

THE PROBLEMS OF POWER'S DEFINITIONS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güç Tanımının Sorunları

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Abstract

In this article, the reasons of disagreements on the definition of power in international relations will be examined. There are many different definitions for this phenomenon. The article argues that there are two main reasons behind the differences in the definitions. One of them is due to the differences between languages and the effects of metaphors that are used to characterize this concept. While these metaphors carry more than one meaning in a language, they also tend to completely differ in essence. The other reason is the reflection of ideology and theorists' thoughts on their own concept of power.

Keywords: *Metaphors, Dimensions of Power, Mobilisation of Bias, Non-Decision Making, Steven Lukes.*

Öz

Bu makalenin amacı, uluslararası ilişkilerde güç kavramı üzerindeki anlaşmazlıkların nedenlerini incelemektir. Uluslararası çalışmalarda, bu fenomen için verilen birçok farklı tanım bulunmaktadır. Bundan dolayı güç için sunulan tanımlardaki farklılıkların ardında iki ana neden olduğunu ileri sürülebilir. Birincisi, bu kavramı karakterize etmek için kullanılan diller ve metaforler arasındaki farklılıkların etkileridir. Nitekim bir dilde bu metaforlar birden fazla anlam taşır ve bu metaforların diller arasında da bazen tamamen farklı anlamları vardır. İkincisi ise teorik ve entelektüel farklılıklarla ilgilidir. Başka bir deyişle, ideolojinin ve teorisyenlerin düşüncelerinin kendi iktidar kavramları üzerindeki yansımalarıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Metaforlar, Gücün Boyutları, Önyargıların Mobilizasyonu, Karar Vermeme, Steven Lukes.*

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Introduction

The phenomenon of power is one of the oldest phenomena in human history; its existence has been linked to human behaviour ever since. This fact was present in the writings of great philosophers and writers such as Plato, Aristotle, Sun Tzu, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Pareto, Weber, among many others. Attention to this phenomenon and its importance increased with the emergence of the nation-state after the Treaty of Westphalia. Discussion pivoted around how to gain more power and maintain it. Historically, the concept of security has been related to power, that is; most powerful states are the securest one.¹ In other words, the more power you have, the more secure you are.

The concept of power, being a considerable concern for states in general, and in the sphere of international political studies in particular, is the most obscure phenomenon in the field of international relations. This obscurity results from the fact that the concept of power has never had a specific definition of what it is, what its characteristics are, how it is formed, how it is used, etc. In general, power always have been one of the biggest questions scholars face in the field of international relations.

Numerous researchers have tried to solve this question. However, Studies have found that obscurity results from two main reasons: First of all, the concept is changing as it causes different perceptions in the historical process. In other words, as the concept does not have a static structure, it is open to the influence of time. The other reason is that the concept can be shaped according ideological or theoretical perspectives, the differences between states, the personal opinions of the descriptor, and so on.² Özdemir has neglected the impact of time on what he called another reason. Expressly, the change in the historical process has no effect on the concept of power only, but also on the difference

1 Bilal Karabulut, *Küreselleşme Sürecinde Güvenliği Yeniden Düşünmek*, Barış Kitabevi, Ankara 2011, p. 20.

2 Haluk Özdemir, "Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güç: Çok Boyutlu Bir Değerlendirme", *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 63(3), 2008, p. 117.

of intellectual or ideological, the differences between states, etc., which is considered as a second reason.

Admittedly, in addition to intellectual or ideological differences and the views of the author of the definition, contrariness related to linguistic metaphors used in the definition is another vital reason. The philosophical problems of concepts in international relations are language problems; the vocabulary used to define a concept or phenomenon affects the general meaning of the concept or phenomenon.³ Thus, this article will address the problems of definitions of concept of power from two perspective; first, the impact of linguistic metaphors used in the definition of a phenomenon or notion on the general meaning of the concept. The second section will deal with the differences in the theoretical definitions presented for the concept of power. As well as, discuss this differences with the aim of showing the effect of intellectual differences on the meaning of power. At the end, we will try to put a definition that is compatible with the evolution that has taken place in the field of international relations at present time and clarifies the meaning of power.

Metaphors and Definition of Power

The French use the word (Force) in the sense of power, and the word (Puissance) refers to the meaning of ability, which is used only to refer to “the act intended to push others to carry out the will of those who act.” In the field of international relations, the word means “the ability of the state to impose its will on other states.” While the word (Force) is used to refer to “the means that used in certain circumstances to serve the desired objectives.” The English dictionary distinguishes between (Strength) in the sense of power, and (Power) in the sense of ability, and the latter has two directions in its use. The word (Power) used in the sense of (Strength) that characterizes the foreign policy practices of one

3 Richard Little, *The Balance of Power in International Relation Metaphors, Myths and Models*, Cambridge University Press, UK 2007, p. 21; Kadir Ertaç Çelik, *Kimlikler Güç Dengesi İttifaklar: Kazakistan Örneği*, Gazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara 2014, (Unpublished Master’s Thesis), p. 18-19.

state and ensures that its objectives are met by other states. Power in this direction consists of “set of factors that constitute the state’s ability (physical and non-physical) to act.” The second direction in the use of the word (Power) is linked to the idea of influencing the minds and actions of others. This direction is the opposite of the former and does not link the ability with the elements of power.⁴

The philosophical dilemmas of concepts in international relations are initially linguistic problems. Perhaps Thomas Hobbes is one of the first philosophers who have been alerted to the influence of vocabulary or what he specifically called metaphors used in the wrong place in the language on the idea to be explained or the phenomenon to be described. Hobbes believed that the misuse of vocabulary in the expression or description of a situation has four adverse effects: first, when people distort their ideas because of the different meanings of the words they use to express something they do not understand at all, so they are wrong. Second, the use of metaphorical words that are used outside their original meaning leads to a situation of misunderstanding for others. Third is when they express something as their intention, if not so. Fourth words when they use to harass each other.⁵

The various linguistic expressions used to describe the term power in the earlier English, French or other dictionaries necessarily reflect the understanding of scholars of international relations of this phenomenon. If we want to adopt those dictionaries mentioned above, the meaning of the power was distributed among several linguistic expressions. One of them considers power as (ability), it also includes the meaning of means. Power is also described as a set of physical and non-physical factors, and there is a trend which links them to affect and control the minds of others. Speaking of metaphors, the latter meaning, which includes influencing the minds of others, may reflect the meaning of magic for some people. In other words, the phenomenon of (power) is a kind of magic that robs the minds of others and makes them lose control over themselves and their actions while being captive to

4 Khader Atwan, *Global Powers and Regional Balances*, Osama Publishing House, Jordan 2010, p. 13.

5 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, trans. Semih Lim, Yapı Kredi, İstanbul 2007, p. 35.

supernatural powers that control the reactions of others or those affected by it.

On the other hand, the argument that power is (means), leads to limitation of its meaning in the physical elements rather than a combination of physical and non-physical factors. Till date, some international relations scholars define the power of the state in terms of the physical elements only.⁶ Even some developed a formula to measure the amount of power of the states. Although the formula included physical and non-physical elements in its calculations, it was not enough to shift the sense of power from a concept based on means, where one player has power over another, to a comprehensive structural concept of power.⁷

Metaphors mean “understanding a conceptual field in terms of the language of another conceptual field.” According to Kovecses, we must make a distinction between “conceptual metaphors and metaphorical language expressions,” such when we say, “life is a journey.” Here the concept of life is defined in terms of expression (journey), and therefore the expression of life comes from the field of journey.⁸ In the previous example (life journey) the conceptual field of the journey was used to grasp the conceptual realm of life. In the same way, we use the metaphor (spider web) to refer to the Internet, while this metaphor is also used to describe another conceptual field. The spider web is similar to the internet in that it is a network that both contain a huge number of intersections as well. From this point on view, Thomas Hobbes states that;⁹

6 Hamit Erdal, *Uluslararası İlişkiler Kavram ve Olaylar Sözlüğü*, Barış Kitap, Ankara 2012, p. 216-217.

7 Ahmet Davutoğlu, the former Prime Minister of Turkey, in his book (*Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*) has developed a formula that, from his point of view, can measure the amount of power of the state. According to Davutoğlu, the power formula consists of two sets of elements, fixed data (FD) are recorded as history (h), geography (g), population (p) and culture (c). Potential data (PD), economic capacity (ec), technological capacity (tc) and military capacity (mc). So for these two sets of elements, the power of a state showing as: $Power = (FD + PD) \times (M \times SP \times Sİ)$. In this form, the (SM) refer to strategic mindset, (SP) to strategic planning, (PW) to political will. $FD = (h + g + p + c)$ and $PD = (ec + tc + mc)$. $Power = \{(h + g + p + c) + (ec + tc + mc)\} \times (SM \times SP \times PW)$. See: Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, Küre, Ankara 2010, p. 45.

8 Zoltan Kovecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, Oxford University Press, USA 2002, p. 4.

9 Hobbes, *op. cit.*, p. 35-36.

"Because of their similarity to one another due to a certain quality or other characteristic, many objects are given one general name; a private name brings one thing to mind, and general names reminds one of those many objects. Some of the general names are broader, others narrower. Some are of equal scope, and they mutually include each other. For example, the word of existence has a broader meaning than the human word and covers it; human and intellectual words are equally inclusive and mutually exclusive. But we should note here that, as in grammar, a single addition does not always understand a single word; sometimes, because of aberrant expression, many words are understood. The person who follows the laws of his country in his movements; all these words form a single name, equivalent to just one word: fair."

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In his book (The Balance of Power in International Relation Metaphors, Myths and Models) Richard Little thinks that "metaphors have a positive aspect, in terms of being able to transform the meaning of a solid concept, and play a key role in our understanding of the new aspects of the world, which we do not understand." The downside of metaphor is reflected in its interchangeability, which is misleading to those who do not have the ability to extract the meaning from it. Those who suffer from what Little calls *Asperger* have a fundamental problem with metaphorical language. The metaphor of these people is understood as a lie.¹⁰

The international system, the sole arena for international relations interactions, is characterized by ambiguity and perhaps that is its fundamental nature. This ambiguity was reflected on the phenomena of the system and the elements of international relations, including the phenomenon of power. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt metaphors and linguistic expressions aimed at removing this ambiguity, and not vice versa. That means the metaphors must not add another vague dimension to the concept

¹⁰ Little, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

of power. The academic field seems to have adopted these metaphors and taken it seriously so as to become an essential tool in the analysis. For instance, the most frequent metaphor in international relations (the balance of power), a concept that emerged in the Renaissance period in Europe and has impacted the concept of power. As Little says,¹¹ *“the conceptual realm of power has begun to be understood within the conceptual realm of balance,” which has overshadowed the traditional concept of power, reshaping it and placing it in a new framework. Since then, Power has left its traditional concept, to be the product of a system in which power is distributed among actors of the system.*”

According to Martin Wight, metaphors are often flexible in its nature, and that is a positive advantage. However, this positive point of view is different and not so perfect in scientific discussions. A lot of debate regarding power has been focused on interpreting the ambiguity generated by the metaphor that is used to explain this phenomenon rather than concentrating on the power, which is the object of metaphors hence causing a lack of attraction on the meaning of power. A linguistic expression or metaphor creates a reciprocal interaction between the origin of the metaphor and the objective. The origin determines the method of seeing the object. At the same time, the objective affects how the origin is seen. In other words, the linguistic expression of the balance metaphor, to a large extent, determines the overall meaning of power. Because the thinking of the phenomenon of power will linked with the perspective of balance. And at the same time, the first understanding of the phenomenon of power will affected by the way of thinking of balance.¹²

Based on the above, the adoption of dictionaries and theories of international relations that see no harm in borrowing linguistic expressions such as ability, means or influence on the minds of others may take away the concept from its actual meaning. The inadequacy of metaphors for the concept of power is a result from of development and complexity of international relations

11 *Ibid.*

12 Little, *op. cit.*, p. 33-34.

in the world today, thus limiting the phenomenon of power to means, influence or even the ability to act has been appropriate for a time. However, today metaphors have become incompetent to describe an essential phenomenon of international relations. In the introduction of his book (*Power: Radical View*¹³) Stephen Lukes notes that the concept of power is “*fundamentally primitive and fundamentally contested. It is fundamentally primitive in that its meaning cannot be explained by reference to other ideas whose meanings are less controversial. It is fundamentally disputed because any assessment of power cannot be separated from what we generally call assumptions of value in the person who views it*”. Leonard Krieger believes that general definitions which do not discriminate or limit power, such as ability to act, are predictable. Thus, the general idea of power in the world as (absolute), which in Krieger’s view is the predominant characteristic of the Western World’s culture, it is a natural description of that phenomenon and an expected result for the random use for metaphors that explains it.¹⁴

Despite the adverse effects of metaphors on the description and explanation of concepts and phenomena, they still have an undeniable importance. The importance of metaphor stems from its function; which is about the removal of ambiguity and complexity of concepts, and the adverse effects are just the result of misuse or misplacement. Its importance seems to be noticeable when keeping away from the traditional metaphors of power, for example, (hierarchy), one of the essential metaphors of power used by (Jeff Vail). According to Vail, power is a rhizome:¹⁵ “*Rhizome provides us with another example of a proven, evolutionarily successful pattern. It acts as the counterpart to, and in many ways is the opposite of, the pattern of hierarchy*”. For Vail, in order to resolve the deficiencies fundamental to the structure of hierarchy, we must, by definition,

13 The first edition was published in 1974.

14 Leonard Krieger, “Power and Responsibility: The Historical Assumption”, Leonard Krieger and Fritz Stern, ed., *The Responsibility of Power: Historical Essays in Honor of Hajo Holborn*, Macmillan, UK 1968, p. 3-8.

15 The concept of Rhizome versus Hierarchy, first presented as a model relevant to human society by Giles Deleuze and Felix Guatari in their book “A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia”.

abandon hierarchy as an organizing principle. We must confront hierarchy with its opposite: rhizome. Rhizome acts as a web-like structure of connected but independent nodes, borrowing its name from the structures of plants such as bamboo and other grasses. Unlike hierarchy, rhizome cannot suffer exploitation from within because its structure remains incompatible with centralization of power.¹⁶

The analogy of power with the bamboo is a more difficult subject in the concept of power, as it is an uncommon metaphor compared to hierarchy. Theorists consider it more accessible to study international relations because the metaphor of hierarchy is closer to hegemony, while the bamboo metaphor is the closest to the modern structural meaning of power. Theoretical studies in international relations are now divided between the traditional belief of power as a tool and modern studies based on the modern idea of structural power in which power is closer to the net.

The fact that there is power in all aspects of social life of human beings has made power a multifaceted phenomenon. This different use of power has been reflected in the meaning of the force in which has become closer to possession than to a relationship, and the notion of possession has become a well-established concept in most studies. The idea of power as a structural concept influenced by the structure of the international order at some point is not an afresh conclusion. Yet, 19th-century thinkers preferred to adopt Hobbes' view as the most natural idea in terms of explaining power (The idea of power for Hobbes is synonymous with the amount of material elements that a state have). However, the events of the 20th century proved that the meaning of power is influenced by the structure of the prevailing international system and that power is closer to the structural relationship than to possession. For example, a state like Japan renounced all forms of military action in its traditional sense after losing out in the Second World War. Nonetheless, it is still an active state compared to the major powers in the contemporary structure of the international system.

¹⁶ Jeff Vail, *A Theory of Power*, Universe Inc., New York 2004, p. 40-50.

Different Approaches-Different Definitions

Joseph Nye summarises the problem facing the study of the phenomenon of power in international relations by stating that; "Power is like weather. It's a concept that everyone talks about, but few people understand its own logic".¹⁷ History has presented many studies, classification, and explanations of power. Moreover, this phenomenon has been explained by many theories to an extent that it could be said that there is no consensus on one concept of power. Some definitions were general to the point of disgoring this phenomenon from its actual meaning and making it a concept synonymous with other concepts. One of them is Donald Puchala's definition of power as "the driving force of the state's management profession, and it's the ability to work in foreign affairs."¹⁸ For Max Weber, power is "the possibility that one actor in social relations will be able to carry out his will despite resistance, regardless of the basis of this possibility." Dahl believes that power, in Weber's definition, is very comprehensive, since it places the actor in a position where he can impose his will in a given situation.¹⁹ In other words, those who are at the top of the social pyramid are those who have the power and ability to exercise it.

So, what is power actually? Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye attempt to answer this question by making distinction between behavioural power and resource power. For them, behavioural power is "the ability to obtain outcomes you want." While resource power refers to "the possession of resources that are usually associated with the ability to reach outcomes you want." Behavioural power in that meaning can be divided into hard and soft power. Hard power is "the ability to get others to do what they otherwise would not do through threats or rewards. Whether by economic carrots or military sticks, the ability to coax or coerce has long been the central element of power". Soft power, on the other

17 Joseph Nye, "The Changing Nature of World Power", *Political Science Quarterly*, 105(2), 1990, p. 177.

18 Terry L. Deibel, *Foreign Affairs Strategy: Logic for American Statecraft*, trans. Walid Shahid, Arabic Book House, Lebanon 2009, p. 282.

19 Robert A. Dahl, "Power", David L. Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 12, The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1968, p. 406.

hand, is “the ability to get desired out comes because others want what you want. It is the ability to achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion. It works by convincing others to follow or getting them to agree to norms and institutions that produce the desired behaviour. Soft power can rest on the appeal of one’s ideas or culture or the ability to set the agenda through standards and institutions that shape the preferences of others.”²⁰

According to Jeffrey Hart, in general, there are three basic approach to define power: first, control over resources; secondly, control over results; third, control over actors.²¹

Power as Control over Resources

This is the oldest and most widely used method in national power studies. Military expenditures, the size of armed forces, gross national product, and population are simple examples of many other similar resources adopted by these studies. The central idea of this hypothesis is that the most resource-owning states are the most powerful states.²² Although there is no single way to classify and divide resources, some theoreticians have made schemes for classification. Harold Lasswell developed a comprehensive scheme consisting of eight values: power (which can serve to gain more power), respect, rectitude or moral, standing, affection, well-being, wealth, skill and enlightenment. While, Dahl divided it into; cash, credit and wealth distribution, obtaining legitimacy, popularity, controlling jobs, and controlling sources of information.²³

Deibel believe that thinking about power from this facet reduces it. What seem to be a useful resource for power in a particular

20 Robert O. Keohane-Joseph S. Nye, “Power and Interdependence in the Information Age”, *Foreign Affairs*, 77(5), 1998, p. 86.

21 Jeffrey Hart, “Three Approaches to the Measurement of Power in International Relations”, *International Organization*, 30(2), 1976, p. 289-303; Mehmet Seyfettin Erol-Şafak Oğuz, “Dış Politikada Ulusal Özelliklerin Etkisi: Türk Dış Politikası Örneği”, Ertan Efeğil-Rıdvan Kalaycı, ed., *Dış Politika Teorileri Bağlamında Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi*, Nobel Publications, Ankara 2012, p. 337.

22 *Ibid.*

23 Dahl, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

situation, may be irrelevant or perhaps unproductive in another situation. In other words, power resources or resources, in general, have no reciprocal characteristics.²⁴ The aim to achieve and the nature of the situation to be dealt with are the determination elements which specify the most useful resource, and so there is no single form of power (such as military power) that is superior to other forms. As was the case after the US occupation of Iraq in 2003, American military superiority was not sufficient to hold ground in Iraq and prevent a military rebellion against it.

The possession of resources alone is not enough. As Dahl states; "*People who can access the same resources or have the same resources cannot exercise the same degree of power. People who are almost equal in wealth or social status may be different in terms of power*". This difference is due to what Machiavelli calls political skill, which being the most elusive component of power analysis. Another crucial element in this aspect is motivations. Two individuals with the same resources may exercise power to a different degree due to different ambitions. Someone may use the resources to increase his power and the other maybe not. Moreover, since power is a relationship between C and R, not only C's motivation is essential but also R's.²⁵

Power as Control over Results

In his book, *The Mathematics of Collective Action* James S. Coleman was the first to develop this approach. This model adopts the rational choice theory of power as to prove its hypothesis. The reasons for controlling resources or other actors arise from the desire to achieve specific results.²⁶ This approach is based on the fact that those who have the power can control things and achieve the desired results. The concept of power in terms of result control has the benefit of being applicable to multi-faceted and mixed-motivational relationships in many issues that have made patterns of control between actors different depending on the different

24 Deibel, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

25 Dahl, *loc. cit.*

26 Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

interests of each actor. Not only that but even in those situations that oblige states to confront a non-traditional adversary such as the forces of nature.²⁷ In other words, this approach extends the scope of the force's function to include not only the threat from similar actors in the international field but also the threats that come from the forces of nature that surrounds the state such as global pollution and natural disasters, for example.²⁸

Jeffrey Hart believes that control over resources or other actors comes second after controlling results.²⁹ However, this approach still has many shortcomings. Perhaps the most important is that some countries who possess elements of power have not been able to control the results. In other words, they have not been able to achieve the desired goals despite having the capacity to do so. For instance, at the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union, despite having the power, could neither control the outcome of the conflict with the United States nor achieve its final goals.³⁰ On the other hand, an actor's control of the results, in some cases, may inadvertently lead to the achievement of the results of another party. For example, even though both sides are foes on the international scene, the United States which occupied Afghanistan in 2002 and ended the Taliban's control of the government, also served Iran, as Taliban was also a threat to Iran. This approach is closer to explaining the function of power than describing it. In other words, this approach does not describe what power actually is.

Power as Control over Actors

This approach is the most dependent on power definitions of recent studies. According to Hart, the most popular definition of power for this approach is made by Robert Dahl. Dahl defined power as "the ability of A to get B to do something which he would otherwise

27 Deibel, *op. cit.*, p. 288-289.

28 Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, "Fırsatlar ve Tehditler İnkileminde İran'ın Orta Asya Politikası", Kamer Kasım-Zerrin A. Bakan, ed., *Uluslararası Güvenlik Sorunları*, ASAM Publications, Ankara 2004, p. 221-222.

29 Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 296-297.

30 Mehmet Seyfettin Erol-Çiğdem Tunç, "11 Eylül Sonrası ABD'nin Küresel Güç Mücadelesinde Orta Asya", *Avrasya Dosyası*, 9(3), 2003, p. 7.

not do.”³¹ The essence of this approach is based on the existence of an actual relationship between the parties, called a power relation. Power relations are multifaceted, including influence, power, persuasion, deterrence, seduction, coercion, etc., which fall under power as a main title. These subtypes, as Dahl calls them, have no agreement on their characteristics and their names, because they are very similar in their own nature. Researchers often use these types to explain and describe what power is.³²

However, Hart also presents his objection to Dahl's definition. For Hart “if A does not want B to do that (something), then his ability to get B to do it is not terribly useful.” Hart believe that there are two types of power that must be distinguished; positive and negative power. Negative power is the ability to get someone to do the opposite of what you want. Hart prefer to deal only with positive power since the non-exercising of negative power can be interpreted as a form of positive power.³³

Hart's objection to Dahl's definition is, in fact, a form of power described by Dahl. In other words, if A does not want B to do that (something), then A can exercise some kind of power to prevent B from doing that (something), and that what A wanted in the beginning. The negative power, as Hart sees it, is actually not reasonable. No one believes that someone will use power over others to get them to do the opposite of what they want. Even Dahl states that A has power over B is not exciting or accurate. In other words, what is to be focused on is the source of the influence of A's power on B, the primary means used by A to exert power on B, what is the amount and scope of A's power on B.³⁴ The best way to resolve that is through causal relations. According to Dahl, causal relations are the closest to the power relations. Based on Dahl the causal relation is, “When we say that A has power on B, it can be replaced by a sentence (A's behaviour is the cause of B's behaviour). If one can know the causal relation, they can also

31 Robert A. Dahl, “The Concept of Power”, *Behavioural Science*, 2(3), 1957, p. 202.

32 Dahl, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

33 Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

34 Dahl, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

know the effect, power, influence or authority and vice versa". The language of reason, such as the language of power, is used to explain a situation in which there is the possibility of intervening to change other events. In social research, the importance (reason) stems from the desire to make an impact and to give legitimacy to the behaviour.³⁵

In Deibel's opinion, the problem of these approaches is that the term power is extended exponentially. Power as a control over actors distracts attention from the user of power and management of resources. The power in terms of control over the results not only set goals within a broad but comprehensive category, but almost every other effect can have an impact on outcomes. As for the causal relations, it drowns analysis in a black hole of variables that interfere between the exercise of power and change in behaviour or result required.³⁶

The Third Dimension of Power

The idea of the third dimension of power in the field of power studies first appeared in 1974 in the book of Steven Lukes "*Power: A Radical View*." Despite being a short book, it was enormously influential. It also caused a broad debate among conceptual theorists and led to several empirical studies attempting to measure the impact of Lukes's third dimension on people's lives. Before suggesting this dimension, Lukes presented a critical analysis of pluralist approaches (Dahl's studies) and non-decision theories (Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz study) of power in his book before finally addressing his vision.

Lukes believed that Dahl, in his studies of power explains (axiomatic idea) that (A) has power over (B) to the extent that he can push (B) to do something he would not have done without that power.³⁷ The central idea of Dahl's approach to the study of power is (who governs?). The essence of this idea, which Lukes describes

35 Dahl, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

36 Deibel, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

37 Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK 2005, p. 16-17.

as the one-dimensional view of power, is the exercise of power.³⁸ The first dimension of power is also known as the (pluralistic approach). According to Polsby, pluralistic approach is “an attempt is made to study particular results in order to determine who actually prevails in decision-making process.”³⁹

In the definition of power, Dahl relied on the change in (B)'s behaviour, which is affected by the power of (A), and therefore the power is calculated only when the change in apparent behaviour is achieved, i.e., the reaction B. The problem here as Lukes sees it is the adoption of this approach by the proponents of the study of apparent behaviour.⁴⁰ According to this fact, power, as Dahl sees, may be coercive or non-coercive. That is, (A) can carry (B) to do something using persuasion or threat. This type of persuasion of power is labeled as “influence” to distinguish it from coercive force involving coercion. On the other hand, the change in (B)'s behaviour may be due to the expected change in behaviour of (A), although (A) had no intention of changing its behaviour or making a change in behaviour of (B). This phenomenon is called by Knorr (silent power).⁴¹ For that reason, Lukes finds that Dahl and the pluralists in general, use words such as power, influence, and others interchangeably.

According to Alan Bradshaw, criticising Lukes to Dahl (and non-decision writers as we shall see), for their (behavioural approach), and their emphasis on apparent conflict.⁴² That with the absence of conflict between the two sides of the relationship makes it difficult to determine the meaning of power in the end. Power may be used, Lukes argues, in cases of potential or ‘latent’ conflict, though “this potential, may never, in fact, be actualized.”⁴³ For this reason, Lukes considers the Pluralist approach to be one-dimensional. The

38 *Ibid.*

39 Nelson W. Polsby, “Community: the Study of Community Power”, David L. Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 3, The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1968, p. 157-163.

40 Lukes, *loc. cit.*

41 Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

42 Alan Bradshaw, “A Critique of Steven Lukes Power: A Radical View”, *British Sociology Association*, 10(1), 1976, p. 121.

43 Lukes, *loc. cit.*

determination of who controls the decision-making process seems to be the best way to determine which individuals and groups have more power in social life. This is because the direct conflict between the actors offers a case or empirical study showing the possibility of influencing results. As a result, power in its first dimension includes a focus on decision-making behaviour in cases where there is actual conflict over interests.⁴⁴

The weaknesses in the pluralist approach encouraged *Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz* to critique this approach in their study entitled *Two Faces of Power*. In their endeavor to go farther than the view of decision-making power advanced by Dahl, the two American political scientists coined the concept of non-decision making. Bachrach and Baratz concluded in their study that power exists not only in decision-making process but also there is another concoct within the decision-making process that is equivalent but less obvious, but nevertheless an essential type of power which they called (non-decision making). They asserted that Dahl failed to recognize or even refer to the power of a non-decision-making process.⁴⁵

Non-decision making process, for Bachrach and Baratz, is; “*a means by which demands for change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are even voiced; or kept covert; or killed before they gain access to the relevant decision-making arena; or, failing all these things, maimed or destroyed in the decision-implementing stage of the policy process*”.⁴⁶ For Richard Rose and Phillip Davies, non-decision-making is “*the exclusion of some alternatives from the agenda of collective choice because dominant values make them politically impossible for the moment*.”⁴⁷ From the point of view of this paper, it is more about reducing the scope of decision-making in secure

44 Lukes, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

45 Peter Bachrach-Morton Baratz, “Two Faces of Power”, *American Political Science Review*, 56(4), 1962, p. 952.

46 *Ibid.*

47 McCalla-Chen Doreen, “Towards an Understanding of the Concept of Non-Decision Making and its Manifestation in the School Sector”, *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 28(1), 2000, p. 33.

issues by manipulating dominant societal values, institutions, and political processes. It is, therefore, a decision that leads to termination or suppression of a potential challenge to the values and interests of the decision maker.

Bachrach and Baratz believed that by focusing exclusively on power-related provisions in political arenas, the assumption was made and all matters of interest, preference or concern surfaced or were pursued in such decision-making arenas. According to the authors, *"Of course power is exercised when (A) participates in the making of decisions that affect (B). But power is also exercised when (A) devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to (A). To the extent that (A) succeeds in doing this, (B) is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to (A)'s set of preferences."*⁴⁸ The importance of the Bachrach and Baratz studies is that they employ an essential idea of (mobilization of bias) in power discussions, *"to explain the manipulation and influence that occurs in the decision-making process and to account for non-decision making"*.⁴⁹ This idea initially belonged to Schattschneider.⁵⁰

Schattschneider defines the mobilization of bias as, *"All forms of political organization have a bias in favor of the exploitation of some kinds of conflict and the suppression of others because organization is the mobilization of bias. Some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out"*.⁵¹ Bachrach and Baratz develop Schattschneider's definition. For them, mobilization of bias is: *"a set of absolute values, beliefs, rituals and institutional procedures . . . that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain persons and groups at the expense of others. Those who benefit are placed in a preferred position to defend and promote their vested*

48 Bachrach-Baratz, *op. cit.*, p. 948.

49 McCalla-Chen, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

50 Bachrach-Baratz, *loc. cit.*

51 Bachrach-Baratz, *op. cit.*, p. 949.

*interests. More often than not, the 'status-quo' defenders are a minority or elite group within the population in question".*⁵²

The summary of their idea is that; power is not a concept or a skill that a particular actor owns directly, but a type of relations that will be used and utilized in a way that institutional structures permit. In the face of invisible oppression methods, actors adapt to the institutional structure created so that they can be easily observed.⁵³ But despite the fundamental difference with the pluralist approach, the Bachrach and Baratz analysis has a common point with Dahl: an actual, observable conflict, overt or covert, since both believe that force can be observed only when there is apparent conflict. For Lukes, "*Just as the pluralists hold that power in decision making only shows up where there is conflict, Bachrach and Baratz assume the same to be true in cases of non-decision making.*"⁵⁴ Bachrach and Baratz assume the same thing; if there is no actual, observable conflict, overt or covert, the assumption must be that there is a prevailing consensus on the status quo.⁵⁵

Even with an obvious conflict, there is no possibility of judging accurately if the current conflict must be changed by the decision-maker or not. The need for change, which is the crucial element of judgment, relates to the extent to which the conflict threatens the values and interests of the decision maker.⁵⁶ As a result, if there is universal acceptance of the status quo, the extent to which this situation and the values and interests of the decision-maker should be examined first. If they disagree with the values of the decision maker, they will work to make changes and vice versa. According to Lukes, the last remark seems to suggest that they are unsure whether they mean that non-decision-making power cannot be used in the absence of apparent conflict or that we could never know if it was.⁵⁷

52 McCalla-Chen, *loc. cit.*

53 Özdemir, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

54 Lukes *op. cit.*, p. 23.

55 Bachrach-Baratz, *loc. cit.*

56 Bachrach-Baratz, *op. cit.*, p. 950.

57 Lukes, *loc. cit.*

Lukes calls this approach the two-Dimensional View of Power, where the term "power" is used in two different senses. On the one hand, it is generally used to refer to all forms of successful control by (A) over (B). The second meaning includes ensuring compliance through the threat of punishment. In order to explain their position and to end the state of confusion, Lukes considers that the first meaning is (power) and the second meaning is (coercion). So as a result, Lukes states that; a satisfactory analysis of two-dimensional power involves examining both decision-making and non-decision making. A decision is "a choice among alternative modes of action"; a non-decision is "a decision that results in suppression or thwarting of a latent or manifest challenge to the values or interests of the decision-maker."⁵⁸

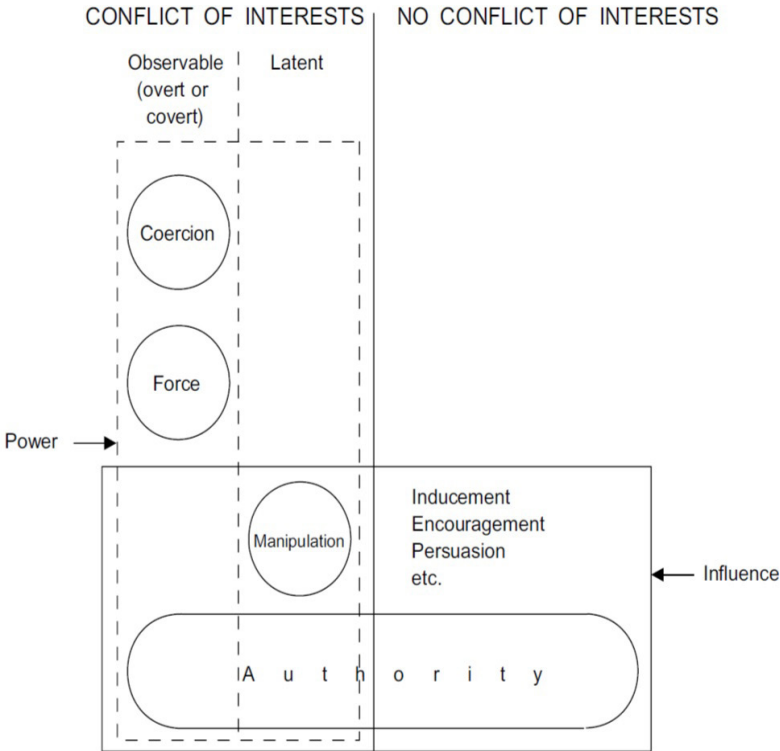
Anes Hassan HAMEED

Lukes puts a figure to explain the appearance of power according to the previous two dimensions, in the case of existence a conflict of interests, whether the conflict was observable or latent, and in the case of absence of conflict of interests. (Look figure 1). In the case of existence an obvious conflict of interests, whether overt or covert, power may come in the sense of influence in a situation where coercion or force is not used, and vice versa. In the case of potential conflict, power comes in the sense of influence in a situation of existence of manipulation between the parties to the conflict. In the absence of conflict over interests, power comes in the sense of influence, which includes encouragement and ability of persuasion.

Lukes argues that the two dimensions above do not describe the general concept of power. In other words, the concept of power presented by the first and second viewpoints focuses on the exercise of the power of (A) over (B) to induce him to do something would not have done without that power. It is not the exercise of supreme power by making one or the other do what you want. They ensure their compliance by controlling their ideas and desires only. The problem that both Bachrach and Baratz and the pluralists impose is that because of the power, as they perceive it, appears only in the actual conflict situation, and so follows the

58 Lukes *op. cit.*, p. 21.

actual conflict as a necessity of power. For Lukes, this ignores the crucial point that the use of power in the first place must be to prevent such a conflict from emerging in the first place.⁵⁹



Source: Steven Lukes, *Power A Radical View*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK 2005, p. 36.

The previous both two dimensions are very biased and address the subject unilaterally. It focuses entirely on the exercise of power and focuses only on asymmetrical powers (the power of an actor above another). Moreover, with only sub-types of power to securing compliance for dominance, it deals with the bilateral relations between the actors, which impose that they seek similar interests. These assumptions must be released and treated so that

⁵⁹ Lukes, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

they can deal with multiple parties with complex interests. Even with bilateral relations, such as marriage.

Lukes believes that “social scientists (exercise fallacy) has been committed by those for whom power can only mean the causing of an observable sequence of events. For that, behavioural political scientists (such as Dahl, Polsby, and others), for example, to equate power with success in decision-making, to be powerful is to win: to prevail over others in conflict situations. But such victories can be very misleading as to where power really lies.... The (vehicle fallacy) is committed by those tempted by the idea that power must mean whatever goes into operation when power is activated. This idea has led sociologists and military analysts, for example, to equate power with power resources, such as wealth and status, or military forces and weapons. But having the means of power is not the same as being powerful. Power is a capacity, and not the exercise or the vehicle of that capacity”.⁶⁰

Lukes in his book, after discussing and analyzing the ideas of both the pluralist and non-decision approaches, presents his vision, which includes what he calls the third dimension of power. The basic argument in Lukes's book, according to Peter Morriss, was how to think of the concept of power; “The basic point of all, or the underlying idea behind all the talk of power, is that A somehow affects B.”⁶¹ For Morriss power means the ability to “shape and control one's own life.”⁶² Lukes defines the concept of power by saying that; “A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests.”⁶³ Here the concept of interests is an evaluation idea that cannot be shorthanded. In general, talking about interests provides a license to launch normative judgments of political and moral character. It is therefore not surprising that perceptions about interests are linked to different moral and political positions. Therefore the concept of interests is linked to different moral and political attitudes. Consequently, Paul Edwards

60 Lukes, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

61 Peter Morriss, “Steven Lukes on the Concept of Power”, *Political Studies Review*, 4(2), 2006, p. 125.

62 Lukes, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

63 *Ibid.*

thinks that Lukes considers power as the "*most effective when it is less observable.*" There may be a potential conflict, which is a conflict between the interests of those who exercise the power and real interests of those who practice the opposition. The latter cannot express or even realize their interests.⁶⁴

John Locke defined power as "*able to make, or able to receive any change.*"⁶⁵ Even this, according to Lukes, is not general enough, because it does not include the ability to resist change in the face of a changing environment. Lukes develops Locke's definition as "*having power is being able to make or to receive any change, or to resist it.*" Although this definition is very general, it has several specific effects. It shows that power is a problematic concept.⁶⁶

The three-dimensional view of power, as Lukes summarises it, involves a thoroughgoing critique of the behavioural focus of the first two views as too individualistic and allows for consideration of the many ways in which potential issues are kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individuals' decisions.⁶⁷ For him, when we say that someone has power or is powerful, we are assigning responsibility to a human agent or agency for bringing (or failing to bring) about specific outcomes that impinge upon the interests of other human beings.⁶⁸

According to Keith Dowding, Lukes' third dimension of power exists where people are subject to domination and acquiesce in that domination.⁶⁹ The most insidious and essential form of power, for Lukes, is domination. His third dimension occurs not only where there is domination, but where the dominated acquiesce in their

64 Paul Edwards, "Power and Ideology in the Workplace: Going beyond Even the Second Version of the Three Dimensional View", *Work Employment and Society*, 20(3) 2006, p. 572.

65 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Nidditch, P. H., ed., Oxford Clarendon Press, USA 1975, p. 111.

66 Lukes, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

67 Lukes, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

68 Steven Lukes, "Power and Agency", *British Journal of Sociology*, 53(3), 2002, p. 491.

69 Keith Dowding, "Three-Dimensional Power: A Discussion of Steven Lukes' Power: A Radical View", *Political Studies Review*, 4, 2006, p. 136.

domination.⁷⁰ Several aspects of domination in the third dimension are essential. First is the status of values, preferences, interests, beliefs, and desires. Second, given their status, in what form can we criticise these objects? Third, there are queries over the dominant-dominated relationship. Does everyone make gains at the expense of others dominance? Can anyone who loses out be labeled as dominated? Fourth, there is the question of responsibility. Must the dominant need to know what they are doing, or can their privilege be a by-product of forces they do not understand?⁷¹

"What do we need the concept of power for?" Lukes asks this question 28 years after he put his book in his article titled (*Power and agency*). He answers himself ; *"we need it just because it is not merely a concept that may (or may not) turn out to be useful in social scientific explanations. We need it because it is indispensable to practices that we inescapably engage in as social and political beings"*.⁷²

Conclusion

The phenomenon of power is a real problem in international studies. Since many studies consider that the essence of international relations is originally the study of the phenomena of war and peace. In other words, international studies are either seeking to find ways to increase the power of the state or how to limit its effects. Because the phenomenon of power has been associated with the emergence of societies since eternity, it can be said that it is the most critical phenomenon dealt with in terms of study and analysis and the most controversial phenomenon of theorists in the philosophy of social sciences.

This fact has been reflected on this phenomenon since it was not exclusive to a single society and culture. As a result, it did not have one form or one image, but on the contrary, it had multiple meanings and shapes depending on the vision of each society and

70 Dowding, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

71 *Ibid.*

72 Lukes, *op. cit.*, p. 491.

culture. Since each community has its own language, it is natural for a power to have many meanings and definition. Specifically, with the spread of translation between languages, the meanings have overlapped and lost their original content. On the other hand, evolution has increased the complexity of the societies, and the phenomena of these societies have also become more and more complex; making it impossible to explain and describe these phenomena in simple language. Hence it became necessary to use vocabulary and metaphors to clarify and demystify them. The fact that metaphors carry more than one meaning, and differ between languages with entirely different meanings is also reflected on the meaning of power, and therefore it is necessary to remove the impurities that the concept of power have suffered from it as a result of the use of metaphors in wrong ways.

Most of the definitions of power have been agreed to be ‘the ability to influence others’ behaviour’ or ‘the ability to control others’ behaviour;’ but such definitions only confirm that influence and control are the essence of power. Some international relations analysts have presented definitions in which they tried to detail what power means, and the relation between two states that allows the government of one of them to carry the government of the other state to follow a specific behaviour, or prevent it from doing what it wants. In other words, power is the ability of (A) to push (B) to do (X) or prevent it from doing (P).

One of the problems of this definition is that it is sometimes difficult to ascertain the probability that (B) will actually do (X) or actually does not do (P) if the effects of the power of (A) are not present. Thus, the essence of any definition of power that it is a behavioural relation between two parties or more than two, one of which influences the behaviour of the other, in the directions that it achieve its objectives, in accordance with its wishes, at a given time, over an extended period of time or in one or several areas.

The phenomenon of power throughout history has been linked to the phenomenon of war. The amount of the state’s military capabilities was synonymous with the size of its power, and the

basis that classifies nations in the hierarchy of international power. But the change in the environment of international system in the twenty-first century, technological developments and more importantly, the global impact of globalization, has led to make changes in the nature and function of war. In the twenty-first century, states have either sought to dominate or to escape from domination. The ranking of sources of power has changed in terms of the relative importance it plays in international politics. New sources of power have emerged, and other sources have disappeared, and their role in international relations has ended. Thus, traditional war is no longer the best way to end conflicts among the world's great powers. As a result, the concept of power has been altered too.

Anes Hassan HAMEED

All these changes must have a distinct place in security, strategic and international studies in general. The problem of differences in ideologies and ideas between political theorists in general and those of international relations, in particular, has been reflected in the form and content of definitions of power. The difference between these theorists is not based on the reality of the definition or not. Instead, the difference reflects the theoretical difference and the ideological backgrounds between them.

As a result, power in international relations in the present century can be defined as; *the ability of A to create and establish a relationship between him and any other subject, by creating the environment and conditions that carry these subjects to adopt the behaviour or act inconsistent with the interests of A and vice versa.* Considering, these adoptions must be as a result of his own free will and not as a compulsion or coercion. So, the condition of the formation or restructuring of the environment in the international political system, in which all actors interact, is a necessity for power to be effective. In other words, in an unsuitable environment, some elements of power become ineffective and have no value.

For instance, the use of nuclear weapons by the United States of America on Japan in Second World War reshaped the international environment, which prompted Japan to adopt capitulation. During the Cold War, and due to the environment not being suitable for

both sides of the conflict, the nuclear arsenals had little to no military value. On the contrary, it had become an economic weight that has exhausted the Soviet Union, which could not continue to confront the US. After the events of September 2001, specifically with the occupation of Iraq in 2003, it was as a declaration of the start of a new political system, which have been drawn its features and established by United States in its strategy for the year 2002 (If the nations of the world want to fight terrorism, they have to do something, they are either with us or against us).

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