Towards a Radical Republican Conception of Power

by

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What is social power and when is it acceptable? In this dissertation I argue for a radical republican solution to this question. My solution is republican in that it understands power to be acceptable when it does not involve domination (or when it is not arbitrary). My solution is radical, however, in that it involves a much more expansive understanding of the basic nature of power than is typically found in contemporary republican political philosophy.

My dissertation has two main parts. The first part develops an analytically rigorous account of social power that overcomes two shortcomings common to contemporary accounts of power. The first shortcoming is that many views of power do not adequately take into account the distinction between an agent exercising power and an agent’s power manifesting itself. Such ‘activist’ views of power deny that an agent’s power can manifest itself when he does not exercise it (or when he is not actively involved in bringing about the outcome). In contrast I argue that an agent’s power can manifest itself - or make a difference in the world - even when he does not exercise it. The second shortcoming is that, due to their focus on exercises of power by agents, many views of power do not pay adequate attention to the ways in which (structures of) social relations confer powers on agents, without the agents’ involvement and sometimes even against their will.

The second part of my dissertation works out an account of how to understand domination (or unacceptable power). I begin with the contemporary (civic) republican understanding of this notion found in the political philosophy of Philip Pettit, but I argue that this understanding of domination needs modification because it is based in a broadly activist view of the basic nature of power. My suggestion for reinterpreting the republican understanding of domination is based on the structural differences between three different ways that power can be exercised. I suggest that dominating or arbitrary power is in essence power that can be exercised over (and so not with) others without also being exercised for them.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis investigates the foundations of republican political philosophy. More specifically, it evaluates the republican idea that the state’s primary purpose is to shield its citizens from exposure to domination, or arbitrary power. The central contention of this thesis is that this republican ideal needs modification because it is grounded in a flawed understanding of the basic nature of power. Hence this thesis is divided into two parts. The first part develops an account of how to understand the basic nature of power. The second part examines the current republican understanding of domination (or arbitrary power) in light of the account developed in the first part, and then suggests a new way to understand the central republican idea of domination that focuses on the structures of social relations that exist when power manifests itself.

In the first part, I develop an account of power that is both ‘inactivist’ and ‘quasi-relationalist’. An *inactivist* account of power holds that an agent’s power can manifest itself both when it is exercised by the agent (or when the agent plays an active role in bringing about the difference his power makes in the world) and when it is not exercised by the agent (or when the agent does not play an active role in bringing about the difference his power makes in the world). A *quasi-relationalist* account of power, on the other hand, holds that many, but not all of an agent’s powers are conferred on him by the social relations he partakes in, both where more limited or personal social relations are concerned and where larger-scale or society-wide social relations are concerned.
In the second part, I examine the current republican understanding of power in light of the arguments developed in the first part. Concentrating on the version of republicanism offered by Philip Pettit, I argue that the current republican understanding of power is flawed in so far as it seems to deny that power can manifest itself in inactive ways and in so far as it minimizes important ways that social relations confer on agents powers to dominate others. The current republican understanding of domination or arbitrary power, in other words, seems to include only instances of conscious-ready domination (cases where the power possessor either is or readily could be aware of how his arbitrary power impacts others), and seems to exclude instances of conscious-resistant domination (cases where the power possessor is not and cannot readily be aware of how his arbitrary power impacts others). An additional shortcoming of the current republican understanding of domination is that it approaches the question of when power is arbitrary primarily through the lens of conscious-ready power. Both the republican understanding of the basic nature of power and the republican understanding of arbitrariness are thus in need of modification. Firstly, I suggest that republicans employ a ‘radical’ understanding of the basic nature of power that is inactivist and quasi-relationalist. Secondly, I suggest that republicans understand the nature of arbitrariness by attending to the structural differences between the manifestation of power-over, power-for, and power-with.

Part 1 contains four chapters. In chapter 1, I outline the debate surrounding the basic nature of power and what the major views about it are in the literature. In particular, I focus on six major questions regarding the concept of power: (1) What kind of thing is
power and what kinds of things can have it? (2) What does power act upon and what kinds of changes does it produce? (3) Is power inherently positive, negative, or normatively neutral? (4) Is there a basic form that power takes? (5) What must be true of the power-possessor to count his power as manifesting itself? and (6) Is power an individual or a collective phenomenon? In addition to these questions, I distinguish seven major views of power, all of which begin from a different intuition about what is most central where power is concerned: (i) the Behavioralist view; (ii) the Intentionalist view; (iii) the Effectivist view; (iv) the Responsibilist view; (v) the Interest-Based view; (vi) the Economic (or Rational Choice) view; and (vii) the Social Field view.

In chapter 2, I present the foundations of my own view of power, which I call an ‘Inactivist’ view. I begin by distinguishing ‘power’ from the related concept of ‘force’, drawing particular attention to how power acts on an agent’s will or its determinants. I then expand on this idea by defining power as the capacity of an agent to affect the practical landscape of another agent, and I argue that this capacity can manifest itself in both active and inactive ways. I fill in some details of this view by distinguishing between an agent’s ‘abilities’ and his ‘powers’, and between three different ways in which an agent can exercise power in relation to another. These three different ways of exercising power are captured by the differences between ‘power-over’, ‘power-for’, and ‘power-with’. I close chapter 2 by defending some central features of my account.

In chapter 3, I examine the role that structures of social relations play in conferring powers on agents. More specifically, I examine how powers can be conferred
on agents by social relations and what role the process of self-formation plays in this. The view I argue for here is quasi-relationalist: It holds that some but not all of an agent’s powers are conferred on him by social relations. I also examine in this chapter the potential barriers that we face in transforming (structures of) social relations that confer problematic powers on agents, and how the insights into the nature of power of both Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault can help us to identify and overcome these barriers.

In chapter 4, the final chapter of part 1, I primarily examine and refute the arguments given in favour of Activist (or both Intentionalist and Effectivist) views and Responsibilist views. Here I argue that the central failing of all these arguments is that they do not adequately account for the distinction between the exercise of power and the manifestation of power. The arguments in favour of these views, in other words, all rely on intuitions about when agents *exercise* power to deny that an agent’s power can manifest itself without the agent’s active involvement or without the agent’s (personal) responsibility being implicated. I contend that while such arguments may very well be correct about the conditions under which agents exercise power, they fail because the exercise of power is not the only way that power can manifest itself.

Part 2 consists of two chapters. In chapter 5 I examine the view of the basic nature of power underwriting Pettit’s understanding of republicanism. The best interpretation of Pettit has him holding a responsibilist view of power. Hence Pettit includes instances of power where the agent is aware of how his power impacts others and instances where the agent is not aware of how his power impacts others but his lack of awareness is due to
negligence. On the other hand, Pettit seems to deny that the scope of ‘power’ includes cases where an agent does impact others but he is non-negligently unaware of this. Alternatively, Pettit’s view of power includes conscious-ready power but excludes conscious-resistant power. By applying the arguments developed in part 1, I argue that this exclusion of conscious-resistant power causes both theoretical and practical difficulties in the republican understanding of arbitrary power, and I suggest that republicans instead ‘radicalize’ by adopting an inactivist and quasi-relationalist view of power which acknowledges both conscious-ready and conscious-resistant power.

In chapter 6, the final chapter of this thesis, I examine how radical republicans ought to distinguish between acceptable (non-dominating or non-arbitrary) cases of power and unacceptable (dominating or arbitrary) cases of power. I first canvass a number of different understandings of how to understand what makes power arbitrary in the literature and reject all of these views. The three major views I reject understand power as arbitrary (i) when the power possessor has sole discretion as to how to exercise his power, (ii) when the power-possessor does not factor the interests or ideas of the affected party into his decision-making process, or (iii) when power is exercised in a way that does not track the interests or ideas of the affected party. While rejecting all of these views, I argue that the most plausible version of the third sort of view, which requires that power track the interests or ideas that would emerge out of deliberative democratic procedures, does helpfully direct us towards another way of understanding when power is arbitrary. This other way of understanding arbitrariness focuses on how the agent affected
by power will view the structure of the relation that exists between himself and other agents when their power manifests itself.

My own way of understanding when power is arbitrary focuses on the structural differences between the three ways of exercising power that I distinguished in chapter 2. I argue that the primary way in which power is non-arbitrary is captured by ‘power-with’: In such cases the affected agent will not view power as arbitrary because the agent affecting him is exercising power together with him rather than unilaterally over him. Correspondingly, the primary sense in which power is arbitrary is when it amounts to power-over: In such cases the affected agent will view power as arbitrary because it is unilaterally being exercised over him. However, I also argue that there is a secondary sense in which power is non-arbitrary, which is captured by the notion of power-for: An affected agent will view power that is being unilaterally exercised over him but also to empower or benefit him as being less arbitrary than power that is unilaterally exercised over him but not to empower or benefit him.

The modifications I suggest to republicanism specifically focus on its most basic foundations rather than on the institutional structure that has been worked out by republican political philosophers. Nevertheless, this structure will likely have to undergo some changes once my modification to republicanism has been factored in. In the conclusion I very briefly consider where some of these changes may need to be made and where republicans should start looking for ideas about how to make these changes.
Part 1:

Power
CHAPTER 1: MAJOR QUESTIONS AND MAJOR VIEWS ABOUT ‘POWER’

1.0: Introduction

In this chapter I present a framework for analyzing the concept of power in so far as it is relevant to social and political philosophy and explicate some of the major extant theories of power in terms of that framework. My framework will be organized around the major conceptual questions that a reasonably robust theory of power should answer. This includes questions such as the following: What kind of thing is power? Is power a thing in itself, or is it a property of things? Is the conscious awareness of a power-possessing agent required for his power to have manifested itself with respect to another agent? Once I have laid out the basics of this analytic framework, I shall briefly show how the major views of power in the literature can be compared within it. However, before I lay out the framework I shall provide a brief introduction to the contemporary power debate, so as to provide a background against which to situate the inquiry. As is common practice, I largely follow the path laid down by Steven Lukes in his 1974 *Power: a Radical View*.

1.1: Lukes and the Beginning of the Contemporary Debate About ‘Power’

In terms of the contemporary debate about power, it is essential to briefly examine the ‘Community Power Debate’ that took place from the 1950s to the early 1970s, and to

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1 Lukes ([1974] 2005). This is common practice because many contemporary theorists of power either have a summary of Lukes’ summary near or at the beginning of their works. See, for example, Hindess (1996), pp. 2-9; Zimmerling (2005), pp. 33-46; Clegg (1989), pp. 8-14; and Haugaard (1997), pp. 16-20.
which Lukes’ landmark *Power: a Radical View* was a reaction. Very roughly, this was an empirical debate between political and social scientists as to how power was actually distributed in American society.\(^2\) One group of theorists, the ‘Elitists’, held that decision-making power was generally unequally distributed, and tended to be concentrated in the hands of a relatively small group of individuals who basically ran society as they saw fit.\(^3\)

C. Wright Mills, one of the more prominent ‘Elitists’, held, for example, that they are in command of the major hierarchies and organizations of modern societies. They run the big corporations. They run the machinery of the state and claim its prerogatives. They direct the military establishment. They occupy the strategic command posts of the social structure, in which are now centred the effective means of the power and the wealth and the celebrity which they enjoy.\(^4\)

The other group of theorists, the ‘Pluralists’, instead held that decision-making power was distributed pluralistically across many different groups in society, each of which was sometimes able to use its power to get the outcome it wanted. Since the debate between these theorists was largely an empirical (and methodological) one about the actual distribution of power in society, it is important to understand the Pluralists’ critique of the Elitists’ perspective on those grounds: Armed with the results of some empirical studies into the power structures of relatively mid-sized communities (such as New Haven, Connecticut), and the thesis that the Elitists’ model could only be confirmed by the existence of a relatively well defined group of elites whose preferences generally won

\(^2\) For a fuller description of this debate, see Lukes (2005), pp. 1-8, 14-28.

\(^3\) As should be clear, the Elitists did not think that it was a good thing that power was concentrated in the hands of a small elite. The label ‘Elitists’ refers to the empirical thesis about the actual distribution of power in society, not a normative evaluation of that thesis’s implications (the same goes for the label ‘Pluralists’).

The day, the Pluralists attacked the Elitist thesis because the preferences that actually did win could be traced back to a variety of different individuals and groups.\(^5\)

The Pluralists were not without their critics. For our purposes, the most important criticism of the Pluralist view was given by Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz.\(^6\) Bachrach and Baratz essentially held that the Pluralist model ruled out an important, probably widespread, and Elitist-friendly, way of exercising power right from the start, and so, unsurprisingly, never found any evidence of it. In a nutshell, Bachrach and Baratz held that securing victory for one's favorite from among a set of preferences about a policy issue was not the only purpose for which power might be exercised; power could also be exercised for the sake of shaping the decision-making agenda and preventing some policy preferences from ever seeing the light of day. Power, for Bachrach and Baratz, had both a decision-making ‘face’ and a non-decision-making ‘face’.

Bachrach and Baratz were widely criticized by the leading Pluralists of the day on the grounds that their theory had little empirical value. It had little or no value for empirical political and social science, the Pluralists held, because the only way to confirm it (or any theory) empirically, and hence the only way to know whether the theory has a reasonable degree of explanatory power, was to find instances where power rendered the decisions that some would have made into non-decisions. But this cannot be done, the

\(^{5}\) See, most importantly, Dahl (1957), Dahl (1958), and Dahl (1961).

\(^{6}\) Bachrach and Baratz (1962), Bachrach and Baratz (1963), and Bachrach and Baratz (1975).
Pluralists held, because it is impossible to empirically investigate non-events, and so Bachrach and Baratz’s theory was empirically useless.

This is roughly the point at which Lukes’ *Power: A Radical View* entered the fray. Lukes directed his critical attention at both the Pluralists and at Bachrach and Baratz: Barchrach and Baratz were indeed substantially correct, Lukes claimed, despite the Pluralist complaints against them, but unfortunately they did not go far enough. In the end Lukes offered a view that was like the views of the Pluralists and Bachrach and Baratz in so far as it held that the concept of power was intimately connected with the concept of interests, but which had a much more politically radical conception of the interests connected with power. Lukes framed the debate as conceptualizing power along three ‘dimensions’: the first, one-dimensional, or ‘liberal’, view is that of the Pluralists; the second, two-dimensional, or ‘reformist’, view is that of Bachrach and Baratz (and also thus includes the one-dimensional view); and the third, three-dimensional view is Lukes’ (which also includes the other two dimensions). The following is a brief summary of Lukes’ critique of the one and two-dimensional views.⁷

On the one-dimensional view, A exercises power over B to the extent that A’s overt actions successfully get B to do something he would not otherwise do. In other words, the first dimension of A’s power over B corresponds to how A can get B to act otherwise by overtly affecting B’s choices. The exclusive focus on overt actions is the central flaw in the one-dimensional view for it allows much that is covert on A’s part and

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yet negatively affects B to slip through the cracks. Here the interests connected with power are conceived as merely subjective interests in so far as they are expressed as policy preferences; this is what Lukes calls a ‘liberal’ conception of interests.

On the second, two-dimensional view, however, A exercises power over B not only when A overtly causes B to act otherwise, but also when A covertly does so. In other words, the second dimension of A’s power over B corresponds to the ways in which A can get B to act otherwise by covertly affecting B’s choice situation. So a two-dimensional view of power acknowledges that A can have power over B in both overt and covert ways. This includes overt coercion or threats as well as, say, manipulation of the political agenda so that B’s issues never get serious consideration. Here the interests that are connected with power are subjective interests understood as policy preferences that would be expressed unless they were somehow blocked from entry into the political arena; this is what Lukes calls a ‘reformist’ conception of interests.

For Lukes there are two particularly important shortcomings of this two-dimensional view. The first is that it only allows outcomes intended or foreseen by A to count as instances of A’s power over B. This is a significant shortcoming because it obscures how potential grievances of the oppressed can be unconsciously excluded by the dominant, or, in other words, how oppression can be made invisible by the socio-cultural background and institutional framework of society. The second shortcoming is that the two-dimensional view obscures how power not only gets the oppressed to act against their desires, but also how it shapes their desires in the first place.
On Lukes’ three-dimensional view, A’s power over B consists not only in the ability A has to intentionally get B to act otherwise; A’s power over B also consists in the degree to which B is liable to act otherwise in response to something on A’s part, in A’s (subjective or objective) interests and against B’s objective interests, whether or not A intends or is conscious of it. So, for example, if B acts otherwise because of adaptive preferences or false consciousness, this might count as being due to an exercise of A’s power over B on a three-dimensional account, but could not count as being due to an exercise of A’s power on a one or two-dimensional account. On the whole, Lukes’ account was so influential that *Power: A Radical View* framed a great deal of the debate about power for years to come and continues to do so. The only other recent figure who has exerted a comparable degree of influence on the power debate is Michel Foucault.

1.2: ‘Power’ Questions/Decision Points

Now that we have a sense of some of the contours of the debate about how to define ‘power’, I examine the basic questions about the concept, or the basic decision points that one would have to pass through on the route to a fully articulated conception of ‘power’ as it is relevant for social and political philosophy. First, though, I introduce some terminology: I shall generally speak of the agent over whom power is held (or with respect to whom it is held) as the ‘receiving agent’ and of the agent who possesses the power as the ‘projecting agent’. I do this because terminology such as ‘dominant agent’ and ‘subordinate agent’ comes with normative connotations that may not be true of all
power relations. For example, speaking of power relations in these terms seems to imply that one of the agents in such a relation always has more power. For the same reasons I do not speak of the relevant agents as the ‘constrainer’ and the ‘constrained’: While some power relations certainly do involve constraint, it is an open question whether all do. The ‘projecting’ / ‘receiving’ distinction does not put these sorts of restrictions on how we speak about power; it only implies that when one agent’s power actually manifests itself, that agent somehow projected something onto another agent, which the second agent actually received. This allows for power to fail to manifest itself, and for an agent who is in some respect a receiving agent to be a projecting agent in another respect.

1.2.1: What Kind of Thing is Power?

The most basic issue to resolve about power is what kind of thing it is. More specifically, we may wonder whether power is a thing in itself or a property of things. In everyday language there seems to be evidence to support both views. For example, power seems to be thought of as a thing in itself when we say that, like wealth, it can be distributed (or redistributed) among different social groups. On the other hand, power seems to be thought of as a property of things we when we say that people, such as the Prime Minister of Canada, are powerful, or when we say that music has the power to move us to action.

Even more specifically, we may wonder of what things power is a property: Is power only a property of agents, or do non-agents have power as well? Everyday language again supports multiple views: Lions and hurricanes are called powerful,
physical structures are said to have power to constrain our movements, and agents are said to exercise power over others. We need to determine whether all these usages of the term ‘power’ are about the same thing. Perhaps, for example, talk about (powerful) agents ‘exercising’ their power cannot possibly be about the same thing as talk about hurricanes being ‘powerful’, since it is not sensible to say that hurricanes exercise power.

A further iteration of this question aims to determine what kind of a property of agents power might be: Is it an episodic or a dispositional property of agents? Very briefly, an episodic property is a property that a thing only has at the times that it is active (or actual), whereas a dispositional property is a standing property - a property that a thing has even when that property is not active. For example, ‘running’ is an episodic property since even things that can run don’t count as running while they are sitting still. Being witty, on the other hand, is a dispositional property in so far as a witty person has the property of being witty even when she is not doing anything witty. If power is an episodic property, then an agent’s power would only exist in so far as it (or he) causes changes in the world. On the other hand, if power is a dispositional property, an agent’s power exists in so far as he can cause changes in the world, even when he (or it) is not actually causing any changes. In other words, if power is a dispositional property (of agents), then it is best to think of power as a capacity that agents may or may not exercise.
1.2.2: What Does Power Change or Act Upon?

Power is typically thought of as producing changes in the world, so we need to determine what sorts of things it acts upon and what sorts of changes it produces. One source of difficulty is that in everyday language we often speak of power as being held with respect to all sorts of things: nature, individuals, groups, issues, and so forth. Given this range of uses, we need to determine which of them are suitable for the purposes of social and political philosophy. Is it, for example, ultimately with respect to agents that power (in the social and political sense) is held? Is power ‘with respect to an issue’ really something like power with respect to the agents who deliberate about that issue? Does ‘power over nature’ refer to a completely different phenomenon than the one that social and political theorists are concerned with?

Even if we assume that power in the sense we are concerned with only acts on agents, there is still a great deal to determine regarding what sorts of changes it produces in agents. An early, fairly restrictive view here was that of Pluralists such as Dahl; they held what could be called a ‘behavioralist’ view of the objects of power: In their view, power was a matter of changing the behavior of others, and power only counted as
manifesting itself in so far as it actually changed the behavior of some agent.\textsuperscript{8} There are, however, broader understandings of the objects of power in the literature. Theorists such as Lukes, for example, hold that power manifests itself not only when it produces changes in the behavior of the agents with respect to whom it is exercised, but also when it produces changes in their beliefs or desires. The main difference here is that theorists such as Lukes seem to regard power as manifesting itself when it produces changes \textit{in} agents even if those changes don’t result in changes in what the affected agents do, whereas Behavioralists would only regard changes \textit{in} agents as being the result of power if the agents subsequently behaved differently.

The main reason Lukes departs from the Pluralists is that his view focuses on interests, which offers another way to understand the proper objects of power. According

\textsuperscript{8} The impetus for this way of thinking about power comes from what Dahl called the ‘intuitive’ notion of power. In one of his earlier articles on the concept of power, Dahl states that we can define ‘power’ “in a way that seems to catch the central intuitively understood meaning of the word...[as] something like this: \textit{A} has power over \textit{B} to the extent that he can get \textit{B} to do something that \textit{B} would not otherwise do,” (Dahl (1957), pp. 202-3). But Dahl’s scientific conception of power is much narrower that this intuitive definition would suggest; indeed, Dahl really thinks that power has to with exploiting resources “in order to effect [changes in] the behavior of another” (ibid, p. 203). In a later Encyclopedia entry, Dahl is much more specific: “At the most general level, power terms in modern social science refer to \textit{subsets of relations among social units such that the behaviors of one or more units...depend in some circumstances on the behavior of other units...For the assertion ‘\textit{C} has power over \textit{R},’ once can substitute the assertion, ‘\textit{C}’ s behavior causes \textit{R}’ s behavior” (Dahl (1986 [1968]), pp. 40-46).

The significance of this only emerges when once one takes into account that Dahl had an ‘operationalist’ approach to the meaning of scientific terms (on this see Clegg (1989), pp. 115-7 and Morriss (2002), pp. 14-17). Very briefly, on the operationalist picture, scientific terms (including social scientific terms) essentially mean nothing more than the phenomena to which they refer. So, on Dahl’s picture, then, power terms don’t refer to a deeper level of reality than the observable phenomena they are couched in terms of - for Dahl, at least on one interpretation, \textit{A}’s having power over \textit{B} really essentially amounts to nothing more than \textit{A}’s behavior causing \textit{B}’s behavior. (This makes it easy to see why Dahl and his fellow pluralists were so critical of Bachrach and Baratz: Barbrach and Baratz’s non-decisions, since unobservable, literally would have been meaningless when viewed through the Pluralists’ behavioralist lens.) This is all despite the fact that Dahl’s ‘intuitive’ definition seems to make power out to be about more than just behavior. In this regard we might say that one of the central problems with the way that Dahl explicated his view is that he failed to sufficiently attend to the difference between \textit{having} power (i.e. having in this context a capacity to change the behavior of others) and \textit{exercising} power (i.e. actually changing the behavior of others).
to Lukes’ initial view, “A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests”, it includes both B’s subjective and objective interests. Lukes subsequently modified his view to allow power to be exercised even when it was not against the interests of the receiving agent, but still maintained that something could not count as power unless it didn’t somehow (negatively or positively) affect someone’s interests. So if Lukes is right, the way to approach the question of the proper objects of power is to determine what the interests of individuals are that power can affect.

A final way to understand the proper objects of power sees power as effecting changes in an agent’s options, or in the values agents attach to the options open to them. On this understanding, power operates by altering the amount of options open to an agent (by decreasing or increasing them) or by altering the (expected) costs and benefits attached to those options. Such an understanding of the proper objects of power broadly corresponds with ‘economic’ conceptions of power and with ‘social field’ conceptions of power. My own view employs the notion of an agent’s ‘practical landscape’ to help understand how we ought to conceive of the proper objects of power; this notion includes certain of an agent’s preferences, certain of his options, and certain of his beliefs.

1.2.3: What are the (Inherent) Normative Characteristics of Power?

It often seems to be assumed that having power exercised in relation to oneself is always somehow a bad, negative, or objectionable thing. There are two dimensions to this

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question, the first having to do with the effects of a manifestation of power, and the second having to do with the inherent characteristics of a manifestation of power. To get a grip on the first dimension, recall Lukes’ assertion that a projecting agent’s exercise of power is contrary to the interests of the receiving agent. On this understanding, power necessarily has a negative normative valence from the perspective of a receiving agent because its effects are always somehow detrimental or harmful to him. For example, if I have power over my friend in so far as I can determine whether or not he goes out binge drinking tonight, this view would say that I only exercise power over him when I detrimentally steer him towards the night of binge drinking. Alternatively, we might say power can have either a positive or a negative impact on another’s interests, as where I either cause my friend to go binge drinking or prevent him from doing so.

To get a grip on the second dimension of this question, we can start by considering what Michel Foucault called the ‘repressive hypothesis’. On such an understanding of power, power only operates by constraining or repressing agents - only by somehow taking things away from them, or only by, as Foucault put it, saying ‘no’. But Foucault held that power does a great deal more than this - it produces, in some sense, the agents whom it represses. As Amy Allen puts it, “[a]ccording to Foucault, power subjects individuals in both senses of the term: Individuals are both subject to the constraints of social relations of power and simultaneously enabled to take up the

\[\text{Foucault (1978), pp. 15-49.}\]
position of a subject in and through those very constraints”.\textsuperscript{11} Power is, in other words, intimately tied to the constitution of the agents who are subjected to it - to be constrained by power is thus, on Foucault’s view, also to be enabled by it or to be empowered by it.

The second dimension inquires into whether, from the perspective of the receiving agent, there is always something objectionable about having power manifest with respect to her, regardless of the positive or negative impacts on her interests, options, etc. In other words, it inquires into whether there is always something bad about the way that power produces changes in the world, even if the changes themselves are positive on the whole. In Foucault’s view, power is involved in making agents who they are, and so it does not entirely make sense to ask whether it is necessarily illegitimate or objectionable from a receiving agent’s perspective. But this dimension of the question allows even broader negative answers than Foucault’s: For example, this question leaves it open as to whether power can operate without constraining at all, whereas Foucault thinks that power both constrains and produces at the same time.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{1.2.4: ‘Power To’, ‘Power Over’, or Neither?}

Another important question is whether there is, at base, one or more than one form of power. Understanding power as a capacity of agents gets us some way towards answering

\textsuperscript{11} Allen (1999), p. 33.

\textsuperscript{12} I shall not discuss Foucault’s view in detail in the next section, which outlines the major total or comprehensive views of power in the literature, since there is good reason to think that Foucault did not have such a view but instead had a number of important insights about how power works. Instead, I shall discuss Foucault in Chapter 3, where I try to work out the role that structures of social relations play in conferring powers on individuals and how we may overturn problematic cases of such structures.
this question, but does not completely solve it. As Morriss points out, saying that ‘A has power’ is incomplete: “it tells is that A has some...property, capacity or ability, but it does not say which... [The real question is whether this needs to be completed by saying that A] has the power to do something... [or by saying that A has] power over someone”.

In the literature there are two competing understandings of power. The first, ‘power to’, is an agent’s capacity to perform actions and need only involve the agent himself. The second, ‘power over’, refers to a typically hierarchical relationship between agents wherein a projecting agent is able to exert control over the receiving agent or the conditions he faces. The difference between these kinds of power is roughly equivalent to Spinoza’s distinction between potentia (‘power to’) and potestas (‘power over”).

There is a great deal of room for debate here, so much so that some prominent writers on power have even changed from a power-over to a power-to view. Lukes, for example, first held that the views of Parsons and Arendt were problematic because “[t]hey focus on the locution ‘power to’, ignoring ‘power over’. Thus power indicates a ‘capacity’, a ‘facility’, an ‘ability’, not a relationship. Accordingly, the conflictual aspect of power - the fact that is is exercised over people - disappears altogether from view”. But Lukes eventually came to think see his own exclusive focus on power-over as “entirely unsatisfactory”. Here Morriss, a staunch proponent of ‘power to’, would

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14 Spinoza (2000), Ch.2.
15 Lukes (2005), p. 34.
certainly agree with Lukes. But there is yet another dimension of the power-over/power-to debate: Some question whether the distinction makes sense at all. Wartenberg, for example, holds that power is fundamentally dualistic: Power-over and power-to are two equally valid but fundamentally different meanings of ‘power’. Wartenberg’s thesis is challenged by Allen, who ultimately sees power-over as a subspecies of power-to (albeit a very important one).

1.2.5: What Must Happen for an Agent’s Power to Manifest Itself?

If we have an understanding of power on which it is a capacity of projecting agents that may or may not manifest itself with respect to receiving agents, we need to determine what sort of involvement is required on the part of the projecting agent for his power to manifest itself. More particularly, we need to determine whether a projecting agent’s power only manifests itself when he plays an active role in causing the receiving agent to be affected, or whether his power can manifest itself in both active and inactive ways. The first sort of view in this respect could be called an ‘activist’ view of power; such a view holds that the projecting agent’s active involvement is required for his power to manifest itself. One variety of activist view is the intentionalist view, which holds that a projecting agent only exercises his power with respect to a receiving agent when he

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18 Wartenberg (1990), Ch.1.
19 Allen (1999), pp. 22-3, Ch.5.
intends the receiving agent to be affected in a relevant way.²⁰ A broader activist allows a projecting agent’s intentions or foreknowledge to ground attributions or power: Such a view holds that a projecting agent only exercises his power when he either intends for the receiving agent to be affected or foresees that he will be affected in a relevant way.

A broader view than the activist view could be called the ‘responsibilist’ view. Such views acknowledge a tight connection between an agent’s power and what an agent is responsible for: On this view, no matter the outcome in question, it is not sensible to construe a given projecting agent’s power as having affected a receiving agent unless it is also sensible to construe that projecting agent as somehow being responsible for the way in which the receiving agent was affected. So, on this view it might very well be that the presence of a particular projecting agent was causally necessary for a receiving agent to have been affected, but that would only imply that the projecting agent’s power manifested itself if he was responsible for what happened to the receiving agent.

A final and even broader alternative could be called the ‘inactivist’ view. Such views hold that a projecting agent’s power can manifest itself with respect to a receiving agent in a variety of ways, some of which entail the projecting agent’s active involvement - as when he exercises his power either intentionally or with foreknowledge - and others of which do not entail his active involvement. In other words, inactivists hold that a

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²⁰ To some extent this way of describing activist views of power is anachronistic. As I shall argue below, one of the central problems with activist understandings of power was that they failed to adequately account for the difference between an agent exercising her power and her power manifesting itself. Such views treated power as a capacity that only manifested itself when it was exercised, as opposed to a capacity that can manifest itself both by being exercised and, in some cases, even when it is not exercised.
projecting agent’s power can manifest itself without being exercised by the agent. Moreover, such a view holds that some cases where a projecting agent’s power manifests itself are not cases where the projecting agent is responsible for the outcome.

1.2.6: Is Power an Individual or a Collective Phenomenon?

The questions about power thus far might seem to be critically flawed in at least one respect. Thus far I have been addressing ‘power’ as if it were only dyadic. By framing the debate as being one about when one projecting agent’s power manifests itself with respect to another receiving agent, I may be thought to be mistakenly assuming that it is not unproblematic to investigate power by isolating a set of agents from the broader social context in which they find themselves. In other words, it might be a mistake to treat an isolated pair of agents as if power relations could exist between them *simpliciter*. This might be true if some reasonably robust social structure was first required for a power relation, properly speaking, to even exist between two or more agents. Perhaps power relations can only exist between a given set of agents when those agents understand each other as occupying particular social roles with respect to each other. Or, in other words, perhaps power is the sort of capacity that an individual can only possess in so far as there is some sort of collective understanding (whether explicit or implicit) that he possesses that kind of capacity. Hannah Arendt may be thought to have an understanding of power along these lines in so far as she holds that “[p]ower is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as
the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is ‘in power’ we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name”.21

An alternative view would see some, but not all, forms of power as having an irreducibly collective component. The power that a legitimate head of state has, for example, cannot exist without there being a common understanding among the citizens of that state as to what the legitimate procedures are for empowering or selecting such a person. Likewise, there may be some powers that an individual possesses in so far as he is generally thought of as occupying some social role in relation to another person: Consider, for example, the extensive ‘power’ that an abusive husband possesses with respect to ‘his’ wife in a thoroughly patriarchal society. We cannot fully make sense of such a person’s power, it seems, without recognizing that it flows from him being recognized as the particular person who fills the social role of husband in relation to her and from what his society generally considers to be the acceptable contours of the husband/wife relation. But perhaps not all instances of power require a preexisting social context - the ‘power’, for example, that a very strong hermit would seem to have over a weaker hermit as soon as the two first encounter each other in the desert seems not to.22

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21 Arendt (1970), p. 44. As with Foucault, I shall not discuss Arendt’s view in detail in the next section. The most compelling reason for this is that it is easier to appreciate the contribution made by Arendt in the context of a consideration about how social relations and structures give rise to power.

22 A final question concerns whether ‘power’ is essentially contested: While it is clear that there continues to be disagreement about the contours of the concept of power, the idea that it is essentially contested implies that such debates can never be eliminated. In other words, if power is what Gallie called an ‘essentially contested concept’, it “inevitably involve[s] endless debates about [its] proper uses on the part of [its] users” (Gallie (1956), p. 169). I avoid putting this question into the above framework because it does not concern power in the same way the others do: The other questions aim to determine what the essential characteristics of power are, where as the question about essential contestedness is a higher-level question about whether there can be a stable consensus around the issues addressed in the other questions.
1.3: Major Substantive Views of the Concept of Power

The remainder of this chapter surveys the major substantive views of power in the literature. The first caveat is that my aim here is to differentiate the different views of power in the framework of the power-questions outlined above. Thus my focus is not necessarily on the overall views of the authors I discuss, but rather on the most distinctive features of their views. Sometimes this will mean that a given thinker’s overall view of power will be slotted into more than one of the categories of major views of power that I have distinguished - I will say that Steven Lukes, for example, has both an Interest-Based view and a Responsibilist view. When this happens it happens because the overall views of such authors have several distinctive features which need to be differentiated.

The second caveat is that I (mostly) concentrate on what could be called ‘total’ views of power - views of power that purport to be general analyses of power phenomena as opposed to those that explicitly limit themselves to theorizing a limited range of power phenomena. I focus on total views of power because the reasons I ultimately give for rejecting them in favor of my own will often be that they, as general views of power, are either too general or are not general enough (they either include too many or too few phenomena within their scope). Views of power that explicitly purport not to be general views would not be vulnerable to such criticism - indeed such views often justify their more limited analyses on the grounds that is is not possible to give both a general and satisfactory account of power. My argument against such views will be largely indirect: I aim to refute these views by providing just what they say cannot be provided.
1.3.1: The Behavioralist View

The Behavioralist view is that of Robert Dahl and other Pluralists. Very broadly speaking, it is as follows: The paradigm case of power for the behavioralists is one where an agent’s overt behavior causes a change in the behavior of another agent, specifically as regards his expressed preferences, as when the President’s public endorsement of a particular policy alternative causes his supporters to throw their support towards that alternative. Power thus understood is a property of agents, although there is some disagreement among behavioralists as to whether it is an episodic property or a dispositional property (Q1). The behavior of another agent is the only proper object of power for the behavioralists since they hold that power does not manifest itself unless it actually produces a change in behavior (Q2). Since the relevant change in behavior can materialize in either good or bad ways and have either good or bad effects, power is normatively neutral for the behavioralists (Q3). Moreover, the distinction between ‘power over’ and ‘power to’ was not central for behavioralists, since since they viewed

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23 A difficulty encountered when trying to describe this view is that there are a number of different variations of it. A greater difficulty is that some of its main proponents did not seem to hold entirely consistent views of power. Consider, perhaps most prominently, the difference between Dahl’s ‘intuitive’ view of power, on which ‘power’ seems to be a capacity to get others to do things that they wouldn’t otherwise do, and Dahl’s later assertion that we can seemingly unproblematically substitute ‘A’s behavior causes B’s behavior’ for ‘A has power over B’. This later statement seems to make power into something that only exists in so far as it causes a change in someone’s behavior, as opposed to something that is also a capacity to bring about changes in behavior. Given such an interpretative difficulty, we seem to have roughly two options for characterizing the behavioralist view: first, we could spend a great deal of effort trying to determine whether it really was closer to an Episodic view of power or to a Dispositional view of power; second, we can treat it as having both Episodic and Dispositional variants, each of which can be assessed separately. I shall take the second route, since my main aim here is determining what we ought to think about the concept of power rather than what specific theorists of power actually thought about it.

having power over someone as essentially equivalent to having the power to alter their behavior (Q4). Finally, because the behavior of projecting agents which causes their power to manifest itself always takes place in the context of disputes over expressed preferences, the awareness of both the projecting and the receiving agents would tend to be involved in so far as it informs their behavior in such circumstances (Q5).27

1.3.2: The Intentionalist View

The intentionalist is the first of two major kinds of ‘activist’ view of power still extant in the literature. To outline the intentionalist view I concentrate on Dennis Wrong’s work. Power, on this view, essentially involves a projecting agent intentionally (or with foresight) influencing a receiving agent (or some receiving agents); it is an intentional form of influence and as such must be differentiated from other, non-intentional forms of influence. Thus a paradigm case of power for the intentionalist could be where a parent intentionally cultivates an appreciation for classic English literature in her child by reading her a variety of Dickens novels, whereas a paradigm case of influence without power for the intentionalist could be a case where another parent inadvertently causes her child to hate all green vegetables by only feeding her brussel sprouts.

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27 Dahl (1986) passim. In principle, of course, behavioralists ought to count power as having manifested itself whenever one person’s behaviour changes another person’s behaviour, which would not require the awareness of either party; thus it is really the behavioralists’ operationalist methodology that requires overt conflict and thus the awareness of both parties. It is again unfortunately not clear what the behavioralists thought about the question of whether power had a collective aspect (Q6), although it seemed clear that they would have denied this because a shared collective understanding of the social roles that various agents occupy does not seem to be necessary for one agent’s behavior to bring about a change in another.
Power for intentionalists is a property of things rather than a thing in itself, can be possessed by any kind of agent to which it makes sense to attribute intentionality, and is a dispositional property in so far as agents have power to the extent that they can intentionally influence other agents (Q1). Moreover, the range of the proper objects of power is only limited on the intentionalist view by the kinds of changes in a receiving agent that can be intended by a projecting agent (Q2). Furthermore, since the changes intended by the projecting agent can be either beneficial or harmful for the receiving agent, the intentionalist holds that power is essentially normatively neutral (Q3). Like the behavioralist, the intentionalist does not put much weight on the distinction between ‘power over’ and ‘power to’ (Q4), seeing the former as a subspecies of the latter. The intentionalist does, however, require active involvement on the projecting agent’s part since he only exercises power when he intentionally (or with foresight) brings about a change in the receiving agent (Q5). Finally, the intentionalist views power as a phenomenon that is not inherently collective, even though the existence of particular kinds of power may indeed have an inherently collective component (Q6).

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28 Wrong (1988), ch.1, *passim*. Hence groups or collectivities can exercise power, although they more frequently exert influence, since the effects of their behavior more frequently than not fall below the threshold of the intentional (Wrong (1988), pp. 3-13).


31 Wrong (1988), ch.1, *passim*.


33 See Wrong (1988), pp. 35-41.
1.3.3: The Effectivist View

The Effectivist view, represented here by Peter Morriss, is a second variety of activist view. This view is motivated by a need to distinguish ‘power’ from other related phenomena, to which end it starts at the idea that ‘power’ refers to the capacities of agents to effect (or bring about) changes in the world (or others), whereas the related phenomenon of ‘influence’ refers to the capacities of agents to affect what others do. For instance, an effectivist might say that a pop music star exerts a lot of influence in so far as his personal preferences affect his fans’ preferences, but that he does not have a lot of power since he does not actually effect (or bring about) changes in his fans’ preferences.

The effectivist view thus holds that power is a dispositional property of agents (Q1), and that it takes as an object any state of the world that can be brought about by an agent, including, but not limited to, behaviour (Q2). Since power for effectivists is a generalized capacity of agents to bring about any changes whatsoever in the world by whatever means are available to them, effectivists hold that power is inherently normatively neutral (Q3). Moreover, since power is a capacity to bring about changes in the world, effectivists see ‘power to’ as the most basic kind of power, whereas ‘power

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34 Alternatively, Morriss provides a different argument for the intentionalist view than Wrong does.
37 Morriss (2002), pp. 16-17, 29-34.
over’ sometimes refers to a subspecies of ‘power to’\textsuperscript{39} but at other times refers to a kind of influence (Q4).\textsuperscript{40} For a projecting agent’s power to manifest itself, the effectivist requires the agent to be involved to the extent that it is necessary to count him as bringing about the relevant change in the world, which, for practical purposes, usually requires the agent’s intentions because one is not really implicated as bringing something about as an agent if it falls below the level of the intentional (Q5).\textsuperscript{41}

\textit{1.3.4: The Responsibilist View}

The Responsibilist view takes questions about an agent’s power to ultimately be aimed at determining when to attribute responsibility for outcomes to the agent. A central difficulty encountered with describing this view is that there can be as many versions of it as there are understandings of ‘responsibility’. So, for example, the responsibilist would have a view virtually indistinguishable from the effectivist (or activist) view if the responsibilist thought that being responsible for an outcome was essentially equivalent to having

\textsuperscript{39} The power to, for example, bring about changes in another’s behavior because of the relationship one has to that other.
\textsuperscript{40} Morriss (2002), pp. 20-35.
\textsuperscript{41} Morriss (2002), pp. 25-28; Although he does admit unintentional influence as a frequent phenomenon.
\textsuperscript{42} Connolly ((1993), p. 102) might be interpreted as having such a view.
actively (in some sense) brought it about.\footnote{Connolly (1993), p. 97.} A broader responsibilist view might allow one to sometimes be responsible for an outcome even if he did not actively cause it.\footnote{Connolly (1993), p. 102.}

To exhibit the Responsibilist view, I focus on the work of William Connolly. On this view, there are two central characteristics of all forms of power: (a) An exercise of power essentially involves the limitation of the range of options open to some other agent, (b) for which the exerciser can be held responsible.\footnote{Connolly (1993), pp. 94-5.} Power here is a dispositional capacity of agents (Q1) which has as its proper objects the options of agents or the costs and benefits attached to those options (Q2).\footnote{Connolly (1993), pp. 88-9, 101-2.} The responsibilist does not consider power to be normatively neutral because an imputation of power is also an imputation of responsibility (Q3).\footnote{Connolly (1993), pp. 105-6.} The central meaning of power here is ‘power-over’, the power that one has to limit others’ scope of action, although ‘power-to’ sometimes also offers an important avenue for thinking about power (Q4).\footnote{Connolly (1993), p. 97.} Since an exercise of power requires responsibility, an agent need not necessarily either intend or foresee the outcome, but it does have to be foreseeable by him (Q5).\footnote{Connolly (1993), p. 97.} Like the activist view, the responsibilist view

\footnote{Connolly (1993), p. 97.}
allows for cases of power that don’t have an inherently collective component, although it would certainly seem open to forms of power that do (Q6).

1.3.5: The Interest-Based View

To explicate the Interest-Based view I focus primarily on Lukes. It in essence holds that a projecting agent’s power has manifested itself whenever any of the receiving agent’s interests have somehow been affected because of the presence of the projecting agent. Power thus understood is a dispositional capacity of agents to affect other agents in ways that impact their interests; Lukes initially held such an impact had to be contrary to the receiving agent’s interests, although he subsequently allowed impacts which have positive impacts to count as well (Q1).⁴⁹ Power has as its proper objects the behavior, covert and overt preferences, and even the preference-formation mechanisms of the receiving agent (Q2).⁵⁰ Lukes’ initial view of power as being a capacity that is exercised against the interests of receiving agents denied that it was normatively neutral, but his subsequent acceptance of positive forms of power seems to make the normative characteristics of power depend on the particular form of power in question (Q3).⁵¹ Ultimately the basic notion of power is ‘power to’, although ‘power over’ does have some normatively distinctive aspects (as in cases of domination) that make it useful to

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⁵⁰ Lukes (2005), pp. 16-29.
⁵¹ Lukes (2005), p. 90.
distinguish it from ‘power to’ *simpliciter* (Q4). Furthermore, since power involves affecting interests, neither the intentions nor the actual foreknowledge of the projecting agent are required, although, so as to distinguish a manifestation of an agent’s power from structural determination, the projecting agent’s responsibility must be implicated (Q5). Finally, while Lukes’ interest-based view does give a significant place to forms of power that have an inherently collective aspect, it does leave open the possibility that some forms of power are not collective (Q6).

1.3.6: The Economic (or Rational Choice) View

Although the specific use of ‘Economic’ to describe this view of power originates in the work of Brain Barry, I shall concentrate here on the presentation given by Keith Dowding. The most compelling reason to do this is that while there are many similarities between Dowding and Barry, Dowding endeavors to present a general analysis of power while Barry takes himself to be primarily concerned with only one socially relevant variety of power. The ‘economic’ view of power could also be called the ‘rational choice’ view of power because it takes as central the ability of social actors

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52 Lukes (2005), pp. 30-38. In the 1974 version of *PRV* Lukes’ central statements regarding power all concerned power-over. However, he later came to see (2005), pp. 69, 119) power-over as being a sub category of power-to (albeit the most important one).

53 Lukes (2005), pp. 48-58,

54 Lukes (2005), pp. 31-5.


56 Dowding (1996).

to alter the incentive structures facing other actors.\textsuperscript{58} Power is thus a dispositional capacity of agents (Q1),\textsuperscript{59} that has the options and incentive structures faced by those agents as its proper objects (Q2).\textsuperscript{60} On Dowding’s view, ‘power to’ or ‘outcome power’ is the more basic notion, with ‘power-over’ or ‘social power’ being a subspecies (Q4).\textsuperscript{61} As far as social power is specifically concerned, Dowding holds that it does require the intentions or foresight of the projecting agent, namely because he thinks that it is only ever exercised deliberately (Q5).\textsuperscript{62} Finally, since social power can result in either positive or negative alterations to incentive structures, it is normatively neutral (Q3).\textsuperscript{63}

\section*{1.3.7 The Social Field View}

The social field conception of Thomas Wartenberg arises by focusing on the ontology of power itself, in so far as its social and episodic/dispositional aspects are concerned. Wartenberg thinks that power is a fundamentally dualistic concept: ‘power-to’ and ‘power-over’ refer to fundamentally different, but closely connected concepts, the not-necessarily relational power we have \textit{to} do things and the necessarily social-relational power we have \textit{over} other agents. However, Wartenberg’s only fundamental concern is

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Barry, Ibid., and see Dowding (1996), pp. 4-5.
\item Dowding (1996), pp. 3-4.
\item Dowding (1996), pp. 4-5.
\item Dowding (1996), pp. 4-5.
\item Dowding (1996), pp. 3-5.
\item Dowding (1996), p. 6. Unfortunately Dowding does not explicitly address the question of whether power was inherently collective (Q6).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
‘power over’ (Q4). Moreover, while power relations of the sort that Wartenberg is concerned with are indeed hierarchical (since they are ‘power over’), the normative valence of a power relationship depends on the uses to which it is put (Q3).

For Wartenberg, to have power over someone is to ‘strategically constrain’ the range or field of possible actions open to him. ‘Strategic’ here means that the ways in which the projecting agent constrains the receiving agent only count as instances of power if they fit into a strategy that the projecting agent is pursuing; thus the projecting agent’s intentions or foreknowledge are always involved at some level (Q5). ‘Constraining’ in Wartenberg’s definition means that the projecting agent limits the field of options open to the receiving agent, although he does not necessarily effect a change in the receiving agent himself. Thus the proper object of power is not just the behavior of the receiving agent but more generally the field of options open to him (Q2). While Wartenberg does think that power is a property of agents, he does not think that it is either strictly a dispositional property or an episodic property. Rather, Wartenberg conceives of a projecting agent’s power over a receiving agent as a ‘field’: It is something that always structures interactions between those agents, even if its specifically dispositional properties are not exercised; it limits the possibilities for interactions between those agents.

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64 Wartenberg (1990), pp. 17-18.
65 Wartenberg (1990), pp. 91-109, 116-121, 141-151.
68 Wartenberg (1990), pp. 28, 74.
agents, and can manifest as the result of both actions and inactions (Q1).\textsuperscript{69} In other words, Wartenberg sees power as having both episodic and dispositional features: Power is episodic in that it does not exist unless it is somehow active or structuring relations between agents, but it is dispositional in so far as it can structure those relations differently depending on how it is exercised.

Finally, in so far as ‘power over’ is concerned, Wartenberg does think that it has an inherently collective dimension. The basic idea here is that we should not view power relations ontologically speaking as primarily a matter of individual relations: Individual cases of power-over only make sense in so far as they exist in the context of group-level relations of power-over. On Wartenberg’s definition, “a relationship between two \textit{individual} agents \textit{a} and \textit{b} is an instance of domination if (1) \textit{a} is a member of a group \textit{A} and \textit{b} is a member of a group \textit{B}; (2) group \textit{A} dominates group \textit{B}; and (3) the domination relationship between \textit{a} and \textit{b} is an instance of the generic domination of \textit{B} by \textit{A}”\textsuperscript{70}.

\textit{1.4: Agency and Structure: An Additional Power Question?}

The set of power questions that I outlined above in section 1.2 all aimed at determining what kind of thing power is. There I asked questions such as: Is it only a property of (individual) agents? What does it act upon? How does it act upon others? However, another important question regarding power concerns how it comes into being. How, in

\textsuperscript{69} Wartenberg (1990), pp. 64-74.

\textsuperscript{70} Wartenberg (1990), pp. 117-121.
other words, do agents come to have the powers that they do? Furthermore, if some powers are normatively problematic, how can agents be prevented from coming to have these powers? The problem we face here is often put in terms of a contrast between agency and structural determination: Agents both live and come into existence within structures of social relations. Thus we might wonder how such structures of social relations give rise to powers in agents. More importantly, if we are concerned with reforming unjust structures of social relations, we need to determine how and whether these structures come into being in the first place. In this regard we are often seen to face a particularly acute problem: Since, at least to some extent, agents (or their selves) are made by the very structures that we might want them to reform, it might seem that there is little possibility of genuine reform to these structures. Agents made by social structures may ultimately be structurally determined to reproduce or reinforce the very structures which they are trying to reform.

I have left the question regarding the relationship between agency and structure out of the framework in section 1.2 not because it is unimportant, but rather because it inquires into power in a different way from the other questions. In fact, if we are to reform problematic power-conferring structures of social relations, this question is of the utmost importance. However, to answer this question it seems that we first need an idea of what kind of thing power is, which is the very issue that I turn to in the next chapter (chapter 2). I shall address the question about agency and structure in the chapter immediately following (chapter 3).


CHAPTER 2: MY INACTIVIST VIEW

2.0: Introduction
In this chapter I outline my own substantive view of what power is by providing answers to the six basic power questions I outlined in the previous chapter. Rather than answering question by question, I proceed in a more holistic manner. I begin by distinguishing ‘power’ from the related concept ‘force’. I then present my general notion of power as a capacity of agents to affect the practical landscapes of other agents, followed by the distinction between exercises and manifestations of power, the notion of a practical landscape, and a set of distinctions between abilities and various forms of power. I conclude by examining and defending certain features of my view, such as why it only includes an agent’s believed options rather than his actual options.

2.1: ‘Power’ versus ‘Force’
I begin with the idea that both ‘force’ and ‘power’ designate qualities of agents: Properly speaking, only agents exercise power or exert force. What grounds this idea is that both these concepts refer to exercisable dispositional properties.\textsuperscript{71} As \textit{dispositional properties}, they are stable or enduring potentialities that may or may not be actualized at any time. For example, ‘being flammable’ is a dispositional property of wood, a property which is actualized in certain conditions but which a given piece of wood has even if it is not

actually on fire. As *exercisable* dispositional capacities, power and force are properties that can be actualized when their possessors *do something* to actualize them. For example, Michael Jordan has the capacity to slam-dunk a basketball, but he must perform some action (or exert some effort) to actualize (or exercise) this dispositional capacity. In contrast, a hurricane has the capacity to be extremely destructive, but it does not *do* anything to actualize this capacity in the circumstances where it is actualized.\(^72\) On this idea, power and force are both exercisable dispositional properties and, thus, only agents possess them because only agents can perform the actions necessary to actualize them.

I now distinguish power from force in three ways before delving more deeply into the nature of power itself.\(^73\) The first two differences concern us in this chapter, and the third difference shall be of particular importance in the next. Both concepts refer to ways that changes in receiving agents (or the situations they face) are produced because of projecting agents. These concepts differ, however, in terms of the features of receiving agents they target, the changes they produce, and the conditions in which they can arise. The first difference between power and force is that power operates on, or has as its immediate target, an agent’s will or its determinants.\(^74\) Force, in contrast, operates against or in spite of the will of the agent to whom it is applied. Thus force, when successful, typically involves physical compulsion - as when a security guard ejects an inebriated

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\(^72\) Thus we may describe a hurricane as ‘powerful’ because it can ‘do’ (or destroy) many things, but should avoid describing it as ‘having power’ because there is no action which it can perform to exercise its power.

\(^73\) For an interesting contrast, compare Arendt (1970), pp. 35-56.

\(^74\) Here I concur roughly with Mansbridge (1994), p. 69, n.2.
man against his will - whereas power typically succeeds by causing an agent’s will to be differently inclined - as when a security guard threatens to break the inebriated man’s arm unless he leaves, and he opts to leave rather than risk a broken arm.

The second difference between power and force is that force, when successful, changes behavior whereas power, when successful, doesn’t necessarily change behavior. This follows from the fact that power has as its target an agent’s will (or its determinants) whereas force works against or in spite of an agent’s will: Since force often operates on an unwilling agent, it is not aimed at changing the dictates of his will, but instead at changing what he is actually doing. An exercise of power, in contrast, may be aimed at changing someone’s behavior, but it need not be. If an exercise of power is aimed at changing someone’s behavior, its aim is to change his behavior by changing his will from being inclined toward one action to being inclined toward another. But an exercise of power might simply be aimed at affecting someone’s will in a less dramatic way - the point of an exercise of power, for example, might not be to change an agent’s course of action, but to make her feel worse (or better) about the course of action that she is already pursuing. For example, power might aim to change an agent’s preferences by making her feel embarrassed about a certain course of action. Power can therefore be successful even if it does not change behavior, whereas force cannot be successful if it fails to change behavior at a given moment.

The third difference between power and force has to do with the conditions of their possibility. Power is such that an individual agent’s capacity to exercise some
(although not all) forms of it depends, in a positive way, on the presence of the right
social context, whereas force is such that an individual agent’s capacity to exercise never
depends on the presence of the right social context in a positive way. Consider, for
example, the President’s power to command the armed forces: This power cannot exist
unless a social context exists in which someone is acknowledged to be the President and
have authority over the armed forces. Force, on the other hand, is very different: For
example, my own capacity to apply force to a steel rod and bend it does not require the
presence of a particular social context in any positive way - at best it requires the absence
of a social context in which others would prevent me from exercising it.

2.2 Power as a Capacity to Affect Practical Landscapes

On my view, an agent’s power is his capacity to affect another’s practical landscape.

More formally, my view can be spelled out as follows:

- A has power in relation to B whenever A has the capacity to affect B’s
  practical landscape;
- A’s power in relation to B manifests itself in relation to B whenever B’s
  practical landscape is affected because of the power A has in relation to B;
- A exercises his power in relation to B whenever A plays an active role in
  causing his power in relation to B to manifest itself.

2.2.1: The Notion of a Practical Landscape

In the next section I shall explore a variety of different forms of affecting an
agent’s practical landscape, but first I shall explain that notion and the difference between
a ‘manifestation’ and an ‘exercise’ of power. The notion of a practical landscape is a metaphor I offer to help conceptualize what power is acting on when it is acting on the determinants of an agent’s will. On this metaphor, practical action is understood as the traversing of a landscape laid out in front of oneself. When an agent chooses to act, he selects, with some minimal degree of active involvement, what direction to go in given the kinds of terrain he perceives, the difficulties he anticipates in crossing those terrains, his particular inclinations for crossing certain kinds of terrain, and so forth. Other agents affect this landscape by projecting a signal onto it, either intentionally or unintentionally. This projected signal alters how the receiving agent’s practical landscape appears to him; the signal is, in other words, superimposed onto the receiving agent’s practical landscape. There it alters the appearance of this landscape by combining with the projections of other agents and those aspects of the receiving agent’s practical landscape which he projects himself. An agent’s practical landscape at a particular time is the product that results from all the various signals being projected on to it.

More formally, an agent’s practical landscape has three main elements. The first element is essentially his beliefs about how the world is as concerns his practical agency; in particular the beliefs that are relevant here are the agent’s beliefs, true or otherwise, about what options are open to him. For the sake of convenience I shall call this element of an agent’s practical landscape his believed options. The second element of an agent’s practical landscape I call his evaluative beliefs: This element essentially comprises an agent’s moral beliefs as well as his epistemological beliefs - both, in other words, his
beliefs about right and wrong action and about how it is proper to go about acquiring new beliefs. The final main element of an agent’s practical landscape is his preferences, and in particular his preferences regarding his believed options.\textsuperscript{75}

The components of an agent’s practical landscape can be affected in a variety of ways by projections of power. For example, power, in the form of a threat, may remove a believed option, making the agent think that a particular goal can no longer be accomplished or that the assistance he would have had in accomplishing it is no longer available. Likewise, power, in the form of an offer, might give rise to a new believed option, revealing an entirely new course of action to an agent’s consciousness. An educative use of power, on the other hand, might also reveal a new option to an agent, or it might make the agent change his estimation of how worthy of pursuit a previously perceived option is. A manipulative use of power, furthermore, might obscure a previously perceived option, prevent an agent from coming to perceive an option, or cause an agent to no longer desire a course of action, even if he judges it worthy of pursuit. In what follows, I shall generally explicate my understanding of power by focusing on how it can affect an agent’s believed options, since this is often easiest to demonstrate. It should be understood, however, that this does not indicate that an agent’s evaluative beliefs or his preferences are less important components of his practical landscape or that the ways in which power can affect them do not merit extensive attention in the long run.

\textsuperscript{75} For a similar but also different notion, see Wartenberg (1990), Ch.5.
2.2.2: Exercises and Manifestations of Power

To illustrate the distinction between the manifestation of power and its exercise, consider the relationship between Alice and Bertrand. Let us assume that Bertrand’s options have been affected in some way. In what cases should we say that it was Alice’s power that caused Bertrand’s options to be affected? One kind of case where it seems plausible to say that it was Alice’s power that affected Bertrand’s options are those cases where Alice took an active role in bringing about the change in Bertrand’s options. An example of this would be where Alice intentionally or knowingly caused Bertrand to believe that some course of action was no longer within his means. This clearly seems to be a case where it was Alice’s power that affected Bertrand’s options because it appears to be a case where Alice exercised her power in relation to Bertrand, and it seems to be an exercise of Alice’s power precisely because of the active role played by Alice in bringing about the change in Bertrand’s options. This makes sense, it seems, because power is a capacity of agents, and capacities are things that can be and are exercised by agents. But we might wonder whether there are cases where Alice’s capacity to affect Bertrand’s options can do so without being exercised by Alice, or whether Alice’s capacity can manifest itself when Alice’s relation to it is an inactive one as opposed to an active one.

In other words, we need to determine when we ought to think that Alice’s capacity to affect Bertrand’s options made a difference in terms of Bertrand’s options, given that something made a difference. As a general matter, it seems appropriate to trace back the difference in Bertrand’s options to Alice’s capacity when the difference would not have
arisen if it had not been for Alice’s capacity. Here it seems that the difference in Bertrand’s options arose at least in part because of Alice’s capacity to affect them. The question then is whether it is only appropriate to think that this difference in Bertrand’s options occurred because of Alice’s capacity when Alice actively did something to bring it about, when Alice exercised her capacity to restrictively affect Bertrand’s options.

On my view, we should trace differences in Bertrand’s options back to Alice’s capacity to affect them both when Alice’s relation to the differences was active and when it was inactive. To motivate this contention, consider a slave owner’s capacity to torture his slave. In this case it seems clear that the slave owner need not actually exercise this capacity to affect his slave’s options. Since the slave knows that his master can easily torture him, the existence of this capacity and the slave’s belief that the master could exercise it ensure the slave will tread very carefully. Likewise, consider the capacity a husband would have to beat his wife with impunity in a thoroughly patriarchal society. The husband doesn’t need to exercise this power, threaten to exercise it, or seem likely to exercise it for it to affect his wife’s options. If she knows that nobody is likely to stop him from beating her or punish him afterward, she must always guard herself against doing anything to upset him in a manner bad enough to cause him to act ‘out of character’.

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One might wonder whether an agent can know about another’s power and yet that power would not automatically manifest itself. Would, for example, a woman’s believed options be affected by her knowledge of her husband’s capacity to beat her with impunity if she completely trusted him not to exercise it? In theory, it seems that his power would fail to manifest itself (affect her believed options) if she believed that there was no possibility whatsoever that he would exercise it. It seems though that in practice such circumstances would be extremely rare. What seems more likely is that she would judge there to be an exceedingly rare chance that he would actually exercise his power, and so her believed options would not be greatly affected by her knowledge of his power.
Ultimately, then, it seems that there are cases where the capacities of agents to restrictively affect the options of others need not actually be exercised for the options of those others to be restrictively affected because of (and by) those capacities. For this reason my notion of power includes a distinction between the *exercise* or *active manifestation* of power (cases where a receiving agent’s practical landscape was affected through the projecting agent’s active involvement) and the *inactive manifestation* of power (cases where, in essence, a receiving agent’s practical landscape was affected because a projecting agent could have affected it through active involvement).

### 2.3: Abilities and Powers ‘In Relation To’

Thus far I have typically used the locution ‘power in relation to’ instead of the locutions ‘power-to’ and ‘power-over’. As we saw in chapter 1, there is much debate concerning whether there is only one basic model according to which it is best to conceptualize power in social and political philosophy, much of it involving the contrast between ‘power to’ and ‘power-over’. I shall now argue that there is indeed one such basic model, and that it is best captured by the ‘power in relation to’ locution rather than the alternatives. In the first place I outline and defend a distinction between ‘abilities’ and ‘powers’, a distinction which seems to render the ‘power to’ locution unnecessary. I then argue that powers (as opposed to abilities) ought to be understood on the ‘power in relation to’ model. I close by distinguishing three different forms of ‘power in relation to’, namely ‘power-over’, ‘power-for’, and ‘power-with’, all three of which I incorporate into
my overall understanding of power as a capacity of agents to affect the practical landscapes of others. In subsequent sections of this chapter I explore how this tripartite understanding of ‘power in relation to’ can help resolve a number of seemingly contrary intuitions about cases involving power.

### 2.3.1: Abilities, Powers, and ‘Power To’

The first question for us to consider is whether one of ‘power-to’ or ‘power-over’ is reducible to the other. Here Wartenberg’s argument that power is a ‘fundamentally dualistic’ concept, or, rather, that there are in fact two different concepts of social power is a good place to start. According to Wartenberg, one meaning of ‘power’ is that of ‘power-to’, the ability to do things. This meaning of power not only applies to agents, it can even apply to non-agents. The other meaning of power is ‘power-over’, which, according to Wartenberg, is different from ‘power-to’ because it necessarily involves a hierarchical relation between agents: “The basic idea of this usage is that power involves a specific type of relationship between human beings, one that is hierarchical in virtue of one person’s ability to affect the other without the other being able to reciprocate”. So, for Wartenberg, the main difference between these two sorts of power is that the one

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78 Wartenberg’s argument for the non-reducibility of ‘power-over’ and ‘power-to’ is arguably the most sophisticated. Compare, for example, Dowding, who parses out the difference between ‘power-over’ and ‘power-to’ not in terms of the presence or absence of a relation between agents, but in terms of whether the affect on the receiving agent is internal to the exercise of power (as in cases of power-over) or whether it is a by-product of the exercise of power (as in cases of power-to) (Dowding (1996), pp. 4-7).


80 Wartenberg (1990), pp. 18.
necessarily encompasses a hierarchical relation between agents, whereas the other can merely encompass individuals and non-agents. Wartenberg admits, though, that there are important connections between the two concepts: at the very least, we cannot attribute ‘power-over’ to someone without not also attributing some ‘power-to’ to him as well.\textsuperscript{81}

Wartenberg’s aim in distinguishing between these two senses of power is showing that social theory would be inadequate if it only employed the concept of ‘power to’: In so doing, social theory would screen out the inherently relational aspects of some forms of power. It would not be impossible to discuss these relational forms of power in a ‘power to’ paradigm - we could talk about powers to affect others through hierarchical relations. However, such locutions have serious drawbacks: First, they are more cumbersome than the equivalent ‘power-over’ locutions; second, they seem to instrumentalize the relational aspect of the power in question by making the hierarchal relation into an instrument through which the one agent affects the other rather than the very thing in which his power consists. Here it is important to note that many theorists have come to agree with Wartenberg that only employing ‘power to’ would indeed miss something crucial, even those such as Morriss who initially thought that ‘power to’ could do an adequate job on its own.\textsuperscript{82} Ultimately, while I agree with Waternberg that it is important to employ a power locution to that draws attention to power’s relational

\textsuperscript{81} Wartenberg (1990), p. 19. Lukes gives a very similar argument to Waternberg here. The main difference between them is that, while Lukes thinks that the necessarily relational and hierarchical nature of ‘power-over’ does mark it out as being of a special sort of normative significance, he accepts in the end that ‘power-over’ is ultimately a subspecies of ‘power-to’ (Lukes (2005), pp. 65-74).

\textsuperscript{82} Morriss (2002), pp. xiii-xiv.
aspects, I do not agree that ‘power to’ ought to be employed elsewhere or that ‘power-over’ is the basic locution that we ought to use to discuss relational forms of power.

Where the use of ‘power to’ is concerned, I argue that we ought instead to favour a distinction between ‘abilities’ and various forms of ‘power in relation to’. My argument begins with a distinction between an agent’s powers and his abilities brought through the following example: Imagine a society much like that of 1940s America called ‘Shmamerica’ wherein the favourite national sport is baseball. As in our 1940s America, dominant-group Shmamericans did not allow people of color to participate in baseball at the ‘national’ level. Unlike 1940s America, however, Shmamericans society was so against people of color playing baseball that it strictly barred them from playing it in any organized fashion. Their only concession was to tolerate the organized participation of people of color in the game of shmaseball - a game almost exactly like baseball, except in that it was not called baseball and had slightly different rules.

Now imagine Jackie Shmrobinson, the Shmamerican counterpart of Jackie Robinson. He was one of the top players in the national professional shmaseball league for many years. Of course, though, he never played baseball since he was a man of color. Jackie Shmrobinson’s case demonstrates the distinction between an ‘ability’ and a ‘power’ quite well, for he had the ability to play baseball, but not the power to do so. Jackie Shmrobinson had the ability to play (professional) baseball because he could run fast, had excellent hand-eye coordination, and a great degree of experience playing shmaseball; indeed, he had the ability to play baseball better than most professional
baseball players, we can assume. Nonetheless, Jackie Shmrobinson did not have the power to play baseball because having the power to play baseball requires being in a social context where one is recognized as being the sort of person who can play the game.

What I aim to capture with the distinction between ‘abilities’ and ‘powers’ is very similar to the difference between the capacity to perform basic actions and the capacity to perform non-basic actions. In essence, one’s powers are his capacities to perform the non-basic actions which can only be performed when the right social context is present or when the right sort of social relations exist between him and others. Among one’s abilities are his capacities to eat food, open and close his eyes, sing an opera, comprehend his native language, and so forth. One’s abilities are the capacities that he has to perform actions independent of the social context he finds himself in. One’s powers, however, are capacities to perform actions which themselves can only be performed in the right kind of social context. Thus Jackie Shmrobinson might have had the ability to run very quickly from first to second base, but not the power to steal second base. Likewise, I have the ability to utter the words ‘destroy France completely’ to the head of the American armed forces should I ever meet him, but, since I was born in Canada, I will never have the power to order him to completely destroy France.

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83 The presence of ‘the right social context / relation’ can be a very weak condition. For example, ‘the right social context’ might merely require the absence of certain mitigating factors, as in the case where an agent’s much higher than average physical strength (an ability) will translate into a power to intimidate others unless he finds himself in a social context which prevents this, such as a society where the physically weak maintain superiority over the physically strong through a variety of psychological mechanisms.
There will, of course, often not be a distinction in practice between one’s abilities and one’s powers because abilities can automatically translate into powers when the right social context is present. For example, Jackie Shmrobinson’s ability to play baseball would have translated into a power to play baseball if men of color were allowed to play baseball in Shmamerica, as would my ability to utter the phrase ‘destroy France completely’ translate into a power to command France’s complete destruction if I were elected President of the United States. However there will always be at least an important theoretical difference between an ability and a power, because one may always inquire into what the social conditions are that enable a given ability to translate into a power and imagine scenarios in which different social conditions would prevent this translation.

Abilities are certainly of interest in social and political theory, for it will often be the case that an agent lacks a power because he lacks the relevant ability. For example, a person who lacks basic literacy skills will often lack the power to participate effectively in collective governance because he cannot access the relevant information. The distinction between powers and abilities, therefore, is very important for social and political theory, for it allows us to identify two very different reasons why someone might lack a given power: He may lack the relevant ability, or the social context within which he finds himself might prevent his ability from translating into a power. The question that concerns us now, though, is not whether social and political theory ought to employ the concept of ‘ability’, but whether it needs both the concept of ‘ability’ and the concept of ‘power to’ once the distinction between abilities and powers is in place.
At this point it is useful to recall that a central feature of ‘power to’ is that in attributing this kind of power to an agent, we need not be implying that there is any relationship between that agent and another agent; in contrast, when we attribute ‘power-over’ to an agent, we are indeed implying a relationship between that agent and the other agent (over whom he has power). However, with the distinction between abilities and powers in play, it seems that attributing a power to an agent would also be implying some relationship between him and another agent. For example, saying that Jackie Shmrobinson has the power (and not merely the ability) to play baseball implies that others recognize him as potential participant in the game. ‘Power to’ still might have an important role to play since, unlike ‘power-over,’ it does not necessarily imply a hierarchical relation between agents, but with the distinction between abilities and powers in play, ‘power to’ seems just as essentially relational as ‘power-over’.84

The question remains, however, as to whether ‘power to’ actually does have an important role to play, or whether, given the distinction between abilities and powers, we ought to employ a more straightforwardly relational locution instead of ‘power to’. This is an important question to ask since one drawback of ‘power to’, is that, at first glance, it does not imply a relationship between its possessor and another agent.85 Since ‘power to’ only seems to imply a relation once the abilities/powers distinction is in place, the use of ‘power to’ would seem to either obscure its relational aspect (unless it is accompanied by

84 For a similar argument and critique of Wartenberg from which I draw, see Allen (1999), pp. 22-3.
an explanation of the abilities/powers distinction) or be overly cumbersome (if it is indeed accompanied by an explanation of the powers/abilities distinction).

Given these difficulties, a fruitful way to proceed is to abandon the ‘power to’ locution and to instead employ a more straightforwardly relational locution. The difficulty we face here is that the only other ‘major’ power locution in the literature, ‘power-over’, is unduly restrictive. Here consider Wartenberg’s contention that ‘power-over’ implies a hierarchical relation: The image that ‘power-over’ most readily brings to mind includes a receiving agent somehow being subordinate to a projecting agent, liable to be constrained by him but unable to fully/effectively reciprocate. Moreover, as Wartenberg argues, the notion of ‘power-over’ seems to have these connotations even if there can be some normatively positive cases of ‘power-over’.86

So, the hierarchical connotation of ‘power-over’ seems to make it unsuitable to serve as a basic understanding of relational power. One reason for this is that this hierarchical connotation implies that the receiving agent is not merely at a disadvantage, but that he has little or no power of his own that he might be able to exercise in such circumstances to resist or overcome the projecting agent’s power.87 A second reason that we ought to resist ‘power-over’ here is that this notion would seem to imply that all relational cases of power involve one or more agents constraining or restricting one or more other agents, which, as I shall argue below, is false.

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86 See Wartenberg (1990), chh. 8-9, especially,
87 C.f. Allen (1999), Ch.1, to whom I am indebted for this point.
2.3.2: Power in Relation to: Power-Over, Power-With, and Power-For

Some prominent theorists take these problems with ‘power-over’ as reasons to return to a basic understanding of ‘power-to’, despite the difficulties with that notion.\textsuperscript{88} I instead argue that we ought to adopt the locution ‘power in relation to’. The basic rationale behind adopting this locution is that it allows us all the variety that the ‘power-to’ locution allows while keeping the relational aspect of power firmly in sight. The ‘power in relation to’ locution requires us to keep the relational aspect of power in sight because the locution ‘in relation to’ is most naturally completed by another agent: So long as we are limiting our inquiry to social/political issues, ‘in relation to’ at least seems to imply that there is \textit{someone} else with whom one has a relationship. The alternative locution ‘power with respect to’ seems a little too broad for our purposes, because it could quite comfortably take as its object both social agents and things such as ‘issues’, ‘outcomes’, ‘nature’, and so forth.\textsuperscript{89} On the other hand, the ‘power in relation to’ locution allows for much variation because it can easily be followed by a qualification noting the respects in which one agent has power in relation to another. For example:

(i) A has power in relation to B where A can affect B’s practical landscape, and A exercises her power in relation to B where A actually brings about some change in B’s practical landscape.

(ii) A has power in relation to some class of agents, C, in so far as A can do φ without having to worry about C attempting to interfere.

This expression is useful because it could also be qualified by an explanation of why the relation exists between A and B in the first place. For example:

\textsuperscript{88} Lukes (2005), pp. 65-73; Allen (1999), ch.5.

\textsuperscript{89} As is the case with Oppenheim’s use of that locution (1981), ch. 2.
(iii) A has power in relation to B in virtue of the fact that A is B’s military commander.

(iv) A has power in relation to B because A and B are business partners.

Even the locution ‘power-to’ does not have as much versatility as ‘power in relation to’. ‘Power in relation to’ allows us to focus on either the explanation of the existence of the power relation or on the respects in which the one agent has power; we could also easily focus on both of these factors using this locution. However, with ‘power to’ we are always required to make reference to the respects in which the one agent has the power to affect the other agent; we cannot, in other words, explain why A has the power to do something to B without first saying what he has the power to do. Despite all these advantages, ‘power in relation to’ has a potential drawback in that it might screen out some of the distinctive features of various different relational forms of power. If, for example, we are concerned with a hierarchical relation between agents wherein one is able to constrain the other, the locution ‘power in relation to’ seems inadequate in comparison with the locution ‘power-over’. ‘Power in relation to’ here allows for the relation in question to be a hierarchical one, and we might get it closer to the mark by calling it ‘hierarchical power in relation to’, but it just does not seem to do as good a job of capturing the distinctive normative characteristics of the situation as ‘power-over’.

Likewise, consider the contrast between ‘power in relation to’ and another relational sort of power, namely Amy Allen’s notion of ‘power-with’. Allen defines *power-with* as “the ability of a collectivity to act together for the attainment of an agreed-

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90 The ‘power-over’ locution, of course, would also have these advantages, but, as I have argued, it would also have some significant costs that the ‘power in relation to’ locution avoids.
upon end or series of ends”. Allen marks this form of power out as a distinctive kind of power so as to meet the central feminist aim of comprehending the ‘power’ of solidarity between various oppressed individual and groups working to achieve common goals - the collective power that exists and is exercised between them. An example of this is the following: A group of five poor women decide to pool their common financial, intellectual, and psychic resources in order to escape their domineering husbands by starting a business and leaving their households; while working and living together they are not only able to achieve financial independence from their husbands, but, through the mutual support that they give to each other, they are able to gain self-confidence and are able to radically reimagine their proper role within society. In cases such as these, I would argue, merely saying that the agents are exercising power in relation to each other would seem to miss much that is of distinctive normative significance.

‘Power in relation to’ can perhaps get some of the way towards ‘power-with’ by focusing on what the relation between individuals enables them to accomplish together. For example, we can speak of the power that women, lesbians, gays, feminists, and members of the queer and transgendered communities all have in relation to each other to work together and support each other in the effort to achieve effective protections from discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation. The problem occurs here when we try to describe an exercise of this kind of power in the ‘power in relation to’

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92 See Allen (1999), Ch.1.
paradigm: It seems that here we are forced to merely describe a collection of agents, each of whom exercises power in relation to each other, and that we will not be able to do much more than this. The shortcoming here is in terms of the collective aspect of the powers in question - the extent to which the individuals are exercising their powers with others, and not merely alongside them, or, in other words, the sense in which the product of an exercise of ‘power-with’ is the product of a collective action and not merely a number of discrete individual actions occurring alongside each other.

So a great deal would be lost concerning this last sort of relational power if we only employed a locution that failed to highlight its collective nature. There is one final argumentative move that the theorist who favors ‘power in relation to’ has that we ought to consider: Recall that there are two distinct issues that are in play in this discussion: (i) whether there is an all-encompassing locution that we can use to speak of all relevant forms of power without losing what is distinctive about all those forms of power, and (ii) whether there is a way of understanding ‘power’ that ought to be at the base of all forms of power in social and political theory. The above discussion shows that ‘power in relation to’ cannot accomplish the task that we aim to accomplish in (i), but this does not mean that it cannot accomplish the task we aim to accomplish in (ii). What one might claim here is that all powers of significance (as opposed to abilities) belong to the category ‘powers in relation to’, a very broad category within which it is important to make distinctions among the ways ‘power in relation to’ is exercised. In other words, we might say that all powers (as distinct from abilities) of interest in social and political
theory are held ‘in relation to’ others, although it is sometimes best to speak of those powers as being exercised with others (or over others).

I shall employ one over-arching model to address power, namely ‘power in relation to’, which, I argue, ought to be divided into three distinct forms. Each of these forms of ‘power in relation to’ captures a unique kind of relation between a projecting agent and a receiving agent, or a unique way in which a projecting agent can affect another’s practical landscape. These three forms of ‘power in relation to’ can be spelled out as follows:

First, power-over refers to the capacity of a projecting agent to unilaterally and deliberately constrain a receiving agent’s practical landscape. He exercises power-over her whenever he plays an active role in bringing about the constraint of her practical landscape, and his power-over her manifests itself whenever her practical landscape is constrained because of his capacity to constrain it. ‘Unilateral’ indicates that when her practical landscape is constrained, the receiving agent is only passively involved; the constraint is imposed upon her and she does not actively participate in bringing it about. ‘Constraint’ refers to a variety of negative ways in which the receiving agent’s practical landscape may be affected; for example, it includes taking away her believed options, preventing her from coming to have a particular believed option, introducing one or more exploitative options, or the manipulation of her evaluative beliefs or preferences. On my view, very roughly, when a projecting agent deliberately introduces an exploitative option, it is an option that is introduced unilaterally and takes advantage of some relatively unique feature of the receiving agent’s situation in order to advance the
interests of the projecting agent. Exploitative options very rarely advance the interests of the receiving agents - this only happens in cases where the receiving agent is already so disadvantaged on the whole that the small gain he gets from taking an exploitative option is able to improve his overall situation. Exploitative options often either harm the receiving agents’ overall interests or contribute to the continuance of his disadvantage as compared to the projecting agent.93

Second, power-for refers to the capacity of a projecting agent to unilaterally and deliberately enhance the practical landscape of a receiving agent. He exercises power-for her whenever he deliberately brings about the enhancement of her practical landscape, and his power manifests itself whenever her practical landscape is enhanced because of his power to deliberately enhance it. ‘Enhancement’ here refers to a variety of ways in which the receiving agent’s practical landscape may be positively affected, including, for example, the addition of non-exploitative believed options or the countering of others’ attempts at exercising power-over her. Thus rational persuasion would count as a exercise of power-for, in so far as it adds the option to believe a new or different proposition by appealing only to reason. It is important to emphasize here, however, that not all ways in which a projecting agent might be causally involved in enhancing a receiving agent’s practical landscape can ground manifestations of power-for; only potentially active forms of enhancement count here. Thus, for example, I could be causally involved in enhancing

93 I am not fully committed to this account of exploitation, but instead employ in in lieu of a fully-developed conception. In essence, the ideal I have in mind is close to that of Feinberg (1988), pp. 176-9 (C.f. Zimmerman (1981).
your practical landscape either by giving one hundred dollars to you or by inadvertently dropping one hundred dollars that you subsequently pick up and keep. Only the first scenario involves my capacity to exercise power-for you, and so only there it would be appropriate to trace back an enhancement of your practical landscape to my power.

Finally, power-with refers to the capacity of a projecting agent to affect a receiving agent’s practical landscape through collective action with her. This differs from both power-over and power-for in a number of important ways. In the first place, power-with can restrict, enhance, or both restrict and enhance its exercisers’ practical landscapes, depending on the nature of the collective action in which they are engaged. In the second place, whenever an agent exercises power-with another agent, it is not entirely proper to speak of either of them as the projecting agent or the receiving agent; rather, the changes produced in their practical landscapes are a joint product that results from their collective action, and so each agent involved is both a projecting agent and a receiving agent. Only where the inactive manifestation of power-with is concerned does it make sense to speak of a projecting and a receiving agent: In such cases, the receiving agent’s practical landscape is affected because she recognizes the capacity of the projecting agent to engage in collective action with her; however, she, the receiving agent, need not also project back a capacity to affect the original projecting agent that will be received by him. In other words, I may gain a believed option by recognizing another’s capacity to engage in collective action with me without her recognizing a similar capacity for collective action in me. Thus, we might say, power-with can manifest itself in a unilateral way
although it can only ever be exercised in a bi- (or multi-) lateral way. Finally, an exercise of power-with between agents can also amount to an exercise of power-over or power-for if they exercise power with each other over or for some other agent.

2.3.3: A Brief Defence of these Powers In Relation To

Having laid out the distinctions between these three kinds of relational powers, I shall offer a brief defence of their inclusion as kinds of power. The main line of objection that I shall be concerned with here can be called the constraint-only view: It would seek to deny that power-for actually ought to count as power, and it would seek to deny that power-with should be counted except in so far as it can be analyzed as mutual constraint (or power-over). The motivations for this view are twofold: First, it seems intuitively obvious that cases of constraint ought to count as power. However, second, we may get a number of counterintuitive results if we allow anything beyond cases of constraint to count as power. For example, if we allow cases that involve enablement or the addition of non-exploitative options to count as power, then anonymous gifts would have to count as exercises of power because they expand the range of options open to receiving agents.

Constraint-only theorists find cases such as these highly counterintuitive, and they contend that the only way to rule them out is to deny that phenomena such as power-for and power-with ought to actually count as power. I share with constraint-only theorists the intuition that phenomena involving constraint are obviously cases of power. Moreover, like them, I do feel some discomfort with simply saying that cases of
anonymous gifts (and similar cases) are cases of power. However, I think the way to dispel this discomfort is not to deny that these are cases of power at all, but instead to say that they are not cases of power-over but are instead cases of power-for or power-with. To reiterate, I agree with constraint-only theorists that the concept of ‘power-over’ points to a normatively distinctive way of affecting agents’ practical landscapes (one that involves constraint as opposed to something else) and that it ought to be counted as power. However, I also think that power-for and power-with each point to normatively distinctive ways of affecting agents’ practical landscapes and that they ought to be counted as power as well. Presumably, then, the constraint-only theorist either denies that (a) power-for and power-with point to normatively distinctive ways of affecting agents’ practical landscapes or (b) that they ought to be counted as power. I shall examine each of these potential sources of disagreement in turn.

In the first place, where power-for is concerned, it seems difficult to deny that this is a normatively distinctive way of affecting agents’ practical landscapes. It is both clear that enhancing an agent’s options, for example, is a way of affecting his practical landscape and that it can be usefully distinguished from other ways of affecting his practical landscape (such as taking away his options). Power-with is therefore more likely to be questioned by the constraint-only theorist. However, rather than deny that it is a way of affecting agent’s practical landscapes, the constraint-only theorist is likely to deny that it is a phenomenon distinct from the conjunction of power-over and power-for. In other words, such a theorist would argue that power-with really just points to the
concurrent exercise of powers-over and/or powers-for on the part of two or more agents.

To convince such a theorist that power-with really is a distinctive phenomenon, in other words, you first need to convince him that collective action is something other than the mere concurrent actions of two or more agents. Since this task would take me too far off track of the present line of argument, I shall simply assume that collective action is more that the concurrent action of multiple agents and save the argument for other work.94

So, if we grant that power-for and power-with are normatively distinctive ways of affecting agents’ practical landscapes, what remains to be seen is whether they ought to be counted as power. My argument that these normatively distinctive ways of affecting agents’ practical landscapes ought to count as power comprises two different sub-arguments. First, as we shall see in subsequent sections, this set of distinctions allows us to accommodate a number of seemingly contrary intuitions at least as well (or better) than the distinctions likely to be proposed by the constraint-only theorist. Second, as we shall see presently, the set of distinctions offered by the constraint-only theorist are not any more compelling in their own right.

As we have seen, if the constraint-only theorist accepts that power-for and power-with are normatively distinctive forms of affecting agents’ practical landscapes, all that remains is for him to deny that they are normatively distinctive forms of affecting agents’ practical landscapes which ought to count as power. It seems that the only positive grounds that the constraint-only theorist could offer for this contention that would not beg

94 See Pettit and List (2011) for a useful place to enter into this debate.
the question would be a case or set of cases that my set of distinctions just cannot handle adequately. A purported example of just such a case would be the anonymous gift scenario we examined above: The constraint-only theorist would say that my set of distinctions cannot handle this scenario because it counterintuitively implies that anonymous gifts are cases of power. Here I would make two immediate replies: First, my view (correctly, I would say) implies that this is a case of power-for but not power-over. Second, I would contend that the constraint-only theorist feels that my view has counterintuitive implications because his intuitive reactions to power phenomena are not adjusted to the distinction between power-over and power-for; in effect, his intuitive judgements proceed as if power-over were still the only possible category of power.

My more extended reply begins by inquiring into what exactly the constraint-only theorist would call the phenomena I have called power-with and power-for. In other words, assuming that these phenomena do indeed refer to normatively distinctive ways of affecting agents’ practical landscapes, what we should call them if we should not call them ‘power’? For the sake of argument, let’s assume that the constraint-only theorist would want to call them something like ‘influence’. So, on this view, there would be three normatively distinctive ways of affecting agents’ practical landscapes, one of which is ‘power’ and two of which are ‘influence’, with the difference between ‘power’ and ‘influence’ depending on whether or not constraint is necessarily present.

What might be the argument for distinguishing between ‘power’ and ‘influence’ in this way? It would be question-begging to say that it is because we need to distinguish
between phenomena which involve constraint and phenomena which do not involve constraint, since the distinctions between power-over, power-for, and power-with can distinguish between constraint and non-constraint quite adequately. Instead it would presumably have to be that phenomena involving constraint are not only different from those not involving constraint, but also more important. The purported greater significance of phenomena involving constraint, in other words, would justify calling them ‘power’ and other phenomena something else. However, here the constraint-only theorist would seem to have a very daunting task indeed: Not only would he have to show that constraint phenomena are more important than phenomena not involving constraint, he would have to show that constraint phenomena are so much more important that it would not do them justice to simply say that power-over refers to the most important form of power. In the absence of such a demonstration, it seems best to move on and examine how a variety of examples are handled by my distinctions between abilities and the three forms of power in relation to.

2.4: Power Over, For, and With: Some Cases

I shall now conduct a defence of my tripartite distinction between kinds of relational power by showing how these three notions can handle a variety of cases. I shall examine

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95 For a similar set of distinction regarding forms of power, see Allen (1999), ch.5. In brief, Allen’s view differs from mine in three ways: (1) She does not include a distinction between powers and abilities; (2) a variety of ‘power to’ rather than ‘power in relation to’ specifies the basic concept of power for her; (3) She distinguishes three more specific forms of power, namely ‘power to [simpliciter]’ (which is very much like my ‘ability’), and ‘power-over’ and ‘power-with’, which are both essentially equivalent to my notions. In essence, my framework can be seen as a modification of Allen’s which adds the notion of ‘power-for’ and which distinguished more sharply between abilities and powers.
three such cases and some slightly different versions of those cases. The first case involves a man named Peter giving a gift to another man named James. The second case involves a woman, Jane, who attempts to help her friends escape their domineering husbands. The third case concerns Bill, who becomes infatuated with and is subsequently exploited by another man, Frank.

2.4.1: Peter, James, and the Gift

My first case concerns Peter, a man who gives his friend, James, an anonymous gift of $30,000. Peter, a wealthy man, discovers that one of his friends, James, is in financial distress. Peter greatly desires to aid James, who would have to sell his house and move his large family to a small apartment if he does not quickly obtain $30,000. However, Peter does not want James to feel either indebted to him or ashamed to have accepted his charity. So Peter arranges for James to be anonymously entered into (and subsequently win) a charity raffle which has a prize large enough to meet James’s financial needs. Presume that however Peter sets things up, James will never be suspicious that he had a role in it and he will not come to view his winnings as charity.

In arranging for his friend to get the money that he needs, Peter has certainly added to James’s options (James now at least has the option of staying in his house but not keeping the winnings, or keeping the winnings and moving to the small apartment). But has Peter exercised power in relation to James? A constraint-only theorist will certainly deny that this is so, since Peter has only added to and not taken away from
James’ believed options (and has thus not exercised power-over James). In fact, for the constraint-only theorist to acknowledge the normative significance of this anonymous gift, he will have to employ a completely different concept, such as ‘influence’. On my view, on the other hand, we would say that Peter has exercised power-for James (since he added a non-exploitative option) but that he has not exercised power-over him (since he neither took away one of his options nor added an exploitative one). A potential advantage of my view, then, is that it allows us to acknowledge the normative significance of Peter’s exercise of a capacity of his to affect James’ practical landscape in a way that clearly contrasts it with an exercise of power-over and yet does not require us to employ a completely different basic concept.

A further advantage of my distinction between power-over and power-for can be brought out by modifying the Peter and James scenario slightly: Imagine that Peter2 has always resented James2’s pride, thinking that James2, a relatively poor (and so unsuccessful) man thinks too much of himself in comparison to Peter2, his better. Peter2 thus relishes the opportunity to give James2 the $30,000, since he strongly believes that this will make James2 feel forever indebted to him and, in turn, recognize his ‘low’ status in comparison to Peter2. So Peter2 offers to give James2 the $30,000 free of charge, and with the condition that Peter2 will never accept any of James2’s attempts to pay the money back. As in the first case, Peter2 has added a believed option to James2’s practical landscape: James2 now has the additional option of taking Peter2’s money and feeling forever indebted to Peter, whereas before his only real option was to sell his house and
move to the small apartment. In a case such as this, there are roughly two possibilities for
the constraint-only theorist: (A) He could say that only removing options ought to count
as power, and so Peter2 does not exercise power-over James2 despite the fact that he
attempts to exploit James2’s situation and attempts to undermine James2’s perception of
his own social status; (B) He could say that Peter2 does exercise power-over James2,
because both the removal of options and the addition of exploitative options count as
exercises of power-over.

I shall assume that the constraint-only theorist would prefer (B), since (A) would
require him to use a completely different concept (such as influence) to describe Peter2’s
actions, which might end up trivializing them. This is because if the constraint-only
theorist prefers to call this ‘influence’, then the question becomes what the comparative
relationship is between ‘influence’ and ‘power’, which in turn leads to the following
dilemma: If ‘power’ is more important for social and political theory than ‘influence’,
then Peter2’s actions seem at least somewhat trivialized; however, if ‘power’ and
‘influence’ are equally (or roughly equally) important, then it is hard to see what is really
gained in the long run by introducing ‘influence’ to describe Peter2’s actions as compared
with simply enriching the range of ‘power-over’. Unfortunately, though, if the constraint-
only theorist does opt for (B) and enriches the range of ‘power-over’, he ends up with a
different problem: He would have to explain why we must count one form of adding
options to an agent’s practical landscape as ‘power’ and another form of adding options
(as in power-for cases) as something such as ‘influence’ when we could instead count
them as different forms of ‘power’. In contrast to the constraint-only view, then, (i) my view does not face the problem of explaining why two very different concepts are necessary to explain similar phenomena (two cases of the intentional affecting of an agent’s practical landscape), even though (ii) my view is still able to clearly mark out the differences between the two cases, with the one being not at all restrictive (power-for), and the other being at least somewhat restrictive (power-over).

A final objection here from the constraint-only theorist might be that allowing the deliberate addition of any options whatsoever to count as ‘power’ would expand the range of the term too far. In other words, if we count Peter as exercising power-for James when he gives him $30,000, then we seem bound to count him as exercising power-for James when he merely gives him $3, since, in either case, James’ options are expanded by Peter’s actions. Two replies seem in order to this worry: First, rather than taking this as a reason not to count power-for as ‘power’, we could simply take it as indicating a need to distinguish between trivial and non-trivial exercises of power-for. Second, it seems that the constraint-only theorist would face a very similar problem, since, by the same logic, both taking away $30,000 and taking away $3 would seem to count as removing options.

2.4.2: Jane and the Five Women: Power-With

Consider a group of six poor and oppressed women. Each of them lives under the heel of a domineering husband who treats his wife like a slave and allows her very little personal freedom or possessions. Each woman desperately desires to escape her husband, but each
woman individually lacks the skills and the financial resources that would be necessary to support herself on her own. One day it occurs to one of the women, Jane, that they could all escape their husbands and go start a successful business if they pooled their talents and their meagre resources. Jane then suggests this to her friends, knowing that it is the only way out for any of them.

Does Jane exercise power in relation to her five friends? It seems clear that she affects their practical landscapes in a very significant way, since, without her suggestion, they would remain under the heels of their domineering husbands. On the eminently reasonable presumption that Jane is not exploiting her friends here, however, the constraint-only theorist will deny that she is exercising power in relation to them because she is not exercising power-over them. Instead, the constraint-only theorist will hold that Jane is influencing her friends, assuming he recognizes the importance of Jane’s actions in the first place. Two sorts of reply from my view are in order here. The first is that a significant part of this case has already been dealt with in outlining the usefulness of the distinction between power-over and power-for in the James and Peter case, for there certainly could be an interpretation of this case on which Jane is adding a non-exploitative option to her friends’ practical landscapes. The second response, however, is more complex and involves the inclusion of power-with.

Let’s distinguish three different versions of the case of Jane and her friends: (1) Jane is not actually destitute or oppressed, but she suggests the resource/skills pooling to her friends because she realizes she can profit from it and they will not be able to enter
into such an arrangement without her initial help. In this case, let’s presume, Jane1 is introducing an exploitative option to her friends’ practical landscapes. (2) Jane2 suggests the resource/skills pooling but does not partake in the joint venture. In this case, let’s presume, Jane2 is adding an non-exploitative option to her friends’ practical landscapes. (3) Jane3, as in the original version, not only suggests the collective enterprise to her friends, but she also participates in it because she is destitute and she realizes that the collective enterprise will not succeed without the unique contributions of each of the six women. Unlike Jane2, Jane3 actually participates in the collective enterprise, and, unlike Jane1, Jane3 participates in a ongoing way, forging bonds between herself and her friends that are not only psychologically and financially supportive, but also allow each woman to, over time, radically reshape her sense of self and social belonging,

The distinction between power-over and power-for allows us to account for the difference between Jane1 (exploitative option) and Jane2 (non-exploitative option). However, the case of Jane3 does not quite seem adequately accounted for by this distinction: First, while participation in the collective enterprise will eventually give Jane3 certain powers-over her friends (she could, for example, threaten to withdraw from the arrangement), her ongoing participation in the enterprise itself cannot solely be a matter of power-over. On the other hand, while Jane3 does indeed in some sense add an option to the practical landscapes of her friends (as in a case of power-for), the option that she adds is very different from the one Jane2 adds: Jane2 is only involved with the added option in so far as the initial change to her friends’ practical landscapes is concerned,
whereas Jane3 will be involved in changing her friends’ practical landscapes in an ongoing way. Moreover, Jane2’s actions only necessarily change her friends’ practical landscapes, whereas Jane3’s actions necessarily change her friends’ practical landscapes and her own practical landscape. It seems, therefore, that a third concept is needed to distinguish between Jane3’s case and Jane1 and Jane2’s cases, a role that power-with is perfect for because of its focus on collective action.

2.4.3: Bill’s Infatuation with Frank: Limiting ‘Power-For’

The final example involves Bill and Frank. Over time Bill becomes thoroughly infatuated with Frank, so much so that eventually Bill will do whatever it takes to spend time with Frank. Frank is well aware of how Bill feels about him, but Frank does not like Bill at all and would prefer to avoid spending any time with him. However, Frank reasons (correctly, let us assume) that Bill would be willing to perform some onerous task for Frank if Frank agrees to go out to dinner with Bill afterward. We can stipulate here that Frank would exercise power-over Bill if he were to make the exploitative offer of dinner to Bill. The difficulty, however, that a theory such as mine seems to face concerns the status of Bill’s power, for, as a result of Bill becoming infatuated with Frank, an option has been added to Frank’s practical landscape. In other words, it seems that Bill has a ‘power’ to become vulnerable to Frank’s exploitation, and thus Frank’s coming to have the option to exploit Bill would be the product of the manifestation of one of Bill’s powers-for. Here the constraint-only theorist seems to have a significant advantage, since
he can say that Bill’s power does not count as manifesting itself in relation to Frank because Bill’s infatuation with Frank does not take away any of Frank’s options. In contrast, a theory that recognizes power-for might seem bound to say that Bill’s power did manifest itself in relation to Frank.

This seems to be a serious problem for power-for theorist since, at least at first, it does indeed appear that Bill’s becoming infatuated with Frank amounted to a manifestation of Bill’s power. However, we need to get clearer about the exact nature of the power that is supposed to have manifested itself. Here we can distinguish between two potential powers: (1) A ‘power’ of Bill to merely undergo a change and become infatuated; (2) A power of Bill to make himself undergo a change to become infatuated. With this distinction in place, the first response of the power-for theorist is to note that ‘powers’ such as (1) are not included in his understanding of ‘power-for’: A power-for theorist holds that a projecting agent’s capacity to exercise power-for a receiving agent is a power to deliberately enhance the receiving agent’s practical landscape.

The question is then whether the manifestation of a power of Bill’s to deliberately enhance Frank’s practical landscape by making himself vulnerable to Frank’s exploitation actually generates counterintuitive results. We may differentiate two ways in which Bill’s power-for could manifest itself here: (i) Bill exercises his power-for and deliberately makes himself vulnerable to Frank’s exploitation; (ii) Bill does not exercise his power, but because of Frank’s knowledge of it, it nevertheless manifests itself and adds an option to Frank’s practical landscape. It seems to me that the (i) does not generate
counterintuitive results: If Bill in fact deliberately made himself vulnerable to Frank’s exploitation, then there is little, if anything, that is counterintuitive in saying that Frank’s option to exploit Bill was the product of a manifestation of Bill’s power. In saying that Frank’s option is a product of Bill’s power, we are not at all prevented from condemning Frank if he actually does take advantage of this option and exploit Bill’s vulnerability.

Before we move forward and assess (ii), it would be useful to have a mundane illustrative example in front of us. Consider the case of the hundred dollars: Sam is relatively well-off and his friend Dave is in financial difficulty, needing at least $100. Sam is able to give Dave the $100 and Dave knows that Sam would freely offer to do so if Sam were to become aware of Dave’s financial difficulties. In this case, Sam can add an option to Dave’s practical landscape by offering to give Dave the $100, and in so doing exercise power-for Dave. However, it seems clear that Sam need not actually exercise this power for Dave’s practical landscape to be affected: Dave’s knowledge that Sam would offer to give him the money in the right circumstances gives Dave an option to put Sam in the right circumstances and be offered the money.

Returning to (ii) and the case of Bill and Frank, if there are indeed counterintuitive implications, the problematic scenario would seem to be the following: Bill can, and, in the right circumstances, would deliberately make himself vulnerable to Frank’s exploitation (and thus give Frank an option to exploit Bill that Frank wouldn’t otherwise have). Moreover, since Frank knows that Bill can do this and the circumstances in which he would, Frank already has an option: An option to bring about the
circumstances in which Bill would make himself open to exploitation by Frank. Thus, the story goes, Bill’s capacity to exercise power-for Frank can manifest itself without Bill’s active involvement and give Frank an option to exploit Bill. This is importantly different from (i), for in that case it seemed unproblematic to say that Frank’s option to exploit Bill was a product of Bill’s power because Bill deliberatedly gave him that option. However, it seems that (ii) is unproblematic for another reason: The story given above that generates the counterintuitiveness seems to start from the point where Bill has a capacity to exercise power-for Frank by making himself open to a certain form of exploitation by Frank. The problem with this is that it ignores the fact that it would actually be Frank who would be exercising his power-over Bill to make Bill subsequently exercise his own power-for Frank. In other words, it would actually be Frank’s initial exploitation of Bill that ultimately renders Bill open to further exploitation by Frank, a scenario which does not seem to have any counterintuitive features.

On the whole, then, it seems that the set of distinctions between the three different kinds of relational power that I have offered accords well with an number of seemingly disparate intuitions that we might have about power. For example, it offers us a fruitful way of understanding the similarities and differences between Peter1’s anonymous gift to James1 and Peter2’s exploitative offer to James2. Moreover, it also seems to do a good job of theorizing the three different ways in which Jane could cause her friends to have the option to escape their domineering husbands. Finally, as we have just seen, instead of
having very counterintuitive implications, the notion of ‘power-for’ another is actually sensitive to the fact that the exercise of power-for others can have costs to oneself.

2.5 Actual or Believed Options and False to True Beliefs

My notion of a practical landscape is one on which all of the components of an agent’s practical landscape are intentional states. In so far as an agent’s options are concerned, my conception limits the ones that count to an agent’s believed options rather than his actual or objective options. This means that there will be many things one might do regarding a given receiving agent that will not count as exercises of power in relation to him. For example, my conception would entail that if I temporarily locked you in a room without your knowledge, my action would not necessarily count as an exercise of power-over you. This is because while the act of locking you in a room certainly affects your actual options - you can’t leave the room while the door is locked - it does not necessarily affect your believed options - you might never find out that you didn’t have the option of leaving the room during a certain period of time, because I might unlock the door before you ever tried to leave. Results such as this might seem counterintuitive at first, so I would like to argue that they need not be. My argument will canvass a couple of different examples which hinge on the distinction between attempting to exercise power and successfully exercising power. I shall argue that my inclusion of only believed options gives us a fruitful way to think about this distinction.
Here's my first scenario: Let's presume that you now have the option to break into my apartment and steal my television. Furthermore, I am so perturbed by the thought of you stealing my television that I throw it away, having decided that it is better for me to not own it at all. However, I neither want to offend you nor put the thought of breaking into my apartment into your head, so I don’t tell you what I’ve done. In this scenario, whether I have exercised power-over you depends on whether or not your practical landscape only includes your believed options, or both your believed options and your actual options. If only your believed options count, then I would not count as exercising power-over you when I get rid of my television, for I haven’t in any way affected your believed options. However, if your actual options count as well, then I would count as having exercised power-over you, since I have removed your actual option to break into my apartment and steal my television. Moreover, it seems that I would not only have exercised power-over you by throwing out my television, but also over everyone else in the world who could have broken into my apartment and stolen it.

Here is another, slightly more complex scenario: A Mafia boss, Carlo, decides to have a sit-down with one of his lieutenants, Tony, who has foolishly been drawing unwanted attention to their criminal enterprise. Carlo requests a meeting which Tony agrees to attend. So as to intimidate Tony, Carlo arranges for another of his subordinates to be not-so-casually waiting outside the meeting when Tony arrives. However, the other subordinate gets stuck in traffic, and so he is not present when Tony arrives and closes the door behind him. The meeting between Carlo and Tony goes so well that Carlo decides he
does not want to things to be ruined by Tony’s discovering the other subordinate outside the room when he exits, so Carlo discreetly arranges for the other subordinate to leave.

Since there was a time where Tony’s getting up and leaving the room would have resulted in his encountering the other subordinate waiting just outside, Carlo clearly affected Tony’s actual options. However, Carlo did not affect Tony’s believed options, even though he initially tried to do so. What are we to say about Carlo’s exercise of power in this scenario? It seems clear that simply saying that he didn’t exercise power-over Tony because he didn’t affect Tony’s believed options does not tell the whole story. However, if we say that Carlo did exercise power-over Tony because he affected Tony’s actual options, then we also seem bound to say that I exercise power-over you when I throw out my television. Fortunately, though, there is a plausible way out of this dilemma: We can say that Carlo tried to exercise power-over Tony but did not succeed.

One potential objection to this schema might be the following: Including only believed options in a receiving agent’s practical landscape might cause us to miss many potentially problematic cases of power. For example, is it not troublesome that Carlo can affect Tony’s actual options even if this doesn’t necessarily mean that he affects Tony’s believed options? After all, there seem to be a variety of ways in which receiving agents might avoid projecting agents’ power on this schema, including sheer luck (as in Tony’s case) or a clueless failure to recognize another’s attempt to exercise power. Thankfully, though, the response to this potential worry can be a relatively quick one: Holding that believed options or other intentional states must be affected for power to actually
manifest itself need not entail that we shouldn’t be worried about projecting agents’ capacities to affect receiving agents’ actual options. The reason for this is that the capacity to affect an agent’s actual options normally, other things being equal, entails an ability to affect her believed options as well.

A final potential reason for including actual options, in at least a limited capacity, concerns exercises of power that transform receiving agents’ false beliefs into true ones (or that at least remove options they falsely believe to be open to them). Imagine, for example, that you are a smoker and are contemplating visiting a foreign country in which you believe that the restrictions on smoking are roughly the same as in your own country. You believe that among your options is the option to visit this county and smoke more or less as you please. However, as it turns out, this belief is false: The country you are contemplating visiting does not allow smoking at all. Now, when I hear that you are contemplating visiting this country and I suspect that you don’t know about the restrictions it has on smoking, I tell you that you are mistaken in an effort to benefit you in the long run. When I do so, though, it seems that I remove one of your believed options, and so I ought to count as exercising power over you on some level.

One potential way around this problem is to hold that where removing believed options is concerned, something does not count as an exercise of power-over unless it also removes an actual option at the same time. Thus, when I inform you that you cannot smoke in that foreign country as you please, I would not count as exercising power-over you because while I do affect your believed options (in causing to be removed your belief
that you do have that option), I do not affect your actual options (because you never had the option to smoke there as you please). Unfortunately, though, while this limited inclusion of actual options into my framework would seem to solve this particular problem, it would introduce a variety of others. This is because the longer range consequence of this move would be to, at least in cases of power-over, require both believed and actual options to be affected in order for power to manifest itself. Thus, for example, a wide variety of cases in which a projecting agent did not affect a receiving agent’s actual options but nonetheless was able to reduce the options that the receiving agent believed to be open to him through, say, manipulation would fail to count as manifestations of power.

Rather than resort to including actual options here, a more promising route seems to be to appeal to the fact that the projecting agent is causing a falsely believed option to be removed. What matters here, in other words, is not that the projecting agent is not affecting the receiving agent’s actual options (although he of course is not doing that), but rather that the receiving agent initially had a false belief that some option was open to him. The fact that there was initially a false belief is significant because it allows us to understand the exercise of power that is involved here as an exercise of power-for instead of an exercise of power-over. This is because, although a believed option is being removed, the receiving agent’s practical landscape seems to be enhanced in that he no longer falsely believes that some option is open to him. Thus the receiving agent, for example, no longer faces the risk of spending his resources in an effort to pursue an
option that he will only discover to be closed to him after he has wasted some of those resources; he can instead make a better-informed choice among his believed options and pursue one that may actually be open to him.

It seems that the process of replacing a false practical belief with a true one ought to count as a case of enhancing a receiving agent’s practical landscape and so as a case of power-for. The remaining question is whether it also ought to count as a case of power-over as well, since there is a sense in which the projecting agent is removing a believed option from the receiving agent’s practical landscape. My inclination is to affirm that cases such as these ought indeed to be counted as cases of power-over because of the structure of the relation between the projecting agent and the receiving agent, even though it seems to be a relatively benign exercise of power-over because the projecting agent is causing a false belief to be replaced with a true one. The relational structure that I highlight here is the one where the projecting agent acts upon the receiving agent rather than, say, acting with him in some manner. There might be, for example, alternative and less invasive ways for the projecting agent to lead the receiving agent from a false belief to a true one rather than, as appears to be the case here, simply stating that the belief is false and appealing to his authority as a knower relative to the receiving agent who is epistemically less well-situated.
2.6: Conclusion

I began this chapter with the idea that a distinctive feature of power is that it operates on an agent’s will or its determinants rather than against or in spite of his will. Differently put, power acts on, and is thus a capacity to affect, others’ practical landscapes. I have also argued that power does not only make a difference in the world when it is exercised by its possessors; power also manifests itself without its possessors’ active involvement. Furthermore, I have argued that, once we recognize the distinction between powers and abilities, we should only be concerned with three relational forms of power: power-with, power-for, and power-over. This tripartite distinction allows us to both acknowledge the significance of a wide range of phenomena by using the term ‘power’ to understand them, and it provides us with a fruitful way of recognizing the normative differences between each form of power. In the next chapter I explore the relational aspects of power in much greater detail, by attending both to the role that structures of social relations play in giving rise to powers in agents and to how we might go about transforming problematic power-conferring structures of social relations.
CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL RELATIONS, POWER, AND STRUCTURE

3.0: Introduction

In chapter 2 we saw that one key feature of power that distinguishes it from force is that some forms of power require the presence of a particular social context or structure of social relations. The President, for example, cannot have authority over the armed forces unless there exists a social context in which someone becomes recognized as having such authority. In this chapter I shall examine the role that (structures of) social relations play in conferring powers on individuals. There are two primary purposes this examination will accomplish: First, we shall see that a significant point against intentionalist, responsibilist, and similar understandings of power is that social relations can confer powers on agents without there being anyone who intentionally brought those powers about or whom we can hold responsible for them. Second, this examination will give us at least a preliminary idea of the challenges we face in trying to counteract unacceptable powers that arise out of (structures of) social relations. Particular attention will be paid here to the views of Arendt and Foucault. On the whole I shall argue for a ‘quasi-relationalist’ understanding of power, an understanding on which some but not all of an agent’s powers are conferred on him by the structure of social relations within which he is embedded.
3.1: Power as Held by Agents Only?

I chapter 2 I began with the idea that power is something that is only possessed by agents. I shall now examine this idea in a little more detail, paying particular attention to whether social institutions and social structures have power. I shall argue that when we speak of things such as social institutions, customs, and the like as having power, these expressions are elliptical; at bottom, they only mean that agents adhere to the norms of these social institutions and enforce them on themselves and others. Thus it is only insofar as agents adhere to these norms that these norms ‘have power’.

The majority of theorists hold a view such as this, and often without much argument. Even those, such as Haugaard, who concentrate very closely on the role that social structures play in the production of power are careful to stress the fact that this is only true in so far as those social structures are upheld by agents:

While we may recognize that structures and systems need constraint, it is important not to consider structures as the active imposers of their own constraint. Structures and systems may have a need for constraint but, unless we wish to be metaphysical about matters, structures are not living entities which have the capacity to act upon their needs. It is social actors who impose structural constraint upon each other as part of the process of structural conflict. Structural constraint lies in the hands of agents engaged in structural conflict.

Dowding perhaps puts the point even better:

It is not the system that has power, but the actors bargaining to achieve their aims as completely as possible. It is a mistake to think that because we are mapping the structure of power, that structures have power. Describing the distribution of power in society by the relations between people does not mean that the relations between those people are themselves powerful.  

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97 Haugaard (1997), p. 165; See also Clegg (1989), Ch.8.
In Dowding’s view it is both redundant and conceptually mistaken to say that non-agents, such as social structures and physical structures, have power. It is conceptually mistaken to say that non-agents ‘have power’ because power is something that can be exercised, and it does not make sense to speak of non-agents as ‘exercising’ anything. It is redundant (or, at best, elliptical) to say that things such as physical structures have power to bring about ends because we can simply say that these things do bring about the relevant ends without any loss of meaning. Rather than say, for example, that buildings without wheelchair access ‘have’ power because they prevent disabled people from accessing them, we can simply say that these buildings prevent people from getting access to them, or that people are prevented from accessing them. Furthermore, Dowding asserts, we ought not think of such physical structures as ‘embodying power’.

While I agree with much of what Dowding says, there are two points I would question. In the first place, I think it is going too far to rule out speaking of physical structures as ‘embodying power’: The fact that such structures are as they are prevents disabled people from accessing them and the fact that they remain as they are persists in denying disabled people access. Both these facts can be seen as a product of the power relations between disabled people and the individuals in society as a whole. These buildings came to lack wheelchair access because of a structure of relations in which the needs of the disabled were not treated as important, and they continue to lack wheelchair

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access because of a structure of social relations in which the needs of the disabled are not
treated as important enough to mandate the changes. So it does not seem inaccurate to say
that such structures ‘embody’ or ‘reflect’ the state of power relations between the disabled
and the individuals in society as a whole. Nevertheless, Dowding seems right that it does
not make sense to describe physical structures as having power themselves, since there is
literally nothing that they are able to do - no actions that they can perform.

A second point to call attention to here is that the mere fact that structures do not
have power to exercise does not mean that they do not have an ongoing impact on the
powers that individuals in society have. The presence of a building without wheelchair
access is both a reflection of the power relations between the disabled and others and a
factor that contributes to maintaining those power relations as they are. The physical
presence of the building imposes (at least) two different sets of difficulties on the
disabled: First, its mere inaccessibility makes it uniquely challenging for the disabled to
require or keep resources that might be used for any purpose; second, that fact that
making the building accessible requires the expenditure of resources means that the
disabled face an additional hurdle in changing that which imposes the unique challenge
on them in the first place. Points such as these become perhaps even more important
when we consider not physical structures but power-conferring social structures, since, as
we shall see, much the same difficulties arise in the case of social structures.
3.2: Power-Conferring Social Relations

Very briefly put, many forms of power between agents require the presence of a certain kind of social relation between them. In this section I put forth a working understanding of what a social relation is, and I also examine some cases of powers which are conferred on agents by their being in particular kinds of social relations. One caveat, though, first: While a particular form of power often cannot exist without a corresponding social relation, not all powers are like this. Consider, for example, the case of two hermits encountering each other at an oasis. Immediately upon encountering the other, each hermit can exercise certain forms of power, such as claiming the oasis and threatening to kill the other if he trespasses. These powers don’t seem to depend on any social relation between the hermits since the hermits have no connection before their encounter. The sorts of social relation-born powers that I am concerned with have a different character: The power in question cannot exist without the social relation. A quick example of this is the husband’s power to beat his wife with impunity from the previous chapter: Since he does not have the power to beat any woman with impunity, his power to beat his wife with impunity would evaporate if they were no longer married.

To understand these relation-born powers (or these power-conferring relations), we need to have at least a working understanding of what a social relation is. On my taxonomy, there are two basic kinds of phenomena that are sufficient to give rise to a social relation between agents. I shall call these, respectively, the formal components of a social relation and the informal components of a social relation. The formal components
of a social relation between two (or more) agents are the claims, duties, and so forth, that they believe to exist between themselves. The informal components of a social relation between two (or more agents) are the set of expectations and commitments between them, as well as the perceived balance of significance/authority and the perceived balance of need between them. A given social relation can have only formal components, only informal components, or both formal and informal components.

As I understand it, a formally composed social relation exists between two agents, A and B, when A identifies B as occupying some social role with respect to A, when B identifies A as occupying some social role with respect to B, and when there is a common understanding of this mutual identification of each other as occupying particular social roles. A social role can be understood as a specification of a given agent’s claims, duties, liberties, Hohfeldian powers, and so forth, as regard some other agent or agents.¹⁰¹ A brief definition of these terms is in order: A has a claim against B when A is entitled to the performance of some action by B; similarly, A has a duty to B when B is entitled to the performance of some action by A; claims and duties are, on this understanding, correlatives (more on this below). A has a liberty with regard to B when A is entitled to perform some action as regards B: Where A has a liberty with regard to B, B lacks a claim relating to A’s performance of the relevant action. A has an Hohfeldian power (or an H-power) with regard to B when A has the capacity to change the claims, duties,

¹⁰¹ In understanding a social role along these lines, I am very roughly adapting the analytical framework of jural relations expounded by Wesley Newcomb Hohfeld in ‘Fundamental Legal Conceptions’ (1913).
liberties, and even H-powers, and so forth that A has with regard to B; A can exercise his H-power, for example, to press his claim against B or to nullify his claim against B and, especially, to create new claims against B and duties to B.

On my definition, a formally composed social relation exists between two agents when there is mutual recognition that each occupies some social role as regards the other. So, a formally composed social relation exists between two agents whenever those agents mutually recognize that some structure of claims, duties, liberties, and so on, exists between them. Such an acknowledgement can be seen to confer a wide variety of powers on each party. For example, if a claim/duty relation is acknowledged to exist between two agents, then the duty-bearer can easily have power-over the claim-holder in so far as he can threaten to not (automatically) fulfill his duty when called upon to do so, giving rise to the possibility that the claim-holder will either be completely out of luck or that he will have to spend additional resources to get the claim fulfilled. Likewise, a claim-holder may exercise power-for the duty-bearer by offering to prevent the circumstances from arising in which the duty would have to be fulfilled. Moreover, an agent who has an H-power regarding another agent would seem to have a variety of powers-in relation to him: He could exercise either power-over or power-for the other agent by unilaterally altering the set of duties and claims that exist between them, or he could exercise power-with the other agent by deliberating with him about how to change the structure of claims and duties between them. The formal components of social relations between agents are thus an important source of the powers they have in relation to each other.
Some social relations, however, will either not have an explicit formal structure or will not only have an explicit formal structure. Some social relations will also (or alternatively) be composed by phenomena that have an informal structure. In my view, there are at least four different kinds of informal components of social relations: a set of expectations between the agents, a set of commitments between them, a perceived balance of significance or authority between them, and a perceived balance of need between them.\textsuperscript{102} I shall now briefly examine each of these elements.

The first kind of informal component of a social relation is a set of expectations among the parties as to how each will and/or should act. Sometimes this set of expectations will exist against the backdrop of a formally composed social relation, in which case it will have a significant impact how the parties can be expected to exercise or fulfill any claims, duties, liberties, and so on, they have. Suzy may, for example, have a claim against her husband, Bob, which she could press, but she may choose to do so only in exceedingly rare circumstances. Likewise, Bob may have a duty to Suzy, but he may only fulfill that duty when pressed to do so. Alternatively, if marriage norms in his society leave Bob at liberty to abuse Suzy with impunity, the set of expectations that exists between them will make a huge difference to what Suzy perceives her options to be: If she believes that Bob would only abuse her in exceedingly rare circumstances, then her believed options will be relatively expansive where he is concerned.

\textsuperscript{102} There are ‘at least’ four different kinds of informal components of social relations because, due to the informal and fluid nature of these phenomena, it is difficult to give classificatory scheme for these phenomena that captures all of them and is at the same time circumscribed enough to be of analytical use. Accordingly, there is no reason to assume that there aren’t additional kinds of informal components.
A set of expectations between parties can thus have a huge impact on whatever powers might derive from any formal components of a social relation exists between them. However, a set of expectations can also confer powers where the formal components of a social relation are absent or are only present to a very abstract degree. Consider the set of expectations that might exist between two traditionally opposed ethnic groups represented by a common practice of leaving each other alone so long as everyone stays in ‘their’ area of town. When a member of one groups enters the ‘wrong’ territory, he can expect an increased likelihood that he will be harassed or even subject to physical violence. A member of the rival group who he encounters may have a great deal of power-over him because of this set of expectations: He will be able to effectively threaten or intimidate the outsider in ways he would not be able to in another part of town.

The second kind of informal component of a social relationship is a set of commitments that the parties have to each other. As with a set of expectations, a set of commitments can exist against the backdrop of a formally composed social relation. In the case where there is a formally composed social relation in the background, the commitments that the parties have to each other go beyond the duties that attach to the social roles they take themselves to occupy. For example, a duty to care for my wife attaches to the social role that I occupy as regards her, but my commitment to assure that she gets the best care possible, no matter the cost to me, might be something that goes above and beyond what I take to be required by my duties as they derive from my social role. Likewise, one might have a commitment to supporting her fellow citizens’ attempts
to publicly air their grievances, as opposed to merely a duty to not obstruct them when they do so. Such commitments are important aspects of social relationships to distinguish because they can often be exploited by one or more of the parties to, say, change the set of expectations that exists among them: If I am utterly devoted to my wife, and she knows it, she can exercise power-over me and exploit this fact to reduce the degree to which she will actually have to perform any duties that she has towards me.

The third kind of informal component of a social relationship is perhaps best described as the level of relative perceived standing between the parties, or, slightly differently, as the *perceived balance of significance or authority* that exists between them. This is revealed by asking questions such as: Does each of the parties respect the other equally? Does each consider the other to be of roughly equal importance? Or, does one party consider herself to be superior or inferior to the other party? Does one give greater weight to the other’s opinion than to her own? Sometimes the perceived balance of significance or authority will be ingrained in the parties’ conceptions of their respective social roles; a woman raised to think that the proper role of a wife was to submit herself to her husband’s authority in all things would certainly fit this model.

This is an important category to distinguish because it will sometimes not be entailed by the parties’ conceptions of the claims, duties, and so on that attach to their respective social roles. A husband and wife, for example, might both think that men and women are generally equal in all settings, and yet the man might think that his wife is much more intelligent than him, and therefore that he should generally adopt her
judgements whenever there is a dispute between them. The perceived balance of significance or authority is also important to distinguish because it can in some scenarios be the most important factor in enabling one party to be able to get the other to change his beliefs about how the world is or about how it ought to be. In such a case the wife might either be able to exercise power-over or power-for her husband by adding or taking away some of his believed options, or by unilaterally shaping his evaluative beliefs to her liking. A certain perceived balance of significance or authority may also be what prompts multiple parties to exercise power-with each other rather than over or for each other.

The final kind of informal component of a social relationship that I distinguish here is a perceived balance of need between the parties. In some ways this notion is similar to the notion of bargaining power, but in other ways it is broader. The basic idea is that an individual’s needs or desires can often give rise to a social relation between him and another in which the other is in a unique position to fulfill his needs or desires. For example, children rely on their parents for survival and romantic partners rely on each other for love and companionship. In a slightly different vein, the destitute may rely on the more fortunate for charity and the infatuated lover may rely on the beloved for the emotional lift that comes from her passing glance. Such balances (or, rather, such imbalances) of need are important informal constituents of social relations because they can give the relied-upon party significant abilities to affect the reliant party’s practical landscape, both for the better and for the worse.
3.3: The Self, Power, Intentions and Responsibility

We just examined a number of different ways that the formal and informal components of social relations can confer powers. However, since our ultimate aim concerns changing structures of social relations in society, it is important to consider how such relations come into being. In this section I focus on how the self and the process of self-formation contributes to the emergence of social relations and on the impact that that has for intentionalist and responsibilist views of power.

In the first place, however the self comes into being, it should be obvious that the self-conception or identity that a person has can have a significant impact on the powers she has in relation to others and the powers they have in relation to her. Consider, for example, a woman whose identity is closely tied up in her marriage and who was raised to believe that women ought to be subservient to their husbands. Depending on the intensity of this belief, her husband might have much more power over her than he even realizes. For example, he might have extensive power-over her preferences, in so far as she would strive to make them conform to his own, or he might also be able to effectively take away one or more of her options simply by expressing an unfavourable attitude towards some course of action. In fact, since it is not unreasonable to suppose that an individual’s conceptions of the proper contours of significant social roles will be closely connected with his self-identity, it is also not unreasonable to suppose that the particular shape of his self-identity will significantly impact any of the formal and informal components of social relations that might arise between himself and others.
Now, the formation of a socialized self, or, the identity of a socialized self, is a complex topic one that cannot possibly be done justice here. However, for our purposes it will be sufficient to examine the contrast between two broad pictures of identity formation that Charles Taylor has called the ‘monological view’ and the ‘dialogical view’. An alternate way to put this distinction is to contrast what feminists have called the ‘liberal abstract individualist’ conception of the self with a ‘relational’ conception of the self.103 As Taylor puts it, on the monological view, individuals ‘discover their own original ways of being, which aren’t socially derived but instead are inwardly generated’; here an individual accomplishes his identity (mostly) on his own, essentially separate from others; here our relationships with others may fulfill us, but they do not define us.104 On the dialogical view, however, the individual’s identity is not totally absorbed into the others who are significant to him, but is instead something that is formed in dialogue with others and can never be fully separated from the relations that exist between oneself and others. One’s identity or sense of self is formed (and reformed) and is always to some extent constituted in relation to others.105

The dialogical view of the self, if true, has broad impacts for thinking about power. In the first place, the truth of the dialogical view would reduce the range within which intentionalist or responsibilist views of power could be true: Such views, after all,

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105 Taylor, ibid.
might not only claim that power does not manifest itself without the intentional involvement of the projecting agent or without his responsibility being implicated, but also that powers don’t come into being at all without the intentional involvement of some agent or without some agent’s responsibility being implicated. The intentionalist and responsibilist would find support for this second claim in a monological view since any powers the individual had because of the particular self he was would have been brought about by himself. However, on the dialogical view there would always seem to be powers that grow out of selfhood which were never intended and for which it will be difficult to locate responsibility. A man’s identity, for example, may be developed in dialogue with his mother, his father, friends, and so on, each of whom will have a different influence on what he takes to be proper conduct between a father and daughter, a husband and wife, and so on. The final product of these interactions, it seems safe to say, will neither be something that any of his dialogical partners intended or could have been expected to foresee; even if each of them had a final, complete identity in mind for the man (which is doubtful), nobody could have foreseen the actual final product that would arise.

A second significant impact of the truth of the dialogical view would seem to be a constraint on the potential for altering the sorts of powers that arise out of the process of self-formation. The monological or abstract individualist model is one on which the individual essentially makes himself; he is to a relatively large extent free to select who he will be from all the available alternatives and to create new alternatives for his self if the available ones do not suit him. On the dialogical view, however, what the individual
can become is constrained by who his (especially early) dialogical partners are: There is no self that he has which exists prior to the dialogical process through which he is formed, and thus no prior self that can do any selecting between alternatives. More importantly, the same will be true of his dialogical partners: The range of alternatives that they open to him will be constrained by the dialogical processes through which their own identities were formed. So, to the extent that the dialogical idea of the self is true, each of us has relatively little influence over who he becomes, and those who do have such influence over him had roughly the same degree of influence over themselves. This seems to show that the dialogical model is one on which the range of possible self-conceptions, identity-generated powers, and social relations available in a society will be relatively resistant to self-directed change: Dialogically formed individuals cannot choose to change their identities as easily as monologically formed individuals can.

In my view, the dialogical or relational view is true to a significant extent and so deserves serious consideration. However, as I argue, we need to be careful how strongly we emphasize its insights. First, even if the relational view applied to some degree to everyone, it does not seem that it would apply completely to most. In other words, even if it were true that everyone to some degree understood themselves through an identity that was framed in terms of relations with others, it does not seem to be the case that everyone (or most) would act through such identities alone. My identity as a husband, for example, plays a very large role in determining what I do, as does my identity as a philosopher. But there are some things about me that don’t seem to be tied to my identity, and some of
those will surely generate powers in me in relation to others. For example, I might choose to earn extra money proctoring exams over the summer, which, without being tied to my identity, grants me significant powers over the students who write my exams.

Second, the strong version of the relational view will not apply to everyone. There are really two different theses that make up the strongest version of the relational view. The first, causal thesis is that individuals’ identities are formed through dialogue with others. Few would reject this view because it is hard to imagine us becoming the agents we do without any socialization. The second, constitutive thesis, however, not only holds that we came to have our identities through our social relations with others but also that we thereafter think of ourselves in an at least a partially relational way: This stronger thesis holds that, when we think about ourselves, such thoughts always somewhat concern our social relations with others - we always to some extent define ourselves in terms of the existence of the social relations that we have - as someone’s friend, brother, mother, partner, lover, student, etc. - or on terms of the absence of particular social relations - as no one’s brother, friend, mother, partner, lover, student, etc.106

This stronger thesis would entail that, even the most extreme rugged individualist to some extent defines himself or herself in relation to others, even if the relation in

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106 A difficulty in assessing such views is they often don’t distinguish the causal claim from the constitutive claim clearly enough. Consider the following passage from Nedelsky, which jumps quickly from the causal point that some of our most essential characteristics are given to us through our social interactions to the constitutive claim that there are no human beings in the absence of social relations: “[P]eople are not self-made. We come into being in a social context that is literally constitutive of us. Some of our most essential characteristics, such as our capacity for language and the conceptual framework through which we see the world, are not made by us, but given to us (or developed in us) through our interactions with others… there are no human beings in the absence of relations with others”, (1989), pp. 8-9.
question is a relation of opposition (to being anyone’s friend, partner, and so forth). While it might be argued that this will be true of all psychologically normal individuals, even the rugged individualist, there will still be some who would seem to escape this net. Consider, for example, a person who defines herself as a seeker-after-truth. All that she does is subordinated to her identity as a seeker-after-truth; any personal relationships she maintains are only maintained for the sake of furthering her quest for the truth; the truth, in other words, is the only thing that is intrinsically important to her. Such an individual presents a unique problem for the relational view: While nearly everything she does will be done because of her identity as a seeker-for-truth, that identity itself is not a relational one. So, in the end, while we certainly do need to attend to the issues raised by thinking about relational self-formation, we should be careful not to extend the thesis too far, lest we are likely to miss powers that do not fit this model.

So there likely will be individualistic counterexamples in society to the relational ideal of the self: There may very well indeed be some people of whom it is not true at all. However, these counterexamples may not be much comfort to those who favour the monological or individualistic view of the self: Here the question is not whether one of these two kinds of view of the self is true of everyone, but to what degree each of them applies to the individuals in society on the whole. In other words, even if relationalists would be wrong to claim that every genuinely (or fully) human self is relational, they may very well be correct that the monological view of the self falls far short because most human selves are somewhat relational. In my view there is a strong prima facie case
for thinking that this is so: As Nedelsky points out, it seems not only true that (at least) most women have (at least partially) relational selves, but also that (at least) many men also have (at least partially) relational selves.107

3.4 Some Other Ways Powers are Impacted by Social Relations

I have just argued that the dialogical process of self-formation has, at the very least, a non-trivial impact on the powers that individuals will have in a society: Our actions are often informed by our identities, and our identities are defined to a significant extent in relation to others; thus, in turn, the actual formal and informal components of social relations that exist between ourselves and others will be impacted in, at the very least, a non-trivial way by our dialogical self-formation. However, as I argued, previously, not all our powers arise out of our social relations insofar as our social relations inform our identities. Some powers will arise out of social relations that aren’t robustly tied to our identities, and some powers will primarily arise out of our natural abilities, such as the powers that arise out of superior physical strength. It is to this latter kind of power that I would like to turn now, since I would argue that even though these powers don’t strictly arise out of social relations, social relations do play an important role in their makeup.

The role that social relations play in shaping the powers that one eventually comes to have is quite significant, so significant, I would argue, that even where powers don't seem to arise out of social relations, they will often be conditioned by social

relations. Take, for example, those powers that would seem to arise directly out of one's physical capacities, such as the power that a very strong person will have to threaten others because of his superior strength. Such powers seem not to arise out of social relations and don't even seem to require the presence of social relations - a stronger hermit would still seem to have the power to threaten a weaker hermit because of his excess of physical strength, without any social relation existing between them. The mere fact that the stronger hermit could successfully carry out the violence he is threatening in the face of the weaker hermit's resistance is enough to give the stronger hermit the power to affect the weaker hermit's practical landscape by threatening him. More generally, we might presume that sufficiently greater physical strength will confer some power to intimidate no matter what social context an agent finds himself in.

However, simply because such powers of intimidation do not depend on a particular social context is not to say that the social context the agent finds himself in won't have a profound effect on how extensive his powers of intimidation are: One's powers of intimidation will be much more extensive in a society where the legal system routinely allows the strong to get away with violence against the weak as compared to a society which criminalizes such attacks. Likewise, consider how the pervasiveness of sexual violence in our culture and general cultural attitudes towards it can condition one's powers to affect others through (veiled) threats of sexual violence. The fact that sexual violence against women is so pervasive in our culture means that a man will have extensive powers to affect the practical landscape of a woman by threatening her with sexual violence, so long as it appears that he could carry out the threatened sexual
violence against her resistance. Moreover, since sexual violence is so pervasive in our culture, a man need not even explicitly threaten sexual violence to affect a woman's practical landscape in a significant way - he need merely tell a 'joke' about sexual violence against women to get his intended effect, while he can be secure in the knowledge that his joke will not likely get him in much trouble because sexual violence against women is so pervasive in our society that joking about it is tolerated. The situation would be vastly different, however, if our society reacted to (threats of) sexual violence against women like it reacts to (threats of) sexual violence against children: In such a case sexual violence against women would no longer be tolerated to such a degree that jokes about it would be unacceptable, and, hopefully explicit threats of it might in turn sometimes be less effective.

So it should be clear that social relations can make a huge difference even in cases where power seems to be primarily based in something other than a social relation. Moreover, in the cases where power is based in a social relation, the contours of that relation and thus the powers that arise out of it can make a huge difference. Above I highlighted cases in which social relations give rise to powers in so far as individuals’ identities are informed by social relations, but now I would like to examine cases that don’t explicitly involve individuals’ identities. Here consider, for example, the huge difference that societal and legal norms regarding marriage make to the powers that arise out of a marriage between two individuals. If, for example, a pervasive social stigma is attached to divorce and a divorce is not legally easy to obtain, men are likely to have much more extensive powers over their wives. In the case that divorce is neither socially
acceptable nor easy for a woman to legally obtain unless a husband is excessively physically and psychologically violent, a man's capacity to inflict slightly less than excessive violence without giving his wife an accepted reason for obtaining a divorce will make a huge difference in terms of how extensively he can affect her practical landscape. The violence that he can effectively threaten to carry out (let alone actually carry out) will be much more extensive, and so too will be his ability to constrain his wife's believed options. Where divorce is socially accepted and relatively easy for a woman to obtain, however, the extent to which a husband will be able to constrain his wife's practical landscape with (threats of) physical violence may be much less extensive.

In connection with this example it is important to highlight that societal and legal norms can confer powers on individuals without the individuals themselves having any say in the matter, or, in other words, even when the individuals on whom those powers are conferred might desperately want to rid themselves of the powers in question. Imagine a thoroughly patriarchal society in which, among other things, dominant social norms and legal norms do not acknowledge the possibility that rape can occur within marriage; the norms of this society treat the act of marrying someone to include a blanket consent to all of his attempts to initiate sexual intercourse, and thus the norms neither recognize the possibility of rape within marriage nor recognize spousal rape as providing a reason for divorce or for initiating other legal proceedings against the offending spouse. In such a society, a woman would always have to live with the possibility that her husband could sexually assault her and face no external penalties whatsoever. More
importantly, perhaps, a woman has to live with this possibility no matter what kind of character her husband happens to have: Since even the best people sometimes lose control and act out of character, there is always the possibility that her husband will do so and attempt to sexually assault her, even if such an action would seem to be completely out of character for him. Moreover, this is a power of which the husband himself cannot divest himself. He cannot, as it were, grant her the power to obtain a divorce if he sexually assaults her, since the social and legal institutions of his society would not recognize sexual assault within marriage as providing a justification for divorce - indeed, the best the man can do here is to promise to let her divorce him if she chooses in the event that he sexually assaults her, a promise which it would always be in his discretion to keep or not keep if he were called upon to do so. So, having lost control but having convinced himself that he had regained it, he could easily go back on his promise and prevent his wife from obtaining a divorce.

To review, I have canvassed here three different ways in which one’s social relations give rise to and impact powers. In the first place, the structure of social relations within a society can have a significant impact even on the powers that seem to derive from natural abilities rather than from social relations themselves: The ways in which social relations are structured within a given society can either increase or decrease the extent of such powers, depending on whether and how far the society in question tolerates their exercise. In the second place, social relations sometimes give rise to powers in so far as social relations inform individuals’ identities and individuals’
identities inform their actions. In the third place, social relations - or social and legal norms - can themselves directly give rise to powers in individuals, sometimes in ways that are not optional for the individuals in question. These categories - especially the last two - are of course much broader than my examples would suggest, but rather than canvas more examples I shall move on to examine some of the difficulties faced in changing the power-conferring social relations in society for the better.

3.5: Barriers to Changing Structures of Social Relations

Before we go on to examine how the views of Arendt and Foucault can provide us with helpful insights into changing problematic structures of social relations, it will be useful for us review what has gone before in this chapter to get a sense of what the barriers are to such a change. I shall distinguish here three such barriers: (1) physical barriers; (2) institutional barriers; and (3) social barriers. I shall also briefly examine how these barriers might work together to reinforce each other.

The first kind of barrier to changing the structure of social relations, physical barriers, I examined at length earlier with the example of a building without wheelchair access. Such buildings are physical barriers to changing the structure of social relations in two important senses. In the first place, the presence of such buildings constitutes an

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108 So long, of course, as the individuals themselves choose to partake in the relevant social relations: The example of a husband’s unchecked power to sexually assault his wife in a society that does not recognize the possibility of sexual assault within marriage is one of these powers - the only way a man can prevent himself from having such a power is to never marry at all.

109 See Nedelsky (2011) for an extensive examination of how social relations can give rise to power.
ongoing source of disadvantage for some relative to others: Those who require wheelchair access to avail themselves of the resources located in such buildings (employment, housing, social assistance, etc.) either cannot access those resources at all or face increased costs in doing so. Thus, relative to others who do not face such physical disadvantages, those who require wheelchair access will have fewer resources left over at the end of the day which they can expend in an effort to remove the physical sources of their disadvantage. In the second place, the difficulty entailed by this lack of leftover resources is further increased by the often steep costs associated with removing the physical source of their disadvantage. Many buildings without wheelchair access are such that it will be very costly to make them accessible. For example, the installation of an elevator where there was none before can be a very costly affair.

Physical barriers, then, both constitute an ongoing source of disadvantage and further compound that disadvantage by often being costly to change. The same is true, it seems, with the second form of barrier to changing structures of social relations, institutional barriers. By ‘institutional barriers’ I mean barriers that arise out of the structure of a society’s legal and bureaucratic institutions (government agencies, non-governmental agencies, businesses, etc.). As in the case of physical barriers, legal and bureaucratic institutions can constitute an initial (and ongoing) source of disadvantage to some over others: Laws, for example, differentially confer powers on some over others, as would the marriage and family law of a patriarchal society give men a more extensive set of powers than women. Bureaucratic institutions can likewise differentially confer
power or they can simply differentially channel resources. Moreover, both laws and bureaucratic institutions can present barriers to effective access to those who do not have the skills, experience, or resources necessary to use those institutions to their advantage. Furthermore, as in the case of physical barriers, legal and bureaucratic institutions can further compound the initial differences they give rise to because of the costs involved in changing them. Changing the law, for example, requires significant financial and political resources and often is a very lengthy process.

The third major kind of barrier to changing structures of social relations, social barriers, shares the structural features of the first two but entails an additional source of difficulty. By ‘social barriers’ I mean a diverse range of beliefs regarding proper social roles, proper action within those roles, the relative worth of ways of living, and the stereotypes attached to various groups. Social barriers often work in tandem with legal or physical barriers, but they can operate on their own. Consider, for example, a society with a largely patriarchal belief about the proper contours of a marriage relation: Such a society, even if it does have a legal structure in which spousal rape is criminalized, would likely be one in which the victims of spousal rape would find relatively little social support and might even face stigmatization. So, as a formal matter a victim of spousal rape could initiate criminal proceedings against her husband, but she would face significant social costs in doing so and might very well find law enforcement officials not particularly zealous about prosecuting her husband. Likewise, the attitude that black males or latino males are much more likely to be engaged in criminal activities than their
white counterparts means that, while they are formally given equal protection under the law, they are much more likely to be subject to unwarranted searches or to not receive the benefit of the doubt in criminal proceedings than their white counterparts.

Like physical and institutional barriers, social barriers constitute an ongoing source of disadvantage for some relative to others. Likewise, the significant costs to change they present further exacerbate these difficulties. In the case of social barriers, however, there is a special source of difficulty that is not present in the case of the other two, Social barriers are certainly costly to change because it can require significant financial, political, and social capital to change people’s underlying attitudes. However, if those who hold a relational view of the self are correct, an additional problem arises here in that both those aiming to effect change and those who are the targets of efforts at change are, to some extent, made up of the very attitudes in question. As an example, just consider Jesse Jackson’s statement that “[t]here is nothing more painful to me…than to walk down the street and hear footsteps and start thinking about robbery, then look around and see somebody white and feel relieved”.

A final point here is that all three of these different kinds of barriers can work together to reinforce each other. For example, the ongoing disadvantages that disabled people face in the case of buildings without wheelchair access are a product of institutional and legal norms regarding them. However, those same disadvantages can serve to reinforce the norms regarding them by, as it were, confirming in the minds of

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others their own attitude of superiority that contributed to the disadvantages in the first place. Likewise, it may both be the case that legal norms regarding the place of women in society make the corresponding social norms more difficult to change and that effectively changing these legal norms first requires a change in the corresponding social norms.

3.6: Arendt's Conception of Power

I have just identified three kinds of barrier to changing structures of social relations. In this and the next section I shall examine, in a preliminary way, what possibilities are open for changing the norms which give rise to those barriers. Towards this end I shall examine the different but complementary insights of both Arendt and Foucault. In this section we shall see that Arendt’s understanding of power offers two important insights about changing the structure of power relations in a society: (1) Since norms that give rise to social and institutional barriers can be understood as manifestations of collective power, collective action will often be the most appropriate starting point for changing those norms; (2) The collective exercise of power (or the exercise of power-with) offers us an important resource for thinking about when power might be unobjectionable.111

Arendt’s objective is a view of power that rejects the command-obedience model, or the way of thinking about power according to which it is essentially akin to the restrictive power of a sovereign. Arendt distinguishes ‘power’ from three related

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111 Here I am indebted to Allen (1999), ch.4.
phenomena that do involve restrictive command-obedience relations, namely ‘strength’, ‘authority’, and ‘violence’.\textsuperscript{112} Arendt’s central definition of power is as follows:

\textit{Power} corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is ‘in power’ we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name. The moment the group, from which the power originated to begin with..., disappears, ‘his power’ also vanishes. In current usage, when we speak of a ‘powerful man’ or a ‘powerful personality,’ we already use the word ‘power’ metaphorically; what we refer to without metaphor is ‘strength’.\textsuperscript{113}

In contrast to strength and violence, any power that an individual can exercise has an inherently collective aspect - such an individual only has this power when a group has come together for a collective purpose and only in so far as he is acknowledged to have such power; even in such cases it is not really ‘his’ power - as something distinct from an expression of the group’s collective efforts - that is being exercised. An illustrative example would be a group getting together in solidarity to act towards a common goal: Power, for Arendt, would be that which exists in so far as the group is acting together in solidarity towards their goal. Power is thus a property of agents rather than a thing in itself, but it is never strictly a property of an individual agent, since it only exists through the collective action of a group. Moreover, since it is a product of the collective action and collective understanding of the group that gives rise to it, power has an inherently positive nature at least in so far as the members of that group are concerned: As soon as the consensus of the group that gives rise to it evaporates, power evaporates too. In other words, while Arendt’s form of power can certainly be exercised in relation to members of

\textsuperscript{112} A fifth phenomenon called ‘force’ Arendt treats as either a synonym of ‘violence’ or as indicating “the energy released by physical or social movements” ((1970), pp. 44-5).

\textsuperscript{113} Arendt (1970), p. 44.
another collectivity in negative ways, it always to some extent appears acceptable to the collectivity that gives rise to it. Such an understanding of power seems to defy the traditional dichotomy between ‘power to’ and ‘power over’; as Amy Allen has argued, a better way to understand power here is as something that is exercised with others.\textsuperscript{114}

On the whole, there are a number of structural similarities between my view of power and Arendt's.\textsuperscript{115} In the first place, just like Arendt, I begin by distinguishing ‘power' from related concepts (which, for me, are 'force' and ‘abilities'). In the second place, I join Arendt in rejecting the command-obedience model of power, in particular because her collective understanding of power points to a form of power that does not fit the command-obedience model. However, I depart from Arendt in a number of ways: (i) the distinctions I draw between power and related concepts do not match up with Arendt's, and (ii), while I reject the command-obedience model as applying to all cases of power, I do think that it applies to some. In essence, I join a number of other commentators, such as Lukes, Allen, and Wartenberg in thinking that Arendt's conception of power only points to one among a number of forms of power, albeit a normatively distinctive form of power that can teach us much about the nature of power itself.\textsuperscript{116}

A good reason, then, to reject Arendt’s view of power as providing a satisfactory general view of power is that there are just too many counterexamples to it: Power-over,

\textsuperscript{114} Allen (1999), pp. 126-129.
\textsuperscript{115} This should be unsurprising since I draw extensively on Amy Allen’s work, and Allen herself draws on Arendt’s work.
for example, can be exercised by both collective and individual agents, and, while
individuals may have power conferred upon them by collective actions, they may also
have powers in the absence of any collective agent whatsoever. With this being said,
however, Arendt’s view is quite important for thinking about changing legal and social
norms within a society. This is because the social and legal norms within a society are a
product of collective action. The social norm that women ought stay at home and attend
to domestic responsibilities, for example, to a significant extent amounts to a collective
understanding that they ought to do so. Likewise, a set of legal norms cannot succeed in
disadvantaging some over others unless those norms are widely adhered to. In this sense,
then, Arendt’s idea that power evaporates when the consensus of the group that gives rise
to it evaporates is particularly germane. This idea implies that a primary aim in
transforming a structure of social relations ought to be causing the consensus (or
collective understanding) that gives rise to a particular set of social and legal norms to
evaporate. It is, of course, not quite so easy to cause a widespread collective
understanding to evaporate (and be replaced with a different one). However, as I shall try
to demonstrate, Arendt’s view of power has additional benefits in so far it exposes
normatively positive forms of power and offers us a fruitful way for theorizing about how
to change collective understandings that give rise to problematic norms.

First, the phenomena that Arendt focuses on call our attention to two distinct ways
of exercising power which show us that power can indeed be exercised in normatively
positive ways - in ways that need not themselves be repressive or that do not themselves
necessarily involve constraining options. Consider the case of collective action from chapter 2 where a group of six relatively poor and oppressed women pool their resources and talents to create a joint business venture which will allow them to escape their husbands. This example brings out the two important non-constraining forms of power to light particularly well. In the first place, this example shows us that individuals can exercise power in a way that does not constrain options but instead adds options (power-for). There is, however, an additional kind of positive power that this example points us to, which is what Arendt herself was primarily focused on: In the event that an option of this sort is open to a group of individuals and they take it together with each other, each of them is not simply exercising power in relation to the others but is also exercising power with them. As we've seen from our discussion of the notion of power-with in the previous chapter, there is indeed something distinctively important here: When individuals exercise power with and not simply in relation to each other, they should be thought not of as simply pushing or pulling each other (as exercising power in relation to *simpliciter*) but as jointly acting together to lift themselves up. In a case of power-with, in other words, there isn't simply a series of projections back and forth between the agents concerned, but there is instead a joint projection issuing from all of them, a projection that affects their own practical landscapes and the practical landscapes of others.

Cases of power-for and power-with are of central importance for thinking about the issues that the second portion of this thesis focuses on: issues of moving away from normatively unacceptable relations between individuals. One particularly important
reason for this comes from the fact that, as I have argued, many of the powers that individuals have to affect others' practical landscapes either rest on or are conditioned by the social relations that they have with each other or on the broader structure of social relations (or norms) within their society. This is particularly important where the structure of social relations within a given society confers non-optional powers on individuals - powers which individuals cannot divest themselves of so long as they participate in the relevant social institutions.

Here we might think of individuals as being caught up in networks of social relations that grant them powers depending on the places they occupy within those networks. The difficulty is that it is very difficult to change the structure of the networks (and thus the powers granted by them) from the inside-out. The best, and perhaps the only, avenue to change a given network of power-conferring social relations is to attempt to escape such a network by creating an entirely new one. New sets of social relations between individuals will allow them to participate in social life on different terms, and thus with different powers. This will often be the best or the only option because the alternative would be, in effect, living outside of a network of social relations and thus not being able to have any of the sorts of power that can only exist within such networks. Furthermore, in so far as an individual derives meaning or a sense of self from the network of social relations he finds himself in, withdrawing from such networks may threaten threaten his very identity in addition to robbing him of his former powers.
Acts that create new networks of social relations in this fashion are classic cases of the exercise of power-with. Again, we may think here of the oppressed women whose joint business venture allows each of them independence from her oppressive husband and which elevates her status within her community, and, moreover, expands the range of possibilities open to other women in similar circumstances. Here we can imagine the man who wants to divest himself as much as possible of his power to sexually assault his wife jointly exercising power-with her; perhaps they could enter into a binding prenuptial agreement that explicitly specifies that their marrying each other does not entail a blanket consent to the other's sexual advances and that forced sexual intercourse does constitute a reason for divorce. So long as the legal institutions within their society would honour such an arrangement, they would be able to exercise power with each other to change the structure of the social relation between them that comes into being when they marry.

3.7: Foucault's Insights About Power

Arendt offers us a important tool for going forward in so far as exercises of power-with are crucial for changing existing collective understandings that generate legal and social norms and, in turn, powers in agents. Moreover, exercises of power-with cannot only be seen as a method by which we may change collective understandings, but, since power-with always tends to appear acceptable to the members of a collectivity exercising such power, exercises of power-with may offer some hope of replacing current collective understandings (or legal and social norms) with ones which will be (more) legitimate. I
shall examine this second point in detail in the second part of this thesis, but for now I shall turn to Foucault’s insights about power. As I shall demonstrate, these insights complement those gained from Arendt in important ways. In particular, Foucault’s insights about power both help us get a clearer focus on what the targets of exercises of power aimed at transforming existing structures of social relations ought to be, as well as suggest some forms these exercises of power might take.

In expounding Foucault’s view of power, I shall focus on identifying some of his key insights that are important for my purposes rather than on analyzing what his fully worked-out underlying conception of power was. Indeed, there is good reason to think that Foucault did not have a fully-worked out underlying conception of power; instead Foucault seems to have had a working concept or ‘ongoing conceptualization’. However, it does seem fruitful to briefly examine his ‘ongoing conceptualization’ to see how well it matches up with my understanding of power as a capacity of agents to affect the practical landscapes of others.

In the first place, Foucault's 'ongoing conceptualization' saw power as a dispositional capacity of agents, a capacity that manifested itself in two distinct ways, one of which was more or less equivalent to power-to and the other which was more or less equivalent to power-over. There is some disparity here, but I do not think that Foucault

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117 In understanding Foucault’s analysis of power, I am quite heavily indebted to Allen (1999), ch. 2.
118 In a later, somewhat retrospective work Foucault identified his main interest not as power but instead as the subject, and insisted that a theory of power such as the kind I have offered (rather than a working concept) was at least somewhat of a mistake (1982), pp. 208-10.
would object to my distinction between 'abilities' and 'powers', since his primary interest was in power-over, the relational form of power. As for the discrepancy between my broader notion of 'power in relation to' and Foucault's narrower relational 'power-over', I am inclined to think that Foucault would not strenuously resist the distinctions I have made between the three different relational kinds of power.

Foucault's 'ongoing conceptualization' of power also corresponds with my view in two other important ways. First, in so far as Foucault sees power as operating on others by not immediately targeting their actions but instead by trying to affect what they see as the possible actions open to them and the attractiveness of those actions,\textsuperscript{120} he would seem to be friendly to the emphasis my view of power places on the practical landscapes of others. Indeed, Foucault's idea that power produces the agents upon whom it acts (more on this later) is not entirely dissimilar from my notion of power as affecting agents by affecting their believed options, preferences and evaluative beliefs - I would readily agree with Foucault that power produces these beliefs and preferences to an extent.\textsuperscript{121} In the second place, the collective aspect of Foucault's view, his idea that power is a 'total structure of actions brought to bear' against others, is very much in keeping with the respect in which my view attempts to highlight the role that the structure of social relations within a society plays in giving rise to and conditioning agents' powers.

\textsuperscript{120} Foucault (1982), pp. 220-1.

\textsuperscript{121} Foucault (1982), p. 212.
I would now like to address the three most distinctive claims that Foucault makes about the operation of power. The first claim is Foucault's denial of the 'repressive hypothesis'. Here Foucault essentially claims that power is both repressive and productive at the same time. To say that it is productive means that it to some degree produces the subjects upon whom it acts. Power does not simply restrict autonomous individuals whose subjectivity is entirely divorced from the operations of power; rather power also operates by enticing individuals to take up the various subject positions that it offers because doing so offers the possibility of being able to relate to others in particular ways and thus also the possibility of acting in relation to them. In other words, Foucault maintains that power does not simply prevent people from doing or becoming things, power actually makes people who they are, and it does so both positively and negatively, by 'inciting, inducing, seducing, making easier or more difficult, and only in the extreme constraining or forbidding absolutely'.

There are two dimensions in which we need to evaluate this claim. First, we need to determine whether power produces to some degree the subjects upon whom it acts or whether it does so completely. In other words, we need to determine whether we ought to take Foucault's ideas here to show that individual subjects (or agents) are themselves completely products of power, or whether there is something more to our agency. Second, we need to determine whether it is true that power always manifests in repressive ways (even as it also always acts in productive ways at the same time), or whether power

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sometimes manifests in non-repressive ways - whether, to use Foucault’s terminology, it is not merely the case that power does not only say 'no', but is also the case that power sometimes does not say 'no' at all.

On the second point, I would argue that it is incorrect to maintain that power always operates by saying both ‘no’ and ‘yes’: As we saw when investigating Arendt's view of power, power sometimes operates by adding options and it sometimes operates by being exercised with others. Neither of these kinds of power need be repressive since neither of them need remove options or possible actions from agents - the agents in question always seem to have some discretion as to whether or not they will take the added option or continue to exercise their collective power with others. This is not to say that this form of power isn't 'productive' in a very broad sense - after all, taking an option will typically close off other options and exercising power with others to some degree locks one in to needing to continue to exercise it, lest the possibilities enabled by it disappear. Nevertheless, neither of these forms of power seems to be inherently repressive in Foucault’s sense.123 In regards to the first point, I shall simply join many of Foucault’s critics, including prominent feminists, in claiming that it would be wrong to obliterate the

123 I have tried to focus here on what we ought to make of Foucault's ideas rather than on determining exactly what Foucault thought. In so far as I am treating Foucault to have thought that power is always repressive to some degree, I am following Allen (1999), pp. 34-7. An alternative option might be to see Foucault as having recognized just the sorts of possibilities that I am calling attention to. On such a reading, Foucault would be denying the 'repressive hypothesis' in two senses: He would be holding that power is always productive, and that it is only sometimes also repressive.
subject in such a way (if Foucault actually does), denying her agency and the possibility to truly transform the power relations in which she partakes for the better.¹²⁴

The second main claim of Foucault's that I would like to address is his claim about the close relationship between power and knowledge. Foucault is also well-known for his claim that there is an intimate relation between power and knowledge, so intimate in fact that he sees power as producing knowledge, or, rather as producing the discourses within which knowledge-claims are made. In fact, this is one of the most important ways in which power produces the subjects upon whom it acts - it produces them in this sense by producing the conceptual and epistemic frameworks into which they fit themselves. In the case of disciplinary power, for example, the very category of delinquency is a product of power, a category into which prisoners are induced to fit themselves.¹²⁵ The danger here is that Foucault can be interpreted as not merely claiming that power produces some pieces of knowledge, but that power produces all discourses within which knowledge claims are made, and so all knowledge-claims are simply products of power.¹²⁶ The implication of this claim is that we have no ground to stand on in making a normative critique of a given structure of power relations - our critique would itself merely seem to be a product of power.

¹²⁴ See Allen (1999), Ch.2 for an overview. Again, since my aim is to evaluate what we should make of Foucault's insights, I have avoided the debate about whether he really believed that the subject / agent was nothing more than a product of power, and so hopelessly trapped by the power that produced her agency.
¹²⁶ See Hindess (1996), ch. 5 and Haugaard (1997), ch. 3 on this.
Since I am not aiming to diagnose what Foucault’s view actually was, my main concern is what we ought to do given the possibility that all discourses of knowledge may be products of power. If this were true, would normative critiques of power structures necessarily fail to be properly grounded? I would argue to the contrary: In such a case a normative critique of power need only fail to be properly grounded if proper grounding requires objectivity, or, in Nagel’s phrase ‘the view from nowhere’.\textsuperscript{127} Instead normative critiques can be grounded, perhaps, in our experiences of the operations of power. In particular, they can be grounded in our experiences of the differences between power-over, power-for, and power-with. In such a case we need not reject Foucault’s insights outright; instead, we can proceed as if the most extreme interpretations of them (e.g. that both the subject and knowledge are merely products of power) are not true. But this is not to deny that, for example, we ought to view all knowledge-claims as potentially subject to critique because power is intimately involved in the production of all such claims. Nor is it to affirm something like the liberal abstract individualist view of the self/subject. Instead, on the whole, we can take Foucault as showing us that that our normative critiques are not grounded in some truth that transcends the contexts within which we make those critiques.\textsuperscript{128} There are a number of ways to proceed from here, but before I explore those there is one more idea of Foucault’s that I need to examine in detail.

\textsuperscript{127} Nagel (1986).
\textsuperscript{128} C.f. Young (1990), pp. 4-7.
The final main claim of Foucault's that I would like to address is his claim about the capillary or local nature of modern power. In premodern societies, Foucault claims, power was vested in and emanated from the sovereign as opposed to the social body as a whole. In modern societies, however, Foucault claims that power is much more pervasive. Power is everywhere in modern society, emanating not just from above, but also from the seemingly mundane everyday practices that make up individuals' daily lives. Instead of power being something that is unique to the sovereign/state and something that is only exercised by the sovereign/state, the powers of the sovereign/state are merely one point along a continuum of manifestations and relations of power. To understand modern power relations, Foucault claimed, it is insufficient to merely investigate how the state operates; rather, we need a 'micro-physics' of power,\(^{129}\) a focus on "power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional forms and local institutions".\(^{130}\)

This insight of Foucault’s is of central importance in terms of how to transform existing power relations that we identify as being in need of transformation. Foucault’s insight here entails that we cannot expect changes at the macro level, or to the main legal and social institutions of the state, to be very effective if they are not accompanied by changes in the more local operations of power. This is because the shaping of power relations at the macro level both arises out of and reinforces the shaping of power


\(^{130}\) Foucault (1980), p. 96.
relations that occurs at the micro level. Thus if we fail to change how power operates at the everyday level, changes to the central institutions of the state may very well be meaningless. At best, we could view such macro level changes as enabling but not actually producing the changes we desire at the level of the everyday; at worst, we ought to expect the problems at the macro level to eventually re-emerge because the micro level operations of power would reproduce them. Foucault’s insight about the capillary nature of power is thus very important for helping us identify what the targets ought to be for exercises of power aimed at transforming problematic structures of social relations: The targets must simultaneously be the macro-level legal and social institutions and the micro-level practices of everyday life.

3.8: Changing Problematic Structures of Social Relations

In this chapter I aimed to accomplish two main tasks: (1) To understand the role that social relations play in conferring powers on agents; (2) To understand the challenges we might face in combatting unacceptable powers, in particular because of the role that social relations play in conferring powers on agents. In very broad strokes, we have seen that a given structure of social relations confers powers on individuals in a variety of ways. Legal institutions and social institutions, for example, confer claims, duties, and Hohfeldian-powers on agents, which in turn translate into various powers over, with, and for, in relation to other agents. Such institutions can also lead to differences in need or perceived authority/significance that in turn give rise to relational powers. The
(relational) processes through which individuals come to be who they are give rise to commonly held beliefs about the proper contours of social roles, which both directly give rise to relational powers and indirectly give rise to such powers because of their role in generating and sustaining legal and social institutions. These processes in turn give rise to various physical, institutional, and social barriers to changing the structure of power relations that exists in a society.

The physical barriers to changing power relations are relatively easy to know how to change: Where they can be changed, all that needs doing is the tearing down or reworking of the physical obstructions. The institutional and social barriers, however, are a far more complex matter, for the very individuals who would tear down those barriers are, at least to some extent, products of the very same barriers. These individuals not only take their being but also their powers to some extent from the structures of social relations in which those barriers play a part. Following Arendt, collective action, or the exercise of power-with, is of paramount importance in changing such structures: Since the problematic power-conferring social relations / structures are themselves the product of ongoing collective action, the overturning of a problematic set of power-conferring social relations seems to require a different form of collective action that will both confer new powers and upset the (implicit or explicit) consensus that gave rise to the original problematic set of relations.

Foucault, as we have seen, offers some important insights into the operation of power that are of assistance to us here. In the first place, his insights show us that the
target of either individual or collective exercises of power aimed at overturning problematic social relations cannot simply be macro-level phenomena such as social or bureaucratic institutions, but most also include the micro-level, everyday phenomena out of which can arise the macro-level phenomena. In the second place, his insights remind us that both our selves and the concepts which we might use to critique these seemingly problematic power phenomena are, at least to some extent, themselves products of power, and so ought to be viewed with suspicion. Genealogical investigations of the sort that Foucault himself engaged in can be helpful to us here, since they can help us understand the relationships between the relevant macro and micro-level processes and help us understand the processes through which our critical concepts came into being. We are, though, still left with the problem that it is difficult to know where or how to proceed.

This is one area in which an interesting convergence between Foucault and Arendt may be of some help. Arendt’s focus on the collective nature of power shows problematic social structures can be supplanted once the collective understanding that gives rise to them evaporates. But what is it for such collective understandings to evaporate? Here it seems that Foucault’s idea that cases of unacceptable power (or domination) are cases of networks where the flow of power has become ‘congealed’ can be of assistance. Foucault’s counterproposal is that we ought to aim for networks in which power flows freely. In the context of Arendt’s notion of evaporating collective understandings, perhaps what we ought to be aiming for is a context in which such understandings are destabilized.

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or in flux. Collective action, then, aimed at destabilizing these collective understandings will be a very important tool for supplanting problematic structures of social relations. It is in a context such as this that Judith Butler’s emphasis on the capacity of subversive portrayals of sexuality to undermine social norms regarding sexuality is particularly germane. Such acts, surrounded by appropriate collective actions, have the potential for destabilizing collective understandings about sexuality.

There are a variety of practices we can undertake to destabilize power-conferring collective understandings, of which I have examined an exceedingly small portion. But even if we were to examine a wider range of examples, we would still face the problem of normatively grounding our critiques of current power structures. This is important both so that we can have confidence that we ought to be undermining a particular power structure and so that we can have in mind some idea of the direction we ought to be heading. Foucault’s idea that power networks ought to be free-flowing rather than congealed does not seem to provide us with the requisite normative ground: Such structures of social relations will be more variable, but greater variability does not mean that they will be any better or any less objectionable. In the second part of this thesis I shall examine just such a normative criterion that is republican in character and that is ultimately cashed out in terms of the differences between power-over, power-for, and power-with. In the next chapter, however, I shall examine in detail the arguments put forth by those with activist, responsibilist, and interest-based conceptions of power.

132 See, for example, Butler (1990), ch. 3.
CHAPTER 4: ACTIVIST, RESPONSIBILIST, AND INTEREST-BASED VIEWS

4.0: Introduction

In the last chapter we saw that structures of social relations and the process of self-formation can confer powers on agents without there being any other particular agent who intended the result or who it would make sense to hold responsible for the result. In this chapter my main aim shall be to take activist and responsibilist conceptions of power on directly. More specifically, I shall argue that it’s not only true that agents can come to have powers without the active or responsible involvement of other agents, but also that the powers of agents can make a difference in the world - or manifest themselves - without their possessors actively bringing about the outcome or being responsible for it. I’ll conclude this chapter, and the first part of this dissertation, by considering the question of whether the notion of interests ought to be a basic component of the definition of power.

4.1: The Basic Argument Against Activist and Responsibilist Views of Power

My basic argument against activist and responsibilist views of power depends on the distinction I made in the second chapter between active manifestations of power (or exercises of power) and inactive manifestations of power (manifestations wherein the power-possessing agent is not actively involved). The most basic statement of my argument is that the arguments previously given in favor of activist and responsibilist
views failed to adequately take into account the distinction between active and inactive manifestations of power. Once this distinction comes into view there is no reason to think that activists or responsibilists are right that an agent’s active involvement is required for his power to manifest itself, even if they are right that his active involvement (or responsibility) is required for his power to be exercised. Arguments for activist views of power, in particular, ultimately fail because they treat active manifestations of power (exercises) as if they were the only kind of manifestations of power. For example, the activist argument against counting cases where one agent unconsciously affects another’s options as instances of power turns on the intuition that it is not plausible to count such phenomena as exercises of power. While I agree with activists that that these cases should not count as exercises of power because the agents in question are not doing what is necessary to count as exercising their power, I think that the overall activist argument nevertheless fails. This is because even if activists are right that it is implausible to count cases where one agent unconsciously affects another as exercises of power, it is plausible to count these cases as (inactive) manifestations of power.\footnote{It may be tempting to say that an agent should count as exercising her power when she was not aware of how her power would affect others but she \textit{ought} to have been. Ultimately I deny this in so far as I agree with the activists that one should only count as exercising power when one intentionally or knowingly brings something about. However, I differ from the activists in so far as they hold that unforeseen effects of one’s power of which one ought to have been aware don’t count of manifestations of one’s power at all (since they are not exercises), whereas I hold that such cases count as inactive manifestations of one’s power for which one is responsible (because one’s lack of awareness was due to negligence).}

In the next section I shall examine in detail one particular activist view of power. Before I do that, however, I shall examine and refute two potential objections to the argument I have just given. The first objection runs as follows: Activist views of power
might indeed be flawed if they did not acknowledge a difference between the phenomena I understand as ‘active’ and ‘inactive’ manifestations of power, but this need not mean that we should refer to both using the term ‘power’. Indeed, the activist might maintain that it is because of the distinctive normative character of exercises of power that we ought to refer to active manifestations of power as instances of an agent’s power and refer to what I have called ‘inactive manifestations’ of power with some other term. In other words, the activist might acknowledge the distinction that I have called attention to but argue that it is only active manifestations (or exercises) of power that deserve (or ought) to be called power because it is only in those cases that the agent who possesses the power makes a difference in the world by exercising his power.

The shortcoming with this activist argument is that it seems to focus exclusively on the power-holder’s perspective and ignore the perspective of the agent who is affected by power. Recall the case where a husband has the power to beat his wife with impunity. One case where his wife’s options are constrained is the case where he threatens to beat her if she meets with any male of whom the husband has not already approved. By making this threat, he takes away his wife’s option of interacting with unapproved males without the risk of getting beaten by her husband. Activists would deem this as an instance of his power because his threat constituted active involvement. However, the wife’s options can also be affected when she knows that her husband has the power to beat her with impunity and would likely avail himself of it because of his jealous and violent nature. Here she seems to again lack the option to interact with unapproved males.
and escape a beating from her husband. Activists would seem to maintain that the limitation of the wife’s options in the second case should not count as being due to her husband’s power because he was not actively involved in bringing it about. In my view, though, when we look at this situation from the wife’s perspective, it is clear that she is subject to her husband’s power in both cases. Hence, I maintain that we ought not to privilege the perspective of the power-holder and instead maintain that both exercises and inactive manifestations of power ought to be understood using the term ‘power’.

This first objection to my argument concedes that there is a relevant distinction between what I call ‘active’ and ‘inactive’ manifestations of power, and it attempts to account for this distinction in terms of what ought and what ought not count as an instance of an agent’s power. In other words, it concedes that an agent’s capacity to affect the options of others can make a difference in the world without being exercised by him, but it maintains that we ought not understand such inactive manifestations using the term ‘power’. The second objection to my argument, however, would persist in maintaining that power can only manifest itself when it is exercised, and would hold that I am simply wrong about what it means for agents’ capacities to manifest themselves. Indeed, this line of objection would take the activist view to already be attending to the distinction between power’s exercise and its manifestation by providing grounds for thinking that power can only manifest itself when it is exercised.

This line of objection surfaces in the activist’s idea about the connection between power and action. Activists sometimes argue that power requires an agent’s active
involvement because power is essentially an ability or capacity to effect changes in the world through action. On this understanding, the capacity that power is can only be activated (or can only manifest) through an action on the part of the person whose capacity it is. Indeed, Morriss, a prominent activist, gives almost exactly this argument for thinking that power only manifests when exercised. Referring to power as an ability, he maintains that:

an ability, by definition, involves the power to do something, or bring something about, by means of an action. It follows from this that the manifestation of an ability must be brought about by an action: an ability is a disposition which if activated by the actor produces the required outcome.\textsuperscript{134}

In response to the first objection, I argued that when thinking about power we ought to consider the perspective of the agent whose options are restrictively affected rather than the perspective of the power-holder, and that when we do it becomes apparent that we ought to count both exercises and inactive manifestations as instances of power. In response to this second objection, I argue that even when we concentrate on the agent who possesses the power/capacity, we still ought to think that this capacity can manifest itself without being exercised by him. This is because, I contend, the question about when an agent’s capacity manifests itself is a question about when the agent’s capacity makes a difference in the world, and this capacity can make a difference in the world even when the agent who possesses it does not make such a difference.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{134} Morriss (2002), p. 62.

\textsuperscript{135} Both activists and responsibilists may wish to dispute my use of the term ‘manifestation’, maintaining that it means something else entirely. In this case I would be happy to simply retreat to the question of when an agent’s power makes a difference in the world, and I would maintain, against the activists and responsibilists that we ought to count some state of affairs as a product of an agent’s power whenever that state of affairs would not have come about without the agent’s power.
Consider again the slave owner’s capacity to torture his slave at will. This capacity certainly manifests itself only when the slave-owner is exercising it - when he in the process of actually torturing his slave. But does the slave-owner’s capacity to torture his slave manifest itself when the slave-owner is exercising it? It is certain that the slave-owner only actualizes his capacity when he exercises it, but the question of when his capacity manifests itself is not necessarily equivalent to the question of when he exercises that capacity. In other words, when we say that the slave-owner’s capacity to torture his slave manifests itself (or makes a difference in the world) we need not also be saying that the slave-owner himself is making a difference in the world or causing the capacity to manifest itself. My claim is that we should regard the slave-owner’s capacity as manifesting itself whenever the capacity itself makes a difference in the world, that is, both in cases where the slave-owner plays an active role in producing the manifestation of this capacity and when the slave-owner’s relation to the manifestation of this capacity is an inactive one. After all, the slave-owner’s capacity brings about changes in his slave’s options both when the slave-owner exercises it and when the slave owner does not exercise it. If the slave-owner is in the process of torturing his slave - say he is approaching his slave with a white-hot poker in hand - his slave will surely attempt to end the torture quickly or avoid it altogether. However, even if the slave-owner is merely sitting still or asleep, his capacity to torture his slave still affects his slave’s options. The slave-owner’s possession of this capacity will cause his slave to lack the belief that he can frustrate his master’s desires and avoid torture at the hands of his master.
So activists like Morriss may indeed be correct that "[a capacity], by definition, involves the power to do something, or bring something about, by means of an action".\textsuperscript{136} The slave owner certainly lacks the capacity to torture his slave if he cannot bring about the torture of his slave by means of an action. But activists also hold, as we have seen, that it follows from this that the ‘manifestation of [a capacity] must be brought about by an action: [a capacity] is a disposition which if activated by the actor produces the required outcome’.\textsuperscript{137} It seems they are right about the second clause: If a capacity is activated by its possessor, then the capacity certainly does manifest itself. But this does not show that the manifestation of a capacity is something that can only be bought about by an action on the part of its possessor: As I have argued, the slave owner’s capacity itself (as distinct from the slave owner) makes a difference in the world even when it is not exercised by the slave owner. In other words, when we are concerned with determining when power manifests itself, we are concerned with what happens because of the powers possessed by agents, rather than what happens because of the powers and the agents who possess them.

\textit{4.2: Wrong’s Intentionalist View}

Dennis Wrong’s view of power is the one in which intentions most clearly play a central role. Wrong argues that we need to have an intentionalist account of power

because of the need to distinguish ‘power’ from social control in general.\textsuperscript{138} Wrong then proceeds to quickly make two qualifications to his view: (i) for an intentional action to count as an exercise of power, the action must be successful in achieving its intended end (otherwise it is “an absence or failure of power”);\textsuperscript{139} and (ii) all foreseen (and not merely aimed-at) effects are relevant to successful exercises of power because “so long as the effects were foreseen by the actor even if not aimed at as such, they constitute an exercise of power in contrast to unanticipated (and by definition unintended) effects”.\textsuperscript{140}

The fact that Wrong endorses both (i) and (ii) introduces a number of potential difficulties.\textsuperscript{141} First, (ii) and (i), as Wrong presents them, are in tension: If a parent is attempting to exercise his power so that his son will not attend a heavy metal concert, and his intentions alone are what really matter, then it seems that, contrary to (ii), the parent should not count as successfully exercising his power when he does all that would normally be necessary for his power to be exercised but the result is the unintended and yet foreseen effect of the son going to the concert and rebelling against his parent in other ways. Since we cannot keep both these theses, it seems best to modify (ii): Surely the complete opposite outcome from what one was aiming at ought not to count as a successful exercise of power merely because one foresaw that this undesirable outcome might occur.

\textsuperscript{138} Wrong (1988), pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{139} Wrong (1988), pp. 5-6.
\textsuperscript{140} Wrong (1988), p. 5.
\textsuperscript{141} For a critique of Wrong that connects with mine on several points, see Clegg (1989), pp. 74-5.
There may, nevertheless, be some merit in (ii). Wrong seems to be on the right track here in so far as he is trying to identify something of significance that occurs when one attempts to exercise his power, and his attempt to exercise power brings about some change in the world that he foresaw but did not intend. It would seem to be unsatisfactory, for example, to merely say that the father’s attempt at exercising power failed in the event that it was his attempt that actually tipped the balance in favor of his son going to the concert. This is one place where the distinction between an exercise of power and a manifestation of power is of use: Wrong could maintain that an attempt to exercise power that failed to achieve its objective but did result in a foreseen outcome is a successful manifestation of power rather than a successful exercise of power. The contrast here would be between attempts to exercise power which do make some difference in the world, whether or not the difference made is what the projecting agent was aiming at, and attempts to exercise power that do not make a difference in the world; the latter would be unsuccessful manifestations of power whereas the former would be successful manifestations of power, of which successful exercises of power would be a sub-variety.

On the rehabilitated version of Wrong’s argument, it would seem to be the agent’s active involvement and his subsequent bringing about of some change in the world that makes the difference in terms of whether his power actually manifests itself. Since this rehabilitated version of Wrong’s argument is nearly identical to Morriss’ effectivist view, I shall save an sustained evaluation of it until the next section. Instead I shall return to
Wrong’s initial argument regarding the support that the activist view of power gets from the need to distinguish ‘power’ from social control in general. According to Wrong:

People exercise mutual influence and control over one another’s conduct in all social interaction - in fact, that is just what we mean by social interaction. It is essential, therefore, to distinguish between the exercise of power and social control in general - otherwise there would be no point in employing power as a separate concept or in identifying power relations as a distinct kind of social relation... But if to collapse the concept of power into that of social control is to vitiate all need for a separate concept of power, then it becomes necessary to distinguish the diffuse controls exercised by the group over socialized individuals from direct, intentional efforts by a specific person or group to affect another’s conduct. Power is identical with intended and effective influence... In contrast to several recent writers, I do not see how we can avoid restricting the term power to intentional and effective acts of influence by some persons on other persons... rather than equate power with all forms of influence, unintended as well as intended, it seems preferable to stress the fact that the intentional control of others is likely to create a relationship that goes far beyond what he may have wished or envisaged at the outset.142

As the above discussion seems to show, when talking about ‘intentional efforts’ (and so forth), Wrong really seems to mean to be referring to cases where one agent makes a conscious effort to affect another, since he includes intended and foreseen effects within the scope of these undertakings. Thus we should really take the above passage as an argument that exercises of ‘power’ ought to be equated with successful conscious attempts to affect others. This makes his argument a little more attractive, but there are still some forceful responses that can be made to it. The first response is that the assertion that coming to have the ability to consciously control another is likely to create a much more richly constituted relationship may well get the order of priority backwards, if there is an order of priority at all here: If either of these things ‘creates’ the other, then surely a richly constituted relationship can give rise to the ability of one agent to consciously control another. So we can easily grant that the ability to consciously control

142 Wrong (1988), pp. 3-4.
another agent indicates a relationship that goes far beyond simply that ability without also granting that the ability of one agent to consciously control another is what gives rise to a power relationship between them.

The second, and more important response to make to this argument is to concede that it is important to distinguish social control in general from instances where a specific agent affects another’s conduct. We may even concede that it is the presence of a particular projecting agent affecting a receiving agent that distinguishes when that receiving agent is subject to power instead of social control. None of this, however, requires us to concede that it is the difference between conscious affecting and unconscious affecting that ought to set the boundaries of what counts as power. After all, one might (although I do not) take a responsibilist view and hold that it is the difference between being responsible or not that sets these boundaries. Moreover, those who hold an inactivist view of power can simply maintain that it is the difference between conscious affecting and conscious affecting that makes the difference between an active manifestation of power and an inactive manifestation of power. With this in mind, therefore, let us examine Morriss’ view more closely to see if power is a matter of affecting others, or whether it is only a matter of effecting changes in others.

\[143\] In other words, we might hold that ‘power’ differs from ‘social control’ precisely because there is a readily identifiable projecting agent in the case of power but not in the case of social control.
4.3: Morris’ Effectivist View

Morriss’ view is important because while he ends up at roughly the same conclusion as Wrong, that a manifestation of power always requires the intentions of the projecting agent, Morriss has an entirely different starting point and a much more nuanced argument. Morriss’ argument begins from the concept of power itself, or from features of the concept of power that seem implicit in the way we use the term. Morriss’ claim is ultimately that ‘power’ and ‘influence’ are importantly different concepts, the first having to do with an agent effecting (or bringing about) changes in others and the world, and the second having to do with an agent merely affecting others. Morriss thus attempts to deduce that ‘power’ only applies where the agent is actively involved from the very nature of the conceptual differences between ‘power’ and ‘influence’.

Morriss begins with a central conceptual difference between ‘power’ and ‘influence’, and then proceeds by arguing that the same difference is present where ‘effects’ and ‘affects’ are concerned. The central difference between ‘power’ and ‘influence is that many things actually do need to happen as the result of what one does if one is to count as ‘influential’, whereas nothing actually needs to happen as a result of what one does in order for one to count as ‘powerful’. One merely needs to be able to do many things in order to be ‘powerful’:

A power... is a disposition that may or may not be activated: TNT is explosive because it explodes when the conditions are right, not because it explodes frequently. A person is powerful if she can do things when she wants to - not only if she does do things frequently. From this it is fairly clear why the dead have no powers of this sort: whilst they can still influence, they do not have a disposition to influence that they can activate. This is why we do
not say that someone had influence, or was influential, but never bothered to influence anyone; we do say that people have power, or are powerful, but do not bother to use it.\textsuperscript{144}

Morriss goes on to argue that we ought to conceive of power as a capacity to effect changes in the world rather than a capacity to affect others for much the same reasons. He begins by noting that to “affect something is to alter or impinge on it in some way (any way); to effect something is to bring it about or accomplish it”.\textsuperscript{145} He then concludes that ‘affects’ corresponds to ‘influences’ whereas ‘effects’ corresponds to ‘exercises power’ because of what it is to be powerful: “[T]hose who affect others without effecting anything are rightly seen not as powerful but merely as nuisances... To affect something (or somebody) but not effect (accomplish) anything seems, then, not to be an exercise of power”.\textsuperscript{146} In other words, Morriss contends that we should conceive of power as a capacity to effect (bring about) changes in others rather than a capacity to affect (impinge upon) others because, even if one frequently affected (impinged upon) others, one would not count as powerful unless one could bring about a variety of changes. Consider, for example, a celebrity whose fashion choices often influence what his fans wear but who could never actually make one of them wear a particular thing: He would be influential in his fans’ fashion choices: If he starts wearing a lot of neon, many of his fans will. But he would lack the power to effect any changes in his fans’ fashion choices: He would lack the power to make any one of his fans wear any neon. Hence, for

\textsuperscript{145} Morriss (2002), p. 29.
Morriss, the celebrity is not powerful because there is no power that he can exercise to bring about (or effect) changes in his fans’ fashion choices.

The immediate response to Morriss is to quickly reiterate a number of points made earlier in this and the second chapter. First, I am perfectly willing to agree that affecting someone but not effecting (or bringing about) anything ought not count as an exercise of power. As I have argued before, though, there are good reasons to think that an agent’s power can manifest itself even if he does not exercise it: An agent’s capacity to exercise power-over another can constrain that other’s practical landscape even when not exercised. In the end, it seems that Morriss’ argument really amounts to a claim that the capacity to exercise power is a capacity to effect changes in others rather than a capacity to affect others. I have little or no quarrel with a claim such as this, since I am perfectly willing to grant that every genuine successful exercise of power brings about some change in the world. But simply because the capacity to exercise power is a capacity to effect changes does not prevent ‘power’ from referring to a capacity to affect others. As I have argued above, our interest in the powers of agents seems to be an interest in when certain of their capacities make a difference in the world (even if they do not). On such an understanding, there is every reason to think that power (generally) is a matter of affecting others even if the exercise of power is a matter of bringing about changes.

Beyond this linguistic/conceptual argument, Morriss pursues three strategies to show that power should be thought of as effecting changes and not simply affecting others (and thus that it only manifests itself when exercised). His first strategy concerns
the link between power and intentions. Here Morriss’ target is a number of purported counterexamples to the idea that a manifestation of power always requires the intentions of the power-holder, and his aim is to show that the counterexamples actually involve ‘influence’ rather than ‘power’. The following is an instance of one of these purported counterexamples: A man comes home extremely angry after a long and frustrating day of work, and, because of his mood and sometimes aggressive nature, his wife ends up not discussing an important issue with him because she suspects that it would only upset him further. Inactivists, such as myself, would say that this is clearly a case where the man’s power with respect to his wife has manifested itself but without his intentions being involved. It might even be a case where his power with respect to her manifested itself against his wishes, since he may well have wanted to discuss the issue with her.

Morris’ response to these cases is twofold. First, he says these cases only seem to show power without intention because ‘power’ and ‘influence’ have previously been identified as synonymous or because power has been previously defined as a capacity to affect others. Second, he asserts that these cases give no positive reason to think that power can be exercised unintentionally. Here Morriss certainly seems right to criticize those who would simply deduce that these cases are examples of the exercise of power without intentions either because ‘power’ and ‘influence’ are synonymous, or because exercising power is a matter of affecting others. Such an argument would beg the

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147 See Oppenheim (1981), pp. 43-46 for some other examples.

question where Morriss is concerned. Moreover, Morriss seems right that these are not cases of the unintentional exercise of power. In other words, Morriss does seem to have a compelling case for thinking that power is not actually exercised in these cases. In the long run, though, the difficulty with Morriss’ argument is that it too begs the question if it is trying to show that power can only manifest itself when it is exercised by its possessor: If the question concerns whether an agent’s power can manifest itself in inactive ways (or whether power can manifest itself without being exercised), then it does no good to discount these cases as manifestations of power because they are not exercises of power.

Morriss’ second strategy to show that power should be thought of as a matter of effecting changes (in others) and not simply a matter of affecting others is to offer some examples which purportedly show that conceiving of power as a capacity to affect others will entail anomalous or counterintuitive results. Morriss has two arguments to show that these cases cannot be properly accounted for using a conception of power as the capacity to affect others: First, he contends that these examples cannot be cases of power because they clearly do not involve the exercise of power. Second, he contends that we cannot properly account for these cases simply by putting restrictions on the ways of affecting others that are to count as exercises of power. Both of these contentions, as I have argued, seem to beg the question to some extent, but the second contention can be rehabilitated if it is recast to concern the manifestation of power instead of its exercise. This rehabilitated contention would be worrisome for my argument, since it would deny

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that the way in which I attempt to distinguish manifestations of power from manifestations of other capacities is viable. Accordingly, I would like to examine these examples to see whether my conception of power can incorporate them.

The first example, which comes from Francis Wormuth, concerns a robbery victim who incautiously displays his wallet to a potential thief.\(^{150}\) The thought here would be that on a view of power as a capacity to affect the options of others, the robbery victim would seem to have power with respect to the thief, and the victim’s power would seem to have manifested itself in so far as his incautious display of the wallet caused the thief to identify him as a potential victim. My view responds to this example as follows: First, it holds that this does not count as a manifestation of power-over or power-with because it does not involve restricting the thief’s practical landscape or collective action with the thief. Second, my view denies that this is a manifestation of power-for, since power-for involves the deliberate addition of options to an agent’s practical landscape: Here it was an accident on the victim’s part rather than his capacity to deliberately affect the thief’s practical landscape that made the difference.

The next example initially appears to be more challenging for my framework, but I shall argue that the correct response to it is to say that it does involve an exercise of power, although the exercise of power is not the particular action that the example focuses on. The example comes from R.A. Young and involves a man who overturns his

car and thus overburdens his insurance company.\textsuperscript{151} Here the problem seems to be that my view of power would count the man’s overturning of his car as grounding a manifestation of his power-over his insurance company in so far as his action impedes the insurance company’s ability to pay out all the claims its clients are making upon it: The fact that the insurance company must pay him as the result of him overturning his car means they will not be able to pay some other claim(s) in the future. In this example I contend that there is an exercise of power, but the exercise of power is not the action upon which the example focuses. It is not the driver’s overturning of his car that amounts to an exercise of his power but rather his initial entering into the contract with his insurance company. His action of entering into the contract with his insurance company itself is what affected the company’s options, since that was the action that took away the company’s option to accept his money and not pay out in the event of an accident. In other words, his overturning his car did not affect his insurance company’s options because their options had already been affected by entering into a contract with him.

Morriss’ third strategy to show that power should be thought of as effecting changes and not simply affecting others is to argue that an agent can have the capacity to effect a state of affairs - and indeed even be considered quite powerful - without also having the capacity to affect anything. Power thus ought not be considered a capacity to affect others because it would be impossible to count such an agent as powerful (since he

\textsuperscript{151} Young (1978), p. 63. A similar example that Morriss also discusses comes from Stanley Benn and involves a financier whose unwise investments cause his clients financial ruin. See Benn (1967), p. 426.
lacks the capacity to affect anything or anyone). Morriss’ example proceeds along the following lines: Imagine a man, Hank, who has but one power, namely the ability to guarantee that the sun will rise in the morning. If the sun is not going to rise, Hank has a machine that can bring it about that the sun will in fact rise. However, this machine’s power is extremely limited: It can only make the sun rise in the morning if the sun is not already going to rise. If the machine is activated on a day when the sun is already going to rise, the machine does not actually bring anything about. If we presume that the sun will rise in the morning for every day of Hank’s life, then it seems that Hank’s machine will never actually affect anything - it will never make a difference as to whether or not the sun rises in the morning, even though Hank would seem to be quite powerful in that he can guarantee that the sun will rise in the morning every day of his life by always flipping the machine on before he goes to sleep. To add a further wrinkle, imagine that Hank’s neighbour, Diana, possesses a machine with the exact same powers as Hank’s machine, and that Diana will always turn on her machine before going to sleep.

Hank, in Morriss’ analysis, would have the power to bring about a guarantee that the sun will rise, although he will never be able to affect whether it rises (given the stipulation that it will in fact rise every morning during Hank’s lifetime). Moreover, he will never be able to affect whether it is guaranteed that it will rise (it will always be guaranteed to rise since Diana will always turn on her machine). Thus Morriss would

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152 See Morriss (2002), pp. 30-32. Morriss’ original example differs mine primarily in that it only involves one agent instead of two agents. I have added the second agent for the sake of clarity.
conclude that if Hank is powerful, power cannot be a matter of affecting things since Hank only has the ability to effect (bring about) a guarantee that the sun will rise. For the sake of argument, I’ll concede that Hank is powerful, although I question whether he does not have the capacity to affect anything, and whether this example helps to show that power can only manifest itself when it is exercised.

With regards to whether Hank has the capacity to affect anything, I argue that he seems to have at least two such capacities: First, Hank can affect who guarantees that the sun will rise. If Hank turns on his machine first, then he will have brought about the guarantee rather Diana. Second, Hank has the capacity to affect Diana’s options. The fact that Hank can turn on his machine first and thus himself guarantee that the sun will rise blocks Diana’s conjunctive option to bring about the guarantee that the sun will rise and turn her machine on after Hank turns his on. So it seems that Hank has the power to affect the world in at least two ways, both of which are intertwined with his power to effect a guarantee that the sun will rise. More importantly, this second way in which he can affect the world allows us to highlight a difficulty with Morriss’ argument that power cannot manifest itself without being exercised: In this case it seems that the fact that Hank has the power to bring about the guarantee that the sun will rise does make a difference in the world. Because of Hank’s power, Diana can no longer guarantee that the sun will rise and activate her machine after Hank’s. If Diana wants to bring about the guarantee that the sun will rise, she now not only has to remember to turn her machine on before going to sleep, but also has to make sure to do so first. Moreover, it seems that the existence of
Hank’s power is sufficient to make it the case that Diana’s options have been constrained: Hank need not exercise his power for Diana’s options to be limited.

One worry a supporter of Morriss might have is that what I call ‘inactive manifestations of power’ are simply what Morriss calls cases of ‘influence’. Thus, it might be argued, Morriss is well aware of the phenomenon to which I am calling attention, although he prefers to use a different term to understand it. One significant difficulty with this line of objection is that my argument ought not only to undermine Morriss’ activist view that power only manifests itself when it is exercised, but also Morriss’ argument for distinguishing between ‘power’ and ‘influence’ as he does. This is because Morriss’ argument for distinguishing between ‘power’ and ‘influence’ depends on it being incorrect to count power as a matter of affecting others rather than a matter of effecting changes in others. In turn, Morriss’ argument that it is incorrect to count power as a matter of affecting others turns on the three strategies that I have just examined and refuted. Thus, in so far as it effectively thwarted Morriss’ three strategies, my argument against Morriss ought to show not only that power can manifest itself without being exercised but also that the difference between ‘power’ and ‘influence’ should not simply be thought of as a difference between effecting changes (in others) and affecting others.

A further reply depends on the difference between an agent bringing about changes and an agent’s power bringing about changes to which I called attention earlier. As we saw, Morriss maintains that it is only when one effects changes in the world that one's power manifests itself, whereas one should be thought of as influencing others
when one merely affects them. As I argued above, a serious problem with activist views is that they seem to obscure that the central issue concerns what happens because of the powers possessed by agents, rather than what happens because of the powers and the agents who possess them. In other words, when we are interested in manifestations of power simpliciter, we are only interested in what happens because of the powers that agents possess. Arguably, it is when we are interested in responsibility for manifestations of power that we are interested in what happens both because of the powers possessed by agents and because of the agents who possess the powers. So, Morriss may very well be right that an agent can only be influencing events when he is not exercising his powers, but, as I argued earlier, this does not show that his power has not manifested itself - that, we might say, his power made a difference even if he, strictly speaking, did not. Thus, we can say that even if Morriss is right to maintain that questions about an agent's power are in the first instance questions about the ways in which an agent can effect or bring about changes in the world, it is not incorrect to maintain, as I do, that one agent has power in relation to another agent whenever the one agent can affect the other agent's options.

4.4: Responsibilist Views

In my discussion of the responsibilist view I look primarily at the arguments of Connolly and Lukes, since others who affirm a tight connection between power and
responsibility tend to follow their arguments. Connolly’s account of power starts from the seemingly unassuming observation that (i) “in those cases where the predicate “power” is applicable, either the [receiving agent’s] capacity for choice or his ability to act as he chooses has somehow been impaired”. He then moves to the conclusion that (ii) where an agent has been affected by power, responsibility shifts “in some degree... away from the [receiving agent] and towards the [projecting agent]”. Connolly’s ‘paradigm’ of power is thus one in which A’s power in relation to B manifests to the extent that A negatively impacts B’s choice situation either (a) by intentionally creating some obstacle for B, (b) by unintentionally creating an obstacle for B where he could have avoided doing so and should have foreseen the negative impact upon B, (c) by being able to create the obstacle and having created the expectation that he would do so if pressed, or (d) by failing to remove some obstacle for B that he ought to have removed.

I have no quarrel at present with Connolly’s understanding of what it would be for A to be (at least partially) responsible for an obstacle faced by B. It is surely a virtue of his account of responsibility that it would include conscious manifestations of power as

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153 Warternberg (1990), p. 86, for example, agrees with Connolly that one’s responsibility for a given action is reduced when she performs that action, at least in part, because her practical landscape has been constrained by the exercise of someone else’s power. The difficulty here, though, is that Wartenberg does not distinguish between an exercise of power and a manifestation of power. It is difficult to determine, therefore, whether Wartenberg is only asserting that exercises of A’s power reduce B’s responsibility for a given outcome (an assertion with which I would agree), or whether he is also asserting that unconscious manifestation of A’s power reduces B’s responsibility (an assertion with which I would disagree, except in cases where A ought to have realized what he was doing).

154 Connolly (1993), pp. 93-4. Theorists such as myself, Wartenberg, Arendt, Allen, and others would not accept such a contention. As I argued earlier, power can have both negative and positive effects.


well as unconscious manifestations of power of which the projecting agent ought to have been aware. Nevertheless, I argue that (ii) is mistaken, and so we ought not to think that responsibility plays a central role in determining what is a manifestation of power. In essence, I contend that it is one thing for one’s power to manifest itself and another thing entirely for one to be responsible for the consequences of one’s actions or inactions.  

Let us for the moment ignore the possibility that power can manifest itself in such a way as to enhance the choices available to an agent and assume that Connolly is indeed right that power always lessens the responsibility of the receiving agent. The fact that an agent’s practical landscape was constrained by another’s power entails that the receiving agent’s ability to engage in actions related to that constraint is lessened, and so too is his responsibility for the relevant outcomes lessened. In such a case, the truth of (ii) would entail that some responsibility for those actions has been shifted towards the projecting agent. (ii) seems to simply assert, in other words, that responsibility is similar to a zero-sum game: If one party loses some responsibility for an outcome because of another party’s actions, the other party must gain some responsibility for that action, according to (ii). Whether or not this is true depends on the sense in which one is using the term ‘responsibility’. If one is using the term ‘responsibility’ in the very broad causal sense

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157 Here I am employing the notion of ‘responsibility’ in the sense that it is concerned with blaming and punishing agents. In saying the power of agents can sometimes manifest itself without them being responsible for the outcome, I thus only mean to say that the agents in question will sometimes not be fit subjects of blame/punishment regarding the outcomes of the manifestations of their power. I most certainly do not mean to say that it isn’t appropriate to hold them responsible for the outcomes of their power in a forward-looking fashion, in a way that asks them to reflect upon the unintended and unforeseen consequences of their actions, with an aim to changing their actions in the future. On this distinction between two different senses of responsibility, see Young (1990), pp.148-51.
where being responsible for something is just to have caused it or taken part in its coming about, then it seems clear that it would not be possible for the manifestation of a projecting agent’s power to have taken away responsibility from the receiving agent and to not have transferred some of it to the projecting agent: In such a case taking away or reducing responsibility would just seem to be a matter of making the receiving agent no longer the sole cause of the relevant outcome. However, if we use ‘responsibility’ in the narrower sense where it implies being an appropriate subject of praise or blame for the outcome, then it is not clear why a reduction in one agent’s responsibility would always result in an increase in some other agent’s responsibility.

Consider the following scenario: Jane, a light-skinned woman, was raised by her racist parents to hate dark-skinned people. But Jane eventually comes to realize that her hatred of dark-skinned people is both irrational and unjust. Upon realizing this, Jane does her best to overcome these prejudices. Jane is successful enough that, after a certain point, she never again makes any racist remarks and she is disgusted with herself whenever a racist thought enters her mind. Nevertheless, certain traces of her racist upbringing remain in her behavior: She tends to voluntarily associate only with light-skinned people, to only watch television shows in which light-skinned people are portrayed in a positive light vis-a-vis dark-skinned people, to take light-skinned people at their word (but not dark-skinned people), to act uncomfortably and guardedly in the presence of dark-skinned people (but not, or at least not nearly as much, in the presence of light-skinned people), and so forth. In short, even though she has managed to
overcome her racist upbringing in her conscious life, this upbringing still shows up unconsciously in her behavior. When Jane has a daughter, Sally, Jane does her best to avoid raising Sally to be prejudiced against dark-skinned people. Nevertheless, Jane’s racist upbringing still shows up in her actions unconsciously, and so Sally inherits these prejudices to some degree because of Jane’s behavior. What is worse, perhaps, is that Sally cannot recognize her prejudices as the result of a racist upbringing because she did not seem to have such an upbringing. Sally’s prejudices appear to her as mere preferences: She ‘just happens’ to find light-skinned people more attractive than dark-skinned ones, she ‘just happens’ to consistently find light-skinned job applicants more skilled than dark-skinned ones, and so forth.

It seems clear that while Sally’s prejudiced actions against dark-skinned people are certainly problematic, it would be difficult to hold her responsible for them in the narrower sense of responsibility. Sally’s relationship with Jane, after all, shaped her practical landscape very profoundly, and it was because of this relationship and Jane’s unconsciously prejudiced behavior that Sally came to have her prejudices against dark-skinned people. But this does not mean that Jane necessarily bears responsibility for Sally’s preferences. Jane could easily have done all that could have been expected of her, and so not be a fitting subject of moral blame or censure for Sally’s preferences. Nonetheless, it was clearly because of manifestations of Jane’s power in relation to Sally

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159 Although she might be responsible in Young’s future-oriented sense of responsibility (1990), pp.148-51.
that Sally came to have her prejudices. So it seems that (ii) is problematic: Without further information, we cannot necessarily conclude that A is somehow responsible for something B does merely from the fact that B’s responsibility for something was reduced because B’s practical landscape was affected by A’s power. The further information we would require here is just the sort of information we would need to determine whether A is responsible for some result of his actions, independent of whether or not those results came about because of a manifestation of A’s power. To insist that responsibility is necessary for power to manifest itself seems, therefore, not to be proven by Connolly.160

Lukes’ argument for a necessary connection between power and responsibility begins much like Wrong’s argument regarding power and intentions: Lukes begins by noting that we need to be able to distinguish an exercise of power from ‘structural determination’.161 So the challenge is to figure out what the limits are of it being sensible to assert that A is exercising power, and it turns out that these limits correspond exactly with the limits of A’s responsibility for the outcomes of his actions; for Lukes, where there is not responsibility there cannot be an exercise of power, and wherever there is an exercise of power there is (at least partial) responsibility:

[T]o identify a given process as an ‘exercise of power’, rather than as a case of structural determination, is to assume that it is in the exerciser’s or exercisers’ power to act differently...

160 Ultimately, (i) seems to be mistaken as well: To say that someone’s responsibility for a given outcome was reduced because of a certain event requires an original reference point, a scenario in which A would have had more responsibility for the outcome. In the vast majority of isolated cases it seems that we will likely be able to do this. For example, in the case where A coerced B into doing phi, we can readily say that B is less responsible for doing phi than he would have been if he had done it without any coercion on A’s part. But in the long run this is problematic because it seems to imply an unrealistic picture of the agent, a picture of the agent on which it is possible for him to choose his ends without any prior influences.

161 Lukes (2005), p. 54.
The justification of this claim... lies in the relation between power and responsibility. The reason why identifying such an exercise involves the assumption the the exerciser(s) could have acted differently - and, where they are unaware of the consequences of their action or inaction, that they could have ascertained these - is that an attribution of power is at the same time an attribution of (partial or total) responsibility for certain consequences. The point, in other words, of locating power is to fix responsibility for consequences held to flow from the action, or inaction, of certain specifiable agents.162

Two replies are in order to this argument:163 First, while it seems that the ability to act otherwise may indeed be necessary for an agent to be responsible for an exercise (or manifestation) of his power, it is not clear why the ability to act otherwise is required for the agent to exercise his power. This is because the fact that an agent could not have acted otherwise does not mean that he was prevented from actively bringing about the manifestation of his power. Consider the commander of a group of soldiers who is temporarily taken hostage (held at gunpoint) by an enemy for the sake of compelling him to command his soldiers to lay down their weapons and let the enemy escape. The soldiers are loyal to their commander and will do whatever he commands, whether that be laying down their arms and letting the enemy pass, or attempting to shoot the enemy before he can kill the commander. But the commander knows the enemy well enough to know that he will get a shot off before the soldiers take him out. So the commander, intensely fearing a useless death and knowing that letting this enemy go will not make much difference, sees himself as having no option but to command his troops to let the enemy pass. If it is plausible to say here that the commander could not have acted otherwise, perhaps because of his psychological makeup, then his being able to act

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162 Lukes (2005), pp. 54-58. The idea that power requires responsibility is also endorsed by Lukes in the later essays (see pp. 76-8).
otherwise was not necessary for his power to manifest itself over his troops. If we view his command as a sort of involuntary, knee-jerk reaction to the threat of his impending death, then we may indeed hesitate to say that he *exercised* power over his troops, but this does not seem to show that it was not his power to control them that made the difference.

The second point has been made by Morriss in response to Connolly, but applies equally well here.⁶⁴ Morriss starts from the observation, seemingly endorsed by both Lukes and Connolly, that ‘having power’ is really prior to ‘exercising power’.⁶⁵ If this is true, though, and responsibility is required to attribute or ‘locate’ power, then it must be necessary for having power as well. But this is absurd, since there are certainly cases in which some agent can have power in relation to another agent that will only manifest if he exercises it: Our commander might have the power to get his troops to do just about anything by simply commanding them to do it, and yet never issue any commands. So if his troops decide to conduct a midnight raid on an enemy position, but he didn’t command it or indicate that it would be desirable, he would not seem to be responsible for the raid, even if he had the power to stop it. Thus, the point of locating power might not be to locate responsibility for outcomes but to instead map out social space or determine what the practical landscapes of agents look like. Here the point of locating a power of command in the commander could be to determine whether the soldiers thought they had the option to conduct the midnight raid and ask their commander for permission.

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4.5: The Relevance of the Capacity to Exercise Power

I have just argued that an agent’s intentions, foreknowledge, and responsibility are not required for that agent’s power to manifest itself, or, in other words, that activist and responsibilist views of when an agent’s power can manifest itself do not succeed. Along the way, however, I suggested that activists may be right about what is required for an agent to exercise his power. I now consider whether this is indeed the case, and then I consider the related question of whether one has to be able to exercise power in order for power to manifest itself. I shall argue that the answer to both of these questions is ‘yes’.

Let us begin by considering what it would be to hold an inactivist view of the conditions under which power is exercised in addition to an inactivist view of the conditions under which power manifests itself. Such a view would hold that an agent can exercise his power even if he doesn’t bring about a given manifestation of it. I tend to side here with Morriss and other activists in holding that the agent is not exercising power unless he is actively involved. This view is correct, I think, even if activists are wrong to maintain that the manifestation of power requires the power-holder’s active involvement.

Again, consider the slave owner’s capacity to affect his slave’s options by torturing him or threatening to torture him. While the slave owner is doing nothing at all, not even refraining from acting, it seems perfectly plausible to say that his power to (threaten to) torture his slave is still making a very significant difference in his slave’s life: Because of this power, the slave will seek to avoid anything that might upset his master and thereby cause his master to torture him. But should we count the master as
exercising this power when he is doing nothing at all, not even refraining from acting? Here we may presume that the master is neither torturing his slave, threatening to do so, nor even consciously taking advantage of his power to torture his slave. The motivation to conclude that he nonetheless could be exercising power seems to come from the fact that one does not want to simply screen out the multifarious ways in which the master might benefit from his power to torture his slave without deliberately bringing about those benefits in an active or direct way. In other words, the motivation to say that the master is still somehow exercising his power to torture his slave here seems to come from the fact that this power is still operative, that it is still constraining his slave’s options. But once we have the distinction between exercising power and power manifesting itself firmly in view, we do not need to say that the master is exercising his power; instead, we can simply say that his power is manifesting itself in inactive as opposed to active ways, and that, in the long run, it is more important to determine when an agent’s power manifests itself (either actively or inactively) than it is to determine when the agent is exercising that power. Indeed, we might say that one of the most normatively significant features of power is that it can affect agents’ options without ever being exercised.

Thus it seems that some sort of activist view is correct about the conditions under which an agent ought to count as exercising his power. The remaining thing to determine is whether we should opt for a responsibilist view - a view on which one must be responsible for a manifestation of his power to count as exercising it - or a pure activist view, a view on which one merely needs to do something aimed at activating his capacity
to affect others in order to count as exercising power. Here I would argue, in agreement with Morriss, that responsibility is not required to exercise power. It is important to keep in mind here that the responsibilist’s claim would not simply be that one has to be able to be responsible for an outcome to count as exercising power, but rather the stronger claim that one actually has to be responsible for an outcome in order to count as having brought that outcome about by means of exercising power.

A relevant example is that of the military commander who has been taken hostage and out of an overwhelming fear of losing his life orders his soldiers to lay down their arms and let his captor escape. If we presume that the commander’s psychological makeup was such that it was impossible for him to do otherwise, then it does not seem that we can hold him (fully) responsible for the outcome. Although we might think him a coward and decide to remove him from command for that reason, it would not seem entirely appropriate to blame him for what he did. Yet it also seems clear in this case that he did (successfully) exercise his power - he commanded his subordinates to lay down their arms and they obeyed.

So it seems that being responsible is not necessary to count as exercising one’s power. There may however, be a broader question to ask here: Is being able to be responsible necessary for one to exercise power? Here it would seem that the responsibilist and activist views come together for the simple reason that whatever one can do, one can do it for morally praiseworthy or blameworthy reasons. The commander

\[166\] On this see Pettit (2001).
in the example above ultimately issued his command out of an overpowering fear for his life, but there seems no reason to assume that he could not have done so for a different reason, for which it would be appropriate to blame him. He could have, for example, actually issued the command because he wanted his captor to escape and not because he was faced with a fear for his life that he could not psychologically overcome.

4.6: Power and Interests

As we saw in the second chapter, there is some debate in the literature as to whether there is an essential connection between power and interests, and, moreover, what the interests are that are connected with power. My view, in specifying the objects of power as the various components of agents’ practical landscapes, certainly entails that power has not manifested itself if it has not impacted certain of an agent’s subjective interests, broadly speaking. However, we might wonder whether both objective and subjective interests count, and, if so, what the correct account of the objective interests connected with power is. Moreover, we might also wonder whether we need a specification of the power-related interests in order to conduct a normative critique of a given structure of social relations.

Lukes’ basic idea is that ‘power’ is linked to interests because some specification of an individual’s interests is necessary to ground the counterfactual assertion that a manifestation of power has taken place. Consider the way that a manifestation of power is specified on my view, for example: A’s power in relation to B manifests itself whenever B’s practical landscape is affected because of A’s power. Presumably we would also like
to be able to identify some cases where power has manifested itself, which would seem to require us to be able to identify what B’s practical landscape would have looked like if it were not for the manifestation of A’s power. In the more overt cases this can be done without a specification of interests: When, for example, you threaten to shoot me if I do not give you my wallet and I take you at your word, I no longer have the believed option to keep my wallet and not get shot by you. But in many cases this will not be quite so easy. Consider, for example, the case where a worker believes that participating in the capitalist system is to his benefit in the long run rather than his detriment. To conclude that this belief was due to a manifestation of power, it might seem that we would require some basis for saying what the worker would ‘naturally’ have come to believe about the capitalist system had he not been ensnared by its dominant ideology.\footnote{167} We would seem to need an account, in other words, of what the worker’s objective interests were and how the capitalist system had prevented him from recognizing those objective interests.

There are two main questions to address here: (1) Do we actually need to be able to identify an individual’s interests to say that power has manifested itself with respect to that individual? (2) Do we need to be able to identify precisely how power has manifested itself in order to mount a normative critique of a social system? I shall answer the first question with a qualified ‘yes’ and the second question with a ‘no’. Where the first question is concerned, it seems true that we will at least sometimes need a specification of (objective) interests to say for sure that power has manifested itself. This

\footnote{167} See Abercrombie and Turner (1978) for a summary and criticism of this idea.
will be especially true in the cases where we suspect that an agent has been prevented from coming to have a particular believed option or where she has seemingly suspect evaluative beliefs or preferences. In such a case, we would clearly need some ground for the counterfactual assertion that the receiving agent would have believed differently if it were not for someone else’s power. However, this does not mean that a basic conception of power is woefully incomplete without such a specification. This is because there will still be many cases where we can posit the operation of power without an account of objective interests. For example, as above, cases of explicit threats remove believed options. Likewise, as we examined in the last chapter, legal and social institutions can make it nearly impossible for individuals to have certain believed options (e.g. the option of initiating criminal proceedings in cases of spousal rape).

As for requiring a specification of individual’s interests to mount a normative critique of a society, it seems that such a specification would only be required for certain kinds of critiques. Consider a society containing a lot of domination, where being able to dominate someone is understood as having the capacity to arbitrarily exercise power-over her.\footnote{168 This is roughly the view of Pettit (1997), which we take up at length in Part 2 of this dissertation.} We might criticize such a society on the grounds that it would have a very negative impact on the interests of its members, in which case we would need some specification of their interests (and their objective interests in particular), or we might criticize such a society on the grounds that there is something inherently objectionable about an agent having the capacity to dominate others, regardless of the impact that capacity had on their
objective interests. On the whole, then, contra Lukes, we do not need a specific account of objective interests for a plausible account of power. Such an account could supplement the account of power I have offered here, but it is neither a necessary component of a basic account of power nor necessary for a normative critique of power.

4.7 Conclusion

In the first part of this thesis I explored a number of central questions about power and presented an understanding of power that is inactivist and quasi-relationalist. My view is inactivist because it allows an agent’s power to manifest itself both when he plays an active role in bringing it about and when he does not play an active role in bringing it about. My view is also inactivist because it does not require a second-order kind of active involvement for an agent’s power to manifest itself, the sort of active involvement that would obtain in cases where he was responsible for an outcome even though he did not positively act so as to bring it about. My view is quasi-relationalist in so far as it holds that some but not all of an agent’s powers derive from or require the presence of social relations. I also examined some general ideas about how to transform problematic power-conferring structures of social relations. What I have not done, though, is examine in a systematic way the normative aspects of power. This is the issue that I turn to in the next part of this thesis, where I specifically put forth a republican understanding of what makes power acceptable and unacceptable.
Part 2:

Republicanism
CHAPTER 5: THE CONVENTIONAL REPUBLICAN VIEW OF POWER

5.0: Normative Neutrality?

The view of power that I presented in the first part of this dissertation is normatively neutral. Before going on to enrich it with a radical republican normative component, I shall briefly clarify the normative neutrality of my basic view. In general, there are two respects in which power might have an inherent normative valence. The first respect concerns the outcomes of manifestations of power: It might be thought, as Lukes initially did, that power always has a negative effect on the practical landscape of the receiving agent, that it is always bad for her on the whole, because it is always exercised against her interests.\(^{169}\) Such a view can be falsified by showing that the effects of power can either be good or bad on the whole for the receiving agent. Consider here the power that parents exercise in relation to their children: Child-rearing, it seems, inevitably entails the exercise of power, and indeed perhaps largely power-over. For example, a parent must limit her child’s ability to watch television in the present so that she will have a wide range of options in the future. Such a limitation of options clearly seems to be an exercise of power but also clearly seems difficult to classify as being against the interests of the receiving agent. Indeed, it is cases such as these that caused Lukes to abandon his initial claim that power was always exercised against individuals’ interests, on the grounds that

\(^{169}\) Lukes (2005), pp. 29-37.
this initial definition neglected “the manifold ways in which power over others can be productive, transformative, authoritative, and compatible with dignity”.¹⁷⁰

The argument I have just given is in line with most views found in the power literature. For example, Wrong, Dowding, Allen, and Wartenberg all hold such a view.¹⁷¹ Wartenberg, for example, argues that the normative valence of power depends on the use to which it is put: Some power relations are instances of domination because they operate to the detriment of the receiving agent, whereas other power relations operate to the benefit of the receiving agent, and even aim to make the receiving agent independent by transforming her.¹⁷² Allen concurs with Wartenberg, arguing that not all forms of power-over are objectionable because some forms of power-over work to the advantage of the receiving agent; the relationship between a coach and the players on a sports team is an excellent example of power-over that is exercised for the benefit of the constrained.¹⁷³

There is, however, a second respect in which power might not be normatively neutral. This has to do with how power affects receiving agents rather than with the overall goodness or badness of the outcomes it produces. Power, in other words, might bring about good or bad outcomes, but it might bring them about in a way that was inherently objectionable. On my view, power is also normatively neutral in this second sense, since it both brings about changes in agents’ practical landscapes in seemingly

¹⁷² Examples of this latter sort of power relation are the aforementioned nurturance relationship between parent and child and the educative relationship between master and apprentice; Wartenberg (1990), pp. 115-139, 203-222.
objectionable and seemingly unobjectionable ways. My view of power has no objection to thinking that power-over is, other things being equal, objectionable to a receiving agent even if it furthers her interests in the long run. In fact, as we shall see in the next chapter, this feature of power-over can help us to understand what might make cases of power unacceptable. However, my view denies that an agent’s power is always (potentially) objectionable in this way. This is because there are other forms of powers in relation to that are not objectionable to the receiving agent in this way. Both power-for and power-with do not seem to have this feature. Power-for is similar to power-over in that both involve the unilateral affecting of the receiving agent, but power-for is different in that the unilateral addition of non-exploitative options does not seem to be objectionable whereas the unilateral subtraction of options or the addition of exploitative options does seem to be objectionable. I would suggest that this difference arises because (i) where an option has been unilaterally added to a receiving agent’s practical landscape she can choose to take it, whereas (ii) she cannot choose to take a removed or exploitative option in the same way. Power-with, on the other hand, does not seem to be objectionable to the receiving agent because she is not simply a receiving agent where it is concerned; she is also a projecting agent. This of course does not prevent a group of agents from exercising their power with each other in a way that amounts to power-over or power-for from an outsider’s perspective, but it does mean that those exercising power-with don’t seem to have to find it objectionable.
Given, then, that power can be understood as normatively neutral, we need to discover under what conditions it is actually acceptable. This is the very issue that I pursue in this and the next chapter. The view I present builds on my arguments in the first four chapters in so far as it aims to avoid the mistakes of activist views of power and in so far as it attends to the respects in which power arises out of social relations. The argument that I present here, however, does not attempt to provide a criterion for distinguishing acceptable from unacceptable instances of power that excludes other rival conceptions. In other words, I take as my starting point the normative criterion represented by the republican ideal of nondomination, or the absence of arbitrary power, but I do not show that this criterion is superior to all other alternatives. Rather, my aim is simply to explore the republican ideal to see whether it provides an adequate means for distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable instances of power.

My particular starting point is the republican idea of freedom as nondomination that has been championed in recent literature most prominently by Philip Pettit.\(^\text{174}\) In this chapter my aim is primarily to determine what sort of underlying view of power Pettit has and to assess some of the basic shortcomings of this view in terms of the arguments I have made in the previous four chapters. In particular I shall attempt to show that Pettit has a view of power that is broadly activist (or responsibilist) in character, and so a state which has as its primary goal the elimination of arbitrary power (or domination) will fail

\(^{174}\) Pettit (1997) is the first major presentation. For other understandings of the republican vision, see Lovett (2010), Shapiro (2003), Shapiro (2012), Skinner (1998), Viroli (2002), and Dagger (1997).
to count as problematic many arbitrary inactive manifestations of an individual’s power (or, as I shall call them, cases of arbitrary conscious-resistant power).

5.1: The Basics Of Pettit’s Republican Political Philosophy

On Pettit’s account the republican state, first and foremost, seeks to maximize, in a consequentialist fashion, the freedom as nondomination of its citizens. As a consequentialist political doctrine, it treats the promotion of nondomination (or the thwarting of domination) as a goal (and the primary goal) that the state should seek to achieve, rather than as a constraint on what actions and policies the state can pursue. A citizen is free from the domination of others when those others lack the power to arbitrarily interfere with her. To say that one has the power to arbitrarily interfere with another is to say that one can interfere with that other at will, or that one’s actions with respect to that other are not forced to track, or take into account, the other’s interests or ideas. In essence, then, the core of republican political philosophy is a commitment on

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175 The republican state is thus allowed (and required) to pursue policies that may result in domination, so long as they can be assumed to reduce expected domination in the long-run (Pettit (1997), pp. 97-109).

176 Pettit generally prefers to use the term ‘track’ rather than ‘take into account’/’account for’, although I shall use both here. The reason for this is that ‘track’ seems, at least to me, to indicate that nondominating instances of power are ones that are responsive to interests or ideas in a positive way, or in other words, that promote such interests. But this is not necessarily what Pettit has in mind, for he is clear that power can negatively impact an agent’s interests and yet not dominate him. ((1997), pp. 172-183). Rather, the idea seems to be that a manifestation of power is arbitrary when the interests or ideas of the receiving agent aren’t factored into the conditions that give rise to that manifestation. This does not mean that power needs to promote the interests or ideas of the receiving agent in order to be non-arbitrary. Rather, the impact on the interests or ideas of a receiving agent needs to have been taken into consideration by the circumstances that gave rise to a given manifestation of power.

177 Pettit (1997), pp. 52-58. As a number of authors, including Markell (2008), have pointed out, this formulation of the understanding of arbitrariness is ambiguous between a number of different readings. We shall explore this ambiguity in much greater detail in Chapter 6.
the part of the state and on the part of (virtuous) republican citizens to regulating power relations between individuals so that unacceptable kinds of power relations (ones that evince domination) are minimized as much as possible.

The conception of arbitrary power employed by republican political philosophy is thus one of its most basic elements. For republicans, unacceptable power is called ‘domination’, which obtains when a projecting agent has the ability to affect a receiving agent’s practical landscape in an arbitrary fashion. Conversely, power is acceptable for republicans when it is ‘nondominating’, which obtains when a projecting agent cannot affect a receiving agent’s practical landscape in an arbitrary fashion. This does not mean that the projecting agent must lack the ability to affect the receiving agent’s practical landscape *simpliciter* in order to not dominate him, only that he must lack the ability to affect it arbitrarily (that is, in a manner that isn’t forced to take the receiving agent’s interests or ideas into account). It is not simply the ability to interfere that matters for republicans, rather it is the capacity to dominate that matters.

However, given the republican state’s general goal of maximally thwarting arbitrary power, there are two more specific aims it seeks to achieve. Firstly, republican society needs to be structured such that each citizen is maximally protected from *dominium*, or being dominated by other citizens. Secondly, citizens must be maximally protected from *imperium*, or being dominated by the state, whether in the form of domination at the hands of state officials, or in the form of domination by state policies.
The avoidance of *dominium* is pursued mainly by ensuring that no citizen has a status in relation to others that would result in him being exposed to a significant amount of domination. This is accomplished by making sure that all citizens are on roughly equal footing in terms of the means, both legal and otherwise, at their disposal to resist attempts at domination by others. Pettit describes this as achieving a state of ‘structural egalitarianism,’ which he distinguishes, in particular, from egalitarian perspectives that focus on equality of resources or equality of opportunity. Inequalities of resources or opportunities are permitted in a structural egalitarian state, but only in so far as they stop short of giving better off citizens the ability to dominate worse off citizens because of the disparities between them.

An important means of ensuring a structurally egalitarian state, other than the presence of a constitutional system of law that is not itself administered on an arbitrary basis, is the provision of special protections for those belonging to what Pettit calls a ‘significant vulnerability class’ - usually a significant social group of individuals that shares in common some distinguishing characteristic(s) on the basis of which all members of that group are typically vulnerable to abuse and other forms of domination at

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178 The ideal here is best described as one where citizens have roughly equal powers to resist attempts at domination, rather than one in which they have equal power with respect to each other *simpliciter*. This is because ‘equal power *simpliciter*’ could be achieved in principle if citizens all had equally high abilities to dominate each other. The ideal republican state, on the other hand, is one in which there are widespread and equitably distributed powers to resist domination with very few (or no) actual powers to dominate.

179 Pettit (1997), pp. 113-119. So, income disparities would not be intrinsically objectionable; such disparities would be permissible up to the point that they did not overcome the institutional arrangements existed in a society for preventing the well off from dominating others through their greater wealth.

the hands of outsiders.\textsuperscript{181} So, if all those who have the appearance of belonging to a certain ethnic group are especially vulnerable to being assumed to have inferior workplace skills, then it might be necessary to enshrine special protections or advantages for them in employment law. Likewise, if all those who appear to be of a certain sexual orientation are especially vulnerable to harassment or assault, it might be necessary to enact specific legal statutes aimed at recognizing this particular vulnerability, in addition to the legal statues that protect the average citizen from harassment or assault - say, for example, to add the category of hate crimes to already existing criminal codes.

The avoidance of \textit{imperium} will be pursued through a variety of constitutional mechanisms and through proper attention to the virtues possessed by both public officials and private citizens. The constitutional mechanisms will include familiar ones such as a separation of powers among a number of different branches of government, a generally counter-majoritarian alignment, and the enshrinement of the rule of law.\textsuperscript{182} Perhaps more importantly, the republican state will be a constitutional democracy that has what Pettit calls a ‘contestatory’ character: It will be a state where any citizen can, ideally, contest or dispute any state policy if she feels that the policy doesn’t sufficiently account for her interests and ideas and where, ideally, a policy will be changed if is found that the policy does not adequately account for her interests and ideas.\textsuperscript{183} The institutions that

\textsuperscript{181} Pettit (1997), pp. 122-125.
\textsuperscript{182} Pettit (1997), pp. 172-183.
\textsuperscript{183} Pettit (1997), pp. 183-205. Of course, it might be the case that a policy remains as it is even if it is found that it initially failed to account for a citizen’s interests and ideas; it might be determined that the policy need not change even once the citizen’s interests and ideas are taken into account.
give the state this contestatory character are of paramount importance for the republican since they are, perhaps more than anything else, what assures that the state and its policies are actually forced to track the interests and ideas of the citizens. Attention to the virtues of public officials is important to the avoidance of *imperium* in so far as it is necessary to ensure that those who occupy positions in the state’s various institutional bodies are not the sorts of individuals who will take advantage of their privileged position to dominate others.\(^{184}\) Attention to the virtues of private citizens is important to avoiding *imperium* because without their vigilance, it will be difficult to assure that state policies are actually responsive to their interests and ideas.\(^{185}\)

The virtues of private citizens are also important in connection with one of the distinctive features of nondomination, namely what Pettit calls its ‘subjective and intersubjective’ aspects. To understand these subjective and intersubjective aspects, first recall that the maximization of a citizen’s freedom as non-domination requires that citizen to be on roughly equal footing, power-wise, with her fellow citizens.\(^ {186}\) Such equality couldn’t obtain, Pettit argues, without that equality being a matter of common knowledge among the parties involved: Without such common knowledge, the protections from domination enjoyed by citizens wouldn’t be fully effective, and maybe not even very effective at all. Thus, Pettit thinks non-domination is connected

\(^{184}\) Pettit (1997), Ch.7.
\(^{185}\) See Pettit (1997), Ch.8.
\(^{186}\) Again, the ideal here is one in which all citizens will have roughly the same significant abilities to resist domination, and where the actual ability of some to dominate others will be as minimal as possible.
[W]ith subjective self-image and intersubjective status… [T]he enjoyment of non-domination in relation to another agent… goes with being able to look the other in the eye, confident in the shared knowledge that it is not by their leave that you pursue your … choices; you pursue those choices, as of publicly recognized right. You do not have to live in fear of that other… or in deference to them… You are a somebody in relation to them, not a nobody.\footnote{Pettit (1997), p. 71.}

So a citizen who enjoys a high level of non-domination not only has the power to resist others’ attempts at domination, but also ought to see herself as being of the same status as them. The connection here with the virtues of private citizens is quite close: Since the existence of a law is not sufficient to guarantee its enforcement, and since the effective enforcement of laws designed to thwart domination cannot be accomplished by the state alone,\footnote{So long as the scope of the state’s involvement in the private lives of citizens is relatively limited.} these laws will not be effective unless the citizenry have the dispositions needed to support them. Such dispositions will include a respect for one’s fellow citizens, vigilance in attending to others’ potential subjection to domination, and a willingness to come to the aid of the dominated, especially where newly-articulated grievances are concerned.\footnote{Pettit (1997), pp. 241-251.} In other words, a high-level of non-domination is not something one can enjoy on her own: One does not enjoy a high-level of non-domination if she merely has formal powers to resist others’ attempts at domination; her powers to resist domination also have to be effective, and they will not be effective unless her fellow citizens stand ready to come to her aid. Thus, enjoying a high level of non-domination not only entails being able to look a potential dominator in the eye, it entails being able to look him in the eye because one is empowered by a robust network of legal and social relations.
5.2: Pettit’s Underlying Conception of Power

As should be clear from the above discussion, the underlying conception of power employed by republicanism is centrally important for evaluating it as a political doctrine. Not only will the underlying conception of power do a great deal to determine the sorts of phenomena that count as domination (and therefore which the state has a principled reason to counteract), but it will also do a great deal to determine what sorts of phenomena republican citizens ought to vigilantly guard against. Thus the first step to determining whether the republican notion of domination offers a suitable criterion for distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable instances of power is to work out what Pettit’s underlying conception of power is: Does he have an activist, responsibilist, or inactivist view, and to what extent does he account for the relation-borne aspects of power? I shall argue that the most plausible interpretation is to regard Pettit as having a responsibilist view and that, while he does pay significant attention to the relation-borne aspects of power, his generally activist orientation towards these aspects of power leaves room for improvement.

The first clue to Pettit’s underlying view comes in *Republicanism* when he describes the interference with others that is involved in the exercise of arbitrary power. He seems to say that unconscious instances of power (cases where an agent is not conscious of how his power affects others) do not fall within his view when he says that the interference with the receiving agent “always has to be more or less intentional in
character: it cannot occur by accident, for example, as when I fall in your path or happen to compete with you for scarce goods; it must at least be the sort of action in the doing of which we can sensibly allege negligence”.\footnote{Pettit (1997), p. 53.} In subsequent work, Pettit identifies this latter sort of action involving negligence as ‘quasi-intentional’.\footnote{Pettit (2008c), p.130. There might seem to be some ambiguity in Pettit’s initial description, since he indicates that the interference in question “includes coercion of the body, as in restraint or obstruction; coercion of the will, as in punishment or the threat of punishment; and... manipulation: this is usually covert and may take the form of agenda-fixing, the deceptive or non-rational shaping of people’s beliefs or desires, or the rigging of the consequences of people’s actions” (1997), p. 53. On this reading, to determine whether Pettit’s conception recognizes both conscious and unconscious forms of power (or active and passive manifestations of power), first we need to figure out what the ‘non-rational manipulation of people’s beliefs or desires’ entails, since this could be interpreted in both an activist fashion and an inactivist fashion. On the strictly activist interpretation, this manipulation is conscious or active on the manipulator’s part but non-rational since it doesn’t involve, say, appealing to reasons. On the inactivist interpretation, the manipulation would at least sometimes be ‘non-rational’ on the manipulator’s part insofar as it isn’t the result of any conscious, rational deliberation. In the end, though, the bulk of the evidence seems to clearly speak in favor of a conception of power that generally includes active manifestations of power and generally excludes inactive manifestations of power. Most importantly, Pettit seems to clarify this ambiguity regarding manipulation in a later book when he characterizes it as a ‘intentional or quasi-intentional’ form of interference that operates on “an agent’s psychology or belief set...[to] deny the agent knowledge of options or costs” (Pettit (2001), p.132). Note that by ‘quasi-intentional’ interference Pettit means interference where the projecting agent could count as negligent ((2001), p.130).} Moreover, Pettit’s setting of the threshold of dominating interference at the border between sensible and non-sensible attributions of negligence clearly seems to speak against including many inactive manifestations of power: The only inactive cases of power that would seem to be allowed by this proviso are those where the projecting agent was not, but ought to have been, conscious or aware of how he affected the receiving agent. However, cases where it is not reasonable to expect the projecting agent to be aware of how he affects the receiving agent seem not to be allowed by this model.

Consider a case where, because of the background legal and social norms within a society, a woman has come to expect that there is a non-negligible chance that she will be
raped if she walks home alone at night on an empty street. Whenever she has to walk home alone late at night, she is always careful to remain extremely alert to her surroundings and to who might be in her vicinity. Should she notice a man walking behind her, she will become worried about what he might do, and she will deliberately change her route so that it goes through a busier area, even if this significantly increases her travel time. Any reasonably intimidating man who happens to be walking behind her in such circumstances will thus affect her believed options: She will no longer think that she can take the shorter route home without risking getting raped by him. But in at least some of these cases the manifestation of the man’s power will be neither intended nor foreseen by him, and where his failure to foresee the manifestation of his power will not surpass the threshold of negligence - that is, his failure to foresee the manifestation of his power will not itself be something for which it is appropriate to blame him. So, if the threshold for domination is either knowledge of the manifestation of one’s power or culpable ignorance of it, the man’s unconsciously affecting the woman’s practical landscape would not seem to count as a manifestation of his arbitrary power.

A further point in favor of this reading occurs when Pettit reaffirms the ‘intentional’ nature of his view of power in a discussion specifically dedicated to mapping out its relation to other views of power. After making the point that some views allow

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192 I do not mean here to indicate that there isn’t some sort of negligence or responsibility on the man’s part, but instead merely to indicate that it would not seem to pass the threshold for culpable ignorance that is operative in legal proceedings. On the contrary, I do think that men in general bear responsibility to think about how their seeming random encounters with other in scenarios such as this might affect those others, and to modify their behavior if possible to take these potential manifestations of their power into account.
both intentional and non-intentional interference to count as power, he emphasizes that his view involves “an intentional sort of power, because the things which the bearer can do are things [he] can be praised or blamed for doing; they are not beyond [his] control”.\footnote{Pettit (1997), p.79.} Initially this seems to leave little doubt that Pettit’s view includes intentional manifestations of power and excludes non-intentional manifestations of power. However, the final result is more complicated, for, if we take Pettit’s earlier assertion about negligence and his present assertion about praise/blame seriously, his view will have to include some non-intentional manifestations of power. This is because there are surely cases where one can negligently impose a restraint on another, and thus be to blame, without either intending or foreseeing that the restraint would be imposed. The most straightforward interpretation of these passages, therefore, seems to be to take them as indicating a responsibilist rather than a strictly activist or intentionalist view. Thus Pettit’s conception of power would generally include consciously-imposed constraints (excluding only those for which the agent cannot be praised or blamed or be held negligent) and would generally exclude unconsciously-imposed constraints (including only those for which the agent can be praised or blamed or be held negligent).

This interpretation fits well with a more recent distinction Pettit has made concerning different kinds of domination in an article specifically aimed at adapting Dahl’s conception of power for republican purposes.\footnote{Pettit (2008b).} In this article Pettit seems to deny

\textsuperscript{193} Pettit (1997), p.79.  
\textsuperscript{194} Pettit (2008b).
that a constraint imposed on a receiving agent needs to be intentional or conscious on the part of the projecting agent to count as a case of his power-over another; A can exercise power over B if A merely ‘invigilates’ over B but does not actively interfere with him:  

\[\text{Suppose that A is poised to interfere, should B make a choice that turns out not to appeal to A; suppose A interferes with B, only on a need-for-interference basis, where the need is dictated by A’s preferences at the time. In such a case, we may say that A invigilates B’s choice, interfering only when the choice does not please. A’s invigilation may not be a conscious or intentional action that would provide a referent for ‘w’ [(a ‘discrete or punctual means adopted by A to control B’)] in [Dahl’s] original schema; it may consist merely in being there, ready to interfere – and interfere intentionally – should B not behave to A’s taste.}\]

The notion that A can exercise power over B if he merely ‘invigilates’ her choices makes quite a bit of sense on the responsibilist interpretation of Pettit: The reason why invigilation would seem to count as an exercise of power even when it isn’t intentional or conscious is because such an activity would impair the ability of B to act on the basis of considerations that don’t conform to A’s wishes, and therefore B’s responsibility for her actions. But it seems clear that mere (i.e. unintentional or unconscious) invigilation of another’s activities couldn’t count as an exercise of power on a strictly activist view, simply for the reason that such invigilation need not involve doing anything directed at the receiving agent. In other words, one might negligently end up in the position of an invigilator without even realizing it; in such a case A would be ‘ready’ to interfere in the

\[\text{195 Pettit makes it clear that he considers that he considers A’s mere invigilation over B a case where a exercises power over B as opposed to a case where A simply has power over B ((2008b), pp. 71-2).}\]

\[\text{196 Pettit (2008b) p.67, 70. There is some ambiguity in the passage as to whether A must be aware that he is in the position of an invigilator with respect to B in order to count as invigilating over B. I discuss the ambiguity in more detail in the note immediately below.}\]
sense that B’s acting contrary to A’s desires would trigger interference by A. Therefore it seems that the notion of invigilation that Pettit introduces points us in the direction of a responsibilist understanding of power rather than a strictly activist one.

An additional point in favor of the responsibilist interpretation of Pettit is given by the very argument that he gives for rejecting non-intentional forms of interference. In *Republicanism* Pettit argues as follows:

> Were non-intentional forms of obstruction also to count as interference, that would be to lose the distinction between securing people against the natural effects of chance and incapacity and scarcity and securing them against the things that they may try to do one another. This distinction is of the first importance in political philosophy, and almost all traditions have marked it by associating a person’s freedom with constraints only on more or less intentional interventions by others.

The most important upshot to draw from this passage for our present purposes is Pettit’s grouping of all non-intentional impediments that individuals might face into the same category. This feature of Pettit’s view is even clearer at the end of a similar discussion in his later book *A Theory of Freedom*; there he concludes that

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197 Ambiguity in Pettit’s notion of invigilation as ‘merely being there, ready to interfere intentionally’ complicates matters slightly here. This is because the fact of the invigilation itself - the fact that the one agent is there and ready to interfere - may or may not itself be the product of intentional or conscious action, and this may be so independently of whether the invigilator is conscious of their invigilation at the time of that invigilation; thus, in the end, there are really four alternatives here. The first of these alternatives, namely unconscious invigilation that was not consciously produced, clearly could not count as a case of power on an activist view. The next two alternatives, namely conscious invigilation, produced either consciously or unconsciously, might count on an activist view, so long as we could point to something that the agent was doing to exercise his power - perhaps that he was staying in the position of an invigilator once he realized that he was in that position. If, however, merely remaining in the position of an invigilator (as opposed to, say, maneuvering to remain in that position) does not count as being actively involved, then an activist view would fail to capture some forms of invigilation. The last alternative, namely unconscious invigilation produced consciously at some time prior to the invigilation itself, is more difficult to diagnose. The answer here seems to depend on whether an activist view requires one to be doing something at the very moment that one’s power becomes relevant in order for one’s power to count as manifesting itself. In either case it would seem that Pettit’s notion fits well with a responsibilist conception of power: A responsibilist conception of power would only seem to have difficulty counting unconscious invigilation not consciously produced; all other forms would involve the agent’s awareness at some level, and so would be things that he could be blamed for producing or allowing to persist.

The lesson is that any ideal of freedom ought to regard [intentional or quasi-intentional] interpersonal restrictions on a person’s freedom as more serious than the impersonal restrictions that arise non-intentionally from the natural order or from the way that things are socially organized.\textsuperscript{199}

Ultimately Pettit’s view is that intentional and non-intentional impediments to freedom are radically different kinds of affronts to freedom; we shall see in a bit what this implies about his underlying view of power. The radical difference between these two impediments to freedom comes out most clearly in an article devoted to criticizing the alternative republican conception of liberty offered by Quentin Skinner.\textsuperscript{200} The dispute between them is roughly as follows: For Skinner, domination and interference are both equally contrary to freedom: An agent's freedom is equally impinged when he is dominated and when he is interfered with, even if such interference is not conducted on an arbitrary basis. For Pettit, however, while both interference and domination impede freedom, they don’t do so equally. Domination is the primary or worse offence against freedom whereas interference (without domination) is a secondary or lesser offence. Thus Pettit thinks that while non-dominating interference does impinge an agent's freedom, it does not impinge an agent's freedom as significantly as domination. In Pettit's terminology, domination, involving the particular evil that it does, actually 'compromises' freedom whereas non-dominating interference, since it is free of the evil of domination, merely 'conditions' freedom (or merely reduces the "range or ease with which people enjoy undominated choice").\textsuperscript{201}

\textsuperscript{199} Pettit (2001), p. 132 (my emphasis).
\textsuperscript{201} Pettit (2002), p. 342. We’ll look in some more detail at the problems that arise from this compromising/conditioning distinction later on in the next section.
It is the fact that Pettit divides these affronts to freedom according to whether or not they entail domination that reveals his basic view of power. This is because, for Pettit, being exposed to domination at the hands of another and being subjected to arbitrary power at his hands are the same thing. Thus, when Pettit claims that non-intentional obstacles don’t involve domination, he is also claiming that they do not involve arbitrary power. There might be two reasons here why he would think that these cases don’t involve arbitrary power: (1) Because, even though they involve power, the power is not arbitrary; (2) because they don’t actually involve power. Pettit’s understanding of arbitrariness, however, shows that he does not accept the first possibility. For Pettit, a constraint faced by an agent only ceases to be arbitrary when the imposition of that constraint is *forced* to track his interests or ideas, and there seems no reason to think that a constraint that rests on and arises out of a certain structure of social relations will have been forced to track a receiving agent’s interests or ideas.\(^{202}\) In other words, if Pettit thought that non-intentional obstacles were cases of power, it would seem that he would also have to consider them cases of arbitrary power or domination. In denying that they are cases of arbitrary power, then, he is denying that they actually are cases of power.

This set of distinctions offered by Pettit lends great weight to the responsibilist interpretation of his underlying view of power. Pettit’s distinctions seem to entail that power is only present when there is an intentional or conscious connection between the

\(^{202}\) Pettit, ibid. In fact, it seems that precisely the opposite would be true, namely that the vast majority of constraints that arise out of a larger structure of social relations will not at all track the interests or ideas of many of the agents facing them.
constraint and the constrainer, or a quasi-intentional connection between them.\textsuperscript{203} The presence of the ‘quasi-intentional’ rider is, as we’ve seen, sufficient to make Pettit’s account more complex than a simple activist account, since this allows for some inactive manifestations of power. Moreover, the instances of unconscious power that are not allowed by this definition seem to be just those for which we would not want to hold the constraining agent responsible, since they fall outside the scope of negligence or that for which the agent can be properly praised or blamed. So a central element of a responsibilist view of power seems to be present in Pettit’s account, namely that only the outcomes for which one can be held responsible can count as instances of one’s power in relation to another agent. The verdict that Pettit’s account of power is a responsibilist one is even tighter than this, for, as can be seen in his defence of prioritizing intentional over non-intentional affronts to freedom, the second distinctive element of a responsibilist account seems to be present as well in his, namely the idea that being subject to the power of another reduces the responsibility of the constrained agent.

Pettit’s explanation for why we ought not treat intentional and non-intentional affronts to freedom as on par with each other is summed up nicely in the following:

Once we see discursive control as the key element in freedom, then we are bound to think that some limiting factors are worse than others...Those [intentional or quasi-intentional] interpersonal limitations that stem from the obstruction or coercion of others, for example, represent far deeper incursions on freedom as discursive control than comparable obstacles that stem from the impersonal environment of choice [i.e. those that “arise non-intentionally from the natural order or from the way things are socially organized”]. They involve denying a person discursive control, and the status that goes with it, whereas the impersonal limitations

\textsuperscript{203} Which we might think of as an indirect intentional connection between the constraint and the constrainer such that some intentional action of his resulted in the constraint in either a praiseworthy or blameworthy fashion. Pettit does not, of course, come out and describe the idea of ‘quasi-intentionality’ in precisely this way, although it does seem to fit perfectly with his other connected statements regarding the matter.
The responsibilist connection here consists in the fact that ‘discursive control’ is what one needs to be “fully fit to be held responsible for what they decide and do”. Thus when one denies someone discursive control and the accompanying status by intentionally and arbitrarily imposing a restriction on him, one is essentially undermining his capacity to be fully responsible for his choices and actions, whereas when one merely imposes a non-intentional limitation on another, one is simply restricting the range of options over which he enjoys discursive control, or for which he can be fully responsible.

5.3: Pettit on Having Power, Exercising Power, and Manifesting Power

One potentially serious problem for Pettit’s view is how it handles the difference between having (arbitrary) power and exercising (arbitrary) power. As I shall show, it does not leave enough room for a difference between having and exercising power precisely because it seems to turn almost all cases where an individual has power into cases where an individual exercises power. It does not, in other words, seem to recognize the difference between one exercising one’s power and one’s power manifesting itself.

In Republicanism, Pettit is very clear that one does not actually need to interfere in the affairs of another to dominate him. Indeed, it is a basic part of Pettit’s definition of domination that A does not merely have the power to dominate B when A has the power

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205 Pettit (2001), p. 70.
to interfere with B on an arbitrary basis, but that A actually dominates B when he has this
power, even if he does not actually interfere.\(^{206}\) This definition gives rise to the following
question regarding the difference between possessing and exercising dominating power:
To count as exercising dominating power, is it enough that one agent dominates another,
or does one agent actually have to interfere with her on an arbitrary basis? In the end, it is
not exactly clear what Pettit’s answer to this question is.

It seems that Pettit wants his conception to include a distinction between having
power and exercising power. He clearly states, for example, that dominating power is
“capacity-based, because it is able to exist without being exercised”.\(^{207}\) However, it is not
clear what the existence but non-exercise of dominating power on the part of an agent
would consist in. One obvious option would be to say that it is a potential capacity that an
agent possesses that has not yet been developed or cultivated to the point where he can
actually exercise it. Perhaps it is, in other words, the capacity that an agent has to acquire
the exercisable capacity to dominate another. Pettit discusses something like this
possibility under the heading of ‘virtual domination’. Virtual domination occurs where
one in some sense has the ability to dominate another but that ability is not fully
developed and so cannot readily be exercised - it is like a naturally talented piano player’s
ability to play the piano when he has never in fact ever attempted to do so. However,
Pettit is clear that ‘virtual domination’ is not what republicans are primarily concerned

\(^{206}\) Pettit (1997), pp. 52-4.
\(^{207}\) Pettit (1997), p. 79.
with - they are only primarily concerned with actual domination - and so this does not seem to be what Pettit means by possessing but not exercising dominating power.\textsuperscript{208}

Another obvious option would be to say that one has but does not exercise power when one could but does not interfere on an arbitrary basis, which initially seems to be what Pettit has in mind. For example, in the course of his dispute with Skinner, Pettit argues that his understanding of republicanism will count a case of the possession of dominating power and actual arbitrary interference as worse for the dominated party than the simple possession of dominating power on the part of another.\textsuperscript{209} Moreover, in the foundational chapters of \textit{Republicanism} Pettit generally speaks of dominating power as the capacity to interfere (on an arbitrary basis), so it seems natural to assume that he takes the exercise of dominating power to consist in actual interference on an arbitrary basis. The difficulty with this interpretation is that Pettit is clear that the one agent still dominates (or is dominating) the other even when he is not exercising his dominating power; he is still exposing the receiving agent to the evil of domination and is thereby still negatively impacting his practical landscape.\textsuperscript{210} The question then arises as to what exactly one is doing when he is dominating another but not exercising his dominating power by interfering on an arbitrary basis.

The difficulty here is that Pettit does not really seem to say much about what

\textsuperscript{208} Republicans might be concerned with virtual capacities to dominate in so far as attention to them is required to prevent agents from developing actual capacities to dominate.

\textsuperscript{209} Pettit (2002), pp. 343-4.

\textsuperscript{210} Pettit uses the terminology of ‘choice situation’ rather than ‘practical landscape’.
interference itself is. In *Republicanism* he gives examples such as ‘coercion of the body,’ ‘coercion of the will,’ and ‘manipulation.’ Now, all of these seem to be examples of what in the article on Dahl’s conception of power he calls a ‘discrete or punctual means or tactic’ adopted by A to affect B, which he also clearly identifies as cases where A exercises his power and where A interferes with B. In fact, in that article, Pettit identifies domination not only as the ability to interfere arbitrarily but also as the ability to arbitrarily “exercise interference”, by which he presumably means the ability to arbitrarily exercise a capacity to interfere.\footnote{Pettit (2008b), p. 67.} However, this does not really settle the issue, for later in the same article Pettit argues that discrete/punctual tactics are not the only way that a dominator can exercise his power or exercise interference. Pettit’s example of a dominator invigilating over another’s activities is explicitly offered as a case where the dominator is exercising power but not \textit{by} means of a discrete/punctual tactic.\footnote{Pettit (2008b), p.70; however, it is worth nothing that this conflicts with Pettit (2008b), p.103, where he seems to identify invigilation as a case of the presence of domination without interference.}

Since Pettit is not entirely clear on what would count as non-interference in the case where A dominates B but does not ‘exercise’ interference, it is very hard to see how one could possess dominating power over another (and therefore dominate him) and yet not actually interfere with him. The example of invigilation demonstrates this extremely well, for Pettit clearly identifies it as a case of exercising interference (or actually interfering), and yet his discussion also seems to allow that neither the dominator nor the
dominated need be consciously aware of the invigilation.\textsuperscript{213} Indeed, it seems that, so long as the dominator would do something when the dominated got out of line, the dominator would count as invigilating the dominated’s choices even if he wasn’t doing anything, or aware of himself as doing anything, to invigilate over the dominated agent.

One final possibility for understanding what Pettit means by the difference between possessing and exercising power is encapsulated in this brief gloss that he gives as the beginning of the article on Dahl’s conception of power: “To possess power over another will be to have access to the resources that allow one to affect the behavior of another; to exercise power will be to make use of those resources for that purpose”\textsuperscript{214}. An account of the possessing/exercising distinction such as this would make a great deal of sense on an activist conception of power, and, moreover, does seem to have a fair amount of intuitive appeal. This distinction would also make a great deal of sense of why Pettit cites ‘manipulation’ as the sole exception to his ‘common knowledge’ condition, which itself is one of the most important features of his view. What Pettit says in outlining this condition is essentially as follows: The mere fact that a dominator can effectively interfere arbitrarily with a receiving agent’s actions is something that will typically

\textsuperscript{213} Although, there are at least two different ways to interpret Pettit there. In either case, though, Pettit’s notion of invigilation seems to make clear that one need not actually do anything to count as invigilating, which is what makes it hard to see why one should count as exercising power/interference when they are invigilating but not actually doing anything (other than being in the position of an invigilator).

\textsuperscript{214} Pettit (2008b), p.67. Although Pettit is not clear about what ‘having access’ means, it seems that the access in question would be relatively easy for the power possessor. It would be strange to count me as having power (or being powerful) in relation to you if I could get you to do something but only at significant cost to myself. For example, it would seem at least a little off to say that I have the power to force a company to honor a warranty if I could get them to do so only by launching a lawsuit against them that would itself drain all of my savings and thus leave me destitute and relatively powerless on the whole.
depend on that fact being a matter of common knowledge between them. For example, many of the aspects in which a master can interfere in a slave’s affairs depends on an acknowledgement or at least consciousness of the master-slave relationship that exists between them. Where a common acknowledgement of this relationship between them is absent, the costs of interfering for the master will often be much higher, since he will have to resort to either physical violence or the direct threat of physical violence to get his way rather than simply express his preferences for a given course of action. Likewise, Pettit thinks, the absence of a relationship of domination between two agents seems to depend on the consciousness of the rough equality in status between them on the part of both - without this commonly acknowledged condition of equality, there will always be room to take advantage of a party who perceives himself to be inferior solely on the basis of his belief. The common knowledge condition is particularly important for Pettit because it allows him to show why we should care about cases of domination without interference. This is because the receiving agent is aware of the interference he could encounter if he behaved out of line, and so he would have a reduced psychological status and likely self-regulate his behavior so as to avoid the interference.

Now, Pettit thinks that the vast majority of cases of domination will fulfill the common knowledge condition - the fact of that relationship between the two will be a
matter of common knowledge between them and any other relevant parties.\textsuperscript{215} However, in \textit{Republicanism} he makes one exception to this rule: Manipulation. This is because cases where one party has the ability to arbitrarily interfere in the affairs of another by either getting him to believe that a given option isn’t open to him or by removing that option without his knowledge will obviously not always fulfill the common knowledge condition; this will be precisely because the ability of the one party to manipulate the other will often depend of the lack of awareness of the manipulated party that something has been done to him.

Now, rather than excise manipulation from the scope of domination because it does not fulfill the common knowledge condition, Pettit wisely chooses to keep it since it is quite obviously an instance of the exercise of arbitrary power. Moreover, in the short run, keeping manipulation within the scope of domination also seems to give Pettit the theoretical resources to incorporate a distinction between having and exercising power along the lines of possessing access to a given set of resources (merely having power) and making use of that set (exercising power). Indeed, we might say that it was the constant satisfaction of the common knowledge condition in most of the cases that we have been examining that was so problematic for Pettit; this is because, whenever the common knowledge condition is satisfied, it will be reasonable to suspect that the

\textsuperscript{215} Essentially, the thought here is that for a shared understanding of inequality between two parties to be relatively stable over time, the perceptions that outside parties have of their relationship will typically either have to line up with their own perception or at least not contradict it entirely. If the perceptions of outside parties differ and those outside parties interact with the two parties in question in any significant way, such interactions would tend to destabilize the shared perception of inequality between the two parties and cause the ‘inferior’ party to realize that their relative lack of power is at least somewhat illusory.
dominator’s power always affects the dominated in some way, even if it is hard to say what the dominated is actually doing to affect the dominated. Manipulation, then, is an important example because it separates the ability to affect from actually affecting. So, in the end, it might simply be that Pettit didn’t mark manipulation out clearly enough in *Republicanism* as a case where A possesses arbitrary power over B but does not exercise that power over B, and so does not actually dominate B, unless A makes use of some of the resources he has access to to affect B’s practical landscape in some way.

Unfortunately, though, the inclusion of invigilation within the scope of domination seems to prevent Pettit from completely cashing out the distinction between having and exercising power as the difference between having access to resources and actually making use of them. The reason for this is that there could be many cases where merely having access to the resources to invigilate over someone’s choices will nonetheless affect his practical landscape even if one never takes advantage of those resources. For example, in our contemporary climate of extensive government surveillance of private citizens, the mere fact that the government could be invigilating over one’s choices is sufficient to give one a reason to watch what one says, even if the government is not actually invigilating over one. Just like a prisoner in Bentham’s panopticon, the private citizen in contemporary society is forced to police his own behavior simply because the government has the resources to be secretly invigilating his choices.\(^{216}\) Thus, while actually taking advantage of one’s resources to invigilate over

someone else’s activities clearly seems to be an instance of dominating him,\textsuperscript{217} as opposed to merely being able to dominate him, some cases of invigilating over another’s activities will be difficult to count as making use of a given set of resources. Indeed, as we have seen, other than fitting Pettit’s description of ‘invigilation,’ is it hard to see what the invigilating agent who isn’t conscious of his invigilation of another is doing that we could also count as making use of a set of resources. Even more importantly, if the invigilating agent can unconsciously invigilate, it is hard to say how he is doing something \textit{for a purpose} in a way that would link up with the object of his invigilation.

Pettit seems to have two options here. The first option is to modify his view of what sorts of invigilation count, specifically in such a way that only invigilation that was intentional or conscious on the part of the invigilator would count as an exercise of power (or as an exercise of interference). This would partially resolve the problem we have been examining since it would require that the dominating agent either intentionally put himself into proximity of the dominated agent so that he could invigilate his choices, or that he found himself in a position where he was knowingly invigilating the dominated agent. But this move would introduce another problem: Recall that one of the appealing aspects of Pettit’s conception of power is that it seems to count A as dominating B when A has the capacity to arbitrarily affect B’s practical landscape and when B’s practical landscape is actually affected because of A’s capacity. This appealing feature would seem

\textsuperscript{217} Or, rather, on my view, it would be clearly be an instance of attempting to dominate him, since he might remain blissfully unaware of the invigilation, and thus manage to escape with his practical landscape (believed options) unaffected.
to be lost if Pettit were to excise unconscious invigilation from the scope of domination, precisely because it does not seem that the invigilator’s lack of consciousness precludes the invigilated from being affected by the invigilation (or by his being in a position to interfere if the invigilated does something that registers as contrary to his desires).

The second option is for Pettit to incorporate something along the lines of the distinction between an active manifestation (exercise) of one’s power and an inactive manifestation of one’s power. On such an understanding, A would count as possessing dominating power over B when A possessed the capacity to affect B’s practical landscape in an arbitrary fashion, A would exercise dominating power over B when A either intentionally or knowingly did (or didn’t to) something to affect B’s practical landscape, and A’s power over B would manifest itself when A didn’t intentionally or knowingly do (or not do) something to affect B’s practical landscape but B’s practical landscape was nevertheless affected because of A’s capacity to exercise his arbitrary power over B. Thus A’s unconscious invigilation of B would count as a manifestation of A’s dominating power over B, so long as B’s practical landscape was actually affected by the invigilation, but it would not count as a exercise of A’s power over B unless A had consciously done something to put himself in the position of an invigilator over B. Likewise, where A merely could but did not manipulate B, A would count as having but not exercising dominating power over B. This set of distinctions clearly allows us to

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218 We might also acknowledge a distinction between actually exercising dominating power and attempting to exercise dominating power according to whether B’s practical landscape was actually affected or not.
make a good deal of sense of the distinction between having and exercising dominating power, and, in particular, in a way that preserves the intuition that what really shows that A’s power to dominate B makes a difference is the fact that B’s practical landscape is affected because of the relationship of domination between them. Another important upshot of this distinction is that it seems to remove the need to determine precisely what sorts of behaviors (actions and inactions) do and do not count as the sorts of doings that occur when one exercises their power over others: Any kind of behavior can count as grounding an exercise of arbitrary power, so long as it is the sort of behavior that can affect another’s practical landscape as a result of conscious action.

One potential difficulty for Pettit, though, is that incorporating the set of distinctions I am proposing pushes one to give up on a responsibilist conception of power. As we saw in Chapter 4, once one allows that an agent’s power manifests itself in both active and inactive ways, there seems little reason to only count as actual manifestations of one’s power instances where another’s practical landscape was affected because of one’s power and one was responsible for that manifestation. It seems more sensible in the long run to maintain that one’s power can manifest itself in both active and inactive ways and that one is only sometimes responsible for the manifestations of one’s power in relation to others. The only part of the responsibilist view of power that does seem worthy of retention is the part that claims that one’s responsibility for a given outcome is somehow impinged when that outcome depended on the manifestation of someone else’s power. But, as we have seen, saying that being the object of a
manifestation of power impinges upon one’s responsibility does not mean that the agent
whose power manifested itself takes some of the other’s responsibility upon himself.

5.4: Potential Dangers of a Responsibilist Republican Conception of Power

The above discussion shows that Pettit has good reason to adopt a distinction between
having power, exercising power, and power manifesting itself along the lines of my own.
This allows a much more straightforward way of understanding domination: Instead of
simply saying that an agent is dominating another both when he is exercising arbitrary
interference and when he is doing nothing at all, we can speak of an agent exercising his
power to dominate another and of his power to dominate another manifesting itself even
when he does nothing to exercise it. But, as I have argued, this seems to undermine the
responsibilist conception of power that Pettit employs, for there are many cases where an
agent’s power to dominate can manifest itself without it being appropriate to hold him
individually responsible for the outcome. It is conceivable, for example, that a husband
could have a power to sexually assault his wife without any significant penalties and not
know about this power: He might believe that any civilized society would include the
possibility of spousal rape within its criminal code and thus wrongly assume that his
society does so, and so, in the end, be ignorant of his power to sexually assault his wife
without significant penalties. And yet his wife might be very well aware that he would
likely get away with sexually assaulting her, and so she would be impacted by this power
in a not insignificant way. So long as it seems problematic to hold the husband
responsible (or fully responsible) for his power, a responsibilist understanding of domination would have difficulty counting him as dominating her here. A view that incorporates a distinction between active and inactive manifestations of power that is not linked with responsibility, however, can simply say that the husband’s power to sexually assault his wife here is manifesting itself in an inactive way, and that it is not clear that he is (fully) responsible for this manifestation.\textsuperscript{219}

In this section I focus on additional shortcomings of a responsibilist conception of power / domination. To do so I develop a shorthand for referring to the cases of power that Pettit’s responsibilist view includes and those which it excludes. As we’ve seen above, it would be far too simplistic to say that a responsibilist view includes conscious instances of power but excludes unconscious ones,\textsuperscript{220} since one could be responsible for one’s lack of awareness of how he affects others. Instead I employ a distinction between ‘conscious-ready’ and ‘conscious-resistant’ cases of power. A \textit{conscious-ready} case of power will simply be a case of power where the projecting agent is aware of how his actions or inactions affect the receiving agent’s practical landscape, or where he could relatively easily be aware of this. The threshold for what counts as being ‘relatively easy’ to make oneself aware of can be tied to the threshold for responsibility: Where we are hesitant to call a case of power ‘conscious-ready’ this will be because we are hesitant to say that the projecting agent is responsible for the effects of his power. A \textit{conscious-}

\textsuperscript{219} I stress here again that I am using ‘responsibility’ in a backward looking way where praise and blame is what matters, and not in Young’s forward looking way.

\textsuperscript{220} That is, cases where the projecting agent is conscious of how he affects others’ practical landscapes versus cases where the projecting agent is not conscious of how he affects others’ practical landscapes.
resistant case of power, on the other hand, will just be a case where the projecting agent is not aware of how his power affects the receiving agent’s practical landscape agent and could not readily be aware of this. In conscious-resistant cases, the projecting agent’s power does affect the practical landscape of the receiving agent, but something prevents the projecting agent from being readily able to see what is occurring. This may be either because the receiving agent herself does not perceive how her practical landscape is being affected, or because the projecting agent is unable to understand the situation from the receiving agent’s perspective. The threshold for this category of power can also be tied to responsibility: The surer we are that a case of power should be deemed ‘conscious-resistant’, the more certain we are that it would be inappropriate to count the projecting agent responsible. With this distinction, we face two very different kinds of problems: We both need to know what to do to convert conscious-resistant domination into conscious-ready domination and how best to combat powers that entail conscious-ready domination.

On this understanding, the obvious shortfall of a responsibilist conception of power would be that it categorically prevents us from counting conscious-resistant cases of power as instances of the projecting agent's power. But, of course, this is only a problem for a responsibilists if the scope of ‘power’ ought to include these cases. The following considerations from Iris Young help show why we should count these cases:

Members of oppressed groups frequently experience... avoidance, aversion, expressions of nervousness, condescension, and stereotyping. For them such behavior, indeed the whole encounter, often painfully fills their... consciousness. Such behavior throws them back onto their group identity, making them feel noticed, marked, or conversely invisible, not taken seriously, or worse, demeaned. Those exhibiting such behavior, however, are rarely conscious of their actions or how they make others feel. Many people are quite consciously committed to equality and respect for women, people of color, gays and lesbians, and disabled people, and
nevertheless in their bodies and feeling have reactions of aversion or avoidance towards members of those groups.\textsuperscript{221}

Some specific examples given by Young are the following:

White people tend to be nervous around black people, men nervous around women, especially in public settings. In social interactions, the socially superior group often avoids being close to the lower-status group, avoids eye contact, does not keep the body open. A Black man walks into a large room at a business convention and finds that the noise level reduces, not to a hush, but definitely reduces. A woman at a real estate office with her husband finds the dealer persistently failing to address or to look at her, even when she speaks to him directly.\textsuperscript{222}

Perhaps most importantly, Young points out, phenomena such as these, which I shall call cases of ‘damaging unconscious aversion’, do not only negatively impact the feelings of those on the receiving end, but also their opportunities:

Unconscious racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, and ableism occur not only in bodily reactions and feelings and their expression in behavior, but also in judgements about people or policies. When public morality is committed to principles of equal treatment and the equal worth of all persons, public morality requires that judgements about the superiority or inferiority of persons be made on an individual basis according to individual competences...however, fears, aversions, and devaluations of groups marked as different often unconsciously enter those judgements of competence.\textsuperscript{223}

An excellent contemporary example of this is the phenomenon of implicit bias that has recently been investigated by feminist philosophers, a phenomenon that shows up clearly in cases of evaluation.\textsuperscript{224} A significant body of psychological research has show that even those who are explicitly committed to equality tend to evaluate members of minority groups (women, blacks, non-heterosexuals) more harshly than they do members of dominant groups, even if the evaluators themselves are members of those minority groups.\textsuperscript{225} The evaluations range across a wide range of characteristics.

\textsuperscript{221} Young (1990), pp. 133-4.
\textsuperscript{222} Young (1990), p. 133.
\textsuperscript{223} Young (1990), p. 134.
\textsuperscript{224} See Saul (2013), to whom many of the particular references in this paragraph are ultimately due.
Experiments have shown, for example, that an ambiguous object in a black person's hand is more likely to be assumed to be a gun than in a white person's hands, and that the exact same curriculum vitae tends to be judged much more positively when it has a male name on it than when it has a female name on it. The degree to which implicit bias restricts the practical landscapes of those affected by it is hard to dismiss. A woman, for example, will on average have to achieve much more than a man if she wants to be judged even equal to him in competence for a job. A black person, on the other hand, will have to be much more careful than a white person when dealing with the police if he wants to avoid provoking a response that will result in a serious or life-threatening injury.\footnote{See Jost, et al. (2009) ; referenced in Saul (2013), p.41, n.7.}

It seems clear that we cannot count many, and perhaps cannot count most of these phenomena as cases of power if we employ a responsibilist view. All of these phenomena seem to fit the model of conscious-resistant power: In the first place, the behaviours take place not merely below the level of the conscious, but even when the agents have strong conscious commitments that run counter to them.\footnote{A possible explanation for this phenomenon is offered by Young (1990), ch. 5. While differentiation from others is a crucial component of the formation of one’s own identity, prevalent public norms within our society entail a commitment to equality that requires us put differences to the side and conceive of everyone as the same, at bottom. This creates a tension, Young argues, between our basic need to differentiate ourselves from others in order to conceive of ourselves as distinct individuals, and our need to think of everyone as being equal (or the same) in order to conform to publicly accepted standards of thought. In other words, it is necessary for the basic security of one’s identity that one differentiates oneself from others, but it is also crucial in contemporary liberal egalitarian society that one not do so (at least not consciously) in certain ways, lest one be a deviant - a racist, sexist, homophobe, etc. Thus, Young argues, one’s differentiating oneself from others is pushed out of one’s discursive consciousness into more subconscious areas, to show up as unconscious aversions and other behaviors that are damaging to those in oppressed groups, where those behaviors must remain if one is to avoid the conscious realization that one nevertheless does racist, sexist, homophobic, etc. things despite one’s fervent commitment to equality.} The presence of damaging behaviours despite conscious commitments against them not only makes them cases of...
conscious-resistant power, but also shows why it is difficult to hold the projecting agents responsible: If the agents could readily be conscious of how their actions were impacting others, they would, presumably, not be engaging in those actions. Thus it seems difficult to blame the agents or hold them responsible for their actions, even though the outcomes are problematic. However, there is good reason to count cases of damaging unconscious aversion as (dominating) power. In the first place, damaging unconscious aversion clearly seems to be arbitrary: Those exposed to damaging unconscious aversion will not view it as a phenomenon that is forced to track their interests or ideas. Moreover, damaging unconscious aversion clearly negatively affects those exposed to it. It clearly can affect their believed options, evaluative beliefs, and preferences in a problematic way. Finally, in limiting the practical landscapes of the affected agents, instances of damaging unconscious aversion contribute significantly to the maintenance of wider structures of domination within a society. In so far as damaging unconscious aversion causes the affected agents to have a stunted image of their self-worth, it risks placing them in a position where they are apt to be dominated by others since they will feel inferior to those others and unable to look them in the eye.\textsuperscript{228}

One response on behalf of the responsibilist would be to argue that damaging unconscious aversion is problematic but ought to be considered something other than ‘power’ - perhaps as ‘social control’.\textsuperscript{229} However attractive that might be, there are two

\textsuperscript{228} Again, see Young (1990), ch. 5 on this.

\textsuperscript{229} E.g. as Wrong’s intentionalist conception of power seemed tempted to do.
compelling reasons why a republican of Pettit’s sort ought to resist taking it. First, it is unclear what grounds the responsibilist could offer for separating out conscious-resistant cases of power like this that would not beg the question by terminating in an explanation having something to do with a necessary link between ‘power’ and ‘responsibility’. Secondly, excising these phenomena from the scope of ‘power’ would seem to mean that they would either be ignored or severely marginalized by the republican state and, more importantly, perhaps also by individual republican citizens. In other words, it seems particularly important for republicans to count these phenomena as products of power because the republican state is either exclusively or at least primarily concerned only with power. Giving a theoretically inferior place to conscious-resistant power would mean that it would largely pass under the radar of the republican state, which would, thus, not seem to have much reason to even try to combat it or support those aiming to combat it.

The alternative is for republicans to radicalize their conception of power, rejecting the responsibilist view and allowing both conscious-ready and conscious-resistant cases of power to count. Later I shall examine whether there are any republican institutions that might ameliorate the need for doing this. For now, though, I shall briefly examine two general dangers that would seem to result from failing to radicalize and which could be combated by radicalizing. The first danger is that a non-radicalized (or conventional) republican conception of power seems to prevent the republican state from devoting any resources to specifically fighting conscious-resistant arbitrary power. The second danger concerns the character of the republican citizen.
That a radicalized conception of power opens the door for the republican state to directly devote resources to fighting conscious-resistant arbitrary power is obvious. What seems less obvious is that a conventional conception of power actually prevents the republican state from allocating resources in such a way. The basic reason for this is simple: The conventional republican state not only seeks to reduce domination on the whole, it also seeks to maximize the scope of undominated choices available to its citizens. So, while the republican state firstly needs to do what it can to reduce the degree to which the powerful can dominate the less powerful, it also needs to enable the less powerful to do as many things as they can within their undominated sphere of action.

Thus, for conventional republicans, maximizing nondomination is the sole primary goal, and maximizing the range of undominated choices is the sole secondary goal. It is this secondary goal that seems to preclude the conventional republican from devoting any resources to fighting conscious-resistant arbitrary power. The reason for this is that the resources that might be devoted to fighting conscious-resistant arbitrary power could always be alternatively devoted to the secondary republican goal and produce some gains in terms of it. Consider, for example, an educational program that would combat conscious-resistant arbitrary power but wouldn’t combat conscious-ready arbitrary power. Whatever the amount of funds needed for this program, there would always be the possibility to instead turn them into a tax rebate. And, other things being equal, a tax rebate would always seem to increase the amount of undominated choices available to the

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less well-off, for as long as they have some undominated economic sphere of action, more wealth enables them to do more things within that sphere. Thus, since the secondary conventional republican goal takes precedence over everything but the primary conventional republican goal, it seems that the conventional republican would always be prevented from devoting resources to anything that didn’t serve either of these two goals, including combatting conscious-resistant arbitrary power.231

The problems entailed by a conventional republican conception of power for the character of the republican citizen are even more important. As we saw, the character of the republican citizenry is of paramount importance for fighting arbitrary power, as Pettit is careful to stress. Because the lack of a relationship of domination between two individuals requires their rough equality in status to be a matter of common knowledge, the mere fact that a law exists to thwart domination will not typically be effective in thwarting domination on its own. For domination-thwarting laws to actually be effective, private citizens must be vigilant in guarding against attempted domination of their fellow citizens, especially where newly-articulated complaints of domination are concerned. In other words, it is not enough that citizens merely be equal under the law for domination to be meaningfully absent in a society, citizens must actually consider each other to be equals whose equality depends on the existence of laws that enjoy widespread support.

231 The conventional republican would of course be able to devote resources to initiatives that thwarted both conscious-ready and conscious-resistant arbitrary power, but in such a case the thwarting of conscious-resistant arbitrary power would seem to merely be a fortunate coincidence.
Within the law-abiding republican citizenry at large, we may distinguish two very different types of citizen. The first type of citizen fits Pettit’s model of being vigilant against domination: He is disposed to be on the watch for potential instances of domination and come to the aid of his fellow citizens when others attempt to dominate them. More importantly, he will be disposed to do this both when the form of domination is widely acknowledged in his society (e.g. sexism) and when the form of domination is not widely acknowledged in his society (e.g. fatism). Such a citizen, in other words, will stand ready to aid his fellow citizens both when the law already acknowledges the actions in question as domination and when it does not yet acknowledge them as doing so. For the sake of convenience I shall call this citizen a ‘progressive’ republican. The second type of citizen, however, does not quite fit Pettit’s ideal: While such a citizen will himself eschew engaging in actions that have been legally designated as domination, he will not go beyond what the law requires of him and he will generally not be vigilant in guarding against the domination of his fellow citizens. This citizen may, if pressed by a legal or quasi-legal obligation, come to the aid of others, but he will rarely or never be on the lookout for any form of domination that is not immediately relevant to him. In other words, this kind of citizen will avoid consciously dominating others himself, but will tend to consider it not his problem when others are exposed to domination for which he is not directly responsible. For the sake of convenience I shall call this citizen a ‘conservative’ republican. The progressive republican, we might say, recognizes a positive obligation to take the interests and ideas of his fellow citizens into account, whereas the conservative
republican only recognizes a negative obligation to do so; the conservative republican
will be formally open to hearing the complaints of others, but he will not encourage such
complaints and, in the absence of them, will proceed as if there were nothing to be
concerned with - such a citizen will effectively leave it up to the dominated to do
something about their domination on their own.

As we shall examine in greater detail below, even a progressive conventional
republican, who thinks that he has a positive obligation to take his fellow citizens’
interests and ideas into account, may still significantly oppress them in a conscious-
resistant fashion. But the problem is even worse where a conservative conventional
republican is concerned: He may, as we’ve seen, think that his obligation to not dominate
others merely requires him to be open to discussing their grievances once they have been
voiced, but does not require him to try to discover what their potential grievances might
be before they are voiced; such a citizen, after all, is only required to not dominate in a
conscious-ready fashion, and, by definition, if he is unconsciously dominating others
non-negligently, then he is not dominating them in a conscious-ready fashion. So a
conservative conventional republican may not only feel that he lacks a positive obligation
to investigate potential grievances, he may even have a perverse incentive to remain

232 The same, of course, might be true of an progressive radical republican citizen, since such a citizen
could equally fail to recognize his oppression of others where such oppression is highly conscious-resistant.
However, this would seem to have a different significance for the two kinds of progressive republican
citizen. For the progressive radical republican citizen, such oppression would count as domination and
would in principle be on par with other, conscious-ready forms of domination. For the progressive
conventional republican citizen, however, such oppression would not seem to count as domination and
therefore would seem to have a reduced normative significance, if any, in comparison to domination.
The same is not true of the radical republican citizen. Because he actually has a theory-specific obligation to do what he can to avoid dominating others in both conscious-ready and conscious-resistant ways, his civic duties require him to not only address grievances when they have been voiced, but also to (try to) investigate potential grievances in advance. Such a citizen is required to ask of his actions not only ‘Have these actions been identified as instances of domination before?’ but also ‘How might my actions be dominating others?’ Importantly, this is true for both progressive radical republicans, who approach their civic duties in a supererogatory fashion, but also for conservative radical republicans, who are only willing to do what is strictly their duty. In other words, we might say that the minimum set out by the radical republican view of power is significantly more demanding than the minimum set out by the conventional republican view, just as the minimum set out by the republican notion of nondomination is more demanding than the minimum set out by the liberal notion of non-interference.

How much of a difference does this make in the long run? I suspect that it could make a huge difference, although I can say why only very briefly here. The impact of this stems from the difference in the overall social-psychological orientation of the citizenry:

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233 We might wonder whether the conservative republican citizen’s ignorance would be culpable, since it seems he would often count as oppressing others in a negligent and therefore somewhat conscious-ready fashion. Whether or not this would be so would seem to depend on the role that this perverse incentive plays in his motivations for his ignorance: if his perverse incentive plays some conscious role in his motivations, then it would indeed seem that the oppression is conscious-ready. However, it seems reasonable to assume that there will be some cases in which this perverse incentive will not be consciously experienced as a perverse incentive, and so it would be difficult to count the individual as blameworthy.

234 See Dagger (2005), Larmore (2001), Richardson (2006), Pettit (2005), and Pettit (2008a) about this.
While a radicalized republican citizenry will certainly still have difficulties recognizing the most deeply ingrained cases of conscious-resistant oppression, they will at least be on the lookout for it, which is something that we cannot say of a conventional republican citizenry. Because of the significant role that the character and dispositions of the citizenry play in republican theorizing about how to thwart domination, the question of what kind of conception of power ought to be employed in republican political philosophy does not only concern what conception of power should inform the actions of the state, but also concerns what kind of social morality will exist within that state.

This is important because of the significant effects that could occur in terms of both conscious-ready and conscious-resistant domination: First, while simply being on the lookout for conscious-resistant oppression does not mean that one is guaranteed to find it, it both seems to make one much more likely to discover conscious-resistant oppression and more likely to be open to changing one’s behavior when one is made aware of how that behavior is actually oppressive. Analogously, consider the results of a general perspective towards discovering untruths. Such a perspective does not guarantee that one will actually discover any untruths, although it does seem more more likely to result in the discovery of untruths than a perspective which is either generally unconcerned with untruths or which rules them out from the get-go. Moreover, in terms of the receptiveness to change that will exist in a citizen, the radical republican citizen is much more likely to be open to change than a conventional republican citizen, because the radical republican citizen is more likely to see himself as sharing the burden of
unearthing conscious-resistant domination with the dominated rather than to see this burden as primarily lying on the shoulders of the dominated. Thus one who is dedicated to discovering conscious-resistant domination seems much more likely to do so than someone who denies the existence of conscious-resistant domination ab initio.

The potential benefits of having a radicalized republican citizenry, however, don’t simply show up in terms of a possible reduction in conscious-resistant oppression; they also show up in terms of a likely reduction of conscious-ready oppression. The simple reason is that a theory-specific injunction against conscious-resistant oppression requires a greater degree of reflection from the individual citizen about the role he plays in maintaining a social system that may give an arbitrary advantages to some. This is important because attention to one’s own role in maintaining a possibly arbitrary social system requires much more attention to the system as a whole than would be required of the conventional republican citizen, at least where the conservative sort is concerned. Ignoring the (potential) domination of one’s fellow citizens by others may not be dominating them in a conscious-ready fashion, since one might not in such a case be taking advantage of a conscious-ready power of arbitrary interference in the lives of others. However, it would seem to constitute conscious-resistant domination, in so far as one’s ignorance or implicit acceptance was required for a fellow citizen’s domination at the hands of another to be effective. If A’s ability to dominate others in part relies on my implicit acceptance of a social system in which those others are not seen as A’s equals, then my participation in that system does affect the practical landscapes of those others:
My participation in that system entails that one aspect of the vulnerability of those others to domination is that I do not stand ready to combat the domination alongside them. If, however, I am on the lookout for forms of domination of which I am not already conscious and I keep in mind that I will sometimes not be conscious of domination because I uncritically accept some social arrangement, then I can at least be said to hold myself ready to stand with anyone who has a grievance that needs expressing.

5.5: Contestation, Intersubjective Status, and Vulnerability Characteristics

The conventional republican state may thus face significant difficulties in combatting conscious-resistant domination. To reiterate: Not only does such a state fail to formally acknowledge conscious-resistant domination, it also seems to have positive reasons against directly pursuing many policies explicitly aimed at fighting conscious-resistant domination: Since the goals of minimizing conscious-ready domination and maximizing the range of choices shielded from conscious-ready domination trump all other potential goals of the conventional republican state, the fact that a given policy might combat conscious-resistant power would carry very little weight. In other words, a state policy which was explicitly aimed at combatting conscious-resistant domination would always be extremely vulnerable to contestation: Any citizen who did not approve of such a policy could always contest it on the grounds that the resources devoted to it could be used to instead further the goal of maximizing the range of choices shielded from conscious-ready domination. The contestatory institutions in this state seem to have
little choice but to side with him, since the minimizing of conscious-resistant domination is not enshrined within the framework of the conventional state, whereas the goal of maximizing the range of choices shielded from conscious-ready domination is.

The question I now briefly pursue is whether the conventional republican state can be expected, because of institutional features it already contains, to indirectly combat conscious-resistant domination. I examine four specific institutional features of Pettit’s republicanism here: Contestatory democracy, the subjective and intersubjective features of nondomination, targeted protections for those belonging to a significant vulnerability class, and structural egalitarianism. I argue that it is doubtful whether any of these institutions will do much to combat conscious-resistant domination.

The first institutional feature of the conventional republican state that might seem to indirectly combat conscious-resistant domination effectively is the requirement of contestatory democracy. Ideally the contestatory institutions offer an avenue for the dominated to bring their grievances to the forefront when the state hasn’t sufficiently tracked them. Thus there seems to be some opportunity for those oppressed by the dominant group in a conscious-resistant fashion to rectify the situation.235 There are two basic problems with this line of thought. The first arises where oppression is so deeply ingrained in the oppressed that they cannot effectively express their grievances in their own terms. This could be because an insufficient proportion of the oppressed are conscious of their oppression or because they cannot effectively conceptualize ways out

235 Please note that below I use the terms ‘domination’ and ‘oppression’ interchangeably.
of their oppression. This would be a problem in a contestatory system because a successful contestation (change in state policy) requires that a reasonably well-articulated complaint be available to make its way through the state’s contestatory institutions.

The second problem for contestatory institutions arises where the oppressive behavior is so deeply ingrained in the dominant group that the oppressed cannot express their grievances in terms that resonate with the dominant group. This is a problem because a successful contestation requires those in charge of the state to accept that they haven’t sufficiently tracked someone’s ideas and interests. But, if a complaint doesn’t resonate with the dominant group, it’s highly unlikely that those in charge of the state will accept that they have acted inappropriately. The predicament of the oppressed may appear natural or unavoidable to the dominant group, and therefore not something in need of fixing. Thus it seems that the more the relevant parties are not conscious of a form of oppression, or the more a form of oppression is conscious-resistant with respect to the dominant group, the less likely a successful contestation of an oppressive state policy is.

Before I move on I should stress that the difficulty canvassed here will certainly also arise in a radical republican state. This is because the eradication of conscious-resistant oppression generally requires the oppressed to be conscious of their oppression. If a form of oppression is so deeply ingrained that nobody recognizes it, the mere fact that conscious-resistant oppression is on the radar of the state and of private citizens is no guarantee that that particular form of oppression will be uncovered. However, it does seem that there are some significant advantages that a radical form of contestatory
democracy would have over a conventional form. The most general advantage is that the participants in a radical contestatory democracy will conceive of themselves as participating in this form of governance both for the sake of combatting conscious-ready oppression and for the sake of uncovering conscious-resistant oppression. In other words, it seems that there will be a presumption on the part of the participants in a radical contestatory system that there are always likely to be significant conscious-resistant grievances to be uncovered. From the side of dominant-group radical republicans, this means both that they ought to be much more open to newly-expressed grievances, thinking that they represent conscious-resistant forms of oppression that have been uncovered rather than simply new complaints that have not been voiced before, and that they will have to second-guess their actions to a much greater degree, on the presumption that some of their actions will be oppressive in a conscious-resistant fashion. In other words, this means that while participating in the contestatory process, members of the dominant group ought to see themselves as having a much greater burden to explore alongside members of the subordinate group how their actions may be oppressive. From the side of the subordinate group, a radical contestatory process seems much more likely to provide them with (the confidence of having) willing partners in the cause of eradicating all forms of oppression, rather than simply dominant others against whom they are lodging complaints. A radical contestatory process may even occasionally have the upshot of causing a sincere member of a dominant group to correctly suggest a respect in which his actions might be oppressive, which suggestion can then be taken up
by the subordinate group in their own time, if they so choose.

A second relevant feature of the conventional republican state is the subjective and intersubjective character of nondomination. Recall Pettit’s contention that the enjoyment of a high level of nondomination not only entails that a citizen isn’t at the mercy of her fellow citizens; it also entails that she should be aware of this status and think of herself as a ‘somebody and not a nobody’ in relation to them. It might seem that a widespread acknowledgement of this status would lead to a significant reduction in conscious-resistant oppression, since, in such a case, no member of the dominant group should think of others as beings to be disregarded when it suits him, and no member of a subordinate group should think of herself as someone who can be so treated. Perhaps a high level of nondomination would encourage citizens to feel positively obligated to not dominate others, and so to actively track their interests and ideas, even unarticulated ones. And, surely, this would reduce the degree to which members of the dominant group would be unaware of how they oppressed others and the degree to which members of subordinate groups would be unaware of their oppression or willing to stand for it.

As with contestatory democracy, however, there are reasons to doubt whether this will make significant inroads against the worst cases of conscious-resistant oppression. By ‘worst’ I mean the most deeply ingrained cases, those that are the furthest away from the conscious awareness of the relevant parties. The problem is that the more deeply ingrained oppression is, the less likely it is to seem problematic to either the oppressors or the oppressed. This might be because the predicament of the oppressed is thought to be
justified because it is natural, as was (and still is) the effective imprisonment of women in the home considered ‘natural’ because they are ‘by nature’ the primary caregivers, child-rearers, etc. Another reason unconscious oppression might not seem problematic would be if it were so subtle that the oppressed themselves think that the very system that oppresses them is actually to their benefit, as is believed to be true in capitalist societies.

To put this point in slightly different terms, it seems that there is a significant problem for Pettit’s ideas surrounding domination and the common-knowledge condition once we admit the possibility of conscious-resistant oppression: For Pettit, it is not only true that the enjoyment of nondomination requires a rough equality between individuals that is common knowledge to all those party to their relationship; it is also true that most instances of domination will satisfy this common knowledge condition: With the noted exception of manipulation, Pettit seems to think that the majority of cases where one has the power to dominate another will be cases where at least both of them are aware of this power. Pettit’s attention to domination that satisfies the common knowledge condition is one of the strengths of his account, for it is the fact that domination is common knowledge that enables the dominator to get his way without having to exercise his power. But when conscious-resistant domination comes into view, Pettit’s account has a difficulty because most cases of conscious-resistant domination will fail to fulfill the common knowledge condition. At best, it seems that only the dominated might be aware of the dominator’s power: If the dominator were aware of his power, it would be conscious-ready. So, a problem with the way that Pettit handles the common knowledge
condition is that there are many more exceptions to it than Pettit allows, exceptions that can only be disallowed if only conscious-ready power is acknowledged.

So, even if a high level of nondomination causes most citizens to think that they have a positive obligation to account for the interests and ideas of others, the most subtle cases of oppression may very well continue to go unnoticed because they may not seem problematic to the oppressors or to the oppressed. Thus it ultimately does not seem that either the subjective and intersubjective benefits of a high general level of nondomination or the contestatory democracy required in the ideal republican state need do much to help alleviate cases of unconscious oppression, especially the most deeply ingrained sort.

The next conventional republican institution to examine is the provision of specific protections for those belonging to a significant vulnerability class. Belonging to a significant vulnerability class is, as we saw, essentially just belonging to a group of individuals who share some feature(s) in common on the basis of which they are typically marked out and thereby made vulnerable to domination by others. It seems that there are two requirements that would have to be met to generate a specific legal protection for a given vulnerability class, namely (i) acknowledgment that the prohibited behavior in

\[\text{\footnotesize 236} \] The case is even worse if a high level of nondomination only leads most citizens to think that they have a negative obligation to not dominate their fellow citizens. Such an obligation would only require citizens to take into account interests and ideas that had already been articulated by others.

\[\text{\footnotesize 237} \] This is not, of course, to say that a radical republican conception of power will necessarily ‘solve’ this problem. As I have argued above, there is no sure way to uncover the most deeply ingrained forms of oppression, especially because the most deeply ingrained forms of oppression will be ones that both the oppressed and the oppressors will resist acknowledging. In a way the benefit that a radical republican conception of power provides here is not a commitment to fighting any particular form of oppression but a higher-level commitment that is aimed at one’s own preconceptions - it is a commitment to holding one’s preconceptions open to reinterpretation in a very radical way, because it is a commitment based in the knowledge that many of one’s preconceptions will result in conscious-resistant oppression.
question constituted domination of that vulnerability class, and (ii) acknowledgement that individuals who belong to that group belong to a significant vulnerability class. The difficulty is that in both of these cases, it seems, the more conscious-resistant a form of oppression is, the less likely either of the conditions is to be met: The dominant group’s conscious-resistant oppression could easily cause them to resist acknowledging that the shared characteristic(s) give rise to a special form of vulnerability, or their conscious-resistant oppression could make it difficult for them to acknowledge that the behaviors in question are actually oppressive. In the end, we might say that a prerequisite for enjoying the protections of a vulnerability class in general is a widespread acknowledgement of the predicament of a particular group, an acknowledgement that very well might be lacking where that group is oppressed in a conscious-resistant fashion. The same seems true of enjoying a specific form of protection: the acknowledgement of the precariousness that necessitates that protection is likely to be absent where oppression is conscious-resistant.

The final institutional component to address is Pettit’s structural egalitarianism. Recall that on Pettit’s view the republican state is only indirectly concerned with inequalities in resources or opportunities; such inequalities matter for the republican only in so far as they give rise to powers in the better off to dominate the less well off. The republican state is thus structurally egalitarian in so far as it aims at providing citizens roughly equal powers to resist potential attempts at domination by others. This idea takes on a special significance when we consider the difference between radical and conventional republicanism: In the conventional republican state, the only powers that
one might worry about arising out of inequalities in resources or opportunities would be powers to dominate in a conscious-ready fashion. A radical republican state, on the other hand, would at least consider as problematic both conscious-ready and conscious-resistant powers to dominate arising out of inequalities in resources or opportunities. So the conventional republican state would seem to fall short here in so far as it would not seem to consider problematic inequalities that gave rise to power to dominate in a conscious-resistant fashion. The radical republican state still might permit some of these inequalities because of the hidden nature of conscious-resistant powers to dominate, but, because of its worry about conscious-resistant domination, it would seem wary of starting to allow inequalities at precisely the minimum level of equality needed to thwart conscious-ready domination - a radical republican state would seem prejudiced towards greater equality than the conscious-ready minimum, just to be on the safe side.

5.6: Conventional Republicanism and Structures of Social Relations

It is worthwhile here to briefly examine the extent to which Pettit accounts for the relational aspects of dominating power, although we have already seen some of the virtues and vices of his account in passing. The most significant advantages of Pettit’s conception of domination, are (i) that it does pay serious attention to the respects in which a relation of domination is often sufficient to ensure that the practical landscape of the receiving agent is affected even if the projecting agent does nothing, and (ii) that it does acknowledge that relations of domination are not simply relations between two
agents that occur outside of some broader structure of social relations. Pettit’s handling of the relational nature of power is thus a step in the right direction in so far as it recognizes that fighting domination is a collective effort - that nondomination can only be effectively enjoyed when there is a commonly and widely acknowledged parity in status between two parties - and in so far as it allows conscious-ready powers of domination to manifest themselves without actual interference by the dominating agent.

The problem with Pettit’s conventional republicanism, though, is that since it only takes relations that involve conscious-ready domination into account, it would seem to miss the many conscious-resistant sources of powers to dominate, both in conscious-resistant and conscious-ready ways. Consider again damaging unconscious aversion: In the best-case scenario, social relations in republican society would fail to evince conscious-ready domination because of a widespread commitment in dominant-group republicans to the equal and respectful treatment of all and to the eradication of conscious-ready domination. Nevertheless, the commitments of dominant-group republicans to not dominate in a conscious-ready fashion are quite compatible with the continuation of others’ subordinate status: These conscious commitments do not prevent anyone from unconsciously making evaluations that consistently disadvantage other groups or from displaying unconsciously aversive behaviours that can cause members of other groups to have a stunted self-image. These disadvantages, although they will not


239 Hirschmann (ibid.), Richardson (ibid.), and Friedman (ibid.) are all careful to stress this point.
arise in a conscious-ready fashion, can give rise to significant powers to dominate that will manifest themselves without their possessors’ active involvement. The mere fact that the dominant group will continue to enjoy certain advantages can mean that others will perceive themselves as being at the dominant group’s mercy, despite the potential protests of the dominant group that they do not dominate in a conscious-ready way.

Another way to see the problem here is to re-examine Pettit’s idea of enacting special protections for those in a significant vulnerability class. The problem is that this solution may take for granted that the characteristics in question of the individuals do make them vulnerable without investigating why those characteristics are (or continue to be) a mark of vulnerability. Thus, if Young is right that part of the reason that vulnerable groups remain vulnerable is because members of dominant groups still have and display unconscious aversions towards others, Pettit’s solution might be doubly problematic. This is because providing members of vulnerable groups with special protections (a) would seem likely fail to be fully effective, and (b) might even be counterproductive.

Pettit’s solution would seem likely to fail to be fully effective because it only attempts to deal with the vulnerability of such groups at the conscious-ready level. Thus only overt cases of their vulnerability landing them at a disadvantage would need to be dealt with: Only cases, for example, where someone is explicitly harassed because he is black will activate the special protections he is afforded and will tend to register with sympathetic others as problematic transgressions of those special protections. Cases where others unconsciously avoid speaking with or acknowledging him, cases where
others unconsciously act as if he is someone to be feared, or where others unconsciously but persistently make harmful evaluations of his credentials, and so forth, would not register simply because they are not conscious-ready. Thus the vulnerability of these groups to both conscious-ready and conscious-resistant domination would seem to persist. On the other hand, as I have noted, enacting special protections for members of subordinate groups may be counterproductive in so far as it marks them out as particularly vulnerable, as somehow inherently or persistently disadvantaged and in need or special assistance, or, in other words, as moral patients rather than as moral agents.
CHAPTER 6: A RADICAL REPUBLICAN CONCEPTION OF POWER

6.0: Introduction

In the last chapter we examined the criterion offered by republicanism for distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable power. That chapter focused on the formal characteristics of the republican view, such as its responsibilist character and the distinctions it made between having and exercising power. There I argued that these formal characteristics need to change. More specifically, republicanism ought to radicalize and employ an inactivist conception of power. On this view dominating power will manifest itself in both active and inactive ways. Moreover, this view requires us to pay particular (but not exclusive) attention to how structures of social relations shape the powers of individuals. What I did not examine in great detail is the normative character of the republican ideal. It is to that issue that I turn my attention in this final chapter.

For the republican, power is unacceptable when it is arbitrary, or when it amounts to domination. This chapter examines a number of possible ways to understand arbitrariness and aims to come to a conception of arbitrariness that will be appropriate for both active and inactive (or conscious-ready and conscious-resistant) cases of power. We shall begin by examining whether the notion of arbitrariness ought to be conceived of in a purely volitional, a purely substantive, or a volitional/substantive manner, and we shall see that none of these ways of understanding domination is entirely satisfactory. We shall then examine structural ways to understand domination / arbitrary power - ways that
focus on the structure of the relation between agents that exists where domination obtains. In particular, I shall argue that a very fruitful way to understand the notion of domination is to attend to the structural differences between power-over, power-with, and power-for. This investigation shall show us that there are both primary and secondary ways in which power can be non-arbitrary: The primary way in which power can be non-arbitrary is when it amounts to power-with (and so not power-over); the secondary way in which power can be non-arbitrary is when it amounts to power-for (whether or not it involves power-over as well). Alternatively, the primary way power is arbitrary is when it amounts to power-over and does not also involve power-for, and the secondary way power is arbitrary is when it amounts to power-over but does involve power-for.

6.1: Three Ways of Understanding Arbitrariness

Republicanism offers a criterion for how to understand when power is acceptable and when it is unacceptable: For republicans, power is unacceptable in so far as it is arbitrary, and it is acceptable in so far as it is non-arbitrary. What exactly counts as ‘arbitrary power’, therefore, is of paramount importance for evaluating radical republicanism. A crucial difficulty with Pettit’s presentations of the notion of arbitrariness is that they do not always distinguish clearly enough between a number of different ways of understanding the concept. Pettit’s main presentation in *Republicanism* is as follows:

An act is perpetrated on an arbitrary basis, we can say, if it is subject just to the *arbitrium*, the decision or judgement, of the agent; the agent was in a position to choose it or not choose it, at their pleasure. When we say that an act of interference is perpetrated on an arbitrary basis, then, we imply that like any arbitrary act it is chosen or not chosen at the agent’s pleasure. And
in particular, since interference with others is involved, we imply that it is chosen or rejected without reference to the interests, or the opinions, of those affected. The choice is not forced to track what the interests of those others require according to their own judgements.

Notice that an act of interference can be arbitrary in the procedural sense intended here - it may occur on an arbitrary basis - without being arbitrary in the substantive sense of actually going against the interests or judgements of the persons affected. An act is arbitrary, in this usage, by virtue of the controls - specifically, the lack of controls - under which it materializes, not by virtue of the particular consequences to which it gives rise. Under this conception of arbitrariness, then, an act of interference will be non-arbitrary to the extent that is is forced to track the interests or ideas of the person suffering the interference. Or, if not forced to track all of the interests or ideas of the person involved...at least forced to track the relevant ones.\textsuperscript{240}

There are at least three different senses of arbitrariness here. The first one we can call the ‘purely volitional’ view; here power is arbitrary because only the projecting agent determines the conditions under which his power affects the receiving agent. In deciding whether to exercise his power, the projecting agent does not hold himself required to follow any standards other than his own; the “only brake on the interference [he] can inflict is the brake of [his] own untrammeled choice or [his] own unchecked judgement, [his] own \textit{arbitrium}.”\textsuperscript{241} The second view of arbitrariness here can be called the ‘purely substantive’ view; here power is arbitrary because there is no substantive connection between the projecting agent’s power and the receiving agent's interests or ideas. The projecting agent’s power need not track the interests or ideas of the receiving agent - it can go against those interests or ideas just as easily as it can go in favour of them.\textsuperscript{242}

The third view of arbitrariness here can be called the ‘volitional/substantive’ view. On this last view, power is arbitrary because the projecting agent is not required to track

\textsuperscript{240} Pettit (1997), p. 55.
\textsuperscript{241} Pettit (1997), p. 57.
\textsuperscript{242} There is a fair amount of ambiguity in Pettit’s text as to what exactly it is to ‘track’ the another’s interests or ideas. Sometimes tracking seems to amount to promoting those interests (or at least not frustrating them). At other times it seems to amount to making them a factor in the decision making (although not necessarily the deciding factor). For the most past, I’ll follow the first interpretation and treat tracking as promoting or at least not frustrating the other’s interests or ideas.
(or, perhaps, take into consideration) the interests or ideas of the receiving agent when making decisions that affect the receiving agent. The volitional/substantive view is wider in some respects but narrower in others in comparison to the purely substantive view: This last view is wider than the purely substantive view in that it does not hold going against the interests or ideas of the receiving agent to be necessary to make power arbitrary (all that is necessary is that the projecting agent is not required to take those interests or ideas into consideration in his decision-making). The volitional/substantive view is narrower than the purely substantive view in that it does not hold going against the interests or ideas of the receiving agent to be sufficient to make power arbitrary (where a projecting agent’s decision-making is suitably constrained, power counts as non-arbitrary even if it goes against the interests or ideas of the receiving agent).

In the extended quotation above, Pettit seems to favour the volitional/substantive view: On the one hand, he clearly goes beyond the purely volitional view in saying that interference with others is arbitrary when it is chosen or rejected without reference to the interests or ideas of the receiving agents. On the other hand, he seems to back away from the purely substantive view when he indicates that interference can be arbitrary even if it does not actually go against the interests or ideas of the receiving agent. However, there are several reasons why it is not clear what his overall understanding is. First, Pettit elsewhere distinguishes his understanding of domination from other understandings of

243 My construal here of the volitional/substantive view depends on it being an open question whether one’s interests include something like autonomy. If an interest in autonomy were included, then the volitional/substantive account would hold that going against some interest of the receiving agent (specifically her interest in autonomy) was both necessary and sufficient for power to count as arbitrary.
power by noting that domination “is a negative sort of power, in so far as it is a capacity to damage the victim, not a capacity to improve the victim’s lot”.\textsuperscript{244} This is in tension with the volitional/substantive view because there could very well be powers to improve a receiving agent’s situation that could be exercised without having to take their impacts on the receiving agent’s interests or ideas into consideration. For example, I might have the power to make you an exploitative offer, a power which might improve your situation even from your own point of view, but which I can exercise without having to make any consideration of what your interests or ideas are.

Faced with this tension, one might think that Pettit’s most obvious move would be to reject the idea that domination worsens a receiving agent’s situation.\textsuperscript{245} Instead he could hold that domination may, but need not worsen a receiving agent’s situation because a dominator is someone who can act without considering the potentially negative impacts of his actions on others. This however would seem to be in tension with a number of Pettit’s other examples, where he specifically marks out situations as evincing domination despite the projecting agent’s good intentions. Consider, for example, the benevolent but dominating slave-master: Such an individual takes himself to be exercising his power for the benefit of his slave, whom the master perceives as a misguided creature incapable of properly understanding his own interests.\textsuperscript{246} The master, we might suppose, only thinks of himself as taking his slave’s interests into account, and

\textsuperscript{244} Pettit (1997), p. 79.
\textsuperscript{245} See also Pettit (1997), p. 52.
yet Pettit still maintains that the master is dominating the slave. One explanation for the persistence of domination might be that the master is not compelled by any external standards, but this would seem to support a purely volitional understanding of arbitrariness (an understanding Pettit rejects). Another explanation for the persistence of arbitrariness could have something to do with the receiving agent’s ideas; perhaps the master’s power is arbitrary because he is not required to consider what the slave’s ideas are about what is in her interests. While there is a lot of support for this interpretation in Pettit’s subsequent work, there would still be a difficulty in figuring out whether a projecting agent should be counted as acting arbitrarily when he has good reason to believe that there is a significant discrepancy between the receiving agent’s actual interests and her ideas about what her interests are.

My main concern here is to determine what republicans ought to think rather than what Pettit himself actually thinks. Thus I shall examine each view of arbitrariness identified above, and argue that none of them is completely satisfactory. Instead, I shall argue that we ought to understand arbitrariness in a structural way, by looking at the structure of the relation that exists between the projecting agent and the receiving agent.

6.2: The Purely Volitional View

One potentially compelling reason to decide in favor of the purely volitional view of arbitrariness would be that it points to a distinctive sort of evil that isn’t captured by...
the other views. Indeed, while Pettit ultimately rejects the purely volitional view, he does cite some compelling considerations that might be though to speak in favor of it, namely considerations regarding uncertainty and the need for strategic deference:

To suffer the reality or expectation of arbitrary interference is to suffer an extra malaise over and beyond that of having your choices intentionally curtailed. It is to have to endure a high level of uncertainty, since the arbitrary basis on which the interference occurs means that there is no predicting when it will strike. Such uncertainty makes planning much more difficult than it would be under a corresponding prospect of non-arbitrary interference. And, of course, it is likely to produce a high level of anxiety...To suffer the reality or expectation of arbitrary interference is [, however,] not only to have to endure a high level of uncertainty. It is also to have to keep a weather eye on the powerful, anticipating what they will expect of you and trying to please them, or anticipating where they will be and trying to stay out of their way; it is to have strategic deference and anticipation forced on you at every point. You can never sail on, unconcerned, in the pursuit of your own affairs; you have to navigate an area that is mined on all sides with dangers.248

Proponents of the purely volitional view may find an upshot in this discussion. At least at first, it appears possible to reduce these sorts of evils by combatting arbitrariness according to the purely volitional view without also combatting it according to the other views. Frank Lovett offers an example of just such a case.249 In Lovett’s example, we have a society where one social group has historically been dominant over another, and the dominance of the one group is so secure that the subordinate group has no reasonable expectation of the relative standing between them ever appreciably improving. The subordinate group is eventually able to secure one concession from the dominant group: At some point, a legal code is adopted by all parties and thereafter strictly enforced. The dominant group makes this concession because the subordinate group requests no change in relative status. Instead they merely ask for all the powers, privileges, and so forth,

249 Lovett (2010), ch.4; Lovett (2012).
possessed by the dominant group at that specific time to be codified. At that time the
dominant group does not lose any specific advantages they possess, and they gain the
advantage of legally and not just socially enshrining their advantages. Such a situation is
nevertheless advantageous to the subordinate group, Lovett argues, because it reduces the
degree to which they are subject to domination on the purely volitional view:

Members of the disadvantaged groups now at least know exactly where they stand: they can
develop plans of life based on reliable expectations; provided they follow the rules, they need
not go out of their way to curry favor with members of the powerful group; and so on. Lovett
argues, because it reduces the
degree to which they are subject to domination on the purely volitional view:

However, Lovett insists, this does not seem to reduce the degree to which they are
dominated in either the volitional/substantive or the purely substantive sense:

Now according to the democratic [version of the substantive conception], it would seem that
this change does nothing to affect the levels of domination present in the society. This is
because the powerful group is in no way compelled by the newly introduced rules to wield
social power specifically so as to track the interests disadvantaged groups would express
through suitably designed deliberative procedures.

If Lovett’s example is successful, it will be to the advantage of the purely volitional view
because it will show that, when giving up the other two views, we need not also be giving
up the possibility of reducing the ills of uncertainty and unrestricted strategic deference
that attach to being exposed to arbitrary power. These ills can be reduced simply by
focusing on purely volitional arbitrariness, and so reducing purely volitional arbitrariness
would be normatively attractive in its own right. This is important for Lovett because he
argues that both of the other two views will inevitably run into serious problems.

The force of Lovett’s example rests on whether it actually is a normatively
attractive reduction of arbitrariness on the purely volitional view that is not also

251 ibid.
accompanied by a reduction in arbitrariness on one of the other two views: If there were an accompanying reduction of arbitrariness on one of the other views, it would remain an open question as to what the explanation was for why the reduction of arbitrariness was normatively attractive. I argue that Lovett only shows that there can be normatively attractive reductions in purely volitional arbitrariness without corresponding reductions in volitional/substantive arbitrariness. In other words, I argue that reductions in purely volitional arbitrariness are only normatively attractive when they are accompanied by reductions in purely substantive arbitrariness - when, that is, they actually track the interests or ideas of the receiving agents. In the remainder of this section I shall examine the contrast between the purely substantive and the purely volitional views, saving the contrast between the purely volitional and the volitional/substantive views for later.

Where the contrast between the purely volitional and purely substantive views is concerned, I both need to show that (i) normatively attractive reductions in purely volitional arbitrariness are always accompanied by reductions in purely substantive arbitrariness, and (ii) that reductions in purely volitional arbitrariness will not be normatively attractive if they are not accompanied by reductions in purely substantive arbitrariness. Firstly, there is an accompanying reduction of arbitrariness in Lovett’s example on the purely substantive view: This is because reducing the degree to which members of subordinate groups face uncertainty and are required to be strategically deferent surely furthers their interests in being able to develop a plan of life based on
stable expectations. Alternatively, constraints designed to reduce these ills certainly seem to be among the sorts of things that subordinate groups would aim to secure if they could.

Secondly, though, it seems that a reduction in purely volitional arbitrariness will not be normatively attractive unless it is accompanied by a reduction in purely substantive arbitrariness. Consider a society of slave-owners bound by external standards to be maximally cruel to their slaves: Should a slave-owner ever get it into his head to be merciful to one of his slaves, he will be taken to task by his peers. Presume that in this society, power will never (at least intentionally) manifest itself in such a way that it does not go against the interests of the slaves. In other words, the power of masters over slaves in this society will never fail to be arbitrary according to the purely substantive view. The problem for the purely volitional view, though, is that power here will always fail to be arbitrary according to that view, since a master’s will regarding his slave will always be constrained by the external standards requiring maximum cruelty. When we run these two points together, it seems clear that the purely volitional view is not tenable as an account of arbitrariness. This is because it seems that what makes the difference as to whether a reduction in arbitrariness on the purely volitional view is actually normatively attractive is whether there is also a corresponding reduction in purely substantive arbitrariness.

6.3: The Volitional/Substantive View

Despite the failure of Lovett’s example to support the purely volitional view, it does undermine the volitional/substantive view. Recall that the volitional/substantive view, at
first glance, holds that it is both necessary and sufficient to render power non-arbitrary that the projecting agent is forced to track the interests or ideas of the receiving agent in his decision-making process. This entails that power ought not be counted as non-arbitrary unless the projecting agent is forced to actually take the receiving agent’s interests or ideas into consideration when he makes decisions that will affect her. Lovett’s example is particularly relevant here because it would be excluded by the volitional/substantive view: In Lovett’s society, there need be no requirement for members of the dominant group to take the interests or ideas of members of the subordinate group into consideration when making their decisions. Instead, members of the dominant group need simply follow the rules, and it is their rule-following behaviour rather than the content of their deliberations that serves the interests or ideas of the subordinate group.

If we accept that the outcome in Lovett’s example is normatively attractive, we need to decide whether it should also be counted as less arbitrary than the alternative in which there was no legal codification of the dominant’s groups privileges over the subordinate group. The volitional/substantive view would deny that Lovett’s case is less arbitrary than the alternative, although it would seem hard for it to deny that Lovett’s case is less objectionable or more normatively attractive than the alternative. So Lovett’s case presents the proponent of the volitional/substantive view with a serious dilemma: Either he has to admit that his conception of arbitrariness is unduly restrictive, or he has to admit that rendering power non-arbitrary is not the only way to render it unobjectionable (or at least less objectionable). Fortunately, though, it does not matter for our purposes
how the proponent of the volitional/substantive view would solve this dilemma, since we are ultimately concerned with the broader question of what makes power unobjectionable rather than the potentially narrower question of what makes it non-arbitrary. Accordingly, while I shall continue to investigate this question in terms of the concept of arbitrariness, it will always be open for me to fall back on the more general concept of objectionability.

Another serious drawback of the volitional/substantive view (especially for the radical republican) is that it is not entirely in keeping with an inactivist and quasi-relationalist account of power. In the volitional/substantive account, power is rendered non-arbitrary whenever the projecting agent is externally prevented from failing to take the interests or ideas of the receiving agent into account when he makes decisions that will affect her. The problem with this understanding of arbitrariness is that it seems to pay far too little attention to the potential for the inactive manifestation of power and to the role that structures of social relations in a society can play in shaping the practical landscapes of individuals. This is because there seem to be two kinds of ways that an agent would not count as exercising arbitrary power on the volitional/substantive account: He would not count as exercising arbitrary power if he made a decision that affected another but he took her interests or ideas into consideration when making this decision. However he would also not count as exercising arbitrary power over her if he simply failed to make a decision: In this second case, it remains true that he did not exercise power arbitrarily by making a decision that failed to track her interests or ideas.
To put this point in other terms, it seems that the volitional/substantive view has difficulties understanding how at least some forms of conscious-resistant power could be arbitrary. This is because some instances of conscious-resistant power will involve cases where the projecting agent just did something, as it were, without actually making a conscious decision about what to do. The example of damaging unconscious aversions would seem to fit this model quite well: At least some of these cases will involve behaviours that are harmful to members of subordinate groups but which the members of dominant groups could not consciously decide to do. Such dominant-group individuals will be constrained by the equality-favouring norms of their societies in such a way that they never could consciously decide to engage in such behaviours: Their being inclined to take the interests or ideas of others into consideration when making decisions about how to interact with others would always cause them to see such behaviours as unacceptable. Thus, according to the volitional/substantive account, their power would not be arbitrary because their conscious decisions would always be forced to take the appropriate considerations into account. If we are to be able to count their damaging unconscious behaviours as arbitrary, then, we need a broader view than the volitional/substantive one.

6.4: Purely Substantive Views

Recall that on the purely substantive view, there must actually be a substantive relation between the projecting agent’s power and the receiving agent: The projecting agent’s power (and not merely his deliberations about when to exercise his power) must actually
track the interests or ideas of the receiving agent. I shall now examine three different potential versions of the purely substantive account, the first of which holds that power must track objective interests, the second of which holds that power must track subjective interests, and the last of which holds that power must track, roughly speaking, the (potential) outcomes of deliberative democratic procedures. I shall argue that the radical republican has reasons to reject all of these versions of the purely substantive view.

6.4.1: Objective Interests

On the objective interests version, manifestations of one’s power in relation to another would be required to track the other’s objective interests. This view is initially attractive because it could allow the radical republican to critique manifestations of power which were designed to or had the result of obscuring receiving agents’ objective interests from them, even if those manifestations of power were in line with their preferences. For example, if a system of patriarchal oppression were so pervasive that relatively few women within that system objected to their treatment or were conscious of it as oppressive, the objective-interests radical republican would be able to critique the system on the grounds that manifestations of male power within it typically failed to track the objective interests of women. There are, however, a number of significant shortcomings of such a view that ought to lead radical republicans to reject it.
The first significant shortcoming of the objective interests version is that it may violate what we might call the ‘structural requirement’. According to the structural requirement, we at least sometimes ought to be able to tell whether a given social relation evinces domination just from the structure of the relation between agents. For example, an unrestricted master/slave relationship is objectionable (or dominating) simply in virtue of the fact that the master can unilaterally take away many of the slave’s options without the slave being able to seriously reciprocate. The problem where the objective-interests version is concerned is that this seems to be a contingent fact. For example, depending upon the account of objective interests at hand, it might turn out to be the case that a given master/slave relationship was not at all arbitrary because it didn’t frustrate the slave’s interests. Moreover, while this result would be avoided by an account of objective interests that included autonomy, it would still at least seem to be a potential problem for the radical republican that one has to work out whether or not one’s objective interests actually include autonomy before one can be guaranteed the conclusion that a master/slave relationship is always at least somewhat arbitrary or dominating.

The second significant shortcoming is that the inclusion of a specific account of objective interests threatens to either trivialize the distinctiveness of the republican contribution or make republicanism seem somewhat absurd. The distinctive contribution of republican political philosophy, we might say, is that it holds that the avoidance of arbitrary power takes precedence over all other goals the state might pursue. Now,

imagine that we have some defensible account of objective interests and we conceive of arbitrary power solely as power that does not track those interests. How, in this case, would republican political philosophy differ from a political philosophy focused simply on the promotion of objective interests? Republicanism here would hold that maximally preventing these interests from being frustrated through the manifestation of power takes precedence over all other goals that the state might have, including the direct promotion of these interests. The first problem here is that this republican idea might not actually be adding something distinctive. This is because the particular account of objective interests itself might already support the republican conclusion (as might be the case if this account held that something akin to autonomy was the central or most important objective interest). In this case, republicanism would merely seem to be working out a conclusion that was already entailed by the account of objective interests, rather than making a distinctive contribution to our thinking about how we ought to go about promoting people’s interests. However, in the second place, republicanism would seem to face an even greater problem if its stress on prioritizing the avoidance of arbitrary power was not supported by the account of objective interests in question. In this case republicanism would seem to hold that avoiding the frustration of objective interests through the manifestation of power ought to be prioritized even though this would prevent the maximal promotion of people’s objective interests. This contribution might indeed be distinctive, but it is hard to see why it would be compelling in the long run.
The final problem with the objective interests version is that it would either be incomplete or would require a significant modification to the basis of republican theory. For short, we might call this the ‘interests/ideas problem’. Recall that the purely substantive view (and the republican conception of arbitrariness more generally) requires that a projecting agent’s power track the receiving agent’s interests or ideas, and not merely that it track his interests. More importantly, we might wonder what ought to be done in the cases that the receiving agent’s interests conflict with his ideas. Which of the two should the republican projecting agent favour? The first difficulty that the objective interests view faces is thus that it only provides us with a way of understanding what the interests are that power ought to track; it does not tell what ideas ought to be tracked or how to balance between conflicts between interests and ideas. Thus, the objective interests version is either incomplete, or it requires us to drop the idea that power ought to track the ideas of receiving agents as well as their interests. While this may not seem like a serious problem in its own right - very few theories are fully complete, after all - it becomes more serious when the subjective and deliberative versions of the purely substantive view come into focus, for neither of them encounters the same problem.

6.4.2: Subjective Interests

On the subjective interests version of the purely substantive view, manifestations of a projecting agent’s power would be required to track some specification of the
receiving agent’s subjective interests. There are three broad possibilities for what to count here, namely expressed preferences (only), both expressed and unexpressed preferences (whether authentic or inauthentic), and only authentic preferences. Of these possibilities, the authentic preferences view is best: The central failing of the expressed preferences version is that it cannot count power that fails to track an unexpressed preference as arbitrary. Imagine here the case of a woman living under an oppressive husband who was too afraid of him to ever actually complain about her situation. Were his power-over her so great that it unfailingly silenced her grievances before they could be made, he would fail to count as dominating her on the expressed preference view because his power would not be failing to track any of her expressed preferences (only her unexpressed ones). The same problem could easily repeat itself at the society-wide level.

The subjective preferences version overcomes this shortcoming where it holds power to be arbitrary when it fails to take into account any subjective preferences of receiving agent, whether or not she has expressed them. However, the subjective and expressed preferences versions share another serious difficulty where they do not take into account the reasons for which individuals have the subjective preferences that they do. In other words, the subjective preferences version would seem to potentially require power to track any subjective preferences whatsoever, even if those preferences were the result of misinformation, manipulation, indoctrination, deprivation, and so forth. Thus,

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253 I only give a very brief presentation of these possibilities here. For a much more nuanced presentation (and the full argument in favor of authentic preference views), see Sumner (1996).
for example, subordinating a slave to a master would only seem to count as arbitrary if
the slave actually wanted to be free; if he preferred his enslavement on the whole for
whatever reason, the subjective or expressed-preferences versions of the tracking
condition would have difficulty finding something objectionable in his enslavement.

The authentic-preferences version is a huge improvement on both previous
preference-based versions. On the authentic-preferences version, power is arbitrary only
in so far as it fails to track authentic preferences, preferences that are both suitably
informed and autonomous. Thus, for example, if a woman’s preference for remaining
in the home were due to someone preventing her from obtaining correct information
about the range of alternatives actually available to her, the authentic preferences version
would not require power to track this particular preference. Likewise, if she were aware
of a reasonable range of the alternatives available to her but her preferences were not
formed in conditions that allowed her to be autonomous, the authentic-preferences
version would not require tracking this preference.

A further advantage of the authentic-preference version, and indeed of any
preference-based version of the purely substantive view, is that it does not run into the
interests/ideas problem as the objective interests version did. The reason for this is that,
on preference-based versions of the purely substantive view, there doesn’t seem to be any
potential for conflict in kind between the receiving agent’s interests and ideas. This is
because the interests that preference-based views specify as counting are intentional

states; they are, in other words, actually ‘ideas’, broadly speaking. Moreover, while there certainly is the potential for an agent’s ideas to conflict with each other, a preference-based republicanism could quite plausibly say that the projecting agent ought to approach these conflicts by favouring the receiving agent’s strongest idea/preference.

There are, however, still some serious worries for the republican in adopting an authentic-preferences understanding of arbitrariness. The first potential problem is the particular way in which this view solves the interests/ideas problem: It solves it by definitional fiat, or, we might say, by effectively denying that it exists in the first place. This problem is certainly not fatal, but we might still hope for a solution to this problem that suggested a method to the projecting agent for solving it instead of denying its existence. I shall argue below that the deliberative version does just this.

The second problem for the authentic-preferences version is the exact same as a problem that arose for the objective interests version: Adopting the authentic preferences version either threatens to undermine the distinctiveness of the republican contribution or make it seem somewhat absurd. On the authentic-preferences version, the distinctive contribution of republicanism would be to hold that avoiding the frustration of authentic preferences through the manifestation of power ought to take precedence over all other goals that the state might have, including the direct promotion of authentic preferences. As was the case with the objective-interests view, this may already be supported by the particular account of authentic preferences at hand - there might be something in this
account of authentic preferences, in other words, that shows that the most serious source of the frustration of authentic preference is the manifestation of power. In this case, though, republicanism does not seem to add anything more distinctive than a working out of what is already entailed by that account of authentic preferences. On the other hand, however, the account of authentic preferences may not support this conclusion, in which case the republican position would seem at least a little counterintuitive in that it would require the maximization of one form of the non-frustration of authentic preferences over the actual or overall maximization of those authentic preferences.

A final problem for the authentic-preferences version emerges when we consider whether it would only require factually tracking authentic preferences or whether it would also require counterfactually tracking them. Whichever alternative is chosen, there are costs for the republican. If the republican only requires factually tracking authentic preferences - or only tracking preferences that actually are authentic - then there could be a great potential for ignoring the people’s actual preferences. Recall that on the authentic preference version, a manifestation of power is only arbitrary to the extent that it fails to track some authentic preference. In other words, disregarding an inauthentic preference does not make a manifestation of power arbitrary on this view. Thus, if the republican were only required to track preferences that actually were authentic, he would seem to be permitted to write off any preferences he had good reason to suspect were inauthentic or compromised. Such a republican, in other words, would only be required to attend to
preferences that truly were authentic; he would not need to take into account what an individual’s preferences might be if they were authentic.

On the other hand, requiring counterfactually tracking authentic preferences brings its own dangers. Here, for an agent’s power to be non-arbitrary with respect to some preference, his power would have to track what that preference would look like if it were authentic. If the agent had good reason to believe that the preference actually was authentic, he would be required to straightforwardly track it. If he had reason to suspect that the preference was not authentic, he would be required to make conjectures about what the preference would look like if it were authentic. One problem that arises is thus that the authentic-preferences version of the purely substantive view either allows the projecting agent to ignore what he believes to be inauthentic preferences altogether, or it requires him to make guesses about what receiving agents would want if their preferences were authentic. The dangers of entitling the agent to make such conjectures where he believes preferences are inauthentic ought to be particularly worrisome for republicans, since it is essentially a license to substitute one’s own judgement for another’s whenever one comes to believe that the other’s preferences have been compromised.

We might not think that the need to make conjectures about what a receiving agent’s preferences would if they were authentic look like is very problematic. After all, every account of domination will entail situations where projecting agents have to make

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255 In truth it seems that he will almost always be required to make these conjectures, since it would seem that his judgements about whether a given preference is authentic would depend on whether that preference accorded with his conjecture about what it would look like if it were authentic.
guesses about whether their actions are dominating. This ‘conjecture problem’ might thus not really be a problem because it is faced by all agents following a particular moral or political theory. For the authentic preferences version, though, this problem is particularly acute because of the kind of conjectures that would be made. Here the difficulty is that the conjectures made by the projecting agents would not seem to be (easily) contestable by the receiving agents. To see this, think about the conditions under which a projecting agent would make the judgement that a preference is inauthentic. Imagine the case where a woman has a preference for the ‘traditional’ life, one where she would stay at home, not developing any skills that might be useful outside the home, and would thus be completely dependent on her husband for support. Presume that our republican agent judges this preference to be inauthentic because of the woman’s upbringing and because he thinks that no reasonable person would want to put herself in a position where she was completely dependent on another. The republican will therefore disregard this preference and perhaps seek to compel the woman to develop skills that she could use if her husband were ever to leave her destitute. On what basis could the woman contest this paternalistic intervention? Given the assumptions that the republican would be making in this case, it does not seem that she would ever be able to effectively contest his judgement, since he has assumed that she began at an epistemically compromised position.

Other potential ways to spell out the concept of arbitrariness would not seem to have this problem to such a degree. There would certainly be cases where agents would, for example, have to make conjectures about which course of action would minimize the
frustration of subjective preferences. The agents making these conjectures, though, can be forced to revise their judgements over time if the facts do not bear out according to their assumptions. In the case of the authentic preferences view, though, there does not seem to be any mechanism by which receiving agents judged to have inauthentic preferences would have to dispute the conjectures that affected them. As we shall see below, an advantage of the deliberative conception is that it does provide an effective avenue for disputing the conjectures that it would sometimes require agents to make.

6.4.3: Deliberative Outcomes

The Basic Idea Behind the Deliberative Understanding of Arbitrariness

On the deliberative version of the purely substantive view of arbitrariness, an agent’s power is required to track the outcomes of deliberative democratic procedures, or, to track the interests and ideas (or the ideas about interests) that would emerge from deliberative democratic procedures. I examine this idea in detail below, but for the moment I call attention to one necessary modification to this view. As it stands, the present formulation of the deliberative version is insufficient because it might only seem to require that manifestations of power account for interests and ideas that have been expressed through suitable deliberative processes. A much better way to formulate the deliberative version has it requiring that manifestations of power account not only for

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those that have been expressed but also, as much as possible, also those that would be expressed through suitably designed deliberative processes. Otherwise, it seems that the deliberative understanding of arbitrariness might fail to identify as arbitrary manifestations of power that did not track preferences of affected agents simply because they had not yet been expressed in the deliberative arena.

To see what the deliberative version would require, we need to examine the general ideal of deliberative democracy. For this a good place to start is Joshua Cohen’s “Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy”. The deliberative ideal, as presented by Cohen, is first and foremost a conception of when and to what degree political decisions are legitimate. This conception begins from the idea that

> When properly conducted... democratic politics involves [reasoned] public deliberation focused on the common good, requires some form of manifest equality among citizens, and shapes the identity and interests of citizens in ways that contribute to the formation of a public conception of the common good... [The basic notion here is] the intuitive ideal of a democratic association in which the justification of the terms and conditions of association proceeds through public argument and reasoning among equal citizens. Citizens in such an order share a commitment to the resolution of problems of collective choice through public reasoning, and regard their basic institutions as legitimate insofar as they establish the framework for free public deliberation... For them, free deliberation among equals is the basis of legitimacy.

As James Bohman puts it, at “the core of deliberative democracy, in any of its forms, is the idea that deliberation essentially involves publicly giving reasons to justify decisions, policies or laws, all of which are the means by which citizens constitute and regulate their common life together”. “[D]eliberation demands the critical engagement of citizens with each other” and “requires that citizens commit themselves to making decisions

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259 Bohman (2009), p. 28.
according to reasons that they believe are public”, and thus to arriving “at decisions that are acceptable to all who share the commitment to deliberation”. In sum, the central thrust of the deliberative ideal is the notion that democratic decisions are legitimate to the extent that they have or could have emerged from a suitably designed deliberative procedure in which the participants freely sought to reach a reasoned decision regarding the how to regulate their common lives as equals.

**Some Apparent Advantages of the Deliberative Understanding of Arbitrariness**

The above discussion shows us that what power would be required to track on the deliberative version of the purely substantive view is not simply the interests that would be identified during the course of deliberation; power would also be required to track the deliberatively produced ideas about how those interests ought to be pursued. The requirement that both interests and ideas (or ideas about interests) ought to be tracked brings us to the first major advantage of the deliberative version, which is that it does not face the interests/ideas problem as the objective or subjective interests versions did.

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262 Cohen (1997), pp. 72-5. Please note that there is disagreement between deliberative theorists as to whether appeals to self-interest ought to be allowed within the deliberative sphere, or whether only appeals based on ‘common concern’ ought to be admitted. Pettit is difficult to locate on this spectrum. On the one hand, his idea that to be non-dominating power must track ‘common avowable interests’ seems to place him in the camp that would deny appeals to self-interest (Pettit (2000), p. 108). However, he sometimes seems to belong to the other camp, for he does note that space ought to be reserved for vulnerable groups to explore their interests (e.g. Pettit (1997), p. 195 and Pettit (1999), p.78) and moreover he seems to think that contestations based on the self-interests of a vulnerable or subordinate group would pass the common avowable interests test (Pettit 2004). For arguments specifically aimed at the inclusion of self-interest in the deliberative sphere, see Mansbridge (1996), Fraser (1990) and Mansbridge (2010).
this regard, recall that the objective interests version either gave us an incomplete understanding of domination or rejected the idea that power ought to track ideas, whereas the subjective interests version overcame this problem by essentially denying that it exists. The deliberative version, on the other hand, solves the interests/ideas problem by suggesting a solution to it: Where there might seem to be a conflict between a receiving agent’s interests and ideas, what the projecting agent ought to do is initiate deliberation about that apparent conflict, since he actually ought to be tracking the receiving agent’s ideas about her interests and how to pursue them that would emerge out of deliberation.

The second advantage of the deliberative version is that it does not threaten to violate the structural requirement, as the objective interests version did. This is because the deliberative version suggests that power ought to track that which would come about when a certain kind of structural relation exists between agents, namely the relation of equal-deliberators about how to govern their common affairs. Thus, the deliberative view is able to reject master/slave relationships because they lack the proper structural relation between projecting and receiving agents. Moreover, the deliberative view is able to do this without requiring consideration of whether the (ideas about) interests that would emerge from deliberation are actually tracked by such an arrangement.

The third advantage of the deliberative version is that it does not face the contestation-resistant conjectures problem that the authentic preferences version faces. Like any understanding of arbitrariness, the deliberative version will require conjectures
on the part of projecting agents. For example, situations will arise where decisions need to be made but there is not ample time to deliberate about what to do. In such cases the deliberative version of republicanism will require projecting agents to make conjectures about what the outcomes of suitably designed deliberative procedures would be and to act on those conjectures. However, unlike the authentic-preferences version, these decisions can be disputed afterward by the affected parties: If they do not believe that the decisions made actually accord with what the deliberative outcomes would have been, they can always initiate deliberation about those decisions. Such deliberation will of course not change past decisions, but it can change future decisions, and, more importantly, it can prevent a particular decision from becoming an ongoing source of arbitrariness.

The fourth advantage of the deliberative conception is that it suggests a method for rendering power non-arbitrary that will be particularly attractive to radical republicans. Recall that radical republicans not only recognize conscious-ready power but also conscious-resistant power. Accordingly, a major concern for radical republicans is how conscious-resistant power can be brought into the consciousness of the relevant parties. Radical republicans will therefore likely find a the deliberative version attractive in so far as it suggests a procedure that has a significant potential to uncover conscious-resistant power: The deliberative process requires participants to articulate their interests and ideas to others, which requires them to first critically examine those interests or ideas so that they are suitable to be presented in public. This is especially because of the expectation that publicly given reasons in favor of a particular policy will have some
connection with the common interests of all. More importantly, since deliberation requires the participants to treat each other as equals deserving of respect, it can be seen to a certain extent as not just requiring critical reflection on one’s interests or ideas, but also as empowering the participants to engage in such reflection in the first place.

Mansbridge helpfully summarizes the transformative potential of deliberation as follows:

When participants change their minds in deliberation, as in practice they often do, they most frequently do so because they have acquired new factual information. They sometimes change their minds because they have detected logical mistakes in their reasoning, or developed new perspectives on the information they have, for example, taking a more long-range view... participants change their minds because they have adopted to some degree the perspective of another or taken the other’s interests as their own...participants may change their minds because the deliberation has evoked and strengthened perceptions of, and a commitment to, justice, which now overrides or modifies the self-interested perspective with which they entered the deliberation. They may even forge new understandings of justice in the deliberation. Or participants may be transformed in this way because the deliberation has evoked and strengthened ties to a communal entity to which they had given less weight before deliberation and that now overrides or modifies their original self-interested perspective. They may also help create, as they deliberate, the entity that now claims their allegiance.263

In requiring participants to engage in critical reflection on their own and other’s interests or ideas, then, deliberation itself has an important capacity to not only bring consciousness-resistant oppression into the consciousness of the oppressed, but also to incline those who may have previously been oppressive in a conscious-ready fashion to change.

Difficulties with the Deliberative Understanding of Arbitrariness

Despite the advantages of the deliberative understanding of arbitrariness, it falls short in some important respects. The most significant difficulties with the deliberative understanding arise, in essence, because it is too narrow. The first of these difficulties

arises when considering societies that do not actually have deliberative institutions in place: There can be a variety of societies that do not include deliberative democratic arrangements within their basic structures, some of which will do better and some of which will do worse in terms of reducing domination. For example, an autocratic monarchy in which the sovereign has absolute power to do whatever he wants seems to do a lot worse in combatting domination than a constitutional monarchy in which the sovereign’s extensive powers are limited, even though neither includes any deliberative democratic element. If we have an understanding of arbitrariness that is only cashed out in terms of deliberative outcomes, however, it would be difficult to say how the latter is better than the former in terms of combatting domination, since neither arrangement includes a deliberative element. Identifying the superior alternative here is made easier by the counterfactual formulation of the deliberative version, since this makes power non-dominating so long as it tracks the ideas that would come to light through a suitable deliberative procedure. This will allow us to (sometimes) make reasonably well-supported comparative judgments between societies that don’t actually have deliberative elements, but only so long as we can give some content to the relevant counterfactual. However, there will surely be some societies for which these comparative judgements cannot be well-supported, namely some societies for which the possible world where they have the deliberative elements is so remote that judgements about what would come about if they did have such a system of government could only be mere guesses.
So the deliberative understanding of arbitrariness is too narrow in that it would prevent us from making some comparative judgements about the relative merits of some societies that do not contain deliberative democratic elements. But the deliberative version is also too narrow in another sense: It makes it hard to see how we ought to assess instances of power that occur at the more mundane level, where collective deliberation about the common good between the projecting agent and the receiving agent does not seem an appropriate guide to how to exercise power. To put this in slightly different terms, since deliberative democracy is primarily a theory about how collective political decisions can be legitimate (or non-dominating), the deliberative understanding of arbitrariness would not seem to fit cases of power that occur at the personal level well.

Consider, for example, the power that a teacher has regarding what her students will and will not learn. At almost any stage of education, a teacher is required to make some decisions about the specific content of her lessons in order that her students will gain in the long run. Moreover, it seems clear that many of these cases of the teacher exercising her discretion are ones where she actually ought to disregard the potential results of deliberations with her students. Knowing that her students might very well make decisions that would benefit them in the short term but harm them in the long run, there are good reasons for the teacher to ignore what their ideas about their interests would be. More importantly, it at least in principle seems possible for her to ignore her

264 In suggesting here that there is a distinction between the personal and the political, I do not mean to run afoul of the feminist idea that much of what has been and still is considered ‘personal’ or ‘merely private’ ought to be brought into the political arena. I merely mean to indicate that there are some cases of power where collective deliberation is not entirely appropriate.
students’ deliberative ideas and yet not be completely dominating them in so doing. Indeed, we might say that in these cases the reason why the exercise of power is not arbitrary is because it is designed to empower the teachers’ pupils in the long run.

Another respect in which the deliberative understanding of arbitrariness seems to fall short concerns personal relationships, a respect which is structurally similar to its shortcoming in terms of evaluating non-deliberative societies. Above I argued that there are cases at the personal level where power can be non-arbitrary even though the projecting agent does not track what the outcome of deliberation between her and the receiving agent would be. I would contend, though, that many, if not most, cases of power at the personal level are cases where power would be arbitrary if the projecting agent did not track the potential outcomes of deliberation to at least some degree. However, I would now like to argue that in at least some of these cases, power need not be completely arbitrary if it diverges from the potential (or likely) outcome of deliberation between the projecting agent and the receiving agent.

Imagine there are household chores to distribute between my wife and myself. Because of my wife’s upbringing, I know that she will do the vast majority of the chores if I let her, but I know that we would agree on a roughly equal share if we were to deliberate about the distribution of the chores. Here I would contend that we have a paradigmatic case where my actions with respect to my wife would be arbitrary if I did not respect the (likely) results of deliberation between us. If I just sit back and take advantage of my wife’s upbringing with the knowledge that the result of actual
deliberation between us would be more chores for me, then I certainly seem to dominate her. Moreover, if I were either to abide by the likely results of our deliberation or actually initiate deliberation, it seems that my actions cease to be arbitrary with respect to her.

But is my initiating deliberation with my wife or abiding by what I suspect the results of our deliberation would be actually necessary for me to reduce the degree to which I am not dominating her here? I contend that it is not: Imagine that I know my wife tends to decide upon equal distributions whenever she makes distributive decisions. I know that were she and I to actually deliberate about how to distribute the household chores, she would accept no less and no more that an approximately equal distribution. But imagine that I believe that I can actually do more than a equal share of the chores, and I wish to go beyond what we would agree to in order that her time can be freed up for other endeavors that will be beneficial to her. Perhaps this will make it easier for her to excel at school or at her career, and so ultimately empower her to a greater degree than she would be empowered if I had actually abided by the likely deliberative outcome.

Do I dominate my wife when I unilaterally take on more than my ‘deliberative share’ of the chores? If we adopt the deliberative understanding of arbitrariness, then it seems that there is no way to avoid the conclusion that I dominate her when I unilaterally take on more than my deliberative share. Here I would correctly think of myself as acting against the likely results of such a deliberation: I would be perhaps furthering some of the interests that she would identify during deliberation, but I certainly would be violating

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265 Or, at the very least, they would be less arbitrary than the alternative.
her ideas about how those interests ought to be furthered. And yet since my actions seem
to empower my wife, it seems hard to say that I am (completely) dominating her.
Consider the reverse case where a wife knows that her husband would insist on doing at
least half the chores, but she consciously takes on more than her deliberative share so that
he will have time to pursue an important project. While there are good reasons to be
critical of this division of domestic labor, the wife’s domination of her husband by taking
on more than her deliberative share certainly does not seem to be one of them.

6.5: Structural Understandings of Arbitrariness

I have just shown that radical republicans have good reason to reject the purely volitional
view of arbitrariness, the volitional/substantive view of arbitrariness, and the purely
substantive view of arbitrariness. I now explore some ways to understand arbitrariness in
a structural fashion, but first I shall motivate this move by reflecting on the virtues and
vices of the above three views. In the first place, recall that a strength of the purely
substantive view is that it allows us to identify power as arbitrary simply when it
frustrates the relevant interests or ideas of the receiving agents. The purely substantive
view, in other words, allows us to identify power as arbitrary without having to consider
the intentions of the projecting agent. This was a virtue when compared with both the
purely volitional and the volitional/substantive views, because both of them would deny
that power could remain arbitrary once the projecting agent’s decision-making was
constrained in the appropriate way. In the second place, however, a corresponding vice of
the purely substantive view is that it seems to deny that power can be arbitrary when it
does not go against the interests or ideas of the receiving agent. The volitional/substantive
account seemed to have an advantage here because it allowed a projecting agent’s power
to be arbitrary when he did not consider the impact of his actions of the receiving agent,
even if his actions did not actually negatively impact the receiving agent.

The issue, then, seems to be why we ought to think that a projecting agent’s
power can be arbitrary simply because he can exercise it without considering its impact
on the receiving agent. I suggest that this seems correct because the scenario under
consideration lacks the right structural relation between the projecting agent and the
receiving agent: Very roughly, perhaps the difficulty here is that the relation between
them that allows the projecting agent to exercise his power in this manner is a hierarchal
one where the projecting agent can unilaterally affect the receiving agent’s practical
landscape. This idea brings us to another virtue of the purely substantive view, at least
where the deliberative version is concerned: Perhaps one reason that that view seemed
particularly attractive is that it focused on a normatively important relationship between
the projecting agent and the receiving agent, namely the relationship of equal deliberators
about their common affairs. The interests and ideas that would emerge out of a
deliberative procedure are important to track, perhaps, not because they would be the best
or most important set of interests and ideas, but because they are the interests and ideas
that would emerge when the (or a) right structural relation existed between the projecting
agent and the receiving agent. Accordingly, the issue that I investigate now is whether we
can come up with a satisfactory understanding of arbitrariness by focusing on what kinds of structures of relations between agents seem to cause the appearance of arbitrariness to evaporate.

6.5.1: Empowerment

If my diagnosis of the cases where the deliberative version was too restrictive is correct, then accounting for the interests or ideas that would emerge from meaningful deliberation is sufficient but not necessary to ensure that power is non-arbitrary. Moreover, the cases where our worry about arbitrary power dissipates without the presence of deliberation both seemed to share something in common: They were cases where the affected agents were somehow empowered despite the lack of tracking deliberative outcomes. So perhaps the lesson here is that the reason deliberation is so attractive to republicans is because tracking the deliberative interests or ideas of affected agents is an important way of empowering them. Perhaps, in other words, the quality that all non-arbitrary cases of power share has something to do with relations of empowerment rather than deliberation.

However, I argue that while ‘empowerment’ may indicate the right direction for radical republicans, it cannot be the final destination. One significant problem is that the term ‘empowerment’ is quite vague and so threatens to make the republican understanding of arbitrariness appear vacuous. In essence, the empowerment view seems potentially vacuous because it would amount to saying that power is arbitrary when it does not empower or take into account the empowerment of those over whom it is
exercised. Another significant problem is that while empowerment (or improving the lot of the affected agent) does seem to be sufficient to avoid domination, it does not seem necessary. Consider, for example, the person who successfully pressures another to step up and do his fair deliberative share. If empowerment is necessary to avoid domination, then getting someone to contribute more, even if he ought to be doing so, would seem to amount to domination because it saps his resources or disempowers him.

The notion of ‘empowerment’ therefore does not quite fit the radical republican’s needs. Despite this mismatch, however, it does seem that there is something of merit in the notion. I would suggest that the meritorious component of the empowerment view is that it is correct that empowering relations reduce arbitrariness. The problem with the empowerment view is that it suggests that only empowerment reduces arbitrariness.

6.5.2: Power-Over, Power-With, and Power-For

In the remainder of this dissertation I am going to suggest, in essence, that republicans ought to understand the concept of non-arbitrariness by combining the relational structures suggested by the deliberative view and the empowerment view. More broadly speaking, I am suggesting that there are two features of relations between agents that can remove the appearance of arbitrariness or that can make power either seem unobjectionable or less objectionable. These features are captured in the notions of power-with and power-for. Even more specifically, I argue that there is both a primary sense in which power can be non-arbitrary (when it involves power-with) and a
secondary sense in which power can be non-arbitrary (when it involves power-for). Correspondingly, I shall be arguing at the same time that power is arbitrary in a primary sense when it only involves power-over, and that power is arbitrary in a secondary sense when it involves power-over and power-for.

Earlier in this thesis I suggested that foregrounding the power-possessor’s perspective contributes to having a general view of power that only acknowledges conscious-ready power. Alternatively, a part of the explanation for why one might reject the idea of conscious-resistant power is that it is difficult to see, from the perspective of the power-possessor, why an outcome ought to count as being due to his power if he didn’t do anything aimed at producing it or if he could not have readily known that it would come about. From the perspective of the affected agent, however, things are very different: So long as the affected agent’s options were affected and would not have been affected if were not for the power some other agent had to intervene, then that other agent’s lack of awareness does not seem to prevent his power from having been involved.

In my view, the conventional republican understanding of power, in so far as it only allows conscious-ready power, has inherited the tendency of activist views of power to foreground the power-possessor. More importantly this tendency has carried over into republican understandings of arbitrary power. Hence the issue has focused on what ought to be avoided from the power-possessor’s perspective in order for his power to seem non-dominating or non-arbitrary. Instead I want to focus on the receiving agent’s perspective and ask what needs to be present for her to see another’s power as non-arbitrary.
I have also suggested earlier that an agent’s power should be understood as a capacity to affect the practical landscapes of others. Now the question is, in essence, what the relationship between agents ought to look like to the receiving agent when she looks out over her practical landscape? To be more specific: For some feature of an agent’s practical landscape that came about at least in part through another’s power in relation to her, when ought she consider that feature non-arbitrary with respect to the other agent? As a first approximation I suggest that a receiving agent ought to regard a feature of her practical landscape as non-arbitrary to the extent that it resulted from the exercise of power-with between her and the projecting agent. This corresponds to the primary sense in which power is non-arbitrary. Here we might alternatively say that power-with is non-arbitrary because it does not involve power-over (the unilateral restriction of an agent’s practical landscape) or, perhaps, because where power-with is concerned, all the agents involved are simultaneously projecting and receiving agents.

Let’s now examine some examples to see how they fit with this model. Consider, first, the case of distributing household chores. If Bob sits back and intentionally takes advantage of Sally’s social conditioning, Sally seems to have good reason to regard the extra burden as arbitrary. The fact that she cannot do less than the lion’s share of the chores without risking a confrontation was not the result of a joint exercise of power-with. Sally was not consulted and whatever capacities she might have to succeed outside of her traditional role were disregarded. Contrast this with Bob and Sally meaningfully deliberating about the chores, and concluding that the best distribution has Sally doing
the lion’s share. Perhaps they both judged it best that only one of them pursued outside employment while the other handled the domestic responsibilities, and they jointly determined that Bob would seek outside employment because of their individual preferences and different earning potentials. This second case has the same result as the first, but it does not seem that Sally’s being required to do the lion’s share of the chores is arbitrary (or as arbitrary). So long as Sally was not unduly pressured into making this agreement, she has much less reason to view the constraints she faces as arbitrary with respect to Bob. The exercise of power that brought about a different set of duties for each of them was the result of a joint exercise of power-with, and so it seems that she ought not to view him as dominating her. It may be that the dominating power of agents other than Bob influenced their joint decision, but this need not mean that Sally should view Bob’s actions as a source of domination.

Consider, second, two brothers, Sam and Max, who jointly own a robot, the control of which they need to split between them. They decide to evenly split control of the robot and they agree to not use the robot for anything that might seriously damage it. Just like Bob and Sally’s case, if we presume that the agreement did not involve any undue pressure, it seems that neither Sam nor Max ought to view the restrictions on his use of the robot as being due to the other’s arbitrary power. The inability of each brother to use the robot in any way whatsoever is certainly due in part to the other brother’s power, but it seems that neither brother has reason to view his inability as arbitrary, since it came about as the result of a joint exercise of power-with. However, if the example
involved a human slave, we can see how the joint exercise of power on the part of the brothers is arbitrary from the slave’s perspective. From the slave’s perspective, the restrictions imposed on him would be imposed unilaterally, and so he has good reason to view the brothers’ exercise of power as arbitrary to him, even though it might not seem arbitrary to them (because, as far as they are concerned, it is bilateral). This power is power-with to the brothers, but power-over to the slave, and it is the slave not exercising power-with alongside the brothers that explains why he ought to view it as arbitrary.

Now consider the case of a citizen constrained by some law. Under what conditions would this law look non-arbitrary to the citizen? On my current line of argument, the law would look non-arbitrary in two cases. The first case is the one where the citizen played a constructive role in bringing that law about: Perhaps he had a hand in authoring it or determining its content, or he elected the government that authored it. In other words, the law ought to seem non-arbitrary to him when he can view its existence as a product of his exercise of power with his fellow-citizens. The second case is where his power was not involved in bringing the law about, but he can view the law as one that he would have brought about if he had had the chance to do so. In either case, the citizen can regard the law as involving power-with between him and his fellow citizens: Either his power with was actually involved, or it counterfactually could have been involved. In neither the actual or the counterfactual case does the citizen have reason to view the law as something that was unilaterally imposed upon him (i.e. as power-over).
As a first approximation, then, the exercise of power-with by the affected agent is sufficient to make power appear non-arbitrary to him. But, is it also necessary? In other words, must power-over always be completely arbitrary since it excludes power-with? I contend that it need not, since some cases of power-over are (or ought to seem) less arbitrary than others from the affected agent’s perspective. Consider the schoolteacher who unilaterally keeps certain information from her students, or the husband who unilaterally takes on more than his deliberative share of the chores. Above I argued that the power exercised by the schoolteacher and by the husband both failed to be completely arbitrary. There is some respect in which the affected agents ought to view these cases of power as non-arbitrary, or at least as less arbitrary than other potential alternatives. The difficulty here for the present conception of arbitrariness is that neither the husband nor the schoolteacher are exercising power-with the receiving agents, and so, on the first approximation view, their power seems arbitrary.

There is an easy way out of this dilemma for radical republicans: Instead of maintaining that there is only one sense in which power can seem non-arbitrary, they ought to maintain that there is both a primary sense and a secondary sense in which power can seem non-arbitrary. The primary sense corresponds with power-with: In these cases the agents involved are not simply receiving agents but are also projecting agents. Their practical landscapes were not affected unilaterally by others but bilaterally involving them as well. The secondary sense of non-arbitrariness, however, corresponds with power-for: In such cases, the receiving agent’s practical landscapes will have been
unilaterally affected, but they will have been affected in a way that empowers them or
tracks their interests. The schoolteacher does exercise power-over her students in the
sense that she denies them options, but she also exercises power-for them by trying to
empower them in the long run. Contrast this with the case where the schoolteacher
demands that her students only wear neon-coloured clothes in class because she happens
to like neon. In the first case she can at least explain to her students that they have to
study math instead of watch cartoons because the knowledge of math will benefit them in
the long run, whereas in the second case her only explanation seems to be that she likes
the colour neon. While her students are involved in neither decision and would choose
differently in both cases, it seems clear that they have reason to view the case that
involves power-for as less arbitrary than the one that simply involves power over.

This secondary sense of non-arbitrariness also works well for the household
chores case and the constrained by law case. In the household chores case, the husband
seems to exercise power-over his wife to some extent both when he does less than his
deliberative share and when he does more than his deliberative share; in both cases he
makes a unilateral decision about how the chores will actually be distributed. However,
the case where he exercises power over but also for his wife by aiming to empower her
clearly seems to be less arbitrary than the case where he merely exercises power-over her.
In the case of the citizen, he will regard any law that he neither actually brought about nor
counterfactually would have brought about as an exercise of power-over him. However,
there are obviously important differences between laws unilaterally imposed on him that
either disempower him or frustrate his interests and those unilaterally imposed on him that either empower him or promote his interests. Laws unilaterally imposed on him for his benefit at least seem less arbitrary than those imposed on a whim or to his detriment.

This distinction between primary and secondary senses of arbitrariness makes it clear why even though radical republicans may ultimately accept paternalistic interventions, they will always prefer to avoid them. Paternalistic interventions, on this understanding, are just exercises of power over but also for receiving agents. They will therefore always be arbitrary in the primary sense because they will be unilaterally imposed on the receiving agents. This primary sense of arbitrariness will give radical republicans pause for a number of reasons, not the least of which are the following: First, the imposers of such constraints may be wrong that the interventions are actually to the benefit of the receiving agents. Thus the projecting agents here ought always to be worried that they are wrong about what the interests of the receiving agents actually require. Second, such constraints may not merely fail to empower the receiving agents but may actually disempower them as well, by treating them as moral patients rather than was moral agents worthy of exercising power-with others. For these reasons radical republicans will always seek to avoid paternalistic interventions whenever possible. Nevertheless, they will recognize that paternalistic interventions at least have the potential to be somewhat non-arbitrary in so far as they may actually involve power-for.

More broadly, with this view of arbitrary power, radical republicans will always try to avoid the potential for the exercise of power-over wherever possible because
power-over is always somewhat arbitrary. Radical republicans, then, will only recognize two kinds of scenarios in which power-over relations between agents may be acceptable. The first kind of scenario involves the necessary exercise of power-over the receiving agent in a way that is also the exercise of power-for him as well. This will be acceptable because it either empowers the receiving agent or furthers his interests. The second kind of scenario involves the exercise of power-over one receiving agent but for another receiving agent. Such cases will be acceptable uses of power-over because they aim to prevent the first receiving agent’s power from manifesting itself arbitrarily.

The only remaining major question is whether we ought to count this second kind of acceptable use of power as bringing out a tertiary way in which power can be non-arbitrary. On the tertiary reading, power would be non-arbitrary in the primary sense when it is power-with and involves the receiving agent as a projecting agent as well, power would be arbitrary in the secondary sense when it was power-over the receiving agent but was also power-for him, and power would be non-arbitrary in the tertiary sense when it was exercised over the receiving agent but for someone else. My inclination is to stick with the primary/secondary distinction because the arbitrariness of power is determined from the receiving agent’s point of view. Thus we should see power over a first receiving agent but for a second receiving agent as arbitrary with respect to the first receiving agent, non-arbitrary with respect to the second receiving agent, and, perhaps, acceptable on the whole because of what the first receiving agent would do if this power over him was not constraining his practical landscape.
6.6 Conclusion: The Radical Republican Conception of Power

This chapter ends with a complete specification of the radical republican conception of arbitrary power. The overall conclusion of this thesis examines this view’s implications.

• A has power in relation to B when A has the capacity to affect B’s practical landscape;

• A’s power in relation to B manifests itself in relation to B whenever B’s practical landscape is affected because of the power that A has in relation to B;

• A exercises his power in relation to B whenever A’s power in relation to B manifests itself because A played an active role in affecting B’s practical landscape.

• A exercises power-over B whenever A unilaterally and deliberately constrains B’s practical landscape or adds an exploitative option to it.

• A exercises power-for B whenever A unilaterally and deliberately enhances B’s practical landscape.

• A exercises power-with B whenever A and B jointly affect their practical landscapes or the practical landscapes of others.

• A’s power in relation to B is arbitrary in a primary sense whenever A exercises power-over B but not also for B.

• A’s power in relation to B is arbitrary in a secondary sense whenever A exercises power-over B but also for B.

• A has dominating power to the extent that he can exercise power over B arbitrarily.

• A’s power in relation to B is acceptable when it does not dominate B or when it is necessary to prevent B from dominating others.
CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined a number of different issues, so it will be useful to first review the positive arguments made before considering where to go from here. In part 1, I outlined a comprehensive view of what power is. Chapter 1 examined the substantial debate in the literature regarding this issue: Theorists disagree as to what kind of thing power is, about what kinds of things can have power, about how to understand the proper objects of power, about the inherent normative characteristics of power, about what forms of power exist, about whether power is individual or collective, and about whether power can manifest itself when it is not exercised by its possessor. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 argued for a particular resolution to these disagreements. In particular, I argued there that power is only a property of agents (whether individual or collective), that power can be understood as acting on agents’ practical landscapes, and that it can manifest itself in both active and inactive ways. Moreover, I argued that the powers (as opposed to the abilities) of importance in social and political theory are all ‘powers in relation to’, and that we ought to recognize three distinct ways that these powers can be exercised: Over receiving agents, for receiving agents, and with receiving agents.

Another important aspect of this discussion concerned the ways in which structures of social relations could give rise to powers in agents. I argued that while individual agents can come to have powers that are not conferred on them by (broader structures of) social relations, the powers that are conferred on agents by (broader
structures of) social relations deserve particular attention. Such powers deserve particular attention because it will be difficult for us to combat unacceptable cases of power if we do not understand how those powers come about. In particular, because of the role that power plays in the formation of the self and because of the pervasiveness of power in everyday life, little will change if we only pay attention to macro-level legal and social institutions. Moreover, it is important for us to think about these relation-born powers because the relations that give rise to them will often essentially amount to the products of collective action, or the presence of forms of power-with at the society-wide level. For this reason it is of critical importance to consider how combatting unacceptable forms of power itself requires collective action (or power-with).

The view of power outlined in the first part was normatively neutral: It held that power could bring about both good and bad outcomes, and that it could bring about those outcomes in positive and negative ways. Accordingly, in the second part, I outlined a view of when power is acceptable and when it is unacceptable that I called a radical republican view. This view is radical in the sense that it acknowledged both active and inactive manifestations of power and in the sense that it allotted a significant place in the understanding of power to relation-borne powers. This view is republican, however, in that it distinguishes between acceptable power and unacceptable power by beginning at the idea that power is unacceptable when it amounts to domination (or is arbitrary). This radical republican view differs from previous republican views in two distinct ways. First, unlike previous republican views (such as the view of Philip Pettit), it employs a
radical rather than a conventional understanding of the basic nature of power. Second, it offers a new way to understand when power is arbitrary, a way that focuses on the structures of the relations that exist between agents when power manifests itself.

One of the particular virtues of this radical republican conception of power, in my view, is that it starts out from relatively unassuming normative assumptions but can potentially generate very robust ones. For example, its basic assumptions include the idea the arbitrariness of power ought to be determined from the receiving agent’s point of view, and the idea that what matters from the receiving agent’s point of view is the structure of the relation between himself and the projecting agent. In other words, the understanding of arbitrariness employed here arises from the structural differences between the three different ways in which a projecting agent can exercise his power in relation to a receiving agent. However, from these basic assumptions we seem able to conclude that the optimal (or least arbitrary) form of collective governance is likely to be a form of deliberative democracy. Likewise, we seem able conclude that roughly equal distributions in resources and opportunities are desirable not because equality is desirable in itself, but because unequal distributions are likely to give the better-off great latitude to exercise power over but not necessarily for the less well-off.

There is still, however, a great deal of work that needs to be put into developing the radical republican view. In other words, I have provided the foundation here for radical republican political philosophy, but many of its particular details remain under-theorized. Most generally speaking, more work needs to go into understanding how
radical republicans ought to go about identifying and transforming particularly troublesome large-scale structures of social relations.

I have identified in this thesis a number of the problems that we face in transforming unacceptable structures of social relations and I have been careful to draw attention to the fact that collective exercises of power will be important to transforming such structures. I have also provided a very rough direction in which such structures ought to be transformed: Very roughly, such structures ought to be transformed towards power-with and away from power-over (or at least away from power-over without power-for). However, I have said comparatively little about how to identify structures that are in need of change and what sort of structures (or societal institutions and practices) ought to replace these structures. Radical republicans need to provide these details if their approach is to be both valuable and distinct in more than just theory from conventional republicanism. Moreover, I have said comparatively little about how agents who would seek to change such structures ought to conduct themselves. I have said that radical republicans ought always try to exercise power-with others rather than over them. However, a much more specific account of the character traits (or virtues) that such citizens would display is needed, as well as an account of how to foster those character traits in a way that ensures that they will be operative in both public and private contexts.

A final general area where there is a great need for further work concerns the distinction between conscious-ready and conscious-resistant power. As I have indicated, a pressing concern for radical republicans is how conscious-resistant forms of power can be
converted into conscious-ready forms of power. This is a serious concern for radical republicans because while they are concerned with both forms of power, conscious-ready forms of power seem to be the only ones that can be directly combated. Where conscious-resistant power is concerned, in other words, the oppressed first need to become conscious of their oppression and then bring their oppression to the attention of their oppressors. Radical republicanism needs to be supplemented, therefore, with an account of the practices that can help bring conscious-resistant oppression to light (if any can).

Thankfully radical republicans are not without resources to draw on in answering these questions. In the first place, much of the work already done by conventional republicans will be of use to radical republicans, especially in so far as combatting conscious-ready power is concerned. Moreover, there is a vast literature about power more generally for republicans to draw on both in the philosophical literature and in the political and social scientific literature. Of particular importance here will be the work of those who follow Arendt in trying to understand the collective aspects of power and the work of those who follow Foucault in trying to understand the multifarious ways in which larger structures of power arise out of everyday practices and the ways in which power can be understood to produce both subjects and discourses of knowledge. Perhaps, then, a final virtue of the account I have offered here is that it gives those who come to republicanism from, broadly speaking, the discourse of analytic political and social philosophy compelling reasons to expand their horizons into other philosophical discourses and into discourses in the social and political sciences.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


