



## A Formal Classification of Power\*

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**Abstract** This article aims to provide a formal classification of social power, where by a ‘formal’ classification is meant a classification of the various ways in which social power is exercised, as opposed to a classification of the different resources (economic, symbolic, violent) used in exercising power in those various ways. The formal classification depends on three fundamental distinctions: first, power relations are either hidden or open; secondly, power is either intentional (on the part of those exercising it) or merely interested; thirdly, power is exercised by means of one of four ‘targets of intervention’ (the subject’s available alternatives, their factual knowledge and value beliefs, their unconscious psychological processes, and their social environment). The various intersections between these dimensions allow us to distinguish clearly and fruitfully between nine different forms of power: coercion/remuneration; anticipated reaction; persuasion; imitation; intentional conditioning; interested conditioning; informational manipulation; psychological manipulation; situational manipulation.

*Keywords* social power, social causation, social freedom

### 1. Introduction

This essay presents a formal classification of power. Power, in general, is understood here as a social causal relation which is either intentional or interested.<sup>1</sup> The ‘social’ character of causation denotes a relationship between various actors (individuals or groups) or better, a relationship between kinds of behaviour of various actors or between their dispositions toward kinds of behaviour. On the one hand, *A* acts (or is disposed to act)

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† Mario Stoppino died in 2001. See the biographical note by Ian Carter in this issue.

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller definition of this type of power, see the first two chapters of my book *Potere e teoria politica* (Stoppino 2001).

causally (by means of a promise, threat, command, advice, etc.) and on the other hand *B* acts (or is disposed to act) consequentially (obedience, acquiescence, observance – in other words, a compliant response, or ‘compliance’ for short). Compliant behaviour can be free, as in response to persuasive power, or not free, as in response to coercive power.<sup>2</sup> It is, nonetheless, an action or course of action by means of which *B* obeys. Naturally, causal relations can be actual or potential, given that power comprises not only the causing of a specific piece of behaviour in another but also the ability to cause it. In the former case (actual power), there is a causal relation between the behaviour of *A* and that of *B*. In the latter case (potential power), there is a potential causal relation between *A*’s possible behaviour – *A*’s opportunity to intervene – and *B*’s probable behaviour, owing to a disposition to comply. For the sake of simplicity, the following analysis mainly considers actual power or the exercise of power. However, all of the reflections contained herein regarding actual power can be easily applied *mutatis mutandis* to potential power.

Not every form of social causation is a form of power, for to qualify as power the social causation must be either ‘intentional’ or ‘interested’. This prerequisite excludes from the scope of power all those causal relations where *B*’s behaviour *y*, though caused by *A*’s behaviour *x*, is either contrary to *A*’s intent or interest or else leaves *A* indifferent. To exercise power is to obtain collaboration. It is to obtain behaviour on the part of others that is in conformity with one’s will or interests. According to the traditional approach, the most appropriate manner for handling the requirement of delimiting the scope of power is by reducing it to include only ‘intentional’ social causation. Thus, the notion of power is anchored to the specific sense of direction underlying the course of action of the person wielding power; in other words, *A*’s ‘intention’ to take course of action *x* in order to obtain behaviour *y* from *B*. This definition is not completely satisfactory, however, as it replaces an overly broad definition of power (social causation *tout court*) with another definition (intentional social causation) which at times can be too narrow. Such a definition excludes from the scope of power instances of behaviour which, even though not themselves intentional, are very similar to intentional social causation. I am specifically referring to examples of social imitation which, though non-intentional, are nonetheless in the interests of the imitated actors, certain types of non-intentional conditioning and, more importantly, ‘an-

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<sup>2</sup> Editor’s note: The term ‘coercion’ in this essay is a translation of the Italian term ‘costrizione’. It should be noted, however, that Stoppino elsewhere uses the Italian term ‘coercizione’ (which would otherwise have been correctly translated as ‘coercion’) in a more narrow sense, to mean coercion (‘costrizione’) by violent means. The term ‘coercizione’ as used by Stoppino is probably most appropriately translated as ‘duress’.

ticipated reactions', which will be discussed later. Given their relevance, especially when studying the structural dimensions of power relations, it is more fruitful to widen the scope of power to include those relations where the consequent behaviour  $y$  of  $B$  furthers  $A$ 's 'interests' even though it was caused by  $A$ 's non-intentional behaviour  $x$ . Since the concept of interest implies a serious disposition to act in pursuit of a certain object, the concept of power can be extended beyond intentional social causation in a manner that is theoretically controlled and empirically manageable (Stoppino, 2001: ch. 2). I therefore define power as intentional or interested social causation.

A general classification of power is herewith presented using the definition of power given above. I consider it a 'formal' classification because it is based on distinctive criteria which regard the form of power relations and not their substance, by which I mean the material dimension of power, the concrete social field within which the relations take place. A substantive classification of power considers the types of resources from which power is derived as well as the types of values in play (the desired objects). A formal classification, on the other hand, has to do with modes of relating or, if you like, the procedural dimensions of power relations. I will focus on the latter classification using the following three criteria.

The first classification criterion concerns an important variable affecting the way in which actor  $A$ , who is exercising power, relates to actor  $B$ , who is subject to it. It consists in distinguishing between two broad types of power: 'open' and 'hidden'. The second criterion is new and is the richest in terms of classificatory results. It regards the specific *target of intervention* through which  $A$  exercises power over  $B$ . This permits a fourfold distinction between: forms of power that limit themselves to altering  $B$ 's 'available alternatives'; forms of power that intervene on  $B$ 's 'factual knowledge and value beliefs' (those subjective elements that condition the available alternatives in a more or less conscious manner); forms of power that shape  $B$ 's 'unconscious psychological processes' (in other words, subjective elements that influence available alternatives at the subconscious level); and forms of power that work on  $B$ 's 'social environment' (that is, on the objective, external conditions that contribute to impacting  $B$ 's factual knowledge and value beliefs and, consequently, his alternatives). The third classification criterion regards the *subjective dimension of A's intervention* – in other words, the sense of direction underlying the behaviour of the actor wielding power – thereby allowing us to distinguish, within the ambit of open power, between 'intentional' and merely 'interested' forms of power.

## 2. Manipulation

According to the first of the above-mentioned typological criteria, power can be divided into two general categories: open and hidden. By 'hidden' power I mean any power relation where *A* tries to hide from *B* his exercise of power (or its nature) and where *B* is effectively unaware of *A*'s power (or its nature) over him. Power is 'hidden' from *B* and this is part of *A*'s deliberate strategy. In the political and social science literature, this type of power is usually called 'manipulation', and I too will use this technical term.

Power is considered 'open' in a power relation either when both of these criteria for manipulation are missing, or when at least the first of them is. The key, in determining the openness of power, is *A*'s lack of intent to keep his use of power (or its nature) hidden from *B*. This may be because *A* specifically requests the relevant behaviour from *B*. In this case, *A* directly confronts *B* who is aware of *A*'s intention to 'persuade', 'remunerate' or 'coerce'. But *A* can also decide not to keep his power hidden even though he does not explicitly request something from *B*. This is so in the case of 'conditioning', where *A* acts in an indirect manner on *B*'s social environment. Lastly, *A* may not intend to keep his power hidden simply because he exercises his power without any intention of doing so. *A* does not aim to keep his power (or its nature) hidden from *B* because *A* does not even aim to use it intentionally. This happens when power becomes (merely) interested social causation in 'anticipated reactions', 'imitation' and 'interested conditioning'. Where power is open, furthermore, the second criterion of manipulation is usually not satisfied either – i.e. *B* is usually aware of being subject to *A*'s power. Even where this awareness is missing, however (as sometimes occurs in certain cases of imitation and conditioning), the fact remains that *B*'s unawareness is not due to *A*'s deliberate strategy.

I will describe open power in detail in the next section. In this section, I will illustrate the general concept of manipulation and its various forms<sup>3</sup>. This order of exposition is for reasons of clarity only, and does not reflect the relative importance of the two general types of power. On the contrary, were I to have been guided by the latter criterion, I would have been forced to begin with open power, which is by far the more important of the two in social and political relations.

When used to denote certain power relations, the word 'manipulation' is not being used in the original sense of the term. Originally, the term was used to describe certain physical interventions by man on nature, through

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<sup>3</sup> On the notion of manipulation, see Stoppino (1983), a part of which is reproduced in the present work, and Ware (1981).

which the physical form of natural substances was altered. Transposed within a social political context, the term refers to certain specific power relations characterized by a marked distinction between the active and intentional character of the manipulator and the passive, unaware nature of the manipulated person and his consequent behaviour. In other words, the manipulator treats the manipulated as if he were a thing – managing, maneuvering and moulding his beliefs and/or behaviour and bypassing any need for the other's consent or conscious willingness. The manipulated individual is completely unaware of being the target of such power (or has no knowledge of its nature). He believes his behaviour is the result of his own independent, conscious decisions.

Note that the hidden nature of manipulation straightforwardly implies the intentional character of its exercise. One might say that *A*'s manipulation is doubly intentional: *A* intentionally attempts to obtain a desired piece of behaviour from *B* and at the same time intentionally attempts to keep his exercise of power hidden from *B*. It therefore follows that the distinction between intentional power and interested power is of no use in building a typology of manipulation. Manipulation is always and only intentional social causation.

A typology of manipulation is possible, however, when based on criteria differentiating between *A*'s targets of intervention: available alternatives, factual knowledge and value beliefs, unconscious psychological processes and social environment. 'Available alternatives' are the various courses of action that *B* takes into consideration (in a more or less sophisticated way). Thus, intervening on *B*'s available alternatives means increasing or decreasing in *B*'s eyes the value of one or more courses of action available to him by means of a promise of reward or the threat of punishment. It means intervening openly on *B*'s conscious practical considerations. It follows that intervention of this sort cannot be exemplified by manipulation. Manipulation can occur, on the other hand, when one intervenes on the factors which are prior (either logically or temporally) to *B*'s available alternatives, and so contribute to moulding those available alternatives. In other words, one engages in manipulation by intervening either on *B*'s 'factual knowledge and value beliefs', on his 'unconscious psychological processes' or on his 'social environment'. I will call the first type of hidden power 'informational manipulation', the second 'psychological manipulation' and the third 'situational manipulation'.

### 2.1 *Informational manipulation*

Informational manipulation acts upon factual knowledge and value beliefs. By 'factual knowledge' I mean not only knowledge of single facts but also notions and cognitions that depend on relations between single facts. The

set of these pieces of information, notions and cognitions constitute the 'sphere of factual knowledge' within which an actor decides on his mode of conduct. By a 'value belief' I mean a conscious stance taken by an actor regarding a value in the general sense, understood either as an end in itself or as something desirable for his projects. The relevant values might be what are commonly seen as 'higher' or 'moral' values, like integrity, honesty and glory, or values that most would judge as 'less high', such as wealth, physical well-being or power over other people. Like factual knowledge, value beliefs concern not only single values but also their interrelations (compatibility or conflict, higher order and lower order). The set of these stances on values and scales (or hierarchies) of values constitutes the 'sphere of values' within which an actor decides on his mode of conduct. Clearly, every behaviour which is not purely instinctive is steered and/or justified by what I have called the actor's 'sphere of factual knowledge' and his 'sphere of values'. It therefore follows that manipulation is possible if it is possible to intervene in a hidden manner on the formation of the agent's sphere of factual knowledge and his sphere of values. Informational manipulation does just that, hiding and suppressing communications to the actor – communications that can regard both the factual knowledge defining the actor's relevant environment and the beliefs and value-doctrines which, if communicated, the actor might have made his own, either wholly or in part.

The simplest example of informational manipulation is the *lie*. By supplying *B* with false information regarding events relevant to his choices, *A* can secretly guide *B* toward a certain course of action while *B*, believing the information to be true, thinks he is choosing freely. Many political thinkers, such as Plato and Machiavelli, have considered lying in politics to be important and effective in gaining the consent of the public or of other political actors. Modern times have seen certain dictators of totalitarian regimes lie unscrupulously for propaganda purposes. But political lies are not an exclusive property of non-liberal regimes. Recent cases of great consequence in liberal democratic countries include the so-called Tonkin Gulf Resolution. On the basis of false information regarding an attack on American navy boats, the US Congress gave President Johnson very broad powers in relation to the Vietnam war.

*Suppressing information* is the second general form of informational manipulation. Suppression is not, in itself, lying. Certain pieces of information, interpretations or evaluations are simply not made available to the public. In this case, the base of knowledge, its interpretation and evaluation is chiseled away for those to whom it is destined. Consequently, it implies a narrowing of the available choices placed before people, in terms of both value beliefs and behaviour. Not surprisingly, the most common forms of political suppression of information – like the practices of secret

government or of the political censure of public, and even private, means of communication – have as one of their primary objectives the avoidance of potential opposition.

Manipulation operates not only by limiting information but also by supplying *excessive information*. Profusely and constantly emitting information and differing or conflicting evaluations can saturate the recipient's capacity to receive and evaluate messages to the point of rendering him indifferent, thus diverting his attention to more personal or 'private' interests. This effect has been especially noticed in research on the mass media. But another not so different technique is used in assemblies and in political committees when a leader, after having allowed his followers to become disoriented by an abundance of documents and information that they have difficulty in comprehending (notwithstanding their great efforts and their heated debates), finally presents a simple interpretation of the facts and an equally straightforward plan of action which is then readily accepted with relief.

A particularly insidious form of informational manipulation can occur at school when teaching becomes *indoctrination*. This form can be of great consequence, owing to the very special conditions that make it possible. First, young people attend school for quite a number of years and for many hours a day. Secondly, they are at school at a time of life when they are particularly malleable and vulnerable. Some theorists hold that schools, given their privileged position in reproducing values and social orientations, are indeed nothing more than 'instruments at the service of the dominant ideology', and therefore necessarily carry out indoctrination and manipulation. This thesis, however, is one-sided and has the grave defect of hiding all useful distinctions behind a single label with little explanatory potential. Even if we were to acknowledge the existence of every plausible type of structural conditioning of the school system, it would still remain important to distinguish between teaching aimed at *understanding*, which promotes thought and autonomous judgment on the part of a pupil, and teaching aimed at *making someone believe*, which creates docile instruments for society, for the nation or for the revolution. It is in this second case – in the case, that is, of indoctrination, be it 'conformist' indoctrination (harnessing and strengthening pre-acquired prejudices in society) or 'sectarian' indoctrination (attacking deep-rooted prejudices only to replace them with others) – that the techniques of suppression and distortion, typical of informational manipulation, are prevalently used.

The factor most decisively influencing both the degree and the effectiveness of informational manipulation is whether, in the regime within which the supplier of information operates, there is a monopoly of the sources of information, or whether there is instead competitive pluralism with multiple centers of information. In a pluralistic regime, competi-

tion between various suppliers produces multiple descriptions, interpretations and evaluations which provide the possibility of identifying and correcting distortions of information or the unilateral suppression of information. This considerably limits the possibilities for the suppliers to engage effectively in manipulatory behaviour. A monopoly, by contrast, enormously increases the recipient's vulnerability and consequently allows the single supplier to manipulate to full effect.

## 2.2 *Psychological manipulation*

Psychological manipulation operates on unconscious psychological processes. An actor's (individual or collective) choices of behaviour are not only the fruit of his conscious deliberations; they are also, to a greater or lesser degree, the result of repetitive and automatic (or quasi-automatic) psychological processes of which the agent is unaware and from which the agent cannot easily free himself. Consequently, an agent's behaviour can be manipulated through a hidden control (an activating or a deactivating) of his unconscious psychological processes. *B* takes a course of action, which he himself chooses; however, unbeknownst to him, *B*'s choice is determined by *A* through the latter's control of *B*'s unconscious psychological processes which steer him in the direction of that course of action.

Two main factors make this form of manipulation socially and politically effective. First, unconscious emotive impulses play a determining role in many of people's choices and actions. Second, there are symbols and images that yield a strong reaction in terms of these impulses. A manipulator's main task, then, is to associate the relevant symbol and/or key image with the social objective that he wishes to bring about by activating an emotional impulse (the social objective might be the purchase of a product, the love and obedience of a political figure, or the hatred and defeat of a foreign country). Furthermore, this association must be repeated incisively and continually until the connection established between the emotion and the social objective becomes akin to a conditioned reflex. These techniques have been applied in a refined manner in so-called 'subliminal advertising', whereby a particular product is associated with a specific symbol aimed at producing an immediate unconscious reaction. Using this technique, deep emotions such as anguish, aggressiveness, sexuality, fear of being isolated or of being different, and so on, have been linked to an extremely varied range of products. But political and religious propagandists have always used these same techniques, albeit in a more intuitive way. Attachment to, or love for the divinity, the tribe, the nation or the political party as well as fear and hatred of nations, religions, races and different classes have been inculcated in the same way, at least in part – i.e. by associating certain symbols with other symbols and, ultimately, with

certain unconscious impulses.

Directly provoking unconscious emotive impulses can be particularly effective when practised on a crowd. Rational self control and individual personal responsibility weaken in a crowd while the irrational and unconscious aspects take clear prominence, producing a sort of emotional contagion among the members. All this makes each individual particularly vulnerable to being influenced emotively. Political activists and demagogues are well aware of this and often use special catalysts to increase their emotive hold on crowds. Consider, for example, the ritualistic use of words in slogans or oaths, often accompanied by music (national or class anthems, popular marches, etc.) or by visual choreography with flags, emblems and stylized gestures. These techniques were carried to a very high level of effectiveness in totalitarian regimes and especially in Nazi Germany.

A particularly intense and prolonged form of psychological manipulation, combined with similarly intense and protracted violent interventions, is to be found in cases of disintegration of the subject's whole system of values and received ideas, as well certain extreme cases of indoctrination. This form is generally known as *brainwashing*. The best known examples of brainwashing belong to our century, and include techniques used to obtain 'confessions' from victims in Stalinist trials or the 'conversion' of American prisoners in Korea, and the destructive stage in the most extreme of the indoctrination processes used in China under the name of 're-education'. But there are also major precedents, such as the techniques used in the Inquisition trials to draw 'confessions' from 'witches'. All of these cases bear certain common traits. First, there are massive physical interventions such as social isolation, hindrance of sleep, limited nutrition and at times torture. Nevertheless, the core of the procedure is essentially psychological: it consists in blocking to the utmost the subject's acquired reflexes – the subject's ideas, his moral principles and even his sense of identity. The victim's reference points in terms of facts and values, the victim's occupation, his religion, and sometimes even his name, are denied him and substituted with others. The emptying of words rich from past experiences, the unremitting interrogations at irregular intervals and always on the same issues, compounded by physical exhaustion due to lack of sleep and malnutrition, lead to the disintegration of the victim's personality thus leaving him in a state of intolerable fear and anguish. At this point an extreme psychological self-defense mechanism comes into play with the rebounding of the subject's emotive charge into a model that represents the opposite of what previously guided his habitual life. Thus arrives the moment of full confession of acts never performed and the complete rebuttal of the ideas and moral principles that had inspired his preceding life experiences.

### 2.3 *Situational manipulation*

Situational manipulation operates on the social environment. By 'social environment' I mean the social context within which *B* chooses strategies and actions. This social context can be schematically characterized as comprising (a) a specific group of actors with (b) a specific distribution of social resources and (c) a specific set of beliefs and dispositions to act. The specific social context as described above represents – for *B* as well as for any other actor contributing to that context and acting within it – a definite structure of constraints and opportunities for his behaviour and initiatives. In order to pursue his values (desired things in the general sense), *B* needs both social resources and cooperation from other actors. And social resources and cooperation can be found only within his social environment. Therefore, the external elements which define the social environment, even if perceived and understood with varying degrees of realism, ordinarily make a decisive contribution in shaping the actor's alternative courses of action and eventually his final behaviour.

From this it follows that manipulating an actor's behaviour is possible if one can intervene in a hidden manner on his social environment and thereby steer his course of action. This is what happens with situational manipulation, which involves hidden intervention either on the distribution of resources or on the dispositions to act of those agents who constitute the relevant social environment of the manipulated individual. By moulding *B*'s important social environmental conditions and thereby influencing his sphere of factual knowledge and/or value beliefs, *A* can secretly steer *B* toward a certain behaviour, while *B*, believing those social conditions to be spontaneous (i.e. the result of a spontaneous social process and not caused by intentional outside intervention), believes himself to be choosing his course of action freely.

An example of situational manipulation that occurs through an intervention on the dispositions of the actors constituting the social environment is where a couple want to correct their son's wayward behaviour, and secretly convince family and friends to behave in a united manner (in passing moral judgment and expressing negative attitudes) with the objective of convincing their son to change his behaviour. In the same way, a businessman with influence in a specific sector can secretly convince other people in the same field to not hire one of his rebellious employees, thereby forcing the employee either to change field or to tone down his demands. This last example is closely related to the other, more simple method of situational manipulation: intervention on the distribution of resources in a specific social environment so as secretly to obtain and maintain the monopoly of a certain type of resource. *A*, who secretly has a monopoly or even only a predominant share of certain specific resources, can

just as secretly dictate his demands and, therefore, steer the conduct of *B*, who has an intense need for those resources or benefits. *B* is unaware of *A*'s predominant or monopolistic position and is therefore just as unaware of the power to which he is subject.

Situational manipulation is a recurring and significant feature of many social and political situations. By its very nature, however, it adapts better to limited social contexts in which an actor can effectively maintain control of the environmental conditions. Within the wider social context comprising an entire community, situational manipulation probably plays only a secondary role. First of all, in such wider settings, the social environment is to a very large degree spontaneous (in other words, not intentionally caused by a single actor or group of actors), being the outcome of a mixture of various forms of behaviour on the part of numerous social actors. Secondly, an actor's strategy in exercising power by intervening on environmental conditions in this wider social context necessarily takes on an open and visible character, either at the economic level, through the accumulation of considerable amounts of resources, or at the political level, through governmental intervention such as the nationalization of the main social resources. In short, within the wider social context of an entire community, power that operates on environmental situations tends to resemble the open form 'conditioning' rather than the hidden form 'manipulation'. For these reasons, the so-called social (or even worse, historical) 'conspiracy' theories, according to which a small elite secretly dominates society (or steers its course in history), acting like a giant puppet master pulling the strings of its agents from behind the scenes, are generally speaking a far fetched caricature and do not appropriately describe social reality.

### 3. Open power

'Open power', as we know, describes a power relation where *A* does *not* try to hide his exercise of power from *B* and where *B*, at least in most cases, is aware of being the object of *A*'s power. The most obvious forms of open power are where *A* expressly asks *B* to take a certain course of action, either by trying to persuade *B* that it is the best course to take, or by promising a reward for complying or threatening punishment for not complying. *B* takes that course of action either because he is convinced of *A*'s good will or because he is enticed by the offer of the reward or because he is afraid of the punishment. In such cases, *A*'s request is explicit and direct and *B* is fully aware of his compliance. I have already mentioned, however, that not all forms of open power are exemplified by a direct request followed by a consciously compliant response. 'Conditioning' can be considered open in the present sense when *A* obtains a given course of action

from *B* without specifically requesting it but by intervening in a clear and conspicuous manner on *B*'s social environment. Power is also open when it is 'merely interested', as in the cases of anticipated reaction and imitation, where what is lacking is not only *A*'s intention to hide his power from *B* but also *A*'s intention to exercise it, as a result of which *A* makes no request. Here, *A* might even be unaware of *B*'s compliance (this can be so, for example, in cases of imitation). Power is hidden (manipulation) when *A* deliberately tries and manages to keep his power hidden from *B*. When this objective is missing, the power is open, whether it takes on the explicit and more or less direct form of intentional social causation or instead assumes the less explicit form of (merely) interested social causation.

Note also that the hidden or open nature of power is taken to depend here *only* on those actors who are involved in the power relation itself, and neither on external observers nor on other actors who belong to the same social context (although as a matter of fact, successful manipulation between two actors often tends also to remain veiled from the surrounding environment). The power relation between *A* and *B* being hidden or open depends only on whether or not *A* conceals that relation from *B*. Thus, open power, as specified above, may nevertheless be 'invisible' or barely visible to an external observer or even to other actors within the same social environment. This can happen, for example, when the power relation takes on the less conspicuous form of interested social causation (as in the case of anticipated reactions), or when *A* and *B* collude so as to keep their power relation hidden or 'behind the scenes'. In the latter case, the power relation between *A* and *B* remains open since it is open for the actors involved. The situation takes on a different hue if the tactic of veiling the power relation from third parties is part of a strategy aimed at establishing a hidden power relation (a relation of manipulation) by *A* (or by *B*, or by *A* and *B* together) over *C*, *D* and *E*. But then *A*'s and *B*'s tactic of hiding their power relation becomes relevant for our purposes because it contributes to hiding the power relation between one or both of them on the one hand and *C*, *D* and *E* on the other. And this simply confirms my point that the hidden or open nature of power refers only to those actors involved in the power relation itself.

Like manipulation, open power can be classified in terms of the criterion distinguishing between different targets of *A*'s intervention: available alternatives, factual knowledge and value beliefs, unconscious psychological processes and the social environment. And again like manipulation, open power can in fact only operate on three of these four targets of intervention. In the present case, the target to be ruled out is 'unconscious psychological processes'. Given that such processes are 'unconscious', *B* remains unaware of them, and *A* usually intervenes at this level exactly in order to keep his own power or its nature concealed from *B*. *B* may think

Table 1 Forms of hidden and open power classed according to the target of intervention

	Social environment	Unconscious psychological processes	Factual knowledge and value beliefs	Available alternatives
Hidden power	Situational manipulation	Psychological manipulation	Informational manipulation	
Open power	Conditioning Interested conditioning		Persuasion Imitation	Remuneration Coercion Anticipated reactions

he is responding freely to a request from *A*, while in actual fact his choice is determined by unconscious psychological processes secretly activated by *A*'s apparently open request (as happens, for example, in subliminal advertising). Thus, interventions on unconscious psychological processes usually characterize manipulation, and are not present in open power. I say 'usually', because it can happen that *A* acts upon *B*'s unconscious psychological processes with the latter's consent and with the objective of freeing him or of making him more aware of these processes and their determining role. This is what is said to happen in psychoanalytic therapy. However, this is a rare case and can be set aside for our purposes.

Open power *can* be exercised, on the other hand, either by influencing the available alternatives *B* consciously considers, or by influencing his factual knowledge and value beliefs (that is, the subjective conditions that contribute to shaping his available alternatives), or by intervening on *B*'s social environment (that is, the external conditions which contribute to shaping his available alternatives). The first subclass of open power, which involves directly influencing the available alternatives, contains three forms of power: remuneration (the promise of a reward), coercion (the threat of punishment) and anticipated reactions. The second subclass of open power, which involves affecting factual knowledge and value beliefs, contains two forms of power: persuasion and imitation. The third subclass of open power, which involves intervention on the social environment, contains the class of power I call 'conditioning', which itself comes in two forms, being either intentional or merely interested.

Table 1 classifies power schematically according to two criteria which respectively distinguish between the hidden or open nature of the relation and the four possible targets of intervention of the actor exercising power. We already know that two areas in the table should remain blank: there is

no open power which works by affecting unconscious psychological processes and there is no hidden power which works by affecting available alternatives. The typology presented in the table seems adequate in its representation of the forms of manipulation, distinguished according to its three targets of intervention: factual knowledge and value beliefs (informational manipulation), unconscious psychological processes (psychological manipulation) and the social environment (situational manipulation). The table distinguishes less effectively between forms of open power, since two of the three relevant areas bring together two forms of power and a third area even contains three. In the case of open power we should therefore introduce a third discriminatory criterion: that which distinguishes between forms of power that are intentional and those that are merely interested. As will be recalled, this last criterion applies exclusively to open power.

As already mentioned, this classification criterion distinguishing between intentional and merely interested power regards the *subjective dimension of A's intervention*, in other words, the sense of direction accompanying the behaviour of A that directly or indirectly causes B's course of action. By 'intention' I mean the conscious objective of obtaining a specific effect. By 'interest' (in the sense of 'subjective' interest) I mean a complex attitude in which, for present purposes, a key component is the disposition to act in such a way as to obtain a given effect. Power is intentional when A tries, by means of action  $x$ , deliberately to obtain behaviour  $y$  from B. Power is (merely) interested when A does not intentionally try to obtain behaviour  $x$  from B, but B's behaviour is nevertheless caused – as in imitation, anticipated reaction or environmental conditioning – by A's prior behaviour  $x$  associated with A's interest in obtaining a certain effect or result of which B's action  $y$  is a part, a condition or a facilitating factor. 'Intention' and 'interest' are clearly not mutually exclusive. Generally speaking an intention – the deliberate aim of an action in obtaining a desired effect – is based on an interest, being based on the disposition to act in order to obtain that effect. Our typological distinction should therefore be seen as differentiating between forms of power that are *merely interested* and forms of power that are *intentional*.

Table 2 shows the schematic classification of open power based on the two criteria which respectively discriminate the intentional or (merely) interested character of A's intervention and the three targets of that intervention. The seven types of open power which I have mentioned are nicely distributed in the above table. Among the powers which act upon factual knowledge and value beliefs we find an intentional form (persuasion) and a merely interested form (imitation). Among the powers that act upon the social environment we similarly find an intentional form (conditioning) and a merely interested form (interested conditioning). And among the

Table 2 Forms of open power classed according to their intentional or merely interested character and according to the target of intervention.

	Available alternatives	Factual knowledge and value beliefs	Social environment
Intentional power	Remuneration Coercion	Persuasion	Conditioning
Merely interested power	Anticipated reactions	Imitation	Interested conditioning

powers that act upon available alternatives we find two intentional forms (remuneration and coercion) and one merely interested form (anticipated reactions). Remuneration and coercion are classed together, but this is not counterintuitive as the two forms do, after all, involve the same technique: the use of sanctions (respectively, positive and negative sanctions). Besides, a *reducto ad unum* with respect to the use of either type of sanction (positive or negative) is already implicit in the merely interested form of power acting upon available alternatives (i.e. anticipated reactions), as I shall clarify below. I now wish to illustrate in more detail the seven (or better, six) variations of open power.

### 3.1 Remuneration and coercion<sup>4</sup>

Intervening upon ‘available alternatives’ means altering the cost and benefit evaluation on which actor *B* bases his choice of a course of action. And it means altering that evaluation not by intervening on the social environment or the factual knowledge and value beliefs that contribute to shaping it, but instead by directly introducing new elements from outside (the promise of a reward or the threat of punishment) to increase or decrease the value *B* links to one alternative or to another. In the absence of such external interventions, *B* will choose the course of action which provides him with the greatest advantages in terms of costs and benefits. *A*’s objective, in exercising remuneration or coercion, is to introduce an element that will alter *B*’s cost and benefit calculation so that he chooses the course of action desired by *A*.

Both remuneration and coercion, then, are based on the use of (positive or negative) sanctions to modify the relative values of the available alternatives. Nonetheless, if we direct our attention specifically to the ways in which the sanctions are used, we shall see that remuneration and coercion

<sup>4</sup> Numerous authors have examined the notions of remuneration and coercion. See, for example, the short but interesting analysis of Parsons (1963).

Figure 1a Remuneration

1	2	3	4	5
+ -	+ -	+ - (+)	+ -	+ -

Figure 1b Coercion

1	2	3	4	5
+ - (-)	+ - (-)	+ -	+ - (-)	+ - (-)

are in a sense opposites. Observe Figure 1a, representing a remunerative intervention.

The numbers 1 to 5 represent available alternatives of which *B* is consciously aware and which *B* evaluates. The plus and minus signs directly underneath each number represent the benefits and costs *B* attaches to each of these alternatives. The bracketed plus sign which appears further below available alternative 3 represents the remunerative intervention, that is, the introduction of an external element by *A* who is trying to exercise his power by adding a new benefit (remuneration) to available alternative 3. *B*'s cost and benefit calculation with respect to his available alternatives is thus altered in favour of one particular course of action, and the remuneration will be successful if the increase in the value of that course of action is sufficient to induce *B* to choose it. In the case of coercion, the opposite process occurs. *B*'s comparative analysis is altered not by a promise of remuneration for conforming but by the threat of punishment for any kind of behaviour that does not conform. Therefore, *A*'s external intervention, rather than enhancing the value of the available alternative desired by *A*, diminishes the value of all the others. This result is shown in Figure 1b, which includes bracketed minus signs below the courses of action 1, 2, 4 and 5 and none under action 3, which is desired by *A*.

Coercion, then, adds an ulterior cost to all courses of action other than the one desired. The coercion will be successful if the value of all the other options decreases to the point that *B* chooses the only alternative that has not lost its (absolute) initial value and that happens to be the alternative desired by *A*.

Remuneration and coercion are the two most widespread and conspicuous forms of power to be found in social and political relations. Rare are the cases in which the influence of one individual or group on another is not accompanied, to a greater or lesser degree, by some promise of remuneration or some threat of punishment. The main resources of power tend to consist in either negative or positive sanctions. This is obviously true of the resources of violence (the negative sanction *par excel-*

lence), but it is also true of economic resources, the supply of which has a remunerative function and the withdrawal of which (as in the case of lay-offs, lock-outs or strikes) can become powerful punishments. And it is further true of symbolic or normative goods such as those associated with a religion. Consider the intense recompense of saving one's soul or of union with God and the brotherhood of believers, and the no less intense punishment of eternal damnation or exclusion from the congregation (ex-communication). Even feelings of affection and love can and should be classed in this way, once one reflects on the importance of mutually beneficial 'exchanges' of affection, or on the severity of punishments like the 'withdrawal of one's affections' – for example, in relations between parents and offspring or in amorous relations. The most important centres of power that people encounter in the course of their lives are all structurally affected by the use of rewards and punishments: from the family to the school, from work relations to the more general network of economic interdependences, from the church to the state and its political relations.

### 3.2 *Anticipated reactions*

In the power relation called 'anticipated reactions' *B* engages in behaviour *y* as desired by *A* without *A* expressing the intention of obtaining *B*'s behaviour *y*, either because *B* anticipates that *A* would react negatively if he did not comply as expected, or because *B* predicts that his behaviour will gain him a reward from *A*.<sup>5</sup> For example, in deciding what stance to take on a certain piece of legislation, a Member of Parliament or Senator can take for granted a specific reaction from a certain part of his constituency even without receiving any request from them and, therefore, decide on a certain intervention or vote in Parliament that will not damage (or will favour) that group's interests, where that intervention or vote is different from the one he would have chosen if he had not foreseen his constituent's reaction. There are two main conditions permitting us to class anticipated reactions as a form of power. First, *B*'s anticipation of *A*'s reaction, which induces him to adopt behaviour *y*, must be directly or indirectly caused by *A*'s previous behaviour, *x*, from which *B* can realistically estimate a good chance of *A* reacting in a certain manner to *B*'s action or omission. Secondly, *A*'s behaviour *x*, which by definition is not associated with any deliberate intention of obtaining behaviour *y* from *B* (for otherwise it would count as intentional social causation), is nonetheless associated with some interest of *A* and, therefore, his disposition to behave in a certain manner in order to obtain specific results of which *B*'s behaviour *y* is a part, a con-

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<sup>5</sup> On 'anticipated reactions', see Friedrich (1963).

dition or a facilitating factor.

As described above, the case of anticipated reactions is nothing other than the (merely) 'interested' version of remuneration and coercion. Positive or negative 'reactions' are the corollaries of reward and punishment. Their anticipation by *B*, no less than a promise or a threat, alter his available alternatives either because they add a further benefit to one of his alternatives or because they add a further cost to all the others. The only thing that is missing from anticipated reactions when compared with remuneration and coercion is an explicit promise or threat from *A*. It is substituted by the probability of *A*'s positive or negative reaction, because *A*'s intention is substituted with *A*'s (mere) interest. Except for this last point, the two forms of power relation are exactly alike.

Given the extreme similarities between anticipated reactions on the one hand and remuneration and coercion on the other, it is often difficult to tell, in empirical research, in which concrete cases to apply the former concept and in which to apply the latter. Especially within the context of lasting relations, it can happen that *A* does not intervene to obtain a specific behaviour from *B* because *A* *predicts and takes for granted* that *B* will respect *A*'s interests (and therefore that *B* will engage in the consequent behaviour) and intervenes to reaffirm his intentional purpose *post factum* with a 'reaction' that rewards *B*'s behaviour or punishes *B*'s lack of acquiescence. In the most structured and long lasting relationships, power relations run more or less conspicuously along tracks of reciprocally stable expectations and the two types of power here discussed mesh into one another, with anticipated reactions acting as a sort of temporal extension of the forms of remuneration and coercion.

### 3.3 Persuasion

Up to now, I have illustrated those forms of open power that involve intervention on available alternatives. We have seen that this kind of intervention works through rewards and/or punishments, directly applied in the case of intentional power (remuneration and coercion) and indirectly applied in the case of (merely) interested power (anticipated reactions). It is now time to turn to forms of open power that modify the agent's factual knowledge and value beliefs. Intervening in an open and *intentional* manner on this target means convincing or persuading *B* by modifying his 'sphere of factual knowledge' and/or his 'sphere of value beliefs'. The intentional form of open power which operates on factual knowledge and value beliefs is the power of persuasion.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> On the concept of persuasion, see Bell (1975).

Persuasion can be defined as a relation in which an actor (*A*) determines the behaviour of another actor (*B*) by modifying the factual knowledge and/or the value beliefs that mould *B*'s behaviour by means of open argumentation which does not contain, either openly or secretly, promises of recompense or threats of punishment. 'Argumentation' is at the heart of the persuasive strategy. I have called this argumentation 'open' in order to indicate that manipulative elements are absent. I shall return to this point shortly. Argumentation can comprise reasoning about facts and their connections, including presenting evidence and proof, as well as reasoning about values and their connections, including invoking duties and feelings. Naturally, the symbolic elaboration of the arguments can be more or less developed, and set out in line with different 'styles' of persuasion. One thing argumentation cannot contain, however, is the promise of remuneration or the threat of punishment, put forward either on behalf of the actor attempting to exercise power or by that same actor on behalf of others. To the extent that a message from *A* to *B* contains promises or threats, persuasion is to that same extent no longer present and the exercise of power is converted into remuneration or coercion.

A very thin and fragile line separates persuasion from remuneration and coercion. First, one must remember that in the case of persuasion, *A* has the deliberate intention of inducing *B* to undertake a certain conduct. One can suppose, at least generally, that the greater the desire to obtain a specific behaviour, the more tempted *A* will be to use, if at all possible, other means (*in primis*, threats and promises) to obtain the desired behaviour from *B*. Secondly, it must be noted that both persuasive argumentation and threats and promises are manifested through the same means: symbolic communications, or messages, that *A* addresses to *B*. And the ambivalence between persuasion and remuneration or coercion often shows up in these messages. *A*'s communication links *B*'s possible behaviour with positive or negative consequences for *B*. Are these positive or negative consequences the result of conjecture linking facts that are totally independent of *A*'s requests, or do they instead express, more or less indirectly, an intention on the part of *A* to reward or punish? Thirdly, one must also consider that a background of remuneration or coercion, qualifying and correcting the attempt to persuade, can be present but not explicitly stated, owing to a more or less continuous social exchange relation between the two actors. In this case, the persuasive social relation is at least partly transformed into one aspect of the 'give and take' of a continuous relation of exchange, and the choices actors have (of trying or not trying to persuade, of allowing or not allowing themselves be persuaded) become, at least in part, 'moves' in the game of remuneration and coercion.

The line separating persuasion from manipulation is just as thin and fragile, if not more so. Regarding manipulation, the first two points dis-

cussed above describing the thin and fragile line dividing persuasion from remuneration and coercion apply here as well. The second point is especially important: persuasion and manipulation use the same medium of symbolic communication; therefore, what at first light might seem to be 'open' argumentation (i.e. messages pertaining to persuasion) can, after more detailed analysis, turn out to consist partly or wholly in manipulative tactics. This point certainly applies to informational manipulation, given that the content of the 'persuasive' messages *A* addresses to *B* can involve distortions and/or a suppression of information. As will be recalled, the possibility for an actor to use such manipulative tactics mainly depends on the degree to which he possesses a monopoly over the means of information. But the same point also applies to psychological manipulation, given that this form of power uses open (or seemingly open) persuasive messages while keeping their real effectiveness hidden. Some have spoken, in this connection, of 'occult persuasive methods', in order to indicate that a seemingly open message communicated by the 'persuader' hides – from the eyes of the actor he is trying to persuade – the persuader's effective power tactic, which consists in the activation of unconscious psychological processes. Clearly, then, to the extent that the persuasive message *A* addresses to *B* contains distorted information or the suppression of information or an 'occult persuasive message', to that same extent persuasion in the strict sense disappears, and the exercise of power is converted into manipulation.

### 3.4 *Imitation*

'Imitation' is to be understood here as having a special technical meaning.<sup>7</sup> The target of imitation (or better, the target upon which *A* intervenes in the case of imitation) is made up of beliefs, interests, ideological orientation, life style, and/or ideas, knowledge, abilities and cognitive bearings; in short, what I call an actor's 'sphere of value beliefs' and 'sphere of factual knowledge'. Secondly, my technical use of 'imitation' implies that the imitated individual has an interest – no more and no less – in being the object of imitation. Thus, as I have argued elsewhere, the relation between imitated and imitator remains outside of the scope of power as long as the imitated individual either has a negative attitude to being imitated, is indifferent to being imitated, or has a favorable disposition toward being imitated that is nevertheless weaker than an interest in being imitated. On the other hand, when *A*'s state of mind regarding imitation is character-

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<sup>7</sup> 'Imitation' within the context of power has been discussed by Partridge (1963). See also Stoppino (2001: ch. 2).

ized not merely by an interest in imitation but by a deliberate intention to be imitated, the power relation between *A* and *B* is transformed into one of persuasion: a form of persuasion which uses 'being an example' as the key argumentative move.

According to the definition of imitation herein assumed, then, imitation is the (merely) interested version of persuasion, just as anticipated reactions are the 'interested' version of remuneration and coercion. Imitation is persuasion consisting of 'examples', but where these examples flow naturally, so to speak – i.e. without any persuasive strategy being adopted by the imitated actor. Just as with anticipated reactions (in relation to remuneration and coercion), it is often difficult to be sure, in observing concrete social relations, when imitation is pure and when it is instead accompanied by a persuasive strategy. Nonetheless, this should not induce us to belittle the importance of imitation in the transmission of cognitive orientations and value beliefs.

In quantitative terms, imitation undoubtedly represents an important channel for transmitting orientations, whether or not it is intertwined with persuasive strategies. It is well known that directly absorbing and reproducing ideals, life styles, orientations and knowledge through example is often more effective than learning through explicit communication and reasoning. This explains the widespread occurrence of social imitation, both between generations and between social groups. In qualitative terms, on the other hand, it is worth noting that the strongest cases of imitation, if also the least common, are ones in which the relevant activities (involving the pursuit of values and/or cognitive orientations) reflect a sincere, profound and satisfied commitment on the part of the imitated actor – in which the activities, in other words, exhibit the characteristics and the magnetism of a life led to the full, and can in no way be reduced to a tactic or an attempt at persuasion. If I am not mistaken, it is in such cases that we find the key to the autonomy of the category of imitation, in both collective and individual social relations.

### 3.5 *Conditioning*

Let us now discuss the form of open power which involves intervening intentionally upon the social environment. As I have already noted, for our purposes the social environment can be understood as comprising (a) a configuration of actors with (b) a given distribution of social resources and (c) a given distribution of beliefs and dispositions to act. Thus, intervening on the social environment means acting upon one or more of these elements, and in particular on the distribution of resources or on the actors' beliefs and dispositions to act. Note that this type of power is essentially of an indirect nature. *A* does not intervene directly on *B*'s available

alternatives, as in the case of remuneration and coercion, nor does *A* immediately intervene on *B*'s sphere of knowledge or value beliefs, as in the case of persuasion. Instead, *A* directly intervenes only on *B*'s social environment. And the intervention turns out to be effective as an exercise of power only because an actor's social environment normally has a great impact on his sphere of factual knowledge and/or his sphere of value beliefs, which in turn affect his available alternatives, which in turn affect his final course of action. Given that *A* intervenes on environmental or external 'conditions', and by this indirect means obtains the desired (and intended) course of action from *B*, I call this form of power 'conditioning'.

A few other elucidations should be made regarding the indirect nature of conditioning. First, conditioning stands out for its often very complex nature. In particular, it can itself comprise, among the conditioning tools, exercises of forms of power other than conditioning. Nonetheless, in such cases one must pay careful attention to not confuse the exercise of these subsidiary forms of power with the broader power strategy, which remains one of conditioning. For example, *A* might alter the distribution of resources within the social environment by intervening through acts of remuneration or coercion. Or *A* might alter the value beliefs and the disposition to act of the relevant members of the social environment by recourse to persuasion or to informational manipulation. Now, taken individually, these acts are simply exercises of power by *A* over *C*, *D*, *E* and *F* in forms other than conditioning (respectively, they are exercises of power in the forms of remuneration, coercion, persuasion and informational manipulation). If, however, these acts are analyzed within the context of *A*'s overall strategy, they are relegated to the status of means, permitting *A* to modify *B*'s social environment as desired. They are transformed into instrumental components of *A*'s exercise of power over *B*, the overall form of which is conditioning.

The second clarification regarding the indirect nature of conditioning concerns the effectiveness of this type of power. One might think that such effectiveness is very limited, since it depends on a relatively long chain of inputs: the modification of the social environment has to change *B*'s sphere of factual knowledge or his sphere of value beliefs, which in turn must modify his available alternatives enough to influence his final course of action. And one might point, in particular, to the weakest link in this chain – the link between the modification of the environmental conditions and the change in *B*'s subjective sphere of factual knowledge and value beliefs. If this subjective sphere is impermeable, the causal chain will be broken and the attempt at conditioning ineffective.

Two points should be made regarding this observation. The first point is that the argument just presented is in theory correct. It is true that, given that social actors react differently to changes within their environment,

their different attitudes in this respect affect the outcome of any conditioning intervention. However, this should not lead us to underestimate the role of conditioning in social and political relations. For the second point to be made is that man is a social animal and depends to an enormous extent on his social environment. Any actor requires resources and the collaboration of others in order to realize his objectives – resources and collaboration that can only be found in his social environment. A specific configuration of environmental conditions constitutes, for those actors operating within that social context, a more or less structured set of constraints and opportunities for their actions and, therefore, for the pursuit of their objectives. Thus, actors' reactions to environmental changes constitute a general and constant feature of social life – a feature that is especially prominent when changes in the environment influence the actors' possibilities of pursuing their most important values, that is, the things for which they feel the strongest need. The case referred to above, of an actor that is totally impervious to changes in his environment, is indeed far from being a common and constant feature of social life and tends, on the contrary, to indicate a pathological condition.

The indirect nature of conditioning should not, then, be seen as diminishing its importance in social and political relations. Consider the relatively obvious case of conditioning that targets the distribution of social resources. The control which certain actors may have over important social resources conditions the behaviour of the actors involved. *A*'s monopoly of resource *x* generates a favourable behaviour toward him from *B*, *C* and *D*, for whom resource *x* is very important, because in this way they will obtain benefits they are not willing to renounce. On the other hand, *E*'s possession of a considerable amount of resource *y*, which for him is a significant kind of resource, protects him from depending on *F*, who has the major control over that resource. In sum, the map of the overall distribution of social resources structures the actors' intentions according to where they are situated on that map. And every strategy to alter or maintain a given distribution of resources is in itself a conditioning strategy. It is from within this perspective (of mutually conditioning strategies) that one should view the continuous competition and conflict of human agents for control of the most important resources: land, raw materials, energy sources, and so on.

### 3.6 Interested conditioning

Remuneration and coercion act upon available alternatives and have anticipated reactions as their (merely) interested corollary. Persuasion acts upon the sphere of factual knowledge and/or value beliefs and has imitation as its (merely) interested corollary. So too, intentional power that acts

upon the social environment – conditioning – has its own (merely) interested corollary. For lack of a better term, I shall call this corollary ‘interested conditioning’. In this type of relation, *B*’s resulting behaviour is caused by changes brought about by *A* in *B*’s social environment. And while *A*’s intervention on the environment is not carried out with the deliberate intention of obtaining a consequent response from *B*, *A*’s subjective orientation nevertheless contains an interest in certain results or objectives of which *B*’s behaviour is either a part, a condition or a facilitating factor.

As I have already mentioned regarding the other forms of interested power, it is often very difficult when analyzing concrete social situations to differentiate cases of merely interested conditioning from ones of conditioning *tout court* – that is, intentional conditioning. In the present case, indeed, differentiating between the two is even more arduous a task. For there is at least one sense in which persuasion differs markedly from imitation, and similarly, remuneration and coercion differ markedly from anticipated reactions: the sense in which the presence or absence of a direct, explicit request from *A* to *B* identifies the action as persuasive, remunerative or coercive. In the case of conditioning, on the other hand, this distinction is entirely lacking. An explicit and direct request from *A* to *B* is missing, not only in the (merely) interested form but also in the intentional form of conditioning. In both cases, all that may appear to occur is the same direct intervention by *A* on the social environment.

In the real world, then, the two forms of conditioning are inextricably intertwined, and interested conditioning acts like an extension of intentional conditioning. Furthermore, the external nature of the intervention on the social environment renders highly likely the occurrence of this ‘(merely) interested extension’ of conditioning. An alteration of the environment is an objective fact and will continue in time at least for a minimal period. It is therefore capable of influencing all the actors exposed to that environment and all the actions that are performed within it. And this suggests a high probability that more or less extensive continuations of interested conditioning could result. Consider the example of a prominent company that decides to start a large production unit in a specific community. The company’s decision drastically alters the distribution of resources in that area. That alteration in turn influences other actors, above all actors on the local government and the most important social actors in the area. And these last changes are, at least in part, desired by the company, which chose the given location for its production unit partly on the basis of its foreseeing these effects of its conditioning role. However, there is also a cascade of secondary effects, brought about by the impact of the environmental changes on the wider group of actors in the area; and while these secondary effects are neither expected nor desired by the com-

pany, they nonetheless coincide, to a greater or lesser extent, with its interests.

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