# Change in Conceptualization of Power

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**Abstract**

Change is inevitable in every conception of politics. The conception of power is not an exception. The main debate of International Relations (IR), realism and liberalism, represent this change process though, change can also be witnessed in each conception as well. The general currency can be observed as a transition from measurable, coercive and deterrent nature towards value-laden, cooperative and co-optive nature of power. The context of power can be assumed by factors such as international political environment and perceived nature of threat that requires a 'flexible' approach to describe its nature. Besides intention of actor should be credited to asses the efficiency of its power.

**Keywords:** Power, International Relations, Change.

### Güç Kavramsallaştırmasında Değişim

**Öz**

Değişim, bütün siyasal konseptler için kaçınılmaz bir gerçekliktir. Bu bağlamda, güç konsepti bir istisnai durum değildir. Uluslararası İlişkilerde ana tartışma konusu olan, realizm ve liberalizm bu değişimi temsil edebilir ve her konseptte de bu değişim görülebilir. Genel geçerlilik, ölçülebilir, cebri, ve caydırıcılıktan değer yüklü, işbirlikçi ve seçilmiş bir güç tanımına kaymıştır.Güç kavramının kapsamı, uluslararası siyasi çevre ve algılanan tehditin doğasıyla anlaşılıbilir ve bu da esnek bir yaklaşım gerektirir. Bunun yanında, aktörlerin niyetleri gücün etkinliğiyle ölçülebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Güç, Uluslararası İlişkiler, Değişim.

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## 1. Introduction

What encouraged Alexander the Great to conquer the 'ends of the world and Great Outer Sea' during 300 B.C.? His idea was based on the self confidence of "possess[ing] the whole of the power which his father had acquired, but to commence, immediately, the most energetic and vigorous efforts for a great extension of it" (Abbot, 1902:13). What were the parameters of power he was relying on to commit a military campaign to Asia Minor, Levant, Persia and finally to India. On the other hand who can assess if he would have attempted to conduct the same campaign in the globe we are experiencing after 2000s?

If put another way, Pericles made Athens be a center of gravity in the Hellenic world of 450 B.C., a hundred year before Alexander the Great. In his speech for the memory of losses in the war against Peloponnesus, he underlines the character of Athens city-state that he perceives as strength such as provided welfare to its people, trade, level of acquired knowledge in the city, accessibility of the city to the foreigners, and, probably the prominent one, democratic structure of the state (Tuncay, 1985:21-30). It is clear that these power characteristics differ from the ones Alexander the Great perceives, even though the era they lived can be approximated. Their power perceptions present different power resources and desires. What makes both close to each other is that they believe in the strength they had possessed in comparison to the threats they have perceived. But the sources of the power they had acquired were different. The goal of the Alexander the Great was to expand the sphere of authority to challenge the unknown out-world. But Pericles' desire was to maintain the order and provide a continuum of profiting from the established order. It can be observed a change in the perception of possessed power between Pericles and Alexander the Great within proximity of geography and timing. Then the motivation of change, order and continuity was prevailing.

If we come to the current era, similar resemblances can be made though; transformation of international arena gave birth to new features in the behaviors and relations of international actors. Hence new concepts have occurred and being claimed. New topics that form the spirit of the current age challenged the perceptions of actors in employing their strategies. The concept of power is as such. There has been an extensive change in the context of power conceptualization. 'Power' was in the domain of realist paradigm though; other theories, mainly liberals advocated new concepts to identify alternative perceptions. The reason may be to strip the realist paradigm of its basic theoretical tenet and bring an alternative explanation to power in order to offer more flexible

justifications to courses of actions. As a result, an expansion of concepts on power occurred affiliated with IR theories other than realist windows. On the other hand realist scholars also delivered a vast spectrum of proposals in describing power conception. They interpreted the progress in the international arena and addressed challenging solutions to the issues that realism falls short in bringing explanation. Consequently there exists change in the perceptions of both among realist scholars and scholars other than realists. A comparison ought to be made to identify the transformation of the power conceptualization especially among and between realist and liberal approaches to pinpoint the course of change in the conceptualization of power.

The definition of power remains vogue and disputable pending to the perceptions of scholars. This reality makes power a contested concept with different interpretations. Scholars claimed various definitions to clarify the context of power[1] to justify their priorities and theoretical choices. If some of the scholars' definitions are examined; power is "national interests" for Edward H. Carr; "the interests of the essential actor – that is state" and "the control of man over man" for Morgenthau; "specific assets or material forces of a state" and "the outcomes of the interactions between states" for Mearsheimer[2]; "control and influence" for Dahl[3]; one of the "currencies of politics", "mechanisms of acceleration"[4] and "obedience through habits and threats"[5] for Karl M. Deutsch; and finally "potential for change" for a liberal scholar, Kenneth Boulding.[6] Berenskoetter underlines the existence of many other "forgotten voices" reminding similar approaches to power as the aforementioned scholars did.[7] Hence it is natural to observe a justification of power with various contextual explanations.

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[1] Power, Literally power is defined as 'the ability or capacity to produce an effect for the possession of control, authority or influence over others', *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, available at: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/power accessed 20 September 2012.

[2] John J. Mearshheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, (New York: Norton, 2001), pp.57.

[3] Robert A. Dahl, 'The Concept of Power', *Behavioral Science*, 2, (1957), pp.202.

[4] Karl W. Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government: Models of Political Communication and Control*, (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1963), pp.124.

[5] Karl W. Deutsch, 'On the Concepts of Politics and Power', *Journal of International Affairs*, 21, (1967), pp.232.

[6] Kenneth Boulding, *Three Faces of Power*, (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989), pp.15.

[7] Felix Berenskkoetter, 'Thinking about Power' in Felix Berenskkoetter and M.J. Williams (eds), *Power in World Politics,* (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp.2.

The argument is that there is a continuous enrichment of power conception in both realist and liberal camps. Liberals are challenging the domain of realism by focusing on the power conception though; they provided a power paradigm consistent with the changing international environment. Realist scholars also challenged their conceptual context to introduce their response to the challenges. If the proposals of various realist scholars are examined, a variation of conceptualizing power can be observed.

The contribution of this study to IR discipline will be to present that there are different interpretations of power regarding its sources, means and methods. It ought to be reminded that decision making mechanisms rely on the power perception of the decision makers either under the democratic control of the voters or within the limits of authoritarian structures. Hence it is crucial to analyze what is meant by power to predict the probable policies of the actors in international relations. If the notion of change in the nature of power perceptions is not adequately conceived, the pursued strategies will not address the faced dilemmas in international system. A number of issues such as acquiring power, its utilization and management within tolerable frameworks, and measuring the power to commit any undertaking are be based on the perceived context of power. Consequently new power contexts should be delineated in order to be consistent with the challenged international political environment.

The analysis of this study is organized around the following questions: What is the nature of change in the context of power conceptualization in realism paradigm? What challenges did the liberal paradigm offer to the debate on the context of power? If both of the theoretical explanations are concerned, how can both theoretical perspectives be compared? The limitation of the paper is that the focus will be framed by realist and liberal interpretations rather than other theoretical approaches. In this sense, the first topic will be to define the changing political environment by a historical review. This review will provide the basis of 'change' in the realist and liberal perceptions of power. The second part will cover the realist power perception. The approaches of leading realist scholars will be examined to observe the 'change' in their conceptualizations. In this sense, the frameworks of classical realism, structural realism (neo-realism) and modified (neo-classical) realism will be concentrated. The third topic will be the power perception of liberal school. The challenging interpretations of leading liberal scholars will be examined and analyzed. Finally a comparison will be made to search the course of change in the conception of power.

## 2. A Review of Challenges to Power Conceptions

Challenges to the power perception directly shape the conceptualization and creates change in the nature of power. A precise historical review might be useful to determine the emerging challenges. Pre-French revolution era can be described as brutal and coercive that bends on *raison d'état of* Cardinal Richelieu's amoral and interest oriented power conception. He depicts power coming from God.[8] Then there is spiritual justification of power, or authority, over the vassals. The royal is inheriting his power from the God that makes power absolute. On the other hand Hobbes relies on the laws of nature that contains coercive power, if justice and harmony are to be attained in society. Both pre and post French revolution eras until post World War era counts power as tangible based on concrete strength such as population, military or territory.

Pax-Britanicca, which is Britain's industrial hegemony, introduced new dimensions to the conception of power.[9] Industrial revolution, from one end challenged the context of power in affiliation with production, market access and resource flow, at the other end challenged the military and economic strength to protect the remote markets of resources and consumption. The competition of European powers initiated an arms race supported by industrial productivity that prioritized both quality and quantity of arms in relativity between major states. The extension of the territories was, again, a physical show of strength. It was sign of being 'major' power to possess a colonial rule. World War I, II and Cold war coincided with the technological progresses that make the capability of arms more destructive than previous ages. For instance possession of nuclear weapons appeared to be a major power resource.

If the perceived parameters of this term are concerned, the nature of the power can be assessed as measurable, coercive and deterrent. But this term ought to be searched pending to the structure of perceived power holding. The decision-makers usually held the decision-making authority that some of them were unquestionable royal individuals or prime ministers like Richelieu, Metternich, Bismarck or Churchill. The main unit was state, which could not be challenged by any other non-state actor. Method was to coerce the others within the limits of balance of power.

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[8] Cardinal Richelieu, 'Political Testament', *Manchester*, available at: http://people.umass.edu/hist101/docs%20absolutism%20101-2007.pdf accessed 05 October 2012.
[9] Encyclopedia Britannica, 'Pax-Britannica', *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, available at: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/447441/Pax-Britannica accessed 06 September 2012.

Threats were emanating from the other rivaling or competing states. Democratic control of the governments was either limited or non-existent. Information circulation would be strictly controlled. Transportation was far more difficult. Diplomacy was falling short to address the problematic issues of inter-state affairs. It was the balance of power that could deter the major powers to check their commitments.

Post Cold War era challenged the international arena, directly changing the context of power. If somebody would ask "which state is powerful?" before the termination of Cold War, the parameters would be state-centric and numeric in the forms of standardized indexes. But post Cold War introduced new parameters that shapes and changes the context of power. First of all, actors have changed. The number of actors increased covering individuals, newly emerging states, regionally influential 'state, sub-state, non-state, or supra-state actors'. It can be claimed that there are deficiencies in the relations of actors, – maybe partially – democratic structures among international actors are built as can be seen state's position in decision making processes in the UN, EU or OSCE. As a result decision mechanisms fastened while norm building process covered a lot more actors, including international organizations and non-state actors. Hence who has the power? The response should include not only the state-actors, but also actors other than states such as individuals, communities of special interests or international corporations.

Nevertheless "the ability of great powers with impressive traditional power resources to control their environments has been reduced by the changing nature of world politics".[10] The new emerging threats are far from involvement of one state, but require cooperation of states and non-state actors within the consent of the worldwide public. States are obliged to cooperate on transnational issues due to lack of capability that any individual state can not figure out against these new types of threats. Moreover, interconnectedness of the international realm will diffuse the consequences of common problems towards the majority of the states notwithstanding their will. Cooperation of small, weak states that are not fully capable of managing their own domestic problems should be urged and supported to prevent these threats. But the problem lies in how to convince these states to be consistent with the common good of international society since interests and capabilities of states may vary. New soft threats appeared to be new issues such as ecological changes, health epidemics, illicit trade of drugs, human trafficking, illegal

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[10] Joseph Nye, 'Soft Power', *Foreign Policy*, available at:
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/Ning/archive/archive/080/SOFT_POWER.PDF, pp.163-164, accessed 08 September 2012.

immigration, terrorism, economic crisis, immigration, poverty, or resource shortages. Such issues are transnational in nature, although they may have domestic roots. The most significant issue is that these soft threats can not be addressed by the classic, conventional power perception. Basically they are beyond the capabilities of states. Military solutions remain inadequate that coercion does not work, but persuasion and consent became prominent. Materially defined power parameters became void in conveying the soft problematic issues.

Another challenge can be counted as interactions between individuals, interest based communities, sub-state level organizations and capitals. Interaction should be expected to increase the global consciousness that by pass the functions of the states. Hence domestic challenges to states are enriched. The circulation of ideas caused diffusion of political conceptions while transforming its context. Ideas appeared to be more effective in persuading minds and hearts of the masses. Official rhetoric of the power holders lost and being lose their efficiencies to mobilize the efforts of publics. This reality may endanger the population parameter of power conception. A population that can not be persuaded by its own government will challenge the pursued policies of state actors. The deficiency may be the non-democratic governments imposing pressure to their own public.

It may be conceived crucial to identify how the nature of the power will be determined and presented. The capabilities and characteristics of targeted state and competing powers may be determinants to some extent in accordance with vulnerability and superiority correlation. In other words, it would be preferred to be superior benefitting from the vulnerable aspect of the counter part. By that way, targeted state will be coerced to act in consent with the desire of the power holder. The vulnerability may be in different forms such as military, economic, administrative. These forms will sophisticate and also shape the nature of power applications. For instance military threats to interests will require the power-holder to build a strong military capability and also capacity to project it to remote regions of the globe if needed. A state actor's vulnerability to economic sanctions will require measures to manipulate the financial markets. Diplomatic capacity will complement the military and economic capabilities to urge the third parties to have the targeted audience to accept the demands. Vulnerabilities of value-system and identity debate in the society present opportunities to bear measures of manipulation to discredit the targeted state. Media's role becomes prominent in articulating prejudices to shape the societies. Instant delivery of messages in media expanded the power's efficiency because globalization process eased the media's penetration to

the societies. Consequently power implementation methods have been challenged. Tangible power indicators, such as quantities in military equipment or facts and figures of economy are not the sole sources of power. Hence opinion, unity and perception of the society can be counted as important as actual military strength.

Another question is to what extent the superiority of the powerful may be sustained. The weak counterpart or competing powers will balance the power of the dominant state. If the number and efficiency of perceived power indicators diminish, the deterrence and plausibility will perish. Hence the power holder should not only lean on the measurable power indicators, but supplement power by persuasive factors. By that way, the power will be consistent and long lasting. Emotions, mainly affirmative perception of power, of the targeted state ought to be expected significant and considerable, even to realize the interests in realist thinking. Then it can be claimed that there is challenge in the perceptions of power. Especially the historical developments in the 20th century, such as the Cold War environment, forced the realist scholars to soften the ruthless power generating methods preached by realism and to prefer or take into account more "acceptable" methods to achieve the interests of the state. Wars are expensive and difficult to justify. The reasoning of hard power application ought to be acceptable by international and domestic public not to lose the credibility. As a result, information age required realist thinkers to consent with liberal approaches.

### 3. A Realist Discussion of the Concept of Power

Power has long been considered in the domain of realism. It is the decisive concept that shapes the international politics. For instance major issues such as war and peace can easily be justified by the conception of power in realist thinking. If the realist perception is overviewed, different perceptions can easily be pinpointed in terms of method and utilizing it. For instance some scholars claim the source of the power inherited in the nature of human, while some others put it to the structure of international system as will be discussed below.

Realist way of power perception contains characteristics that differs it from the other theoretical currencies. Scholars presented coercion, compulsion and ruthless application of power legitimate to realize the interests of the state actor. For instance Weber's concept of "authority, dominance, rule or governance" inspired leading realist thinkers such as Robert Dahl, Hans Morgenthau, Raymond Aaron and Michael Mann to locate power application methods in the frame of coercion and

[compulsion].[11] Among them, Dahl prioritizes compulsion in his definition of power: "to get what [the state] wants"[12] that "[the other state] would not otherwise have done".[13] In the realist approach, then, power is to be able to force the other actors to act in line with own interests.

Realist thinking requires the essential actor, which is state, continuously struggling for power, although the ultimate aim may differ pending to which realist perspective, mainly survival or security dilemma, is preferred. Steans and Pettiford underline a similar perception on the essence of "power" as "the ability to change [the] behavior [of states] and dominate in international realm, either regional or global".[14] Power can be used in a similar way as 'authority', 'influence' and 'coercion' though; realism has much to say on the context of 'power'.

One tendency to classify the power conceptions is from Baldwin. He puts power under two different contexts.[15] One of them is the national power approach that takes power in the frame of measurable resources. But the dilemma of potential and realized power takes the debate to how far potential power resources could be converted to actual power. Additionally a power resource may be idle in unrelated fields of international relations. The context of the relational power takes interaction a prominent requisite between two actors. Relational power is more pragmatic and focuses on the outcomes of mutual interaction. A change is expected in the behavior of an actor.

Classical realists take power central to the international politics. Power is both the ultimate aim and the main cause of the politics. In this context, Morgenthau presents one of the most comprehensive studies on 'power'. Power is inherent to human nature as objective laws have its roots in it. His power-centric approach focuses on keeping power for maintaining status quo, increasing power for establishing an imperial or demonstrating power for gaining prestige.[16] These tendencies lets the states pursue an equilibrium policy, which is to establish 'balance of power'. Then power accumulation is both an aim and a tool to realize the interests of the state.

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[11] Berenskkoetter, 'Thinking', p.3.
[12] Boulding, 'Three', p.226.
[13] Dahl, 'The Concept', p.158.
[14] Jill Steans and Lloyd Pettiford, *International Relations: Perspectives and Themes*, (Malaysia: Pearson Education, 2001), p. 30.
[15] David A. Baldwin, 'Power and International Relations' in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth Simmons (eds), *Handbook of International Relations*, (London: Sage, 2002), p.183.
[16] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations, The Struggle for Power and Peace* (USA: McGraw Hill, 1993), p. 40.

The accumulation may be achieved by elements of national power that can be grouped in two categories for Morgenthau. The first category – geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, military preparedness and population – are tangible and essential to accumulate power. But second category, which are national character and moral, quality of diplomacy and government, are intangible and complimentary. As can be seen from the sources, first group of them are materially expressed that can be measured by specific facts and figures. But the second group has qualitative features. If both sources are concerned, a comparison of two actors can be made to evaluate the relative power of two nations by means of the first category of power resources. Nevertheless Morgenthau's power perception takes the military an essential aspect, but it is not the sole one. Military power can not be equated to national power. He praises rational choice to obtain the change in the outcome favoring the one who is exercising power.

Edward Carr, another classical realist, equates power to international politics. He recognizes power indivisible. He divides power in three categories: military power, economic power and power over opinion.[17] Military power is the essential feature for the state while economic power is to support military power. Propaganda covers the power over opinion in relation with military and economic powers. Carr's approach to power seems more compliant to Morgenthau. Morgenthau's tangible power resources can be traced in the Carr's military and economic power whereas both praises power over opinion to delineate propaganda. For both, the survival and the desire to dominate are the justifications of seeking limitless power, especially in the axis of measurable, coercive and relative power. Power over opinion is the complimentary aspect of power that both scholars focus on.

Structural realists are divergent from the classical realism indicating the reason of accumulating of power. Classics, especially Morgenthau was insistent about the nature of human seeking for power, but Kenneth Waltz, leading structuralist, links power to anarchical environment among states.[18] Anarchy requires no cooperation but the state of war. Then states will pursue strategies to accumulate power. Both of the perceptions of Morgenthau and Waltz matches on the process of 'struggle' for power, although their arguments regarding aim of the state is contradictory in terms of power maximizing or security maximizing tendencies. Anarchy requires the state to maximize its power to obtain security under the

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[17] Edward H. Carr, *Twenty Years Crisis* (New York: Palgrave, 1988), p.109.
[18] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (California: Addison Wesley Publishing Co., 1979), p. 102.

conditions of 'self help'. Then the perception of power is based under the relativity of the state actors by asking "who will gain more?"[19] Although Waltz has no clear definition of power, he underlines "economic, military and other capabilities of nations" within the measurable characteristics as size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence. But states have different combinations of capability which are difficult to measure and compare.[20] Hence the ranking of the states will be made not by an exact but rough measurement. Then power is matter of perception. Nevertheless any state would possess power in a certain filed of capabilities, but not within the other field. For instance a militarily strong state does not mean that it is as stronger in terms of economical capabilities.

Another strand of realism neo-classical (modified) realism also argues on the continuous struggle for power. Anarchy appears to be the common point of both neoclassical and structural realists, but unlike structural 'anarchy is a permissive condition rather than an independent causal force'.[21] The significant contribution of modified realist, as Stephen Walt puts it, is placing the domestic politics as an intervening variable between distribution of power and foreign policy.[22] As can be seen from the determinations of Stephen Walt, Gideon Rose and Randall Schweller, the main concern of neoclassical realism is the foreign policy of the state while including the personalities of the statesmen, state-society relations and state interests. That means states are not alike units and the perception of the decision makers are crucial to identify the possessed power of the state under the limitations of the domestic structure. A relativity exists in comparing the power of the states. Schweller proposes the 'Correlates of War' index in which military, industrial and demographic capabilities are the features in measuring the power of the state.[23] But intervening variables ought to be clarified to what extent the decision makers can benefit from these strength features. Power is not an end in itself but a mean to increase the states' influence. The power and interests of the states can be correlated. The more state possess power, the wider interests can be defined, but within the perception of decision makers.

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[19] Waltz, 'Theory', p. 105.
[20] Waltz, 'Theory', p. 131.
[21] Brian Schmidt, 'Realist Conceptions of Power', in Felix Berenskkoetter and M.J. Williams (eds), *Power in World Politics,* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 57.
[22] Stephen Walt, 'Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition', in Ira Katznelson and Helen V.Milner (eds), *The State of Discipline*, (New York, Norton, 2002), p. 197.
[23] Schmidt, 'Realist', p. 59.

If an overall assessment of realist perception is made; the common point is the struggle of power of the 'states'. But the evolving aspect is that the reason of this struggle emanates from human nature for classicals, anarchy and relativity of the states for neorealists and finally, additional to neorealists, intervening variables for neo-classicals. The centrality of power for each strand of realism is clear, issues such as context and measurability of power remains vogue. Commonality of them can be named as benefitting from the measurable, tangible power indicators such as the economic capacity or military strength in numbers.[24] The emphasis on military, economic and demographic power parameters makes the command type- coercive power as the basis of the nature of power. On the other hand the quality, rather than quantity, of these factors seems weak in examining the context of power. This gap can be correlated to problem of measuring the power. The judgment of quality is flexible that makes the power hard to rank among state actors. Especially neo-classical tendency to attribute power to the perception of decision makers makes power conception volatile to describe the context of it.

Morgenthau's parameters to elaborate the power of the state under certain titles are challenged by the structural and neoclassical realists. They focused on relativity of the strength of the state rather than possessed absolute power. Relativity brings the issue of comparability of the sates, but it remains rough to determine the ranking of the states in international realm. This difficulty may stem from the severity to describe the environment the state is experiencing. Realism seems falling short to respond the ongoing challenges in international politics by simply claiming measurable power parameters. The inclusion of domestic intervening factors may be course to respond the challenges of post Cold War era.

Hence the change in the realist power conceptualization can be summed up as defining the context of power, measurement issue, involvement of structure rather than alike state units and intervening variables additional to structure of the system.

### 4. Liberal Perspectives of Power Conceptualization

Liberal view starts the debate on the power conception with the state as a 'necessary evil'. State is seen as autonomous, fair arbiter, policy making body. But state ought to be distinguished from civil society in which

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[24] The deductions of Mearsheimer, Morgenthau and Deutsch are also in parallel to identify the context of power since all of them focus on material capabilities. See Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 57; Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 127; Deutsch, *Politics and Government*, p. 85.

individuals engage in collective action and activity. Then civil society, or 'power of people', will try to influence the state challenging the distribution of power by periodical election system. Liberal thinking enhances the notion of actors in international system and intra-state affairs, while bringing a pluralist perception. Power, which can be defined as the capacity to act to advance an interest or to influence the outcome of an event or a decision, is diffused across a range of institutions and among a variety of states and non-state actors. The challenge of liberal-plural view to realist perception is that military power has become inefficient and no longer a reliable indicator, involvement of non-state actors, capacity of plural actors to act collectively to achieve a common good and variability of the possession of power over time and area.[25] Moreover a problematic issue is how the power of political actors is affected by economic processes by giving the latter a paramount significance.[26] Another crucial point of discussion is the cooperation among enriched actors of IR. Cooperation has become a method of enhancing mutual interests denouncing the brutal nature of power. Power is more quality based and hard to measure. It is cost effective if the losses in the major wars are concerned. Hence the witnessed change in the nature of power is coherent by the basic assumptions of liberal view. For instance interconnectedness of the states and new actors of international environment reveal new concepts of power, such as soft power. These concepts will be searched in the frame of new liberal paradigms of power conception.

Weber's definition and conception of power contributes a challenging approach to the debate. He defines power within a new approach and classifies power in accordance with the pursued method of employing it. He defines power as "the opportunity to have one's will within a social relationship, also against resistance, no matter what this opportunity is based on" and indicates three forms of power as "power over", "power to" and "power with". "Power over" refers to domination that has coercive nature. "Power to" indicates the definition of power in general. "Power with" refers to a certain form of having things done in collaborative endeavors. Social relationship that requires a shared value system forms a "power with" understanding rather than "power to" or "power over" perception. Distinction of power "with", rather than "to" and over", can be reasoned by the evolving nature of the international relations. Weber's conceptual explanation is a clear challenge since it brings the notion of cooperation among international actors. It is required 'new dimensions of

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[25] Steans and Pettiford, 'International', pp. 57-60.
[26] Oktay Tanrısever, 'Güç', in Atila Eralp (ed), *Devlet ve Ötesi:Uluslararası İlişkilerde Temel Kavramlar-State and Beyond: Basic Terms in Internaional Relations,* (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2009), pp. 62-3.

power exercises other than pure military and economic coercive measures'[27] because IR is enriched with newly emerging actors such as civil society, nongovernmental organizations, and opinion groups.

The classification of power by Kenneth Boulding, who can be counted as idealist type economist-sociologist due to his proposal of a world government, is commonly accepted to describe a typology of power as "the stick, the carrot, and the hug". The "stick" matches coercive power that is based on superior strength by applying threat or use of the threat, which fits the realist thought. The "carrot" is more gentle form of power such as rewards, bribes or exchanges. Finally "hug" is the "integrative" and "collaborative attraction" embraced by liberals. It is the co-optive power that enables to shape peacefully rather than change forcefully. Boulding typifies integrative power by teamwork, loyalty, legitimacy, the will to cooperate and the use of persuasion where "integrative power is both the most difficult to define and yet potentially the most significant form of power"[28].

Joseph S. Nye Jr. is one of the prominent scholars who challenged the realist conception of power. It may be claimed that he shifted the power conception from the domain of realism by attributing new context. He depicts power in a linear line beginning from command power, made up of coercion and inducement to co-opt power that is based upon agenda setting and attraction.[29] The poles of this linear line are identified as "materially based, measurable and coercive" hard power and "value laden, immeasurable, and intangible" soft power. According to Nye, while the traditional conceptualization of power as military and economic strength leads to threats and bribes in order to increase the state's influence, soft power instead benefits from the spread of culture, ideas and values. This approach focuses on "the power of seduction" where Nye refers his proposal to E.H. Carr's "power over opinion" concept, which can be summed up as directing the opinion leaders.[30] Nye's 'soft power' can be linked to the belief that it is difficult, but not impossible to change the peoples' firmly held beliefs. When a source is credible and attractive, if a message is repeated with emotional content, whilst a receptive mood of the target exists, attitudinal change is more likely.

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[27] Berenskkoetter, 'Power', p. 3.
[28] Boulding, 'Three', p.10.
[29] Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics,* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), p. 8.
[30] Nye, 'Soft', p. 5.

Liberal conception of power does not rely on command power that consists military and economic assets that will "change what others do", but co-optive power that is "the ability to shape what others do"[31] by indicating two separate courses to achieve goals: "the use of sanctions or the inducements" or "convincing other actors to share preferences" by attraction rather than coercion.[32] Nye approaches sanctions and inducements in the context of hard power along with military and economic power even though the line between "inducement" and "attractive" power is blurring. Three sources of power are crucial to underline that are "attractive cultural capability; political values at home; morally and legitimately justified foreign policy"[33], although the success or failure of the mentioned sources can hardly be measured since the natures of these sources are value-laden. If these sources are reviewed, first, Nye attributes great value to culture and argues that "the cultural customs and ideas, which are dominating global norms, will enhance the credibility"[34] and promotes the soft power strength. By means of cultural activities, eventually, societies will begin to judge their own societal values, economic, political and justice systems attributing the dominant culture as a reference. Attractive culture will start to transform the structure of the society and shape the choices in a chain of societal fields as discussed above. Hence diffusing culture will create a change in the perceptions of diffused societies.

Additional to culture, political values and their practices are efficient sources of expanding soft power for Nye.[35] The power wielder should be trustworthy and believable. The implementation of propounded thesis in domestic sphere will be observed by international public. Media and information technologies made possible to aware even the underdeveloped societies what is occurring in the most developed states. The pursued domestic policies of soft power wielders appeared to be a point of admiration or criticism. For Nye, "the regime of the state actor and offered freedom to the domestic institutions" may be criteria in the perception of societies, even though authoritarian regimes may deny some portion of the policies.[36] If the implementation of policies is fruitful, developing or underdeveloped societies take it as an example and emulates similar

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[31] Nye, 'Soft', p. 7.
[32] Joseph S. Nye, *Power in the Global Information Age: From Realism to Globalization*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 5.
[33] Nye, 'Soft', p. 11.
[34] Joseph S. Nye, 'The Benefits of Soft Power', *Harvard Business School*, available at: http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/4290.html, accessed 11 September 2012.
[35] Nye, 'Soft', p. 15.
[36] Nye, 'Soft', p. 16.

policies in their domestic affairs. On the contrary, double standards and failures breach the image of states. Put another way, the soft power wielder should be consistent with what was said and what is done. Consistency of the verbal statements and practices will promote the credibility of the soft power wielder and will be more persuasive in shaping other societies.

Besides the implementation of universal values, domestic public order and welfare are criteria to identify the strength of any society. If any society is depriving of reaching the basic services such as sanitary, clean water, electricity, food, injustice in disputes or lack of job to feed the family, then it will be inevitable for them to dream the order and living standard of the power wielder. Soft power wielder will be able to persuade the societies, which are void of basic needs, to apply her system of development while fixing this society to her sphere of influence. Adhered society will probably cooperate voluntarily with the soft power wielder. Consequently, if common public goods function properly, the other societies will observe the model of development and import it to their countries. Consistent and successful domestic policy of the soft power wielder will charm the other states to pursue similar policies as the soft power wielder. As far as the administrative systems come closer, interaction may increase and a state of dependency may occur. In this sense, Robert Cooper claims that the centrality of the state and its legal and constitutional order as the most developed version of soft power.[37]

Besides domestic implementation of consistent policies, foreign policy of the state is a source of soft power since the attractiveness of a state depends on the values that are expressed through the substance and style of foreign policy.[38] The starting point of the Nye's debate may be based on liberal approach. From this perspective, the credibility and plausibility of a state can be enhanced in international arena by promoting shared values, which can be exampled as respect to international law, adherence to universal values, integration to institutions and loyalty to peace. Along with adherence to common values, cooperative tendency with both state and non-state actors will ease the efforts of wielding soft power. Broad and transparent foreign policies will promote respect and trust where consultation is the essential tool in solving disputes. Pursued policies to achieve global public goods will motivate actors to follow the defined course on the way to build a global system that every party will be consistent.

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[37] Robert Cooper, '*The Goals of Diplomacy, Hard Power, and Soft Power*',in David Held, Mathias Koenig-Archibugi (eds), *American Power in the 21st Century*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), pp. 167-180.
[38] Nye, 'Soft', p. 60.

The critiques should also be concerned regarding the deficiencies of soft power. For instance Nye lists the potential indicators of soft power as Nobel prices, music sales, book sales, attracting tourists, the number of asylum seekers, life expectancy, GDP, popular sports.[39] The issue should be to what degree these achievements lead to policy changes. If these achievements are observed by the other societies, they will provide basis to determine how charming soft power wielder is. But it is vogue if these facts and figures lead to policy changes. It can be claimed that some of the indicators would, some would not. For instance neither of the policymakers would sacrifice the interests of own country since another state is the best in football. Folk music should not be expected to shape the minds of the policymakers and societies in international affairs. But it is clear that these means will contribute to obtain psychological basis of power perception.

The new events of international politics such as 9/11, Afghanistan intervention and Iraq invasion were challenges to the soft power perception of Nye. Soft power was lacking justifications of these interventions. Hence a change occurred in the structure of liberal comment on the nature of power these events. Nye a new type of power in 2008 with his colleague Richard L. Armitage. They pinpoint[40] a new type of power that may be affiliated to soft power: "smart power". Armitage and Nye suggested that "an integrated grand strategy that combines hard military power with soft attractive power to create smart power of the sort that won the Cold War". Considering this speech was made in front of the U.S. policy makers, it had mere practical meaning than an academic one. The testament may be perceived as a step back from the liberal point of power perception. If Armitage's realist[41] and Nye's liberal backgrounds are combined, it may easy be understood how the smart power suggestion was constructed upon.

Gunnar Hökmark, a Swedish politician and Leader of Moderate Party Group in EU Parliament, also attracted the attentions to the necessity of combining soft power with military resources even tough he did not

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[39] Nye, 'Soft', p. 76.
[40] Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, 'Implementing Smart Power: Setting an Agenda for National Security Reform', *Statement before the Foreign Relation Committee of US Senate*, available at: http://www.csis.org/index.php?option=com _csis_congress&task=view&id=254, accessed 11 October 2012.
[41] Armitage was foreign policy advisor of Ronald Reagan, deputy Secretary of State in Reagan's and George W. Bush's presidency term.  He was interviewed by the special commissions to identify his role in illegal CIA operations. Spartacus School Net, available at: http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/JFKarmitage.htm, accessed 11 October 2012.

termed smart power.[42] He pointed out the deficiencies of power by his two proposals: "The first one is that diplomacy and soft power can be quite successful but without the presence of power and military resources these instruments lack credibility. The second is that hard power and military resources can be enough to win a war but are not enough to establish peace". He presented soft power as a useful method, but lack of adequacy without coercive potential power resources and vice versa.

Walter Russel Mead expands the discussion soft power proposing the conception of "sticky power". His claim is that "arguments relating to the limitations of hard power and the advantages that can accrue from the use of attractive power rooted in factors such as culture, ideals, values, which encourages others to want what you want, are basic among advocates of an advanced role of public diplomacy. But sticky power is the "power of economic attraction, which once embedded becomes addictive and hard to escape from".[43] It is clear that 'sticky power' challenges 'soft power'. The source is economic that can be counted as hard power in Nye's conceptualization. Hence economic attraction makes the weak state to be addictive to the stronger state. As far as the economic power declines, then addiction ends. Because it becomes an obligation for weak state to be in consent with the demands of the strong state. Otherwise weak state will be faced with damaging consequences. Weak state finds a living space for her to benefit from the economic strength. As a result, the necessity of volunteer obedience of the weaker actor, according to 'soft power', ought to be ignored in any case the weaker actor should consent to the will of stronger one.

Peter Coleman recommends a linear division of power, which extends between destructive and constructive power. Destructive power may be characterized as "unidirectional", "competitive" and requires a "zero-sum" approach, which can be claimed as the loss of one party is the gain of the other party. The powerful imposes what the weak is required to do. It has the authority and initiative on the weak. On the other hand powerful must check the rivaling powers to challenge the relations of power yielders and its dependents. Apart from destructive power, constructive power is "bi-directional" and "cooperative". Mutual gains and rewards will encourage the actors to share and expand each other's power. It has outcomes for self, other and the environment. This perception suits

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[42] Gunnar Hökmark, 'Speech', *Tel Aviv University,* available at: http://www.european-enterprise.org/items/whatwedo/articlesspeeches/ Tel_Aviv_University_Diplomacy_and_balance_rev.pdf, accessed 12 October 2012.
[43] Walter Russell Mead, 'America's Sticky Power', *Foreign Policy*, No.141, (March-April 2004), p. 48.

power "with" and "to", rather than "against/over". It is flexible and responsive to the demands of the others and to the environment.[44]

Apart from aforementioned liberal discussions, Nye's another contribution to the debate of power, which is the relation between information and power, ought to be examined. Nye claims that "power is passing from the "capital-rich" to the "information-rich".[45] Even though this claim contradicts with the effects of democracy and transparency, information is a multiplier of power wielding. The spectrum of information-related power activities can be widely identified such as scientific domination, broadcasts of media, information technologies and intelligence. For instance the produced knowledge in social sciences is the essential mean of justification and legitimization. It will directly cause to value exportation to the other societies. The terminology of the produced information can be benefited to build the basis of agreements or disagreements. In other words, information facilitates the norm and culture diffusion with the proper communication means. Apart from producing, sharing information eases the power wielding efforts since "it will contribute to cooperation, common understanding and dealing with common challenges."[46] The inflation of information offers the state actors chances, but also requires flexibility to respond the fast spinning nature of new information.

If an overall assessment on the notion of change among liberal perceptions of power is needed, power might be viewed in "positive terms as the capacity to act collectively to realize a common good" as Stean and Pettifor mentioned.[47] Subject matter of liberal thinking is based on a collaborative, integrative and cooperative type of power understanding. It is the mutual gains of both weak and strong to cooperate on the issues that benefit all parties. The nature of the power is not limited with the military or economic aspect of power resources, but expanded to attraction and ability to shape the international environment. Coercion, even though the military and economic capability allow, can not be the course to attain power.

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[44] Peter T. Coleman, 'Positive Power: Mapping the Dimensions of Constructive Power Relations', *International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution, Teachers' College, Colombia University*, pp. 2-11, available at: http://www.tc.colum bia.edu/i/a/document/9109_PositivePower.pdf accessed 12 October 2012.

[45] Joseph S. Nye, 'Soft Power', *Foreign Policy*, No. 80 (Fall 1990) p. 164, available at: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/Ning/archive/archive/080/SOFT_POWER.PDF accessed 12 October 2012.

[46] Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye 'Power and Independence in the Information Age', *Foreign Affairs*, 77/5 (1998), p. 94.

[47] Steans and Pettiford, 'International', pp. 59-60.

It can be observed an expansion of liberal conceptualization of power. Especially the method of power application becomes the major theme of emerging liberal power conceptions. Most of the examined power concepts deal with how to build the interaction between two or more parties. Whatever the source of the power is, the core issue is to employ it in a constructive and participative sense. This mentality will promote peace and common understanding of the international actors in conducting their relations.

Another subject matter, soft power, claims very comprehensive approach to the liberal construction of power. The issue that makes different soft power from the other proposals is that soft power clearly defines the sources and means of soft power. Context is perceptible and seems very pragmatic. It presents a very concise conceptualization regarding the methods to be employed to attain power.

Another significant characteristic of liberal justification of power emanates from the interconnectedness of the actors, which can not be limited only by the states. Actors such as Individuals, non-state organizations and supra-state organizations challenge the coercive based power applications. The democratic expansion of politics in intra and interstate affairs requires attractive stance and affirmative contributions to the common problems of international society. Increasing level of trade hardened to pursue war-prone and coercive methods of power politics. Liberal mode of power requires a constructive, integrative and co-optive power perception since it will be the harmony of interests to promote common good of all actors of international realm.

It is assessed crucial to review the challenges that affect the power conceptualization. A historical background of challenges will contribute to determine the factors that cause 'change' in the conceptualization of power, especially to perceive the comparison of realist and liberal frameworks. Hence following part will concisely clarify the 'change' in international politics before analyzing the 'change' process of realist and liberal concepts of power.

### 5. A Comparative Analysis of Change in the Conceptualization of Realist and Liberal 'Power' Perceptions

Aforementioned discussions indicate that there is a clear distinction between realist and liberal poles of power perception, especially in terms of the sources and means of power. The realist approach prioritizes interest oriented power figures, which can be presented by significant facts

and figures of capabilities. Power is both an aim and mean to dominate the realm and realize the interest. Liberal thought, on the other hand, promotes a cooperative tendency disregarding the strength of the counter part basing the relationship on mutual gains. The liberal perception is built upon a value laden evaluation of power conception. The word "powerful" may be attributed not to the one that holds a stronger army, but other issues such as economy and agenda setting capability in international arena. Liberal triumph of the post-Cold War era weights heavily the non-coercive means of power other than military, but new soft-threats[48] and interventions are contradictions. The general tendency of power applications ought to be taken into consideration that peace time cooperative activities of both state and non-state actors shape the political environment in international arena.

Peter Digeser compares and contrasts the known power perceptions that offers a clear understanding of the 'change' in conceptualizing power. He presents the power conception of Dahl, which was "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" as the first face of power. But he puts forward the second face of power with the conception of Bachrach and Baratz that "power is not solely a matter of getting B to do something that she does not want to do, but can also be a matter of 'preventing' B from doing what she wants to do". Finally he presents the perception of Luke as the third face of power as "an agent B may willingly do something that agent A wants B to do" reminding the volunteer participation of actor to the desires of powerful. He introduces Foucault's power explanation as the fourth face of power as flexible, knowledge-power nexus based approach.[49] The change starts with challenging the coercion-based 'change in behavior' perception of Dahl and prevention-based justification of Bachrach and Baratz to 'consent-based' concept of Luke. The discussion goes deeper with a philosophical challenge to the context of power by taking 'knowledge' and power nexus of Foucault.

As can be clearly seen from the afore mentioned discussions, liberal approach challenged the power conception of realism by underlining a transition from destructive to constructive, from material-based to intangible-oriented value laden and flexible power perceptions. Peace time methods of power relations may be in the frames of show of military forces, economic and political dominance, but additionally ideational

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[48] We used soft threat for the emerging threats to the welfare and stability of individual and international societies such as unlawful immigration, environmental degradation, organized crime, corruption, terrorism etc.

[49] Peter Digeser, 'The Fourth Face of Power', *Journal of Politics*, 54/4 (1992), pp.977-82.

attractiveness to shape prejudice in the minds of adversaries, impartial opponents and domestic public. Ultimate goals of actors can be achieved not only in the forms of brutal military mobilizations, but by means of liberal methods such as scientific superiority, educational offers to the other communities, building alike world views among the individuals, cultural politics attracting the masses.

On the other hand it can be claimed that liberal views can not regret from state-centric, realist approaches in a world that is ultimately controlled by the states. Hence realist and liberal views eventually overlap in benefitting from the tools of generating power to reach their goals, especially in peace time activities. As an example, both paradigms make use of cultural activities. Realist aim would be to realize the interest and dominate the realm at the expense of other actors whilst liberal purpose would be to create an environment of cooperation. Consequently, no matter what the theory is, benefited tools of building power may be uniform, but the purpose should be expected to be distinctive. The benefitted tools of power appeared to be more pacifist, cost effective and tolerable after the Cold War.

Nye termed the concept of soft power though; the conceptions of other liberal scholars resembles to Nye's 'soft power' perception. For instance Nye's 'soft power' concept can be resembled to "power with" of Weber, "integrative" power of Boulding and Lukes' "the radical conception of power". Weber's collaborative endeavor in promoting power indicates a similar vision. Boulding underlines the "increase in the productive and integrative powers of the human race" as much more significant than "the increase in its destructive powers"[50] before Nye proposed his soft power concept highlighting cooperation and interconnectedne ss. Steven Lukes argues volunteer obedience of an agent B that agent A wants B to do.[51] Then there is a manipulation on desires of B. The motivation of B may be interest or fear, but still B willingly does what A wants. But Nye's challenge is that his conception clearly challenged the realist power politics by delineating concise, concrete conception that fits the prerequisites of current age. Nye's conception can be claimed still valid though; realist critics may question the validity by exemplifying the post Cold War US-led interventions. But Nye's smart power strategy responded to the challenges of international politics. On the other hand similar challenge can also be observed in the realist course of power conception. Although the basic tenets can be claimed as the same, such as taking the essential as state,

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[50] Boulding, 'Three', p. 226.
[51] Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View,* (London: Houndmills, Macmillan Education, 1974), p. 27.

realist perception also adopted itself to the transformation of international politics. Structural explanations and neo-classical justification of power can be perceived as examples of this transformation.

Co-optive power introduces volunteer obedience or serving to the goals of soft power with a cost-effective method. The methods of "the ability to affect what other countries want" can be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions.[52] Trust and perception of the majority of the international society may persuade most of the agents to accept the discourses of few agents. In another words, not only the military or economic strength, but also the trust can convince the actors to accept the courses of actions of these players. It is clear that realist perception is lacks the potentiality of trust to the other state actors. Liberal commitment by means of regime and norm building efforts can build the trust among states. The challenge of trust will promote the cooperative power relations.

Cultural affairs and public diplomacy may be considered as tools of building "ideas" in accordance with constructivist understanding. The idea of a commonly dreamed globe, which is non resistible in the minds, is itself a power, although the context of the dream varies in the minds. Common goods of international society and universal values may be presented as the ultimate, innocent and unquestionable motivation of the international actors. For instance, ideas, such as toleration and welcoming the "different" will not be difficult to reach consensus among the actors of international system, because either of the ideologies, governments or organizations can not claim inequity and injustice. The significant characteristic of this tendency is the cooperative nature of the power relations to attract the public opinion. There will be no coercive power that magnetizes overall public.

Another significant issue is the soft threats and weakening state structures which are unable to control their territories. These threats are posing the danger of spreading instability and challenging the international order. The capabilities of strong states seem inadequate to respond these threats by means of numeric military and economic capabilities. Even the strength of these state are somehow the reason of some type of soft threats such as terrorism, radicalism, immigration or environmental degradation. Hence realist concept of power falls short to prevent these soft threats. The consent of weak states must be assured, although it will not be adequate since the inability of these states would be the cause of instability. Then an

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[52] Nye, 'Soft Power', *Foreign Policy*, pp. 166-7

individual level consent becomes 'must' to obtain the desired goals. Liberal perception's cooperative, constructive approach fits to build an environment to get the consent of individuals, non-state groups and organizations. Hence liberal based, tolerable and constructive power may be a course of action to suppress the soft threats.

### 6. Conclusion

The "context of" and "means to realize" the power is a point of discussions in accordance with the streams of eras. The main events of different centuries shaped the perception of the power conception. After the World Wars and Cold War, it could be observed a challenge in Western IR discipline to describe what the power is. Power was perceived with measurable material figures such as number of soldiers, population, number of annexed territories, economic parameters. The one who had the capability to coerce the other actor would be conceived as powerful. But the recent discussions about the nature of power shift from material basis of power to its intangible structure such as moral, value-laden, cooperative, ideational and cultural factors. If the historical processes of various theoretical debates are examined, only several power paradigms can be observed until 20th century. But 20th century's debates enhanced and increased the number of power perceptions.

In the context of realist and liberal power conception, change of context can easily be observed in the nature of power perception. Realist concept evolved as the World War and Cold War eras lost their blueprints. Realist conception has changed and adopted itself to the new challenges, although it can be claimed that this adoption fell short to meet the requirements of the new environment. Liberal scholars challenged realist perspective and took the power concept out of the realist domain. Liberals contributed to the IR by providing alternative power definitions, sources and means. The military interventions of post-Cold war era hindered the liberal justificastion of power, but liberal context has been adapted to the challenges by inhaling a midway course. Smart power is proposed as a median to both realist hard power and liberal soft power. Consequently the context of power can be assumed by factors such as international political environment and perceived nature of threat that requires a 'flexible' approach to describe its nature. Besides intention of actor should also be credited to asses the efficiency of its power.

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