack Welch has come to dominate many companies as soon profits became weak. Third, the legal status of labour in relation to management in the United States has been much weaker all along than in continental European and, to some extent, East Asian forms of capitalism. Fourth, the talk of participatory management clashed all along with the widespread cult of the CEO and the ever-widening disparities between CEO remuneration (and power) and employee wages. The roller coaster experience of turn of the millennium capitalism has led to a general fascination with power in boardrooms, from the preoccupation with "leadership" to corporate war games. Fifth, to the extent that these trends apply, they apply in advanced capitalism and in countries with a social tradition; they do not apply in emerging markets where labour conditions are much harsher.

Over time, according to the democratization hypothesis, political parties and trade unions tend to function less as centralized organizations and more as coalitions and networks of power. This is only partially and regionally true.

Emancipation movements should be part of the democratization process. There is a parallel shift in progressive strategies of social transformation — from strategies aimed at seizing state power or the means of coercion (the monopoly of legitimate violence) to strategies of forging consent. Political

revolution, coup d'état, Jacobinism, insurgency, Blanquism, Leninism and focismo are all methods of acquiring state power. Since the 1980s, armed struggle organizations in many arenas have retooled to take part instead in democratic processes (Rocamora, 1992).

In penal systems there is an overall change from containment, punishment and collective revenge towards an ethos of improvement and social reintegration. Here also, however, the United States is an outlier. Galbraith's 1983 observation on the decline in the use of the death penalty does not hold for the United States, where the use of the death penalty, while declining worldwide, has remained steady. While comprising five percent of the world's population, the United States has 25 percent of the world's prisoners. The privatization of prisons in the United States makes incarceration a profit-making business.

In pedagogy there is a change from punishment to reward, from the nineteenth-century "black pedagogy" to Benjamin Spock. In education there is a gradual change from learning as drill and rote learning to learning-as-understanding and more recently, from teacher-centred to learner-centred methods of education. With illiteracy still prevalent in many developing countries and the growing neglect of education in advanced countries such as the United States, however, this cannot be considered a leading trend.

In therapy and treatments of mental illness there is growing concern with difference and the problematization of "normality". Again, this is by no means a general trend.

5. International affairs have been conventionally viewed as more Hobbesian and anarchic than domestic politics; that they should be considered as a terrain of increasing normative regulation is itself a trend break and a sign of changing times. International cooperation and normative regulation have been increasing markedly in the course of the twentieth century. The Geneva Conventions regulating the conduct of war are a case in point. The twentieth century has witnessed a gradual strengthening of international law with the Nuremburg trial, the founding of the United Nations, the United Nations declaration of human rights and the International Court among the major landmarks. Recent developments include the International Criminal Court, the ban on anti-personnel landmines and a wide range of treaties and covenants. In international relations, bullying and gunboat diplomacy have gradually made way for "talk softly and carry a big stick" and more recently, for humanitarian intervention. Thus, arguably, over time coercive power is increasingly deployed in the name of humanitarian interests. Humanitarian intervention as a justification for third-party armed intervention is a case in point. In the face of mounting global problems (ecological problems, international crime, terrorism, nuclear arms, migration, poverty and development) there is an overall gradual change from "national interest" to international public goods, from unilateralism

to multilateralism, although asymmetric power relations continue to prevail. Cases in point are the Kyoto Agreement and nuclear arms and nonproliferation agreements.

Although these trends represent major ruptures with previous patterns, the counterpoints are momentous. The United States refuses to sign many international treaties and laws. That the United States is out of step with the worldwide trend towards growing international cooperation and regulation is not merely a matter of a single administration but a long-term trend in which the leading hegemon prefers to "keep its options open" and maintain maximum manoeuverability. Meanwhile, through its international influence, the United States exports "international legal nihilism". Thus, US foreign aid now comes with the clause that recipient countries should exempt US citizens from ICC jurisdiction (and accept Genetically Modified Food). Second, humanitarian intervention, or "humanitarian militarism", is profoundly controversial, selective and hypocritical in application Nederveen Pieterse, 1998).

Trend Break or Momentum?

Just in case we would concur that there is a trend towards a gradual democratization of the exercise of power, then how would we explain and interpret this trend? This affects how we would interpret exceptions and countertrends.

This trend overlaps with several general perspectives in social science. According to Norbert Elias's configuration sociology, the lengthening chain of interdependencies over time involves greater interactive regulation and internal self-control, somewhat infelicitously termed the "civilizing process" (1994). This broadly parallels Teilhard de Chardin's thesis of demographic compression and complexification (which would eventually result in a "noösphere"). Ulrich Beck (1992) argues that there is a trend towards growing reflexivity in "new modernity", not merely of the self but also collective reflexivity. More momentous still is Henryk Skolimowski's view that "we are evolution conscious of itself". In this view, we would have collectively entered a moral space, which is being inhabited inconsistently and hypocritically, but by historical standards is nevertheless a collective moral space. This trend is loosely confirmed by the emergence of global ethics as a theme (Küng, Kohl, Dallmayr, Falk), which however tenuous and contentious, is a historical novelty.

The circumstances of greater demographic densities and growing extensive interdependencies are undeniable. This planetary condition is usually referred to under the shorthand "globalization". The notion of growing reflexivity is contentious but plausible. Another undeniable empirical circumstance is growing human capabilities reflected in technological change. This might suggest that new technologies decrease the gap between the

powerful and the powerless (as in arguments about the Internet and democracy). Rather than referring to a direct nexus between growing capabilities and democratization, however, this refers to *both* greater capabilities for control and for emancipation. By this logic, the dialectics of power and empowerment intensify and, increasingly, take on global scope (see Nederveen Pieterse, 1989).

It is difficult, of course, to affirm or deny a general trend towards democratization: the evidence is patchy, uneven and contradictory (and this treatment has been sketchy and incomplete; it does not address, for instance, questions of human rights, the role of the media, the debate on international public goods, etc.). Whatever democratizing trends that do exist are regional (they do not apply worldwide), sectoral (they do not apply in all spheres of social life), partial (they do not represent a complete change) and contradictory (they are often offset by countertrends in other social spheres). Besides, whatever democratic trends that exist are reversible and, historically, have often been reversed.

The two major hurdles that stand in the way of a general democratizing trend are steep and growing global inequality and the contemporary United States as a global bottleneck. With regard to the United States, there are two general possibilities. One is to negate the thesis because of US trends and to consider American politics as a trend breaker. The second is that we would accept the thesis and consider the United States as an outlier and a temporary anomaly (in view of the burdens of hegemony) that will eventually catch up with global trends. Is the American imperial turn a harbinger of the future or a holdover of the past? Elsewhere (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004) I argue that the American imperial turn is an expression of growing economic, political and social decline, so that this in itself is not likely to turn the global tide. Far more profound is the problem of economic and political global inequality, which is fundamentally incompatible with global democratization and outruns democratizing trends.

Nevertheless, the empirical circumstances that underlie these trends — growing demographic densities, global interdependence and growing human capabilities — are structurally significant. This makes greater cooperation likely. This may easily, however, be elite forms of cooperation, domestic and international. This is why considering the politics of empowerment is as important as contemplating the changing politics of power.

Notes

1. This paper was originally presented at a conference on the Modern Rishi in Kottayam and at a seminar in History at JN University in New Delhi, 1999. An early version was published in the journal *Vision* (Nederveen Pieterse, 2000). This treatment focuses on power; the politics of empowerment are dealt with in Nederveen Pieterse, 2001 and 2003.

2. This is taken up in Nederveen Pieterse, 2004.
3. See also Canetti, 1973; Lukes, 1974; Parenti, 1978; McNeill, 1982 and Poggi, 2001.
4. On cultures of power, see for example, Mosse, 1975; Elder and Cobb, 1983; Kertzer, 1988; Nederveen Pieterse, 1993 and Taussig, 1997.
5. On organization as a form of power, see Clegg, 1989 and Perucci and Potter, 1989.
6. On technology and power, see Allen and Hecht, 2001 and Nederveen Pieterse, 2002b.

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