

Canadian
Forces
College

Collège
des
Forces
Canadiennes



SOME CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES ON POWER

Major Martin Proulx

JCSP 46

Solo Flight

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed remain those of the author and do not represent Department of National Defence or Canadian Forces policy. This paper may not be used without written permission.

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of National Defence, 2020.

PCEMI 46

Solo Flight

Avertissement

Les opinions exprimées n'engagent que leurs auteurs et ne reflètent aucunement des politiques du Ministère de la Défense nationale ou des Forces canadiennes. Ce papier ne peut être reproduit sans autorisation écrite.

© Sa Majesté la Reine du Chef du Canada, représentée par le ministre de la Défense nationale, 2020.

CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE – COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

JCSP 46 – PCEMI 46
2019 - 2020

SOLO FLIGHT

SOME CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES ON POWER

Major Martin Proulx

“This paper was written by a candidate attending the Canadian Forces College in fulfillment of one of the requirements of the Course of Studies. The paper is a scholastic document, and thus contains facts and opinions which the author alone considered appropriate and correct for the subject. It does not necessarily reflect the policy or the opinion of any agency, including the Government of Canada and the Canadian Department of National Defence. This paper may not be released, quoted or copied, except with the express permission of the Canadian Department of National Defence.”

« La présente étude a été rédigée par un stagiaire du Collège des Forces canadiennes pour satisfaire à l'une des exigences du cours. L'étude est un document qui se rapporte au cours et contient donc des faits et des opinions que seul l'auteur considère appropriés et convenables au sujet. Elle ne reflète pas nécessairement la politique ou l'opinion d'un organisme quelconque, y compris le gouvernement du Canada et le ministère de la Défense nationale du Canada. Il est défendu de diffuser, de citer ou de reproduire cette étude sans la permission expresse du ministère de la Défense nationale. »

Word Count : 5,117

Nombre de mots : 5.117

SOME CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES ON POWER

But, as I said at the beginning of this Response, this practice of focusing on some (relevant) aspects and ignoring other (irrelevant) ones is how we have to work with concepts; they are tools that we use to work on a very restricted area of our concerns, and they work well when (and only when) they are appropriate to the matters at hand.¹

-Peter Morriss

Introduction

Power. A widely studied and analysed concept within social sciences, it has been employed to explain relations amongst various actor. Great political theorists including Robert Dahl, Steven Lukes, James March, Peter Morriss, Joseph Nye and David Baldwin to name a few, have expanded on the various aspects of power. The concept of power can be studied from various perspectives. Behavioral, theorist, operational, elitist and pluralist beliefs and theories are only a small segment of thinking which yield broad positions and views on power. Accordingly, the concept is often reviewed, analyzed and debated amongst the academic community, advocating for their respective views in an effort to enhance overall knowledge.

Power, an elusive concept, has often been employed interchangeably with other words like influence, control, authority, force, strength, manipulation and some see it as a synonym of rule².

¹ Morriss, Peter. 2012. "A Response to Pamela Pansardi." *Journal of Political Power* 5 (1): 91-99. doi:10.1080/2158379X.2012.660027. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/2158379X.2012.660027>.: 97

² Lukes, Steven. 2003. *Power*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Limited. p.21; and Baldwin, David A. 1979. "Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends Versus Old Tendencies." *World Politics* 31 (2): 161-194. doi:10.2307/2009941. <https://www-cambridge-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/core/article/power-analysis-and-world-politics-new-trends-versus-old-tendencies/7B639F6FA5AA7F763D183E1626D91CBB>.:163; Tellis, Ashley J., Christopher Layne, Janice L. Bially, and Melissa MacPherson. 2000. *Measuring National Power in the Postindustrial Age*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, The.

The variety of terms employed to explain this concept should be representative of the multiple and often contested views on this topic. Political theorist Robert Dahl has provided one of the first contemporary conceptual explanation of power which is still widely referred to nowadays. He debated that “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do”.³ Working on the same concept, political scientist Joseph Nye addresses power as an “ability to influence the behaviours of other to get the outcome one wants”.⁴ The above mentioned definitions only provide some insight into the multitude of definitions regarding power. Many more definition of power exist however, most infer a relationship between two actors and a desired outcome. However, as the basis of this work, we will refer to Dahl’s definition when addressing power.

Resources and power. Implied in the concept of power are the elements, resources or capabilities required to produce power. Nye refers to it as “possession of capabilities or resources that can influence an outcome”.⁵ Dividing those into two categories of resources, measurable and intangible, his theory brings nuances to the type of power employed to achieve the outcome. He proposes two types of power: hard and soft. Nye contends the importance of resources in the concept of power in the following: “Power is conveyed through resources, whether tangible or

[https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/\[SITE_ID\]/detail.action?docID=3031494](https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/[SITE_ID]/detail.action?docID=3031494).: 9; Kindleberger, Charles Poor. 1970. *Power and Money*. London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.: 56

³ Dahl, Robert A., The Concept of Power, *Behavioral Science*, 2:3 (1957:July): 202.

⁴ Nye, Jr Joseph s. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. NY, NY: PublicAffairs.: 2

⁵ Ibid, 3

intangible”.⁶ However, the multitude of resources, variables and intangibility associated with some makes it challenging to fully evaluate an actor’s power.

Power is relational. Dahl definition infer a relation between both actors. However, this relation, the relation of power is complex and multidimensional. For example, according to political scientist David Baldwin, power can be divided into six major dimensions: “scope, domain, weight, base, means, costs, time, and place”.⁷ To fully understand the complexity of the relation, it must be viewed as an aggregation of multiple variable brought by each actor. While most of the focus is oriented toward actor “A” in the power relationship, grasping the objective or ability of the receiver or “B” must be considered. In this context, Nye proposes that to be successful in the power relationship, one needs to understand the others preference.⁸ Analyzing those multitude of variables makes power situational and non-fungible thus very complex to predict outcomes consistently⁹.

Power in outcomes. The concept of power remains theory, an abstract measure, until it is applied. Lukes present this view as “the difference between potential and actual power, between its possession and its exercise” while Philosopher Michel Foucault argues that “Power only

⁶ Nye, Joseph S. 2011. "Power and Foreign Policy." *Journal of Political Power* 4 (1). doi:10.1080/2158379X.2011.555960. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/2158379X.2011.555960>.: 12

⁷ Baldwin, David A. 2016. *Power and International Relations : A Conceptual Approach*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cfvlibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4333591>.: 50

⁸ Nye, Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*., 2

⁹ Baldwin, David A. 2016. *Power and International Relations : A Conceptual Approach*...., 70

exists when it is put into action".¹⁰ This becomes the actualization of power, the transition from a concept into its application.

In this essay, a narrow view of power will be presented. It will be addressed from a political analysis perspective and it will be argued that national resources are the elements of a country's power and its measurement is complex and cannot serve to anticipate outcomes between two agents. However, once power has been exercised, an agent's true relational value of power can be measured under those specific circumstances. This fine portion of the concept of power will be addressed in three parts producing an interlocking argument by providing amplification on the subject of resources providing power, relational power and outcomes and power.

Chapter 1 – Resources and Power

How does an agent gain power? What elements of a country provide power? The source of power has been long debated amongst political scientists and theorists. In the late 1970's, practitioner turned scholar Ray Cline proposed a simple equation which would serve to calculate a country's power. A five variable equation, it included measurable (population, landmass, economy and military capacity) and non-measurable elements (strategic purpose and will to pursue it). Practically, when applied at the time of the Cold War, Cline's formula identified that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was having double the power of the United

¹⁰ Lukes, Steven. 2003. *Power. ...*, 17 and; Foucault, Michel. 1982. "The Subject and Power." *Critical Inquiry* 8 (4): 777. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/docview/1297306604?accountid=9867>. p.788

States (US).¹¹ With this thinking, power would become fungible and outcome of interactions between actors should become predictable. In this case, the USSR should have been victorious the over the US. Noting the outcome of the Cold War, both Nye and Baldwin have been critical of this limited approach in analyzing power.¹² Over a quarter of a century later, a RAND study identified, in the international system, the most important variables include population, human capital, economy, technological prowess and military capabilities demonstrating limited consideration posed to the multitude sources of power.¹³

From Dahl's definition, one must understand what are the components of power in his concept of "A power over B[...]"¹⁴ Analyzing power, it can be argued that an actor's resources are part of its strength . These strengths, matched with a strategy, provide actors the ability, or a possession of means to do something.¹⁵ In this section, a theory regarding the transition of resource into power will be proposed. Resources, through strategy, create abilities (resources + strategy = abilities). However, these abilities remain a potential, unacheived potential, until they are met with a purpose and an opportunity to become power and effectivelly accomplish an objective (abilities + purpose + opportunity = power). It is at that point that resources have been transformed into power. When looking at power, while some of its parts can be measured, the

¹¹ Melbourne, Roy. 1979. "Ray S. Cline. World Power Assessment 1977: A Calculus of Strategic Drift. Pp. Ix, 206. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977. \$12.95. Melvin A. Conant and Fern Racine Gold. the Geopolitics of Energy. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978. \$20.00." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 442 (1): 140

¹² Baldwin, David A. 1979. "Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends Versus Old Tendencies." ...,173; and, Nye, Joseph S. 2011. "Power and Foreign Policy."..., 10

¹³ Treverton, Gregory F., Jones Seth G. 2005. *Measuring National Power* . United States: Rand Corporation.: 5

¹⁴ Dahl, Robert A., *The Concept of Power*, ..., 202.

¹⁵ "Lexico." <https://www.lexico.com>., accessed Apr 16, 2020, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/>.

overall aggregation of various resources to create powers compounds the system's complexity thus making it unfeasible to calculate.

In order to have a good comprehension of the concept of power, an explanation of resources is required. In his concept, Dahl explains that the basis of an actor's power are their resources.¹⁶ Nye, amongst other, expand on the resources yielding power. These resources, or means, can be divided into producing two types of power categories: hard and soft. Under those categories, he infers that measurable resources, such as population, territory, economic strength and military forces produce hard power¹⁷. In international relations, those elements are often cited and referred to by analysts when measuring sources of power. However, as we learned from Cline's power formula, limiting one's view on the aggregate value of those quantifiable resources can yield false understanding of power.

Complementing to measurable resources are those resources which are intangible, unquantifiable, which can produce soft power. Continuing with Nye's concept, he identifies three sources creating Soft power: "culture, political values and foreign policy". He enumerates them as "institutions, ideas, values, culture, and perceived legitimacy of policies".¹⁸ Calculation of these resources, to evaluate how much of it a specific actor possesses, is unfeasible. This impossibility in measuring these resources is due to two main factors. First, the impracticality in

¹⁶ Dahl, Robert A., *The Concept of Power...*, 203.

¹⁷ Nye, Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. ..., 5

¹⁸ Nye, Joseph S. 2011. "Power and Foreign Policy." ..., 19

measuring attractiveness and second, one must have an understanding of the recipient or subject perspective regarding those resources.¹⁹ The value of the resources yielding soft power, or attractiveness to those resources, is given by the recipient. Therefore, the value will be subjective and fluctuate for one actor to another. Even if sentiments towards these resources could be calculated, and owing to the large amount of actors, it would engender a countless amount of variables to be considered. This would make impossible build an equation robust enough to be a true representation of the resource's value. To better understand the relation between resources, or means and power, one must understand the concept of strength, strategies and abilities.

The resources, or means, are both tangible and intangible and should be considered as an actor's strength which has yet to be converted into power. To expand the concept of strength, economic historian Charles Kindleberger, provides a great explanation between strengths and power.

Kindleberger argues that "strength as a means which exists independently of whether it is used to assert or achieve control over policies of other countries"²⁰. These resources become a possession of an actor means' or a potential ability to do something. It could be argued that not all resources are strengths. Not all actors have access to the same resources or transfer all of their resources to create strengths. At this point, strengths should be considered a component of an actor's power. However, strengths must be matched with a strategy to become an ability.

¹⁹ *The Routledge Handbook of Soft Power* 2016., edited by Naren Chitty, Li Ji, Gary D. Rawnsley, Craig Hayden and John Simons. London: Routledge. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cfvlibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4732464>.: 82

²⁰ Kindleberger, Charles Poor. 1970. *Power and Money...*, 56

Strategy is an essential element in the conversion of resources into power. Its importance stems from the fact that resources are limited thus choices regarding which resources will be favoured, or prioritized, over others will lead to an actor's power. Nye alludes to "power conversion when getting resources to outcomes".²¹ The conversion of resources into power requires strategies to ensure they meet the desired outcome.²² Other than leadership, Nye does not provide any other sources of strategies in the resource to power conversion.²³ It could be argued that these strategies could consider the policies, the management, the level and type of means associated with the transformation of those resources, to name a few. The result of the conversion of resources, through strategy, is an actor's abilities.

The ability of an actor is not a synonym of power but should be considered as one of its components. The concept of ability should be viewed as a possibility, a latent capability regarding the application of the resources. In line with this view, political scientist Pamela Pansardi proposes that abilities of an actor are "all the basic actions or strings of basic actions that an individual can perform".²⁴ Peter Morriss provides an amplification to the meaning of ability: "it could only be possessed by an agent, capable of deciding whether to exercise the ability or not".²⁵ While Pansardi proposes actions that an actor can perform, Morriss proposes a

²¹ Nye, Joseph S. 2011. "Power and Foreign Policy." ..., 12

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Pansardi, Pamela. 2012. "Power to and Power Over: Two Distinct Concepts of Power?" *Journal of Political Power* 5 (1): 73-89. doi:10.1080/2158379X.2012.658278. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/2158379X.2012.658278>.: 78

²⁵ Morriss, Peter. 2012. "A Response to Pamela Pansardi." ..., 97

range of decisions required regarding when actor might decide to employ, or not, these actions. Therefore, having abilities is not enough in the equation of power, there needs to be a decision regarding its employment. The decisions regarding the employment of an ability should factor the opportunity and the purpose of the ability. This ability of an actor is disassociated from the opportunity and a purpose to employ the resource. But both opportunity and purpose must be considered when viewing an actor's components of power.

The power of an actor can be identified when the ability and the opportunity, or "a set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something"²⁶, to employ the ability against another actor is present. Pansardi explains the following differences when looking at abilities and opportunities: "The abilities of an individual are to be seen as constituting a basis for her power, but are not equivalent to her power, since her power is specifically shaped by her opportunity context"²⁷. Agreeing with Pansardi, an actor needs the opportunity, the right circumstances, to employ their abilities. It could be advanced that, to be successful in the employment of an ability, an actor will choose, or create, an opportunity which will grant them the greatest chance of achieving their objective. Thus, opportunity becomes a requirement of power, along with the abilities of the actor. Leaving the last component of power, purpose.

²⁶ "Lexico." <https://www.lexico.com>., accessed Apr 16, 2020, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/>

²⁷ Pansardi, Pamela. 2012. "Power to and Power Over: Two Distinct Concepts of Power?" ..., 82

An actor's purpose, or "the reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists"²⁸, must be addressed as a constituent of power. Concurring with Baldwin, he presents that the element of purpose cannot be completely be absent when looking at power. He refutes Kindleberger who claims that power "does not imply purpose" and identifies "[t]he weakness in Kindleberger's concept of power is that he implies that power can be divorced completely from goals or purposes".²⁹ In the context of analyzing the components of power, "A" must have a reason to use its abilities over "B". These reasons are to meet an objective set by "A". It could also be argued that purpose links to strategies in converting resources in abilities to meet an objective. This would be the case in the event that resources are limited thus maximizing those is required to meet that objective. Under this perspective, purpose should be considered as a component of power.

To summarize the components of power, resources and strategies are the components of an actor's ability. Once an actor has established its abilities, opportunity and purpose are considered and will develop into an actor's power. In international relations, evaluating a country's power is extremely challenging. Currently, there are many index systems in the world measuring various data with the objective to establish a country's power. However, Baldwin identified the issue stemming from those is "relational concept of power would immediately encounter the difficulties flowing from the multidimensionality of power and the lack of a

²⁸ "Lexico." <https://www.lexico.com/>, accessed Apr 16, 2020, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/>.

²⁹ Baldwin, David A. 1979. "Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends Versus Old Tendencies...", 173

standardized measure of value in terms of which these dimensions could be expressed”.³⁰ The various index each provide a different measurements proving that various resources generating abilities combined with the intangibility of soft resources provides an incalculable amount of possibilities. While some of an actor’s resources can be calculated, owing to the different intangible variables in portion of the resources, in strategies, opportunity and purpose, an actor’s power can be difficult or impossible to assess. Even Dahl pointed out the complexity of ranking the actors on power: “Assuming that one has power comparability, the next problem is to rank every actor whose rank is relevant to the research. Here we ran into practical problem of great magnitude.”³¹ Therefor, the concept of power remains conceptual and a poor indicator in measuring outcomes.

Chapter 2 – Relational Power

The previous chapter presented the components on an actor’s power. However, to fully explain power, it must be viewed as a relational concept, or “concerning the way in which two or more people or things are connected”.³² When examining power through Dahl’s definition, “A has power over B”, it implies a connection between A and B.³³ This connection, this relation, the power of A over B, can be multi-faceted. It could range from beneficence to a relationship of domination amongst the two actors. Furthermore, this relationship should not be considered fungible, or “able to replace or be replaced by another identical item; mutually

³⁰ Baldwin, David A. 2016. *Power and International Relations : A Conceptual Approach...*, 112

³¹ Dahl, Robert A., *The Concept of Power...*, 209

³² "Lexico." <https://www.lexico.com>., accessed Apr 16, 2020, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/>.

³³ Dahl, Robert A., *The Concept of Power...*, 202.

interchangeable”.³⁴ To have a greater understanding of power, this chapter will initially explore the types of relationships between two actors. Then it will address the fact that power is not interchangeable, or fungible, by arguing that an actor’s power is limited by the recipient, the situations and time.

Power is a relational concept and much analysis has been done to explain this notion of relation between two actors. To ascertain the importance of the relation in the concept of power, Morriss states: “[I]gnoring cases of power that do not involve others, precisely because that is not what interests us in the social sciences.”³⁵ Progressing to the argument, it can be contended that a broad range of relations can exist between two actors. When looking at power, it is best done by referencing Dahl’s definition which makes reference of those two actors as “A” as the main actor and “B” as the receiver of power. Both of these actors are in a power relationship. Morriss states that “[...] power is something that one can do that does rely in some way on the presence of others; it requires some sort of a social or interpersonal relation”.³⁶ Similarly, Foucault presents power as more than a relation: “The exercise of power is not simply a relationship between partners, individuals, collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify others”.³⁷ This view proposes that the relationship where there is a change in behaviour. In analysing Dahl’s definition of power, some might view the perspective of “power over” as requiring a

³⁴ "Lexico." <https://www.lexico.com/>, accessed Apr 16, 2020, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/>.

³⁵ Morriss, Peter. 2012. "A Response to Pamela Pansardi." *Journal of Political Power* 5 (1): 91-99. doi:10.1080/2158379X.2012.660027. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/2158379X.2012.660027>.p.96

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Foucault, Michel. 1982. "The Subject and Power." ..., 788

forceful behaviour from “A” in order for “B” to do something that it would not otherwise do. It implies that “B” is averse to the behaviour from “A”, where “B” will not benefit from “A”.

However, the power relation between two actors is more complex and nuanced. When analyzing “A”, there are a list of behaviours that can be applied on “B”. Nye present these lists of behaviours under a spectrum, ranging from command and coercion to co-opt and attraction.

These range of actions include the employment of military forces, to the application of negative (sanctions) or positive (payment) economic pressures to having a culture and policies that are attractive to the recipient. Associated with these behaviours are a multitude of abilities can apply ranging from hard to soft power, or a mix of both.³⁸ Viewed in this context, “A” has a broad range of capabilities available to exercise its power over “B”. Baldwin expands this view of power as a relational concept through: “power is never inherent in properties of A, but rather inheres in the actual or potential relationship between A's properties and B's value system”.³⁹ When studying the power relationship, one must not solely focus on “A” but also examine “B”, as the recipient of power, and how it will influence the relation.

In relations, the recipient of power, “B”, is an active participant. Reinforcing the concept of power as a relation, “B” has an impact on “A’s” ability to achieve its outcome. Dahl understands and acknowledges the participation of “B” when elaborating his concept. He addresses this part when enumerating the five elements of power comparison and refers to the *scope* when looking

³⁸ Nye, Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. NY, NY: PublicAffairs. p.8

³⁹ Baldwin, David A. 1979. "Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends Versus Old Tendencies." ..., 171

at the recipient of power. He refers to scope as “B’s response”.⁴⁰ In understanding “B”, the recipient of power, one should note the actor’s resistance, and its impact, to “A’s” power. Nye indicates the importance of considering “B” when seeking to change the behaviour: “When we measure power in terms of changed behaviour of others, we have first to know their preference”.⁴¹ This will have an impact on which resources “A” must employ and have an effect on the outcome. Baldwin makes encapsulates this view in his work: “If B's perceptions, values, and skills are such as to make it impossible for A to influence him, then putative power should never have been attributed to A in the first place.”⁴² To be considered a power relationship, there must be at least two actors with one being the recipient of power. And to have a successful power relationship, for “A” to have power over “B”, it is best to understand the recipient preference and resources. This understanding will increase the chances of compliance, therefore, of success of “A” in the power relationship. In this chapter, thus far, it has been established that power is a relation between two actors. It has also been established that understanding the power relationship requires grasping power of both actors. However, this power relationship is not enduring, and it cannot be assumed that it will continuously have the same outcome. This understanding should be considered ephemeral and power should not be thought as fungible.

Power is not a fungible. Something that is fungible is referred as a good or something that is “mutually interchangeable”. Baldwin indicates that “[f]ungibility refers to the ease with which

⁴⁰ Dahl, Robert A., *The Concept of Power...*, 203, 206.

⁴¹ Nye, Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics...*, 2

⁴² Baldwin, David A. 1979. "Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends Versus Old Tendencies." ..., 171

power resources useful in one issue-area can be used in other issue-areas".⁴³ A resource that is fungible can be viewed as convertible, or something that can be exchanged or substituted. Explained differently, when looking into economic terms, money is most likely the most fungible resource however, even it has its limit.⁴⁴ In an international relation context, power of a country cannot be rationalized, quantified to anticipate an outcome. Nye points out "power in one relationship or context may not produce it in another."⁴⁵ If power could be fungible, it could be argued that Cline's equation could serve to measure the power of an actor and anticipate outcomes, which it cannot do consistently.

It could be argued that power is not fungible for multiple reasons. Two of those reasons have already been addressed. Chapter one presents the challenges in calculating an actor's power. If the value of power cannot be assessed, how can its value be measured. And, in this chapter two, thus far, it was presented that power is a relation between two actors. Therefore, one must account for both actor's power when looking at the relationship, compounding the overall calculation of power. Two other considerations must be viewed when assessing an actor's power: time and situation. Both of these considerations affect and can change an actor's power. Nye presents that power is constantly fluctuating: "[t]he value of power is not fixed and changes over time and is situational".⁴⁶ This increases the power calculation challenge and these two factors will be the focus for the remainder of this chapter.

⁴³ Baldwin, David A. 2016. *Power and International Relations: A Conceptual Approach...*, 70

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Nye, Joseph S. 2011. "Power and Foreign Policy." ..., 9

⁴⁶ Nye, Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics...*, 2

An actor's power is dependent of the situation. In Nye's words, "Power is relative to the context - what might give power in one situation might not in another (in different part of the world at the same time)".⁴⁷ When looking at a fix period in time, an actor's might have the power over an actor but not another. Explaining dependence of power on the situation, consider the US in the early 1960's. In that time period, the US and USSR were facing each other in the Cold War. While neither countries were winning, neither were loosing this confrontation. However, in the same time period, the US sought to dispose of Fidel Castro, the new Cuban leader. However, the US, and it power, was unable to succeed in a regime change in the small Carrabean island. Therefor, in this example, the same country, which maintained the same power, was in a stalemate against one actor and unable to yeild the power necessary to dispose the Cuban state leader. This provides a concrete example of how power is dependant of the situation.

Time is the last factor to consider regarding power and its lack of fungibility. Nye summarize this view: "[Power] is relative in time. In previous time it might be different then today (in the same part of the world in different times)."⁴⁸ Described differently, the elements that were deemed powerful in past times might not yield the same power nowadays. Examining the aspect of power and time through the aspect of pre and post industrial democracies. It could be argued that pre and post industrial democracies have changed their views of power. While military

⁴⁷ Nye, Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics...*, 12

⁴⁸ Ibid, 2

power was the main element of a country's power in pre-industrial democracies, welfare has been the focus in post-industrial times.⁴⁹ Under this example, military and welfare are the elements of power examined over a period of time, the value of military power has diminished and the value of welfare has increased. Time and elements of power are closely linked, thus the power value of an element is likely to change over time.

This chapter explored the relativity of power. This relativity is multi-dimensional and must account, at a minimum, at the recipient of power, the situation and time when evaluating one's power. This relativity illustrates that power is not fungible, where employment in one situation, over one actor at a set time will yield the same power balance with another actor in a different situation in another time.

Chapter 3 – Outcomes and power

The previous portions of this paper focused on analysing the concept of power by understanding its components and its relation between actors. It has been established that the measurement of power is complex and cannot be precise. Furthermore, power is not fungible, where it can be applied equally between situations and obtain the same result. The previous chapters have looked at power as a potential, a hypothetical concept. In this last chapter, it will be argued that an actor's power is only a potential until it is applied. And, only upon its application, the true value of an actor's power can be established.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 19

An actor's accumulation of resources, or abilities, and its transformation into power remains a potential until relation has been completed. Based on Dahl's definition, this can be described as "A" get "B to do something that B would not otherwise do". Nye points out the danger of associating power and outcomes: "When people define power as synonymous with the resources that (may) produce outcomes, they often encounter the paradox that those best endowed with power do not always get the outcomes they want."⁵⁰ He also presents the difference between potential power and outcomes when arguing soft power in the following: "the gap between power measured as resources and power judged as the outcome of behaviour is not unique to soft power"⁵¹. In the employment of "not unique to soft power", it could be suggested that the statement could also apply to hard power components equally. Therefore, this gap between measuring potential power and exercised power will always be existent. In light of this statement, it could be claimed that an agent's resources and power may not be equivalent to the actual result or outcome. Therefore, actors would be ill advised to anticipate outcome based on their resources. Philosopher Michel Foucault, in his work "The Subject of Power", expands on power and its exercise stating: "[p]ower only exist when it is put into action".⁵² Similarly, Lukes points out that "[t]o exercise power is to perform actions".⁵³ Both academics propose power as an action. Aggregating Nye, Foucault and Lukes views, it can be suggested that power must be employed to achieve outcome, otherwise it is not power. However, it can be caveated that not all power

⁵⁰ Nye, Joseph S. 2011. "Power and Foreign Policy." ..., 12

⁵¹ Nye, Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*..., 6

⁵² Foucault, Michel. 1982. "The Subject and Power." ..., 788

⁵³ Lukes, Steven. 2003. *Power*..., 77

will have the anticipated result. The lack of anticipated result lends itself to the fact that power should not be considered fungible. Therefore, power must be exercised and only through its exercise the real power of an actor can be established. Closing this argument with a World War II example, it also interconnects the concept of power as being relational in time. Consider France, Britain and Germany in 1940. Both France and Britain combined, were identified as having more tanks than Germany but yet, were amassing a significant amount of losses at the hand of Germany in the early years of the war. This example provides clarity on the concept that abilities are not power and that an actor needs to act on those abilities to be considered power. It also prepares the next consideration regarding power: the true value of power can only be recognized at the conclusion of the power relation.

The amount of power an actor has over another remains only a potential, a capability, until the power has been actualized. That is to say, the true value of an actor cannot be established until he has exercised its power. Referring to Dahl's definition of power, this exercise would occur when actor "A" has used its power over actor "B" to achieve its objective. It could be argued that the outcome, the result of the achievement of the intended objective, is the true measure of power in a relation. M. Wohlforth, points out: "A relationship of power can never be known until after power is exercised".⁵⁴ Political Scientist Jack Nagel suggests there is a difference between a preferred and real outcome. He stipulates: "an actual or potential causal relation between the

⁵⁴ Wohlforth, William. 1993. *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions during the Cold War*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. p. 4, 10

preferences of an actor regarding an outcome and the outcome itself".⁵⁵ Returning to our previous World War II example, it could have been anticipated that France and Britain's numerical superiority of tanks could have been a predictor of a winning outcome. However, this case illustrates that the true power in 1940, between France, Britain and Germany, was held by the latter. This view of power, examining the power of an actor after the actions is called *ex post*. It can be argued that, from this position, true power of an actor over another can be established. All power comparison before an action, or *ex ante*, can only be considered as potential and can only serve as a hypothetical understanding of the outcome.⁵⁶

Power between two actors should be considered potential until it has been exercised. When the power relationship has been completed, or *ex post*, there can be a real understanding of the actor's real power. Practically, international relations analysts' formulation of complex mathematical equations and indexes to calculate an actor's power should not be used to predict the outcome of power relations. Understanding and predicting a country's power, through building power indexes based on national resources, should be seen as a misjudgement.

Conclusion

Power is an elusive concept. Many great academics and practitioners from various fields have elaborated and expanded on this broad subject. Views on this subject is varied and consensus is

⁵⁵ Nagel, Jack H. 1975. *The Descriptive Analysis of Power*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

⁵⁶ Nye, Joseph S. 2011. "Power and Foreign Policy."..., 12

difficult to achieve. This paper only offers a small perspective on the topic of power. It argued that resources are not synonymous with power and there is a conversion process the former to become the latter. It could be said that the transformation process is a critical step in the conversion of resources into power. The outcome of this conversion is the amount of power it will have. However, calculating power is impossible. While there are tangible resources, intangible resources of power (policies, culture, etc.) are rendering the process much more complicated. Furthermore, the infinite number of possibilities when aggregating the various resources, its calculation during the transformation into power exacerbate the issue.

The concept of power is relational. It is relational to other actors where two actors can measure their relative power to one another and anticipate an outcome. But power is also relational to situations and time. This relational perspective of power makes it fix in those three elements (actor, time, situation). Therefore, the relation of power cannot be transferable, or considered fungible between any of those three elements. Practically, power in one relation will unlikely yield the same power in another situation.

Noting the various country assessment and power indexes placing much emphasis on building, understanding and measuring power, it only accounts for the potential power of an actor. The real power can only be measured, between two actors, at the conclusion of the power relationship. The actor with the most power will be the victor of the power relationship. This

winner might not be the actor which was assessed as having more power at the onset of the relation therefor demonstrating that true power cannot be calculated at the onset of the relationship.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "Lexico." <https://www.lexico.com>., accessed Apr 16, 2020, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/>.
- The Routledge Handbook of Soft Power* 2016., edited by Naren Chitty, Li Ji, Gary D. Rawnsley, Craig Hayden and John Simons. London: Routledge. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cfvlibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4732464>.
- Bachrach, Peter and Morton S. Baratz. 1962. "Two Faces of Power." *American Political Science Review* 56 (4): 947-952. doi:10.2307/1952796. <https://www-cambridge-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/core/article/two-faces-of-power/0642CFB6AFD6EBF4312DF34CF1556671>.
- Baldwin, David A. 2015. "Misinterpreting Dahl on Power." *Journal of Political Power* 8 (2): 209-227. doi:10.1080/2158379X.2015.1055950. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/2158379X.2015.1055950>.
- . 1979. "Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends Versus Old Tendencies." *World Politics* 31 (2): 161-194. doi:10.2307/2009941. <https://www-cambridge-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/core/article/power-analysis-and-world-politics-new-trends-versus-old-tendencies/7B639F6FA5AA7F763D183E1626D91CBB>.
- . 2016. *Power and International Relations: A Conceptual Approach*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cfvlibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4333591>.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1957. "The Concept of Power." *Behavioral Science* 2 (3): 201. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/docview/1301269515?accountid=9867>.
- Foucault, Michel. 1982. "The Subject and Power." *Critical Inquiry* 8 (4): 777. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/docview/1297306604?accountid=9867>.
- Haugaard, Mark. 2017. "Power-to, Power-Over, Resistance and Domination: An Editorial." *Journal of Political Power* 10 (3): 271-273. doi:10.1080/2158379X.2017.1384227. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/2158379X.2017.1384227>.
- Havel, Václav. 2018. "The Power of the Powerless." *East European Politics and Societies* 32 (2): 353-408. doi:10.1177/0888325418766625. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0888325418766625>.
- Kindleberger, Charles Poor. 1970. *Power and Money*. London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Lukes, Steven. 2003. *Power*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Limited.
- . 2005. *Power: A Radical View*, edited by null. Vol. null.
- Melbourne, Roy. 1979. "Ray S. Cline. World Power Assessment 1977: A Calculus of Strategic Drift. Pp. Ix, 206. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977. \$12.95. Melvin A. Conant and Fern Racine Gold. the Geopolitics of Energy. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978. \$20.00." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 442 (1): 140-141.
- Morriss, P., S. Clegg, and M. Haugaard. 2009. *Handbook of Power*, edited by null. Vol. null.
- Morriss, Peter. 2002. *Power: A Philosophical Analysis*, edited by null. Vol. null.
- . 2012. "A Response to Pamela Pansardi." *Journal of Political Power* 5 (1): 91-99. doi:10.1080/2158379X.2012.660027. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/2158379X.2012.660027>.
- . 2006. "Steven Lukes on the Concept of Power." *Political Studies Review* 4 (2): 124-135. doi:10.1111/j.1478-9299.2006.000104.x. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1478-9299.2006.000104.x>.
- Nagel, Jack H. 1975. *The Descriptive Analysis of Power*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Nye, Joseph S. 2011. "Power and Foreign Policy." *Journal of Political Power* 4 (1): 9-24. doi:10.1080/2158379X.2011.555960. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/2158379X.2011.555960>.
- Nye, Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. NY, NY: PublicAffairs.
- Pansardi, Pamela. 2012a. "On Abilities and Power again: A Reply to Peter Morriss." *Journal of Political Power* 5 (3): 493-497. doi:10.1080/2158379X.2012.735120. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/2158379X.2012.735120>.
- . 2012b. "Power to and Power Over: Two Distinct Concepts of Power?" *Journal of Political Power* 5 (1): 73-89. doi:10.1080/2158379X.2012.658278. <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/2158379X.2012.658278>.
- Tellis, Ashley J., Christopher Layne, Janice L. Bially, and Melissa MacPherson. 2000. *Measuring National Power in the Postindustrial Age*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, The. [https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/\[SITE_ID\]/detail.action?docID=3031494](https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/[SITE_ID]/detail.action?docID=3031494).
- Treverton, Gregory F., Jones Seth G. 2005. *Measuring National Power*. United States: Rand Corporation.

Wohlforth, William. 1993. *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions during the Cold War*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press.