

Workshop 3

Power and the Study of International Relations

Thursday, 10 of December 2009

Prof. Stefano Guzzini, Dr. Piki Ish-Shalom, Dr. Galia Press-Barnathan

Different aims inform the study of power. It plays a role in two distinct if related domains. In the field of political theory, the purpose of power analysis is to capture the nature of the 'polity' in which questions of the organisation of (organised) violence and of the common good, as well as of freedom, are paramount. In these studies, power stands for 'government' or 'governance' and political 'order', and relates to personal 'autonomy'. The logic in the field of explanatory theories, on the other hand, is to think power in terms of a theory of action mainly, and a theory of domination subsequently. Here, power is central for the explanation of behaviour and/or the outcomes of social action. It refers to 'agency', 'influence', if not 'cause', and to 'rule' or 'domination'. Theoretical and conceptual advances in one domain always intrude into the other; but their explicit and coherent connection is often difficult. To further complicate things, power belongs to a family of concepts and is tied to such concepts as authority, responsibility and legitimacy which often intrude into, or are in fact central for, a particular analysis of power.

As such, the study of power is virtually ubiquitous in International Relations. International political theory openly engages with it whenever it touches topics such as origins of political order, as e.g. Classical Realists did, modes of governance or regimes, as institutionalists do, or governmentality, as contemporary Foucauldians do. Whether they deal with it explicitly or implicitly, many scholars of international relations rely on specific concepts of power for their empirical explanations.

The workshop is planned as a forum in which students can discuss their own research, but with a reflective awareness of the role theoretical and empirical power analyses in the social sciences (and applied to International Relations) can play therein. We therefore

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invite students to write papers which reflect on the underlying conception of power in their research, be it in terms of the underlying political theory or in terms of the conceptual definitions necessary for their explanations. Similarly welcomed are papers which openly engage the potentially limited use of concepts of power for their research at hand, as compared to other central concepts. And finally, we obviously invite papers which directly deal with power analysis in IR, be it on the philosophical, theoretical or methodological level (e.g. how to measure power).

Short Bios of the Workshop Leaders:

Stefano Guzzini is Senior Researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies and Professor of Government at Uppsala University, Sweden. His publications include *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: the Continuing Story of a Death Foretold*, and *Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and his Critics* (co-edited with Anna Leander). His articles appeared in e.g. *European Journal of International Relations*, *International Organization*, *Millennium*, *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, *Review of International Studies*, *Revue Française de Science Politique*, *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen*. He previously edited the *Journal of International Relations and Development*. He is currently working on an edited volume *Geopolitics Redux? 1989 and the Revival of Geopolitical Thought in Europe*, a book on *Power and International Relations*, and a reader on *Foreign Policy Analysis* (3 vols, co-edited with Walter Carlsnaes).

Piki Ish-Shalom is a Lecturer at the Department of International Relations, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has published articles in different scholarly journals such as *International Studies Quarterly*, *European Journal of International Relations*, and *Political Science Quarterly*. He is interested in issues of ethics and international relations, and in the nexus between theorizing the political and politicizing the theoretical.

Galia Press-Barnathan is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of International Relations at the Hebrew University. She has published two books: *The Political Economy of*

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Transitions to Peace- A Comparative Perspective (Pittsburgh University Press, 2009), and *Organizing the World- The United States and Regional Cooperation in Asia and Europe* (Routledge, 2003). She has published articles on the topics of NATO, security regionalization, role of economic incentives in transitions to peace and the English School in journals such as *Security Studies*, *Cooperation and Conflict*, *International Studies Review*.

PROGRAM

- 08:30-09:00** Registration and refreshments: Maiersdorf Faculty Club,
- 09:00-09:30** Opening, Maiersdorf House
9.45 Workshop starts at the seminar Room, Department of Political Science, # 4326, Social Sciences Building. Participants are invited to leave as a group immediately after the opening session at Maiersdorf House
- 13.30-14.30** Lunch break, Maiersdorf Faculty Club, 2nd Floor, Registered Participants and Invitee Only.
- 18.00-20.00** Conference Closing Event, Best Paper Prize, Panel on Graduate Education

ABSTRACTS OF WORKSHOP'S PAPERS

On Behalf of Organisations: New Faces of Power Beyond the Nation State
Tatjana Jackel, University of St Andrews, Scotland

Power is not only one of the central topics of inquiry in International Relations but has also been of significant relevance in other related disciplines such as Political Sociology,

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Social Anthropology and Political Philosophy. However, the explanation of power in terms of practicability and complexity in International Relations remains limited. Furthermore, power is still often linked to a state centric understanding of power in general and of political power in particular.

Tackling both problems, this paper suggests that organisations and organisational theories should play a greater role in the examination of power. It argues that states as organisations with certain membership rules are only one type of power holding entities in the world and that a variety of different organisations, which are operating in a system of cooperation and coordination based on power relations, exists. Consequently, it aims at decoupling the perception of power and its normativity from the nation state by replacing the state with organisations and then demonstrating ways how political power could be understood in a world of international as well as global power relations.

This world of organisations is only one way of understanding power in International Relations among many others, it therefore does not assume to be ultimate and unique but one possible perspective. The practicability of the organisational approach to power is then illustrated on two different cases of global communications: swine flu and terrorism. How are swine flu and terrorism related to power? And how do communications themselves transform power relations and affect organisations?

These questions are then answered on the basis of an organisational approach to power.

Theoretically, the paper is based on sociological constructivist and poststructural approaches such as Foucault and Luhmann as well as certain International Relations approaches such as Guzzini. Managerial ideas such as Brunsson play a role in terms of understanding of organisations.

‘The Stigmatization of Certain Contemporary Weapons of War: Its Origins, Evolution and Development.’

Patricia Shamai, University of Southampton, United Kingdom.

This presentation seeks to describe PhD research analyzing the stigmatization of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, collectively categorized as ‘Weapons of Mass Destruction’ (WMD). Sociological research has been used to define the process of stigmatization. It is identified that in order for stigma to develop, it is dependant upon

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social, economic and political power. As technological innovation has created new contemporary weapons of warfare, so efforts are made to proscribe these weapons.

This PhD research has examined the contribution of perceptions of power toward international efforts to address and control the threat of WMD. The process of stigmatization is reflected in an analysis of the origins and progression of the stigmatization of WMD. To this end, documented historical materials have been used to analyze debates within the League of Nations and the United Nations (1920-1970), which have led to collective measures to control these weapons. By analyzing the stigmatization of all three methods of warfare it is then possible to examine the importance of the historical evolution and development of these weapons.

This research has adopted both inductive and deductive research methods to explore whether the stigmatization of WMD has been due to utilitarian, moral and ethical factors. In addition, the conceptual guideposts of realism, neo-realism, normative theory and constructivism have been used to provide a broader insight into the distinction between these weapons and other contemporary methods of warfare.

It is argued that the utilitarian, moral and ethical aspects of WMD are reflected in a number of research themes, proportionality, technological innovation, the targeting of combatants (military) and non-combatants (civilians) and possession versus use. These themes are addressed by the use of specific research questions: 1) How did the stigmatization of certain contemporary weapons of war evolve? a) To what extent was the killing of non-combatants regarded as something to be stigmatized? How did the view of this change? b) What role did changes in technology play in the stigmatization of certain contemporary weapons of war? c) To what extent have the contrasting normative constraints over the possession and use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons influenced their use and possession? 2) Why have nuclear, chemical and biological weapons become stigmatized as one category of warfare? What is the significance of the categorization of WMD?

This research highlights that the stigmatization of WMD is the result of the utilitarian, moral and ethical aspects of these weapons. Efforts to acquire and possess WMD have been associated with perceptions of enhanced political power.

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The stigmatization of WMD first emerged in a top-down process, as a reflection of the material and normative concerns of political leaders. In time this process has emerged by way of a bottom-up process. The general public and UN are now familiar with the term WMD. It is recognized that there has been some intersection within this process, where bottom-up and top-down norms have merged.

It is argued that by examining the origins, evolution and development of the stigmatization of WMD, new possibilities are created for international control.

The Panopticon of International Law: Compliance in a Transnational Society
Pini Miretski, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

This paper examines the influence of transnational actors on compliance with international legal rules, as part of the power/knowledge structure. The relations of power, as developed in an information-oriented world, are multiform and are not found in a dichotomous relationship between the dominator and dominated. Therefore knowledge provided by third parties including transnational actors such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and transnational corporations (TNCs), influences the relations of power. This, in turn, awards great power to transnational actors, as they are able to change the array of available knowledge in the system.

According to Bentham's principles, power should be visible and unverifiable. But is this possible in the international arena? In global politics, states increasingly limit available access to information and visibility of their actions. However, a state's possibilities of reducing visibility of its military actions are somewhat constrained in the present global transnational society. The presence of NGOs such as Human Rights Watch or Amnesty International, even in the most remote parts of the world, conjointly with the availability of cheap and easily attainable means of communication provided by TNCs, create the visibility effect.

The second principle of power, un-verifiability is also provided by NGOs and media TNCs. One such case is the "Shooting Back" project of the Israeli human rights NGO B'Tselem. In January 2007 B'Tselem provided Palestinians living in high-conflict areas with video cameras in order to capture, expose, and "seek redress for" human rights

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violations in the Occupied Territories. This move once published, caused soldiers and mainly their commanders to be aware of the possibility that they are observed and filmed, without knowing the exact source of the filming.

According to Backer, compliance is a function of both observation and the knowledge of being observed. Law in this sense can be understood as a framework for surveillance, understanding surveillance as information gathering, assessment, and judgment. Surveillance has accordingly morphed from an incident of governance to the basis of governance itself.

The presence of TNC media-giants and NGOs, infringe on the freedom of the states to use military means as they may see fit. The need for legitimacy, acquirable by complying with international law, is affecting the assertion of power by the state. Power is the response to the assertion of power by others. The power of transnational actors, by changing the basis of the available knowledge, restrains and reconstructs the power of states.

The importance of this research is in the fact that if transnational actors indeed influence the considerations whether to comply with international legal rules, the unveiling of their role also unveils a potential enforcement structure in international law. If basic concepts of the international legal system were that there is no supreme law maker, no laws, and no enforcement; this may slowly be changing in a transnational society. Transnational actors may be one of the answers to the enforcement deficit of international law, which may in turn increase compliance with international legal rules.

Norms as a Major Component of Power in IR

Nadav Kedem, University of Haifa

Many scholars emphasize the importance of norms to the theoretical and explanatory dimensions of international relations (IR). A vast body of literature in IR seeks to prove that "Norms Matter". Consequently, scholars tend to focus on well established norms; norms that are internalized by most relevant players. However, following norms as a result of almost full internalization by all relevant players doesn't necessarily reflect power relations, as the reason of compliance is directly related to the agent's own

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preferences. Nevertheless, norms in more preliminary stages of evolution, i.e. norms that were not fully internalized, open the door for a more fruitful discussion on power. Such norms can be a major component of power.

Norms can serve as the major components of the international order, or its "rules of the game"; in certain cases, they can serve as institutions. Such norms can deal with issues such as legitimate ways of changing borders or using military power, and international status. Usually norms that deal with such issues are not fully internalized by all agents; however, they do have substantial influence over reality.

While the common wisdom might be that materialistically stronger agents will dictate the relevant "rules of the game", the weaker agents will be able to actively use these norms in order to restrain, and in a way to dominate certain aspects of the stronger agents' policy. This concept is very similar to Ikenberry's concept of Binding. However, while Ikenberry focuses on how an International Order forms "After Victory", my research focus on what happens "*after after* victory"; how the power games between the agents will look like.

Specifically, my research will focus on the (materialistically) weaker agent's odds to successfully restrain the superpowers during the sometimes lengthy period that follows the formation of the international order.

My theoretical ideas are based on insights from Evolutionary Biology, Sociology, Game Theory, and Economics. These insights help us to understand which norms will evolve under various conditions, how stable these norms will be, when such norms can be breached without paying a substantial price, and when new norms will substitute old ones.

Based on the abovementioned literature, I argue that the chances of such restraining efforts to succeed will increase when the relevant norm is more developed; when recent precedents for breaching the norm beneficially are not evident; when the systemic material power distribution is relatively equal; and when the possible new stable rules are more certain and limited in number. The constitutive process of norms' development and their strategic use will be demonstrated by: the Greek War of Independence, the collapse of the European Concert and the Iraq War.

Is absolute power an insignificant concept?

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Gadi Heimann, University of Haifa

Power is an important concept in political science, including international relations. However, despite this it is not very clear. The concept has been defined in various ways in the past by sociologist, political scientists, psychologists, and economists. These definitions often vary significantly from one another and it is hard to say that a real consensus exists around such important questions as what is power, the basis of power, and how to measure power. Roughly speaking there are two approaches to measuring power. We can call the first the *absolute* approach as it divorces power from specific contexts such as domain or scope. The second approach conceives of power as *relational*, in other words, as measurable only in the specific context of relations between the party that wields the power and the subject to which power is applied. A growing group of international relations scholars has adopted the relational definition of power. This approach has become accepted in recent decades unlike the absolutist approach, which has attracted wide criticism. I believe it radical to claim that the absolutist approach lacks relevance and fails to reflect reality. Although it is relevant to critique the absolute power approach, the conclusion that it is meaningless and thence redundant does not do it justice. There are three arguments to support this: *the added value* in measuring power in absolute terms; *the anticipated reaction* which appears to make it more meaningful, and lastly, *status identities* as the fungible aspect of power which ascribes greater meaning to absolute measurement.

'Shoot and Don't Talk'? Structural Factors and the Legalization of Weapon-Prohibition Regimes

Rony Silfen, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Starting from the late 19th century international regimes prohibiting the use of specific weapons show an inclination toward legalization, evident by deeper and more precise legal obligations, which are increasingly implemented and enforced by independent international bodies. While current IR legalization literature focuses mainly on agent-centered theories to account for legal regimes formation and evolution, I argue in this paper that the unique characteristics of different **structural** power distributions (i.e, multi-, bi-, and unipolarity) have an important role in encouraging and discouraging

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legalization prospects of weapon-prohibition regimes. They do so by enabling and constraining two variables known to influence actors' motivation to legalize their international commitments: the role played by Great Powers in the legalization process, and their sensitivity level to relative gains considerations. By hypothesizing on the varying effects of each material structure on these factors, I claim, that increased legalization of weapon-prohibition regimes is more likely in a unipolar power setting; to a lesser degree under multipolarity; and under bipolar structure increased legalization is least plausible. In order to test my hypothesis, I analyze the evolution of the chemical weapons prohibition regime by measuring its varying legalization levels over the past century and assessing the influences of each power distribution setting on the two variables mentioned above. Although the analysis indicates, as I assumed positive correlation between specific material power distributions and the legalization prospects of chemical weapons prohibition regimes, I conclude this paper by stressing the limitations of structural arguments in accounting for foreign policy decisions. Finally, I offer some future research avenues needed to reaffirm my initial hypotheses and to better integrate them with other explanations for legalization.

The proliferation of international legal regimes is one example of the growing importance of international law for understanding occurrences in world politics. By approaching the legalization phenomenon from a structural perspective, this paper aspires to achieve three goals: Firstly, to fill a theoretical lacuna by offering a structural-material account for legalization so far neglected by IR scholars. Secondly, and from an IR theoretical perspective, to add to the growing literature coupling structures, traditionally restricted to the description and analysis of macro-political phenomena, with foreign policy decisions and specific international political occurrences. And lastly, by fluctuating on the axis between international relations and international law, I wish to contribute to the growing inter-disciplinary literature and create another linkage between these two bodies of knowledge necessary for understanding the global political realities of the 21st century.

International Democracy Promoters – Empowered to exercise power?
Daniela Huber, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

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This paper proposal seeks to analyze the implicit concepts of power reflected in the theoretical part of my dissertation. In my dissertation, I aim to explain the foreign policy of democracy promotion. The research question is: *What enables and constrains democracies to promote democracy abroad?* I argue that democracies are enabled by a “regime of truth” consisting of the factors identity (democracy promotion is “the right thing to do”), international norms (democracy promotion is “the proper thing to do”) and shared belief systems (democracy promotion is “the smart thing to do”). Shared belief systems are developed through discourses, in consistency with values and norms, and are tested against “reality”. In this “reality”, material factors can constrain democracy promotion. When democracies perceive their security environment as highly threatening, democracy promotion does not seem to be “the smart thing to do”. When security threats are removed, democracy promotion becomes possible, but not inevitable.

Questions of power run through different parts of this theory. Firstly, the research question already frames which sides of power I will look at, namely **what empowers actors to exercise power**. Secondly, power also plays a role in defining the dependent variable – democracy promotion. Per se, democracy promotion is a strategic action, as it has a long-term purpose, namely the imposition of democracy on other states. The act of democracy promotion is an exertion of power (*Machtausübung*). There are three ways in which power is exerted: there is coercive (military invasion), utilitarian (conditionality and democracy assistance), and identitive democracy promotion (naming and shaming, and communication).

Thirdly, in the explanatory part of the theory, the concept of power which underlies this theory seems closest to Hannah Arendt’s conception. Arendt claims that “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” (Arendt 1970, 44). Habermas argues that in Arendt’s theory “power is built up in communicative action” (Habermas 1986, 77). Power is generated by the community. In International Relations, there are two communities who can generate power: the domestic community and the international community. They empower someone to exert power. Power is to be distinguished from force. Force is a specific form of *Machtausübung* (exercise of power), but not power. Besides force, there are two other instruments of exercise of power: inducement and

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persuasion. Material resources such as military instruments or economic wealth are necessary to exercise certain forms of power, but they do not generate power. Material power resources make an action possible and make some actors more privileged than others, but they do not make an action inevitable. Per se, such resources cannot empower. In other words, invoking a much cited example, the robber pointing a gun at someone is essentially a desperate person, stripped of any power. Not only was his deed born out of desperateness as a powerless figure in society and is an attempt of challenging (or destroying) power, but also will he be forced to run away after his deed.

National Courts as International Players: the Impact of Judicial Activism and the Empowerment of International law
Osnat Grady Schwartz, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

This lecture seeks to understand the rising power of domestic courts and judges in the international arena, and their emergence as a new force on the international scene. It suggests a new theoretical explanation by exploring the linkage between two important trends: the global expansion of judicial power and the increasing use of International Law (IL) in domestic courts. I will argue that for national courts and judges to become strong international players, both domestic courts and IL have to gain more power at both the national and the international levels.

My thesis incorporates two aspects of power in the international sphere – normative and institutional. The normative aspect of power is manifested in the increasing authority of IL, both on the international level (by "legalizing" and "constitutionalizing" international relations) and the national level (by seeping into domestic courts' judgments). The institutional aspect of power is realized through the increased participation of domestic courts and judges in the international relations through their judgments. These two aspects are interrelated and facilitated by the global expansion of judicial power.

The expansion of judicial power is a common phenomenon for most (if not all) western democracies, where courts are no longer perceived as solely "dispute settlers" and "law enforcers", but also as "norms endowers", and "the rule-of-law safe-guardians". Terms like "judicialization" and "judicial activism" have been entrenched in the public discourse in these countries, emphasizing the power courts have gained in relation to the other arms

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of government. This trend is supported, inter alia, by the establishment of constitutional courts (another development encouraged by IL) and the deterioration of doctrinal barriers (such as "standing" and "junctisability") traditionally used by courts to filter political and other sensitive (including international-relations related) matters from passing their gates. This expansion of judicial power first took place within its "natural" geo-political zone, the State. After positioning themselves as "quasi executive/ legislatures", national courts have allowed themselves to get more involved in their States' international relations, gradually doing so by implementing IL.

The increasing use of IL bears two important outcomes: First, it helps strengthening IL, since IL has very few enforcing mechanisms. This was done after decades of reluctance on the part of domestic courts to implement it. Second, strong IL helps courts to fortify their position in relation with the other branches of government. Assuming that "States" and "Courts" are no longer perceived as a whole body, but as separate agents competing for authority, IL mainly restricts the power of States, while amplifying the power of Courts. It does so by seeing national judges as direct subjects and supplying them "ammunition" against their own governments (e.g., human rights treaties and rules of customary IL), allowing them to enjoy much higher legitimacy in the international sphere. In this manner, a cycle of "mutual reinforcement" is created between IL and domestic courts, forming their interrelated relationship. This relationship is at the heart of the new class of international actors – national courts and judges.