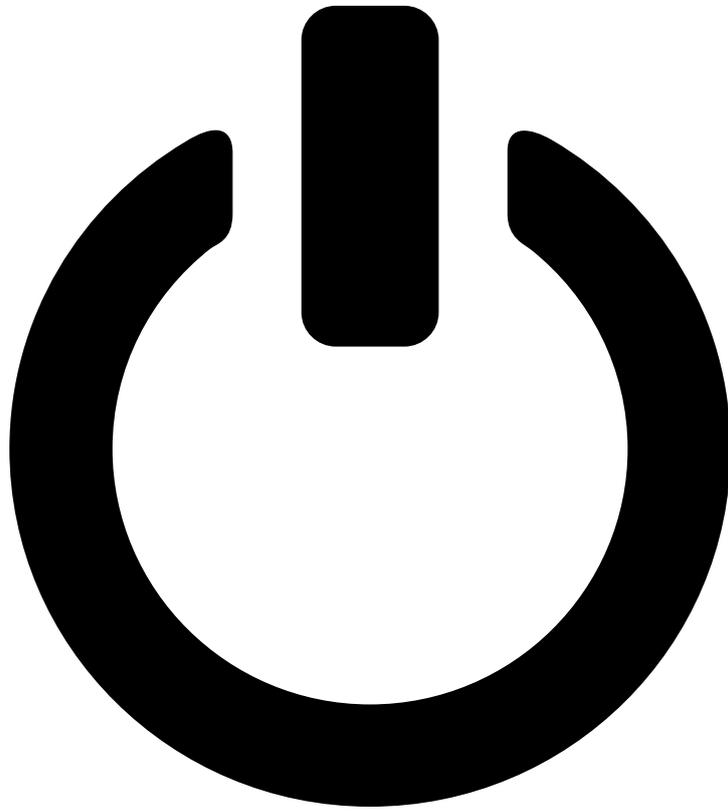


# REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

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# Power with, not power over

Neal Lawson



If power is the way to make things happen, then how do we make things happen in the 21st century? The answer, sadly and wonderfully, is that it's complicated.

Essentially, two ways of making things happen have dominated our lives to date. First, change through bureaucracy – i.e. through targets, audits, command and control. Books can and have been written about the failings of bureaucracy, but let's resort to an easy shorthand - the Society Union failed. Quite spectacularly. The second way of making things happen is through the market – in essence, change through competition and individualised incentives. Again, reams have been written on the limits of the market, but let's resort to another shortcut – Lehman Brothers and pretty much the whole financial system failed. And again, quite spectacularly.

So if machines and markets have their place but also their limitations – what makes us powerful today? What enables us to do things?

To help think about where we might find the answer I've found it useful to understand two different conceptions of power. Power over – or power as domination, versus power to/with – in other words, power as transformative

capacity. The early management theorist Mary Parker-Follett, writing a century ago, first explored this distinction, and it is used today, most notably by Hilary Wainwright in relation to her work around public service reform.

I best understand the concept through one of Aesop's Fables, which tells the story of the wager between the wind and the sun over who could make the traveler remove their coat. The wind went first and blew and blew trying to force the coat off, and all the traveler did was – come on you know this – do their coat up tighter. And then the sun shines and of course it's too warm to be wearing a coat! Power with, not power over.

Today we are potentially entering a new era of 'power with'. Digital technology is flattening the world, putting information and communication literally in the hands of everyone. Hierarchies and elites are yesterday's forms of domination. It is a world where, as the Jericho mantra goes, the future will be negotiated, not imposed. The technology then fits along new theories of human psychology – see for instance Dacher Keltner's new book [The Power Paradox](#), which redefines power away from coercion towards altruism and generosity. In this emerging world, real empowerment in an organisation comes from the belief that you are "making a difference in the world", and "acting in ways that improve the lives of others", not dominating them. And so we land on the square of another Chambers favourite, Frederic Laloux and his ideas

about [Reinventing Organizations](#), where power is dispersed, people are still held to account and productivity goes through the roof.

Of course, none of this means that we inevitably enter a new and more progressive power paradigm. Those operating with old power structures – from nation states to digital giants – will use power to rig the rules and buy off the transformation to a world in which we share power. But after markets and machines, we have to fight to make morality the new power theory and practice of the 21st century. As Frankie Goes to Hollywood and Gandhi said, not 'the love of power', but 'the power of love'.

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# Paper wraps stone: why soft power trumps hard power in the age of communication

Indra Adnan

What do Uganda's use of WhatsApp, India's establishment of Bollywood and Daesh's use of video have in common? They are all illustrations of soft power succeeding where hard power previously failed.

The concept of soft power has evolved significantly over the past ten years. When it was first developed by Clinton advisor Joseph Nye in the early Nineties, it was purely an international relations term used to describe the state alternative to guns and money. Instead of using force, soft power was how the US dominated the globe using attraction. Rather like charisma in an individual, soft power came through US qualities, values, style – the whole American Dream – pulling people towards it, shaping their choices.

Today however, alternatives to hard power are as likely to be used by non-state actors, from activists to terrorists, bloggers to entrepreneurs. Instead of investing in beautiful state-sponsored institutions to create influence – the British Council, China's 800 Confucius Institutes, India's Bollywood – individuals use petitions, videos, networks to change the shape of a global conversation.

Consider how Avaaz's 45 million members regularly [change policy](#). Or how Daesh has been able to capture the world's imagination, manipulate defense departments and become the Pied Pipers of Islamic youth with their mix of [macabre videos and poetry](#) – all simply distributed on smartphones. And after decades of trying to address epidemics through aid that never quite found its target, the information and image sharing capacity of WhatsApp is beginning to make a real difference to [health in Uganda](#).

It's not simply that knowledge is shared virally, peer-to-peer, rather than trickling down from the previous gate-keepers, but also that the forms of sharing are compelling, seductive, transforming – the disseminators shape our thinking and change our lives. Instead of using carrots or sticks (aid, sanctions), change happens through releasing memes – powerful new ideas – or establishing new narratives that can make success or failure happen. Just as paper wraps stone.

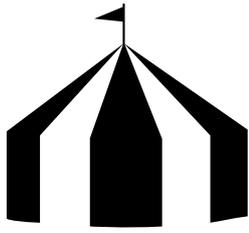
Is soft power relevant on a micro level, between organisations or even individuals? In my work as a consultant, I have advised as many businesses, schools and individual leaders in the

UK as government departments and institutions like NATO. Wherever there are sets of dynamic relationships at play, soft power is an important factor and [modern power literacy](#) is vital for effective action in the complex environments we all have to navigate.

One hint: don't mistake soft power for either marketing or propaganda. When Number 10 paid millions for its Great Britain campaign, it may have helped tourism, but it did nothing to increase influence abroad. Instead, as Lord Howell, convener of the UK Select Committee on soft power, [reported](#), with our austerity measures and immigration controversies making headlines around the world, we are currently draining what was once our biggest asset – soft power. As the annual [soft power index](#) will show you, influence arises from attraction.

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# Tents on the Road to Jericho - Leadership, Communications & Trust in a Post-PR World

Robert Phillips

The genesis for *Trust Me, PR is Dead* – and subsequently Jericho Chambers – is traceable to a conversation with Cass Business School's Professor Cliff Oswick in spring 2012.

Cliff was struck by my work on the inevitable consequences of heightened employee activism and the energy it would unleash. At the time, Occupy was camped outside St Paul's. Its tents were never going to be enough to properly address the issues of our time: the fragility of trust; an emerging power vacuum between leadership elites and the people; ugly and growing global inequality; a burning planet; an impending reaction against free market economics and post-Crash capitalism.

Both in politics and business, those nominally in control were paralysed within failed leadership models, not actually knowing *why* they needed to change. Woefully disconnected from the needs and hopes of civil society, critical issues were ignored. Courageous and just leadership, steadily eroded over the previous five decades, had all but evaporated – replaced instead by cosmetic policies wrapped in facile sound bites made by cookie-cutter leaders.

Such was the manifestation of old power and its imaginative failure.

Occupy's tents were powerful totems for brooding, later surging, popular discontent. Lacking the discipline to properly organise and mobilise, Occupy was a signifier of what emerged, in under five years, through the likes of Donald Trump in the US, Marine le Pen in France or Jeremy Corbyn in the UK. These people could organise and mobilise. You didn't have to be a visionary to see this anti-establishmentarianism coming: it was axiomatic.

The old power elites should have realised then that the game was up, but they remained wilfully blind. Global capitalism was (and still

is) not working for the common good. Put simply, the pursuit of power over the common good clouds judgment and leadership in the public interest.

The old order clung on in forlorn hope that the world would once again turn its way, occasionally cheering itself up by hanging out at Davos or, in the corporate world, painting lipstick-on-pig CSR initiatives. But its hopes faded and failed. Rightly, the old order has been found wanting, though still feigning shock, surprise and outrage at Trumpism and its manifestations elsewhere.

Conversations with Cliff four years ago – important staging posts on the road to Jericho – emerged as a chapter in my book, on the death of leadership itself. The two of us began to think instead about the twenty-first century leader as social activist and the corporation or organisation as social movement – better ways to seek legitimate purpose and earn trust.

Conventional thinking around charismatic, servant or distributive leadership will not work in a world of crumbling hierarchies, where authority – now a rented space – is constantly challenged and scrutinised by the convening power of networks of shared interest, accelerated by the march of technology. A new form of generative dialogue offers a progressive alternative. Co-produced, adaptive and evolutionary systems – developed with “wise crowds” – better represent the 99% and slay the myths of imposed solutions from above.

PR is dead, not because I quit my previous career, but because PR is part of the old-world power problem. Falsely manicured, happy endings, dictated on the terms of political or business elites, are not the answer. The truth will always out. We need look no further than the Panama Papers or Volkswagen. The public leader voluntarily radicalises honesty and transparency before the truth exposes them in

any case. They make themselves accountable to citizens and society first. Ceding control like this of course takes vision and courage – but then these are supposedly the characteristics of true leadership.

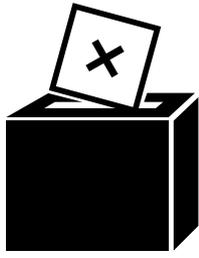
This belief in relinquishing power and control runs to the heart of the Jericho proposition. New, open processes are emerging, in which leaders accept the messy chaos of the real world, recognise they are no longer in control and actively embrace dissent. Those who constantly bang on about trust fail to understand that greater trustworthiness is secured through demonstrating reciprocal vulnerability – intelligently placing and intelligently refusing trust – and accepting that no-one has all the answers (if ever there is actually an answer at all). We have to disrupt ourselves, old power structures and half-a-century of imposed Business School “wisdom” if we are to navigate a better future.

That future, to paraphrase my Jericho colleague Neal Lawson, can only be negotiated, not imposed. Another colleague, the brilliant author Margaret Heffernan, advises that the bigger prize lies in collaboration, not competition. Together, we must give real voice and participation to citizens and civil society. This fundamental humanity – together with a fairer distribution of power – lies at the heart of a better, future capitalism and organisational design.

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# Power to the People: is this the Future of Work?

Prof. Veronica Hope Hailey and Dr Michael Gill

Over the last 25 years a quiet revolution has been taking place in the relationship between white-collar service, managerial and professional employees, and their employers in large private and public sector organisations.

Previously, joining these institutions promised a “job for life”, but this promise disappeared from the employment proposition about the same time as “mergers and acquisitions”, “global restructuring” and “downsizing” entered the mainstream vocabulary of everyday life.

So, what’s the problem? The problem is that these changes – these shifts in employee expectations and employer obligations – have changed the nature of the power dynamics in the employment relationship. And there are consequences.

In a way the previous relationship was clear: the employee committed to work as hard as was required for the employer/shareholder or government, and that commitment was rewarded by the employer with a promise of job security. With the loss of that security for Miss Jobholder on one side of the equation, and no let up on the performance demands of Mr. Employer and Mrs. Shareholder on the other, insecurity rose but anxiety did not, at least not for a while. A vibrant growth economy masked the underlying insecurity. Growth economies are fun economies. Whilst Miss Jobholder might know there was no security in the long term, any latent anxiety was covered by a sticking plaster made up of short-term bonuses, salary rises and promotions, plus a lively external jobs market.

The financial crash and subsequent recession brought all of this to an abrupt halt. The sticking plaster was very quickly ripped off when the cuts started and, as well as hurting from the personal loss and shock of the growth bubble bursting, people started to query the ability and competence of Mr Employer. People simply questioned whether these well-paid senior leaders were really in command of their brief and also whether moral integrity featured at all. Distrust joined insecurity to form a heady

cocktail at the level of Miss Jobholder, and the fragility of institutions and the precarious nature of working life were laid bare.

Since the crisis and recession, change continues. Technological developments have blurred work/life boundaries still further, increasing the availability of employees to constantly answer mail or take calls and therefore be constantly “at work”. There is little escape from your employer and therefore the pressure of performance. Whilst many employers do offer good mental health and well-being programmes, some employees now interpret these benefits through a lens of distrust. They may see such programmes as being entirely self-serving in so far as their provision by employers ensures that their “most valuable asset” is kept in peak condition in order to deliver peak performance! Furthermore, the benefits of globalisation continue to be unevenly distributed with global gains going to a wealthy elite, whilst the average employee still works for employers who command and retain the majority of the power in the relationship.

Of course employees are not passive in all of this. For instance, the conundrum of the UK’s productivity levels failing to bounce back as before after this particular recession may have its roots in employees using their discretion not to “give their all” to employers. These are employers who, in the media at least, have been portrayed as self-serving and self-interested.

Some of the more powerful people in the job market – the very talented elite of young business graduates – are acting in a way that earlier generations of graduates did not. These new millennials are much more discerning about future employers, subjecting them to greater scrutiny on criteria such as environmental records, corporate social responsibility and moral integrity, and rejecting job offers from those who do not appear to make the grade. Technology, whilst pervasive in our lives, also enables access to information

and knowledge about large employers amongst those who are tech savvy – and millennials are certainly that. Other young business graduates are turning away from the large employers altogether, reckoning instead that starting their own business gives them more control and more power in their lives than their parents’ generation ever had.

It is not all doom and gloom. Employers with intelligence, integrity and a concern to create a world with better opportunity for all, regardless of place of birth, are recognising the need to recalibrate the employment relationship. They seek a more balanced set of power relations that do not accentuate insecurity and anxiety nor exacerbate income and power differentials within the workplace. Emblematic employers such as Unilever and John Lewis, or the Big Four professional service partnerships, show that it is possible to be commercially successful but still concerned about avoiding anachronistic and dysfunctional power relationships in working lives. They are not afraid of rebalancing power in favour of their people.

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# As leaders, men may have the power, but women are more powerful

Alaric Mostyn

The words *men*, *power* and *leader* go hand-in-hand – it is the way the world has generally been. Despite 100 years of emancipation, not much has changed. Female political leaders are still a rarity (why Scotland stands out as a novelty), and many who do succeed – from Thatcher to Clinton – appear to have to be as macho as a man.

It is even more marked in big business. Only 9% of FTSE 100 executive directors are women and only 5% of CEOs are. An appalling statistic – there are more male CEOs called John than there are female CEOs. By mid-career, women's aspiration and confidence erodes, while men's doubles. Women are too often without support and encouragement – compared to men on their way up – and told (by men) that they are “not cut out for power and leadership”.

What is really stupid here is not just the lack of ethics and fairness – although that is a strong starting point – it is that the world would be so much better off with women leaders, because (in general) their leadership improves what is achieved and how. Women are more effective leaders – more powerful leaders – than men, for three reasons:

## **1. More collaboration and power-sharing**

Leaders have teams around them. The

most powerful thing a leader can do is ensure that their collective performance is stronger than any individual. Research shows that leadership teams with plenty of women – especially if led by women – are more likely to achieve this. Male teams and leaders are too focused on their own goals, needs and pressures – and so more likely to hang on to their personal power.

## **2. Less short-termism vs long-term progress and legacy**

Research also suggests that women are more likely to be driven by long-term outcomes, and good at leading to those ends. Men are more motivated by the thrill of the quick win. That is why banks' trading floors are mainly male, whereas the managers of big investment funds are often female.

## **3. More boldness vs risk-taking**

The same combination of hormones and social conditioning that drives males to like the short-term, also drives them to take more risks – excited by the sense of power that comes with taking big risks. Research suggests that women, by contrast, are more likely to understand disruption, embrace transformation, to innovate, to think in new ways – to be bolder.

Overall, women are more likely to live up to the best definition of the role of

leadership: to create the conditions for everyone to succeed. In other words – to give up ‘control’ and ensure shared power for the greater good.

So why – and how - have men managed to hang on to power? Mainly because we have let them. Especially us men. For if women really were in more positions of power, the odds are they would start sharing it more. And that is an unnerving thought for us men.

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# The Power of the Truth: I'm tired of the lies working mums tell (and I should know, I'm one of them)

Christine Armstrong



I'm concurrently reading Vicky Pryce's recent book *Why Women Need Quotas*, alongside Margaret Heffernan's 2004 *The Naked Truth*, about why women aren't breaking through in business. Depressingly the latter sets out the challenges faced by senior women and could have been written at tea-time yesterday. Vicky Pryce argues that quotas are critical long before board level because of the economic catastrophe of losing so many talented women from the workforce. Both explore the barriers for women, especially mothers, and why so many drop out before they might get into positions where they could drive change.

I was recently asked to continue a series of 'Power Mum' interviews I've done for Management Today live on stage at a conference. The Power Mum had been nominated locally and, without any hint of feminine self-deprecation, the interview was a bloody disaster. For fear of being judged, my interviewee avoided admitting she makes it work by having a nanny and a cleaner and a husband who is based at home. She talked extensively about how progressive her own organisation is, sliding over some very difficult issues she had previously discussed on the phone, finally sharing some tips for managing conflict.

Nothing should have surprised me about this. When I started my interviews, I did so in response to an article about Karren Brady in the Evening Standard explaining how she combines a huge job in town with having kids in the country – just by working really intensively in the week. Naturally her life was peachy perfect and her kids never needed her at that precise moment she was running a board meeting. Reading as (then) a mother of two small kids, working full-time in an organisation packed with shouting alpha males, I didn't recognise a word she said. I

knew there was a different truth because me and my friends were living it. So I went to explore it.

I sought out women willing to speak the truth. Unlimited by PR machines they tried hard to be honest, express their vulnerabilities and admit the things that had gone wrong. Readers responded strongly. They recognised the double whammy of isolation both at the school gate and at the office when they missed the late-night shifts: an exclusion that hurts as badly as physical pain. A profound lack of support networks – "I don't have time to see my friends". The social judgement, which to my regret the interviews sometimes make worse. "She might be powerful but she is no mother", wrote one woman on Facebook in response to a mum who admitted the nanny cooked the family meal every evening. Another interviewee confided afterwards she wished she'd never admitted publicly that she had a Saturday nanny to buy herself the time to get her hair cut and do some yoga. She's been asked about it ever since.

Off the record, over lunch or a drink, some conversations were darker. Marital problems, depression, sleep deprivation, a strong sense of loss, feeling disconnected from their children... and big questions about whether the hours they were doing was a price worth paying. Vicky Pryce tells a story in her book about calling home from the office one evening to find it very noisy and chaotic and demanding to know what was going on. It was one of her kids' birthdays and she'd planned a party at the weekend, but forgotten the actual date. The way she tells it is funny; I wonder how it felt on the day.

Reflecting on that disastrous stage interview, I remembered Anne-Marie Slaughter's famous article in *The Atlantic* after she resigned from her role as Director of Policy Planning at the State Department under Hilary Clinton. In it she admitted: "I'd been the woman smiling the faintly superior smile while another woman told me she had decided to take some time out or pursue a less competitive career track so that she could spend more time with her family. I'd been the woman congratulating herself on her unswerving commitment to the feminist

cause... I'd been the one telling young women at my lectures that you can have it all and do it all, regardless of what field you are in."

But she finally admitted the truth: she was wrong – and she went on to quit her dream job. The combination of long hours, travel and inflexibility were damaging her family life and her boys needed her home. It makes me want to interview some of my power mums in a few years when they can be as publicly truthful as Slaughter. The line in her article that she says was the hardest to write was: "Deep down, I wanted to go home".

And that's the kicker. However much we want careers, we also want – need – to go home regularly. Many men do too of course, but the role of motherhood is socially and biologically loaded so it's usually the women who give up their dream jobs if, when, our children need us.

I notice that the happiest working mums, irrespective of weekly total hours, work three to four days a week in their office and manage to do one or other school run most days. Yet for all the chat about diversity and inclusion most businesses really struggle with these options for senior professional roles. Even truly honest conversations remain difficult. A hugely successful but teary friend is about to return after her third maternity leave to an unsympathetic boss. She thinks that even asking for a four day week will set her career back. I worry that she'll endure it silently for a year or so and then quit, ensuring that everyone involved loses.

If quotas focus minds on the solutions to reap the benefits Alaric describes, then so be it. But to get to that point, more of us will have to tell the truth, more loudly and more often. Call me if you're up for it.

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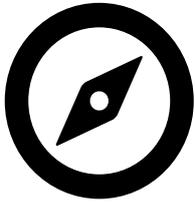
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# Power sharing: North and South

Deborah Doane



The [UN's 2013 Human Development Report](#) proposed that the South was heading into a new zenith. Development indicators show that countries in the South are seeing higher standards of living, longer life expectancy and more sustained investment than ever before. This zenith, they argue, will transform reality in the 21st century. The “Rise of the South” is just beginning, according to the authors.

Increasingly, developing countries are paving their own path out of poverty on their own terms: Bolivia has reduced extreme poverty significantly and grown its economy by a consistent 5% per year; China and India both doubled their per capita economic output in less than 20 years.

We've all heard the phrase “lies, damn lies and statistics.” The data tells one story, but there is another, more important story to be told: whatever rise in economic power some southern countries are now experiencing, the majority of those in the North still hold the power over the majority of those in the global South.

Look at any set of global policy negotiations – from climate to trade – and you'll see the power imbalance between North and South in action. At the Paris climate talks last year, the UK sent 100 delegates, the US 150, Canada a bloated 300. This is against those who are most expected to be impacted negatively by climate change: the Philippines, with a population of 100 million, of whose islands many are

expected to be submerged as sea levels rise, sent 50. India, with a population of 1.2 billion, whose millions of farmers are already suffering the devastating effects of climate change, sent just 25.

Power is an issue we often disregard: in global forums, in boardrooms, in supply chains. Global brands who claim they have no ability to change the working conditions in a sovereign country because “it's the market” are claiming porkies: as an industry (whether its fashion, food or mining), brands hold the strings to dramatically improve or undermine any attempts to change the working conditions of those they are sourcing from. Most southern countries still rely on northern companies for the vast majority of their economic wellbeing. While not universal, Global brands frequently demand everything from tax cuts to weaker labour laws in exchange for their business. Why is it that a Western brand gets 50% of the value of the T-shirt, while the farmer, the ginner, the spinner, the weaver, the seamstress, the transporter, share the meagre remains?

Let's not pretend its corruption, or the market, or something else that keeps many Southern countries poor. Power – or lack of power – is what keeps workers vulnerable, farmers poor, and their country's future at the behest of those in the North.

As a western person living in India, I was afforded many privileges. I once walked through the gate of a conservative university with a young Indian colleague, where there was a “no jeans” policy. I was wearing shabby jeans, and suddenly she was worried that we wouldn't get through. Even her dad, a wealthy and prominent businessman, was once turned away. I told her not to worry: I'm white and western. She laughed nervously, but I was right. We swished through without

question. She may have had more wealth than me, more legitimacy as a local, but I, a northerner, had all the power.

Where does one begin to change this? The same way any relationship moves itself on a more equal footing. As in any twelve-step process, the first thing you need to do is acknowledge that there's a problem. Companies can start by opening themselves up and questioning the power they're afforded, whether it's in the grand lobbying corridors of global policy circles; or in the day-to-day negotiations that take place in individual supply chains. Most leading companies claim to want to do good, or at least, do no harm. By asking the question: “Do I have too much power in this relationship?”, we can at least start to address the ways and means of redressing the balance between north and south.

If, like the World Bank, who recently removed any distinction between “developing” and “developed” countries in their labels, we mask over the power dynamic between North and South, we miss what's really at stake. Power, more than any other factor, is what will ultimately break the entrapment those in the South find themselves in. People in the South need more power; those of us in the North, quite simply, should have less.

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