

CHAPTER 1

What Is Power in Global Affairs?

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For a concept that is so widely used, “power” is surprisingly elusive and difficult to measure. But such problems do not make a concept meaningless. Few of us deny the importance of love even if we cannot say, “I love you 3.6 times more than I love something else.” Like love, we experience power in our everyday lives, and it has real effects despite our inability to measure it precisely. Sometimes, analysts have been tempted to discard the concept as hopelessly vague and imprecise, but it has proven hard to replace.¹

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The great British philosopher Bertrand Russell once compared the role of power in social science to the centrality of the concept of “energy” in physics, but the comparison is misleading. Physicists can measure relations of energy and force among inanimate objects quite precisely, whereas power refers to more ephemeral human relationships that change shape under different circumstances.² Others have argued that power is to politics as money is to economics. Again, the metaphor misleads us. Money is a liquid or fungible resource. It can be used to buy a wide variety of goods, but the resources that produce power in one relationship or context may not

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produce it in another. You can use money in a housing market, at a vegetable market, or in an Internet auction, whereas military capacity, one of the most important international power resources, may produce the outcomes you want in a tank battle, but not on the Internet.

Over the years, various analysts have tried to provide formulas that can quantify power in international affairs. For example, Ray Cline was a high-ranking official in the CIA whose job was to tell political leaders about the balance of American and Soviet power during the Cold War. His views affected political decisions that involved high risks and billions of dollars. In 1977, he published a distillation of the formula he used for estimating power:

$$\text{PERCEIVED POWER} = (\text{POPULATION} + \text{TERRITORY} + \text{ECONOMY} + \text{MILITARY}) \times (\text{STRATEGY} + \text{WILL})$$

After inserting numbers into his formula, he concluded that the Soviet Union was twice as powerful as the United States.³ Of course, as we now know, this formula was not a very good predictor of outcomes. In a little more than a decade, the Soviet Union collapsed and pundits were proclaiming that the United States was the sole superpower in a unipolar world.

A more recent effort to create a power index included a country's resources (technology, enterprise, human, capital, physical) and national performance (external constraints, infrastructure, ideas) and how they determined military capability and combat proficiency.⁴ This formulation tells us about relative military power, but not about all relevant types of power. Although effective military force remains one of the key power resources in international affairs, as we shall see in the next chapter, the world is no longer as unconstrained as in nineteenth-century Europe when historians could define a "great power" as one capable of prevailing in war.⁵

Military force and combat proficiency do not tell us much about outcomes, for example, in the world of finance or climate change.

Nor do they tell us much about the power of nonstate actors. In military terms, Al Qaeda is a midget compared to the American giant, but the impact of terrorists relies less on the size of their forces than on the theatrical effects of their actions and narratives and the overreactions they can produce. In that sense, terrorism is like the sport of jujitsu in which the weak player uses the strength of the larger against himself. This dynamic is not caught by typical indices of military power.

In certain bargaining situations, as Thomas Schelling demonstrates, weakness and the threat that a partner will collapse can be a source of bargaining power.⁶ A bankrupt debtor who owes \$1,000 has little power, but if it owes \$1 billion, that debtor may have considerable bargaining power—witness the fate of institutions judged “too big to fail” in the 2008 financial crisis. North Korea’s Kim Jong-Il “is probably the only world leader who can make Beijing look powerless. . . . Diplomats say Mr. Kim brazenly plays on Chinese fears. If the Chinese do not pump aid into his crumbling economy, he argues, they will face refugees pouring across the border and possible unrest.”⁷

Any attempt to develop a single index of power is doomed to fail because power depends upon human relationships that vary in different contexts.⁸ Whereas money can be used to measure purchasing power across different markets, there is no standard of value that can summarize all relationships and contexts to produce an agreed overall power total.⁹

DEFINING POWER

Like many basic ideas, power is a contested concept. No one definition is accepted by all who use the word, and people’s choice of definition reflects their interests and values. Some define power as the ability to make or resist change. Others say it is the ability to get what we want.¹⁰ This broad definition includes power over nature as well as over other people. For my interest in actions and

policies, a commonsense place to start is the dictionary, which tells us that power is the capacity to do things and in social situations to affect others to get the outcomes we want.¹¹ Some people call this influence, and distinguish power from influence, but that is confusing because the dictionary defines the two terms as interchangeable.

There are many factors that affect our ability to get what we want. We live in a web of inherited social forces, some of which are visible and others of which are indirect and sometimes called “structural.” We tend to identify and focus on some of these constraints and forces rather than others depending on our interests. For example, in his work on civilizations, political scientist Peter Katzenstein argues that the power of civilizations is different from power in civilizations. Actors in civilizations command hard and soft power. Social power operates beneath the behavioral level by shaping underlying social structures, knowledge systems and general environment.¹² Even though such structural social forces are important, for policy purposes we also want to understand what actors or agents can do within given situations.¹³ Civilizations and societies are not immutable, and effective leaders can try to shape larger social forces with varying degrees of success. As the famous German theorist Max Weber puts it, we want to know the probability that an actor in a social relationship can carry out his own will.¹⁴

Even when we focus primarily on particular agents or actors, we cannot say that an actor “has power” without specifying power “to do what.”¹⁵ We must specify *who* is involved in the power relationship (the scope of power) as well as *what* topics are involved (the domain of power). For example, the pope has power over some Christians, but not over others (such as Protestants). And even among Catholics, he may wish to have power over all their moral decisions, but some adherents may reject his power on some issues (such as birth control or marriage outside the church). Thus, to say that the pope has power requires us to specify the context (scope and domain) of the relationship between the pope and any individual.

A psychopath may have the power to kill and destroy random strangers, but not the power to persuade them. Some actions that affect others and obtain preferred outcomes can be purely destructive and not dependent on what the victim thinks. For example, Pol Pot killed millions of Cambodian citizens. Some say such use of force is not power because there was no two-way relationship involved, but that depends on context and motive. If the actor's motive is pure sadism or terror, the use of force fits within the definition of power as affecting others to get what the actor wants. Most power relationships, however, depend very much on what the victim thinks. A dictator who wishes to punish a dissident may be misled in thinking he exercised power if the dissident really sought martyrdom to advance her cause. But if the dictator simply wanted to destroy the dissident, her intentions did not matter to his power.

Actions often have powerful unintended consequences, but from a policy point of view we are interested in the ability to produce preferred outcomes. If a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) soldier in Afghanistan kills a child by a stray bullet, he had the power to destroy but not to achieve his preferred outcome. An air strike that kills one insurgent and many civilians demonstrates a general power to destroy, but it may prove counterproductive for a counterinsurgency policy. The actions of a country with a large economy may have unintended effects that cause accidental harm (or wealth) in a small country.¹⁶ Again, if the effects are unintended, then there is power to harm (or benefit), but it is not power to achieve preferred outcomes. Canadians often complain that living next to the United States is like sleeping with an elephant. From the Canadian point of view, intentions do not matter; it hurts if the beast rolls over. But from a policy-oriented perspective, intentions matter in terms of getting preferred outcomes.¹⁷ A policy-oriented concept of power depends upon a specified context to tell us *who* gets *what*, *how*, *where*, and *when*.¹⁸

Practical politicians and ordinary people often find these questions of behavior and motivation too complicated and unpredictable.

Behavioral definitions judge power by outcomes that are determined after the action (what economists call “ex post”) rather than before the action (“ex ante”). But policymakers want predictions about the future to help guide their actions. Thus, they frequently define power simply in terms of the resources that can produce outcomes. By this second definition of power as resources, a country is powerful if it has a relatively large population, territory, natural resources, economic strength, military force, and social stability. The virtue of this second definition is that it makes power appear to be concrete, measurable, and predictable—a guide to action. Power in this sense is like holding the high cards in a card game. But this definition has major problems. When people define power as synonymous with the resources that (may) produce outcomes, they often encounter the paradox that those best endowed with power do not always get the outcomes they want.

This is not to deny the importance of power resources. Power is conveyed through resources, whether tangible or intangible. People notice resources. If you show the highest cards in a poker game, others may fold their hands rather than challenge you. But power resources that win in one game may not help at all in another. Holding a strong poker hand does not win if the game is bridge. Even if the game is poker, if you play your high hand poorly, or fall victim to bluff and deception, you can still lose. Power conversion—getting from resources to behavioral outcomes—is a crucial intervening variable. Having the resources of power does not guarantee that you will always get the outcome you want. For example, in terms of resources, the United States was far more powerful than Vietnam, yet lost the war. Converting resources into realized power in the sense of obtaining desired outcomes requires well-designed strategies and skillful leadership—what I call smart power. Yet strategies are often inadequate and leaders frequently misjudge.

Nonetheless, defining power in terms of resources is a shortcut that policymakers find useful. In general, a country that is well endowed with power resources is more likely to affect a weaker coun-

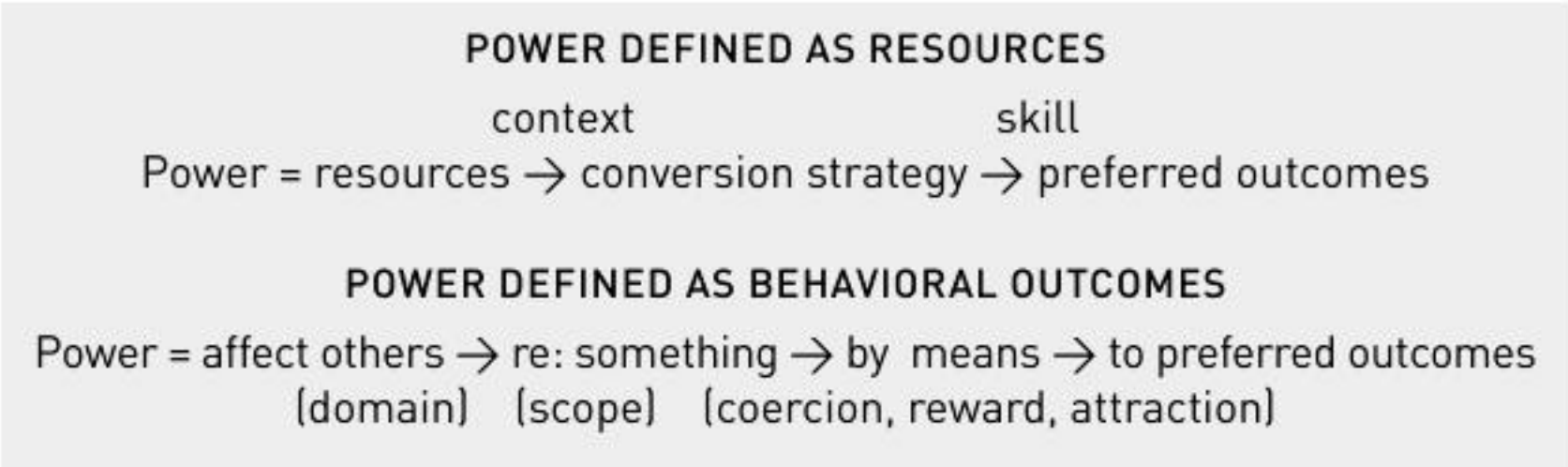
try and be less dependent upon an optimal strategy than vice versa. Smaller countries may sometimes obtain preferred outcomes because they pick smaller fights or focus selectively on a few issues. On average, and in direct conflicts, we would not expect Finland to prevail over Russia.¹⁹

As a first step in any game, it helps to start by figuring out who is holding the high cards and how many chips that player has. Equally important, however, is that policymakers have the contextual intelligence to understand what game they are playing. Which resources provide the best basis for power behavior in a particular context? Oil was not an impressive power resource before the industrial age, nor was uranium significant before the nuclear age. In traditional realist views of international affairs, war was the ultimate game in which the cards of international politics were played. When all the cards were on the table, estimates of relative power were proven and disproven. But over the centuries, as technologies evolved, the sources of strength for war often changed. Moreover, on an increasing number of issues in the twenty-first century, war is not the ultimate arbiter.

As a result, many analysts reject the “elements of national power” approach as misleading and inferior to the behavioral or relational approach that became dominant among social science analysis in the latter half of the twentieth century. Strictly speaking, the skeptics are correct. Power resources are simply the tangible and intangible raw materials or vehicles that underlie power relationships, and whether a given set of resources produces preferred outcomes or not depends upon behavior in context. The vehicle is not the power relationship.²⁰ Knowing the horsepower and mileage of a vehicle does not tell us whether it will get to the preferred destination.

In practice, discussions of power in global affairs involve both definitions.²¹ Many of the terms that we use daily, such as “military power” and “economic power,” are hybrids that combine both resources and behaviors. So long as that is the case, we must make clear whether we are speaking of behavioral- or resource-based definitions

FIGURE 1.1 Power as Resources and Power as Behavioral Outcomes



of power, and we must be aware of the imperfect relation between them. For example, when people speak of the rising power of China or India, they tend to point to the large populations and increased economic or military resources of those countries. But whether the capacity that those resources imply can actually be converted into preferred outcomes will depend upon the contexts and the country's skill in converting resources into strategies that will produce preferred outcomes. These different definitions are summarized in Figure 1.1. The figure also illustrates the more careful relational definition in which power is the ability to alter others' behavior to produce preferred outcomes.

This is what people are getting at when they say things like "Power doesn't necessarily lead to influence" (though for reasons already explained, that formulation is confusing).

In the end, because it is outcomes, not resources, that we care about, we must pay more attention to contexts and strategies. Power-conversion strategies turn out to be a critical variable that does not receive enough attention. Strategies relate means to ends, and those that combine hard and soft power resources successfully in different contexts are the key to smart power.

THREE ASPECTS OF RELATIONAL POWER

In addition to the distinction between resource and relational definitions of power, it is useful to distinguish three different aspects

of relational power: commanding change, controlling agendas, and establishing preferences. All too often these are conflated. For example, a recent book on foreign policy defines power as “getting people or groups to do something they don’t want to do.”²² But such a narrow approach can lead to mistakes.

The ability to command others to change their behavior against their initial preferences is one important dimension of relational power, but not the only one. Another dimension is the ability to affect others’ preferences so that they want what you want and you need not command them to change. Former president (and general) Dwight Eisenhower referred to this as getting people to do something “not only because you tell them to do so, but because they instinctively want to do it for you.”²³ This co-optive power contrasts with and complements command power. It is a mistake to think that power consists of just ordering others to change. You can affect their behavior by shaping their preferences in ways that produce what you want rather than relying on carrots and sticks to change their behavior “when push comes to shove.” Sometimes you can get the outcomes you want without pushing or shoving. Ignoring this dimension by using a too narrow definition of power can lead to a poorly shaped foreign policy.

The first aspect, or “face,” of power was defined by Yale political scientist Robert Dahl in studies of New Haven in the 1950s, and it is widely used today even though it covers only part of power behavior.²⁴ This face of power focuses on the ability to get others to act in ways that are contrary to their initial preferences and strategies. To measure or judge power, you have to know how strong another person’s or nation’s initial preferences were and how much they were changed by your efforts. Coercion can be quite clear in a situation in which there appears to be some degree of choice. If a man holding a gun on you says, “Your money or your life,” you have some choice, but it is small and not consistent with your initial preferences (unless they included suicide or martyrdom).²⁵ When Czechoslovakia succumbed to German and Soviet troops entering

Prague in 1938 and again in 1968, it was not because that country wanted to.

Economic measures are somewhat more complex. Negative sanctions (taking away economic benefit) are clearly felt as coercive. Payment or economic inducement to do what you initially did not want to may seem more attractive to the subject, but any payment can easily be turned into a negative sanction by the implicit or explicit threat of its removal. A year-end bonus is a reward, but its removal is felt as a penalty. Moreover, in unequal bargaining relationships, say, between a millionaire landowner and a starving peasant, a paltry “take it or leave it” payment may give the peasant little sense of choice. The important point is that someone has the capacity to make others act against their initial preferences and strategies, and both sides feel that power.

In the 1960s, shortly after Dahl developed his widely accepted definition, political scientists Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz pointed out that Dahl’s definition missed what they called the “second face of power.” Dahl ignored the dimension of framing and agenda-setting.²⁶ If ideas and institutions can be used to frame the agenda for action in a way that make others’ preferences seem irrelevant or out of bounds, then it may never be necessary to push or shove them. In other words, it may be possible to shape others’ preferences by affecting their expectations of what is legitimate or feasible. Agenda-framing focuses on the ability to keep issues off the table, or as Sherlock Holmes might put it, dogs that fail to bark.

Powerful actors can make sure that the less powerful are never invited to the table, or if they get there, the rules of the game have already been set by those who arrived first. International financial policy had this characteristic, at least before the crisis of 2008 opened things up somewhat when the Group of 8 (G-8) was supplemented by the Group of 20 (G-20). Those who are subject to this second face of power may or may not be aware of it. If they accept the legitimacy of the institutions or the social discourse that framed the agenda, they may not feel unduly constrained by the

second face of power. But if the agenda of action is constrained by threats of coercion or promises of payments, then it is just an instance of the first face of power. The target's acquiescence in the legitimacy of the agenda is what makes this face of power co-optive and partly constitutive of soft power—the ability to get what you want by the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction.

Still later, in the 1970s, sociologist Steven Lukes pointed out that ideas and beliefs also help shape others' *initial* preferences.²⁷ In Dahl's approach, I can exercise power over you by getting you to do what you would otherwise not want to do; in other words, by changing your situation, I can make you change your preferred strategy. But I can also exercise power over you by determining your very wants. I can shape your basic or initial preferences, not merely change the situation in a way that makes you change your strategy for achieving your preferences.

This dimension of power is missed by Dahl's definition. A teenage boy may carefully choose a fashionable shirt to wear to school to attract a girl, but the teenager may not be aware that the reason the shirt is so fashionable is that a national retailer recently launched a major advertising campaign. Both his preference and that of the other teenagers have been formed by an unseen actor who has shaped the structure of preferences. If you can get others to want the same outcomes that you want, it will not be necessary to override their initial desires. Lukes called this the "third face of power."²⁸

There are critical questions of voluntarism in determining how freely people chose their preferences.²⁹ Not all soft power looks so soft to outside critics. In some extreme cases, it is difficult to ascertain what constitutes voluntary formation of preferences. For instance, in the "Stockholm syndrome," victims of kidnapping who suffered traumatic stress began to identify with their abductors. Captors sometimes try to "brainwash" their captives and sometimes try to win them over with kindnesses.³⁰ But in some situations, it is more difficult to be certain of others' interests. Are Afghan women

TABLE 1.1 Three Aspects of Relational Power

<p>FIRST FACE: A uses threats or rewards to change B’s behavior against B’s initial preferences and strategies. B knows this and feels the effect of A’s power.</p>
<p>SECOND FACE: A controls the agenda of actions in a way that limits B’s choices of strategy. B may or may not know this and be aware of A’s power.</p>
<p>THIRD FACE: A helps to create and shape B’s basic beliefs, perceptions, and preferences. B is unlikely to be aware of this or to realize the effect of A’s power.</p>

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oppressed when they choose to wear a burka? What about women who choose to wear a veil in democratic France?³¹ Sometimes it is difficult to know the extent of voluntarism from mere outward appearances. Dictators such as Adolf Hitler and Stalin tried to create an aura of invincibility to attract followers, and some leaders in southeastern European countries succumbed to this effect. To the extent that force creates a sense of awe that attracts others, it can be an indirect source of co-optive power, but if the force is directly coercive, then it is simply an instance of the first face of power.

Some theorists have called these the public, hidden, and invisible faces of power, reflecting the degrees of difficulty that the target has in discovering the source of power.³² The second and third faces embody aspects of structural power. A structure is simply an arrangement of all the parts of a whole. Humans are embedded in complex structures of culture, social relations, and power that affect and constrain them. A person’s field of action is “delimited by actors with whom he has no interaction or communication, by actions distant in time and space, by actions of which he is, in no explicit sense the target.”³³ Some exercises of power reflect the intentional decisions of particular actors, whereas others are the product of unintended consequences and larger social forces.

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For example, why do large automobiles dominate our city streets? In part the answer reflects individual consumer choices, but these consumer preferences are themselves shaped by a social history of advertising, manufacturers' decisions, tax incentives, public transport policy, road-building subsidies, and urban planning.³⁴ Different choices on these issues by many visible as well as unseen past actors confront an urban resident today with a limited set of choices.

In 1993, Bill Clinton's political adviser James Carville is alleged to have joked that he wished he could be reborn as the bond market because then he would have real power.³⁵ When we speak of the power of markets, we are referring to a form of structural power. A wheat farmer who wants to earn more income to pay for his daughter's college tuition may decide to plant more wheat. But if other farmers plant more as well (and demand does not change), market forces may reduce his income and affect her educational prospects. In a perfect market, the agent has no pricing power. Millions of other unseen agents making independent choices create the supply and demand that determine the price. This is why poor countries that produce commodities are often subject to wide variations in their terms of trade. But if an agent can find a way to change the structure of a market by introducing an element of monopoly (a single seller) or monopsony (a single buyer), she can gain some power over price. She can do this by differentiating her product through advertising, creating brand loyalty, picking a special location, and so forth. Or in the case of oil-producing countries, agents can try to form a cartel like the Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Different analysts cut into the complex pattern of causation and draw the line between individual choice and larger structures at different places. For example, sociologists tend to focus less on specific actions and outcomes than political scientists do.³⁶ Analysts who focus only on individual agents, as the first face of power tends to do, are clearly failing to understand and describe power relationships fully. But those who focus only on broad social forces and longer

historical perspective, as the second and third faces of power tend to do, pay too little attention to the individual choices and intentions that are crucial in policy. Some critics have called my approach too “agent centered,” but it still allows some consideration of structural forces even if it does not include all aspects of structure.³⁷

Some analysts regard these distinctions as useless abstractions that can all be collapsed into the first face of power.³⁸ If we succumb to this temptation, however, we are likely to limit what we see in terms of behavior, which tends to limit the strategies that policymakers design to achieve their goals. Command power (the first face) is very visible and readily grasped. It is the basis for hard power—the ability to get desired outcomes through coercion and payment. The co-optive power of faces two and three is more subtle and therefore less visible. It contributes to soft power, the ability to get preferred outcomes through the co-optive means of agenda-setting, persuasion, and attraction. All too often policymakers have focused solely on hard command power to compel others to act against their preferences and have ignored the soft power that comes from preference formation. But when co-opting is possible, policymakers can save on carrots and sticks.³⁹

In global politics, some goals that states seek are more susceptible to the second and third than to the first face of power. Arnold Wolfers once distinguished between what he called possession goals—specific and often tangible objectives—and milieu goals, which are often structural and intangible.⁴⁰ For example, access to resources or basing rights or a trade agreement is a possession goal, whereas promoting an open trade system, free markets, democracy, or human rights is a milieu goal. In the terminology used previously, we can think of states having specific goals and general or structural goals. Focusing solely on command power and the first face of power may mislead us about how to promote such goals. For example, in the promotion of democracy, military means alone are less successful than military means combined with soft power approaches—as the United States discovered in Iraq. And the soft

power of attraction and persuasion can have both agentic and structural dimensions. For example, a country can try to attract others through actions such as public diplomacy, but it may also attract others through the structural effects of its example or what can be called the “shining city on the hill” effect.

Another reason not to collapse all three faces of power into the first is that doing so diminishes attention to networks, which are an important type of structural power in the twenty-first century. Networks are becoming increasingly important in an information age, and positioning in social networks can be an important power resource. For example, in a hub-and-spokes network, power can derive from being the hub of communications. If you communicate with your other friends through me, that gives me power. If the points on the rim are not directly connected to each other, their dependence on communication through the hub can shape their agenda. For example, even after independence, many communications among former French African colonies ran through Paris, and that increased French power to shape their agenda.

In other more complex network arrangements, theorists point to the importance of structural holes that prevent direct communication between certain parts of the network.⁴¹ Those who can bridge or exploit structural holes can use their position as a source of power by controlling communication between others. Another aspect of networks that is relevant to power is their extensiveness. Even weak extensive ties can be useful in acquiring and disseminating novel and innovative information. Weak ties provide the ability to link diverse groups together in a cooperative, successful manner.⁴² This increases a country’s ability to gain power with, rather than over, others. The ability to create networks of trust that enable groups to work together toward common goals is what economist Kenneth Boulding calls “integrative power.”⁴³ According to psychologists, “Years of research suggest that empathy and social intelligence are vastly more important to acquiring and exercising power than are force, deception, or terror.”⁴⁴

Political theorist Hannah Arendt once said that “power springs up among men when they act together.”⁴⁵ Similarly, a state can wield global power by engaging and acting together with other states, not merely acting against them. Princeton political scientist John Ikenberry argues that American power after World War II rested on a network of institutions that constrained the United States but were open to others and thus increased America’s power to act with others.⁴⁶ This is an important point in assessing the power of nations in the current international system and an important dimension for assessing the future of American and Chinese power in the twenty-first century.⁴⁷ For example, if the United States is involved in more communication networks, it has a greater opportunity to shape preferences in terms of the third face of power.

For policy purposes, it can be useful to think of the three faces of power in a reverse sequence from the order in which they were invented by social scientists. A policymaker should consider preference formation and agenda-framing as means of shaping the environment before turning to the first, or command, face of power.⁴⁸ In short, those who insist on collapsing the second and third dimensions of power into the first will miss an increasingly important aspect of power in this century.

REALISM AND THE FULL SPECTRUM OF POWER BEHAVIOR

In the United States, the tendency to focus on the first face of power is partly a reflection of American political culture and institutions. No politician wants to appear “soft,” and Congress finds it easier to boost the budget of the Pentagon than that of the State Department. That bias has been reinforced by prevailing theories of international politics. For centuries, the dominant classical approach to international affairs has been called “realism,” and its lineage stretches back to such great thinkers as Thucydides and Niccolò

Machiavelli. Realism assumes that in the anarchic conditions of world politics, where there is no higher international government authority above states, they must rely on their own devices to preserve their independence, and that when push comes to shove, the ultima ratio is the use of force. Realism portrays the world in terms of sovereign states aiming to preserve their security, with military force as their ultimate instrument. Thus, war has been a constant aspect of international affairs over the centuries. Realists come in many sizes and shapes, but all tend to argue that global politics is power politics. In this they are right, but some limit their understanding by conceiving of power too narrowly. A pragmatic or commonsense realist takes into account the full spectrum of power resources, including ideas, persuasion, and attraction. Many classical realists of the past understood the role of soft power better than some of their modern progeny.

Realism represents a good first cut at portraying some aspects of international relations. But as we have seen, states are no longer the only important actors in global affairs; security is not the only major outcome that they seek, and force is not the only or always the best instrument available to achieve those outcomes. Indeed, these conditions of complex interdependence are typical of relations among advanced postindustrial countries such as the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, and Japan. Mutual democracy, liberal culture, and a deep network of transnational ties mean that anarchy has very different effects than realism predicts. In such conditions, a smart power strategy has a much higher mixture of the second and third faces of power.

It is not solely in relations among advanced countries, however, that soft power plays an important role. In an information age, communications strategies become more important, and outcomes are shaped not merely by whose army wins but also by whose story wins. In the fight against terrorism, for example, it is essential to have a narrative that appeals to the mainstream and prevents its recruitment by radicals. In the battle against insurgencies, kinetic

military force must be accompanied by soft power instruments that help to win over the hearts and minds (shape the preferences) of the majority of the population.

Smart strategies must have an information and communications component. States struggle over the power to define norms, and framing of issues grows in importance. For instance, CNN and the BBC framed the issues of the First Gulf War in 1991, but by 2003 Al Jazeera was playing a large role in shaping the narrative in the Iraq War. Such framing is more than mere propaganda. In describing events in March 2003, we could say that American troops “entered Iraq” or that American troops “invaded Iraq.” Both statements are true, but they have very different effects in terms of the power to shape preferences. Similarly, if we think of international institutions, it makes a difference if agendas are set in a Group of 8 with a few invited guests or in a Group of 20 equal invitees. These are just some examples of how the dimensions of the second and third faces of power are becoming more important in the global politics of an information age.

SOFT POWER BEHAVIOR AND RESOURCES

Some critics complain that the prevailing definition of soft power has become fuzzy through its expansion “to include both economic statecraft—used as both a carrot and as a stick—and even military power. . . . Soft power now seems to mean everything.”⁴⁹ But these critics are mistaken because they confuse the actions of a state seeking to achieve desired outcomes with the resources used to produce them. Many types of *resources* can contribute to soft power, but that does not mean that soft power is any type of *behavior*. The use of force, payment, and some agenda-setting based on them I call hard power. Agenda-setting that is regarded as legitimate by the target, positive attraction, and persuasion are the parts of the spectrum of behaviors I include in soft power. Hard power is push; soft power is pull. Fully defined, soft power is the

ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes.⁵⁰

Here is a representation of a spectrum of power behaviors:⁵¹



In general, the types of resources associated with hard power include tangibles such as force and money. The types of resources associated with soft power often include intangible factors such as institutions, ideas, values, culture, and the perceived legitimacy of policies. But the relationship is not perfect. Intangible resources such as patriotism, morale, and legitimacy strongly affect the military capacity to fight and win. And threats to use force are intangible, even though they are a dimension of hard power.⁵²

If we remember the distinction between power resources and power behavior, we realize that the resources often associated with hard power behavior can also produce soft power behavior depending on the context and how they are used. Command power can create resources that in turn can create soft power at a later phase—for example, institutions that will provide soft power resources in the future. Similarly, co-optive behavior can be used to generate hard power resources in the form of military alliance or economic aid. A tangible hard power resource such as a military unit can produce both command behavior (by winning a battle) and co-optive behavior (by attracting) depending on how it is used. And because attraction depends upon the mind of the perceiver, the subject's perceptions play a significant role in whether given resources produce hard or soft power behavior.

For example, naval forces can be used to win battles (hard power) or win hearts and minds (soft power) depending on what the target and what the issue are. The U.S. Navy's help in providing relief to

Indonesia after the 2004 East Asian tsunami had a strong effect on increasing Indonesians' attraction to the United States, and the U.S. Navy's 2007 Maritime Strategy referred not only to war-fighting but also to "maritime forces . . . employed to build confidence and trust among nations."⁵³ Similarly, successful economic performance such as that of China can produce both the hard power of sanctions and restricted market access and the soft power of attraction and emulation of success.

Some analysts have misinterpreted soft power as a synonym for culture and then gone on to downgrade its importance. For example, the historian Niall Ferguson describes soft power as "non-traditional forces such as cultural and commercial goods" and then dismisses it on the grounds that "it's, well, soft."⁵⁴ Of course, eating at McDonald's or wearing a Michael Jackson shirt does not automatically indicate soft power. Militias can perpetrate atrocities or fight Americans while wearing Nikes and drinking Coca-Cola. But this criticism confuses the resources that may produce behavior with the behavior itself. Whether the possession of power resources actually produces favorable behavior depends upon the context and the skills of the agent in converting the resources into behavioral outcomes. Eating sushi, trading Pokemon cards, or hiring a Japanese pitcher (as the Boston Red Sox did) does not necessarily convey power to Japan. But this is not unique to soft power resources. Having a larger tank army may produce victory if a battle is fought in a desert, but not if it is fought in a swamp. Similarly, a nice smile can be a soft power resource, and you may be more inclined to do something for me if I smile whenever we meet, but if I smile at your mother's funeral, it may destroy soft power rather than create it.

SOFT POWER AND SMART POWER

As mentioned in the Preface, I developed the term "smart power" in 2004 to counter the misperception that soft power alone can produce effective foreign policy. I defined smart power as the ability

to combine hard and soft power resources into effective strategies.⁵⁵ Unlike soft power, smart power is an evaluative as well as a descriptive concept. Soft power can be good or bad from a normative perspective, depending on how it is used. Smart power has the evaluation built into the definition. Critics who say “smart power—which can be dubbed Soft Power 2.0—has superseded Soft Power 1.0 in the U.S. foreign policy lexicon” are simply mistaken.⁵⁶ A more accurate criticism is that because the concept (unlike that of soft power) has a normative dimension, it often lends itself to slogans, though that need not be the case.

Smart power is available to all states (and nonstate actors), not just the United States. For example, as we will see in Chapter 7, small states have often developed smart power strategies. Norway, with 5 million people, has enhanced its attractiveness with legitimizing policies in peacemaking and development assistance, while also being an active and effective participant in NATO. And at the other extreme in terms of population size, China, a rising power in economic and military resources, has deliberately decided to invest in soft power resources so as to make its hard power look less threatening to its neighbors and thus develop a smart strategy.

Smart power goes to the heart of the problem of power conversion. As we saw earlier, some countries and actors may be endowed with greater power resources than others, yet not be very effective in converting the full range of their power resources into strategies that produce the outcomes they seek. Some argue that with an inefficient eighteenth-century government structure, the United States is weak in power conversion. Others respond that much of American strength is generated outside of government by the nation’s open economy and civil society. And it may be that power conversion is easier when a country has a surplus of assets and can afford to absorb the costs of mistakes. But the first steps to smart power and effective power-conversion strategies are understanding the full range of power resources and recognizing the problems of combining them effectively in various contexts.

Hard and soft power sometimes reinforce and sometimes undercut each other, and good contextual intelligence is important in distinguishing how they interact in different situations. But it is a mistake to think of information campaigns in terms that misunderstand the essence of soft power. If we had to choose between having military or having soft power in world politics, we would opt for military power. But smart power suggests it is best to have both. “The military has to understand that soft power is more challenging to wield in terms of the application of military force—particularly if what that force is doing is not seen as attractive.”⁵⁷ If the levers of soft power are not pulling in the same direction, then the military often cannot create favorable conditions on its own.

Early in 2006, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said of the Bush administration’s global war on terror, “In this war, some of the most critical battles may not be in the mountains of Afghanistan or the streets of Iraq but in newsrooms in New York, London, Cairo and elsewhere.” As *The Economist* commented about Rumsfeld’s speech, “Until recently he plainly regarded such a focus on ‘soft power’ as, well, soft—part of ‘Old Europe’s’ appeasement of terrorism.” Now he realized the importance of winning hearts and minds, but “a good part of his speech was focused on how with slicker PR America could win the propaganda war.”⁵⁸ Unfortunately, Rumsfeld forgot the first rule of advertising: If you have a poor product, not even the best advertising will sell it. He also forgot that the administration’s poor power-conversion strategy was wasting both hard and soft power assets. The first step toward developing more effective smart power strategies starts with a fuller understanding of the types and uses of power.