POWER

AND

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

DAVID A. BALDWIN

POWER AND

INTERNATIONAL

RELATIONS

POWER AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A Conceptual Approach

David A. Baldwin

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

Princeton and Oxford

For Helen, who makes it all worthwhile

Four things that give mankind a shove
Are threats, exchange, persuasion, love;
But taken in the wrong proportions
These give us cultural abortions,
For threats bring manifold abuses
In games where everybody loses;
Exchange enriches every nation
But leads to dangerous alienation;
Persuaders organize their brothers
But fool themselves as well as others;
And love, with longer pull than hate,
Is slow indeed to propagate. (Boulding 1963, 434)

Contents

Preface

> In the science game it is important to be prepared to define one's concepts because the querulous answer to questions about definitions which one so often hears from social scientists, namely, "You know what I mean," is almost always precisely false. (Levy 1969, 99)

The origin of this book can be traced back more than forty years, especially to a sabbatical year spent at the London School of Economics and Political Science (1969–70). Although I had used Robert Dahl's work on power in my first book and some early articles, I did not seriously engage the social power literature until 1969, when I stumbled across a book entitled *Political Power: A Reader in Theory and Research*, edited by Roderick Bell, David V. Edwards, and R. Harrison Wagner, in The Economists' Bookshop. One never knows what will come of browsing. I was immediately struck by the subtlety and sophistication of the social power literature as compared to the treatment of power in the international relations literature. Thus began a year of research on the concept of power that led to the publication of five articles in 1971. During subsequent years, I wrote a number of additional articles on various aspects of power, some of which were published together in book form in 1989. To some extent, this book attempts to draw together, integrate, build upon, and revise ideas about power developed since 1970.

A second important source of the ideas expressed in this book is a graduate "Colloquium on World Politics" (G8842), which I taught for fifteen years at Columbia University—a course nicknamed "the power course" by the graduate students. The basic idea of the course was similar to the basic idea of this book, that is, to bring the ideas in the social power literature developed by political scientists, economists, psychologists, philosophers, sociologists, geographers, and mathematicians to bear on theories of international relations. Over the years, the graduate students debated, challenged, and refined my thinking about power and international relations. (Columbia graduate students are not a passive lot.) A number of these students have gone on to make contributions of their own to the literature on power. I hesitate to name them for fear of leaving someone out.

Younger scholars may be puzzled by this book and find it old-fashioned. There are no case studies, no large-n data sets, no regressions, no algebraic formulas, and no tests of empirical hypotheses. Although these devices have made important contributions to understanding international relations, they do not suffice. In addition, clear concepts are needed. Thus, the focal point of this book is conceptual analysis rather than empirical work or theory construction. Before one can construct measures of power or a theory of power, one must have a clear understanding of what is to be measured and what is to be theorized.

Younger scholars may also find it odd that there are so many references to works written more than ten years ago. An obvious reason for this is that one purpose of this book is to trace the evolution of the concept of power in international relations theory since World War I. There are, however, additional reasons. Jacob Viner used to point to three reasons to pay attention to the history of thought: (1) There may be some good ideas in the older literature. In other words, the older scholars may have gotten some things right. For example, the works of Harold Lasswell, Ernst Haas, Arnold Wolfers, Harold and Margaret Sprout, Inis L. Claude, Kenneth Boulding, Quincy Wright, and others contain insights that retain their relevance

x

today.[1] (2) One wants to avoid reinventing the wheel and, more importantly, avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.[2] Recognizing original thinking in any discipline is difficult without knowledge of disciplinary history. It is difficult to "stand on the shoulders of giants" if one does not know who the giants are. (3) Finally, setting the record straight with respect to the intellectual history of a discipline has value in and of itself. An additional reason is that "the history of thought on the subject of power," as Kenneth Boulding points out, "has been very little studied by comparison, for instance, with the history of economic thought" (1989, 9).

From a stylistic viewpoint, the scarcity of first-person pronouns will strike many as odd. I am aware that the taboo on such pronouns has virtually withered away, but I do not condone it. Scholarship is not a matter of splattering one's personal opinions all over the page; there is a difference between scholarship and op-ed pieces. I am also aware that some scholars have come to view the use of the third person as an attempt to deceive readers by concealing one's personal biases behind a façade of feigned objectivity. Although I do not claim to be able to keep my personal biases from influencing my writing, I do not regard this as a justifiable excuse for not trying to do so.

Some readers may be tempted to suspect that my ill-concealed admiration for the work of the late Robert Dahl arises from some personal relationship with him. Other than a perfunctory handshake at a professional meeting, however, I never had a personal relationship with him. I was never his student, his colleague, or his coauthor. Rightly or wrongly, my admiration for his work is based solely on intellectual grounds. Robert Dahl was to the discipline of political science what John Maynard Keynes was to the discipline of economics. Just as Keynes was arguably *the*

---

1   The Presidential Address at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, for example, builds on earlier work by the Sprouts (Starr 2013).

2   For example, see the treatment of "interdependence" by IR scholars in the 1970s discussed in Chapter 7, pages 157–61.

great economist of the twentieth century, so Dahl was arguably *the* great political scientist of that century.

Older scholars are likely to note that the title of this book has been borrowed from my former teacher, Inis L. Claude Jr., who published a magnificent book with this title fifty years ago. Although he died recently, I would like to think that he would interpret my borrowing of his title as the tribute it is meant to be.

In a career of more than fifty years, one accumulates many intellectual debts, far too many to be acknowledged here. They include, but are not limited to, former colleagues at Dartmouth College and Columbia University and current colleagues at Princeton University. Frederick Frey generously allowed me to share draft chapters of his book on power with my Columbia graduate students. His vast knowledge of the literature on power and his incisive analysis thereof are unmatched by any scholar I have ever met. That his book remains unpublished is a great loss to the scholarly community. I am also indebted to Torben P. Behmer, James W. Davis, Giulio Gallarotti, Stefano Guzzini, Ethan Kapstein, Robert O. Keohane, Helen V. Milner, Joseph S. Nye Jr., Bruce Stinebrickner, and Richard Winters, who read all or parts of the manuscript and provided helpful comments. My most important intellectual debt, however, is to the students in "the power course" at Columbia, especially Patricia Weitsman, whose promising career was recently cut short by her death at too young an age.

Throughout the gestation period for this book, Rachel Morales provided logistical support, and Helen Milner provided inspiration, criticism, encouragement, and emotional support—all critical ingredients of any book-writing project.

POWER AND

INTERNATIONAL

RELATIONS

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

https://vk.com/readinglecture

The word *power*, when used in a political sense, appears to signify the possession of the means of influencing the will of another, either by persuasion or threats; or of constraining his person by the application of physical force.

—George Cornewall Lewis, *Remarks on the Use and Abuse of Some Political Terms* (Lewis 1970 [1832], 227)

Power Analysis: Important, Difficult, and Recent

The concept of power has been described as "perhaps the most fundamental in the whole of political science" (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950, 75) and as "the most important single idea in political theory" (Elster 1976, 249). Countless other political scientists have made similar comments about the importance of power to the discipline.

In 2002, the newly installed editor of the *American Political Science Review* observed that "any real coherence in political science exists only at the broadest conceptual level, in the form of our widely shared interest in power" (Sigelman 2002, viii). In 2006 and again in 2013 *power* provided the theme for the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.

1

Widespread agreement that power is important, however, does not mean that there is equally widespread agreement on how to define the term or similar "power terms," such as control, influence, persuasion, authority, coercion, and so on. Robert A. Dahl noted this lack of agreement at the beginning of his seminal article "The Concept of Power" in 1957, and nearly fifty years later, observed that "unfortunately, in neither ordinary language nor political analysis is there agreement on the definition and usage of what might be called 'influence terms'" (Dahl and Stinebrickner 2003, 12), Steven Lukes, the author of a widely cited study of power published in 1974, wrote thirty years later that even "among those who have reflected on the matter, there is no agreement about how to define it, how to conceive it, how to study it, . . . [or] how to measure it" (2005, 61). Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye refer to power as "an elusive concept" (1977, 11). Hans J. Morgenthau (1964, 27n) suggests that "the concept of political power poses one of the most difficult and controversial problems of political science." Kenneth N. Waltz (1986, 333) views power as a key concept in realist theories of international politics, while conceding that "its proper definition remains a matter of controversy." Robert Gilpin (1981, 13) describes the concept of power as "one of the most troublesome in the field of international relations" and complains that the "number and variety of definitions should be an embarrassment to political scientists" (1975, 24).

Despite the numerous political thinkers who have used the concept of power down through the ages, including Thucydides, Kautilya, Aristotle, Machiavelli, and Hobbes, little attention was devoted to explicating the concept by anyone other than Hobbes before the twentieth century. Before World War II, this began to change, with contributions by Max Weber (1947 [1922]), George E. G. Catlin (1927), Charles Merriam (1934), Bertrand Russell (1938), and Harold Lasswell (1936). The most important turning point, however, came with the publication of Lasswell and Kaplan's *Power and Society* in 1950. In what could be described as a veritable *revolution in power analysis*, a number of other scholars quickly built on the conceptual foundation laid by Lasswell and Kaplan. This group included Herbert Simon (1953, 1954, 1957), James G. March (1955, 1956, 1957), and Robert Dahl (1957), among others.

During the last half of the twentieth century, contributions to the rigorous and systematic study of power came from scholars in a wide variety of disciplines, including sociology, economics, psychology, geography, and philosophy, as well as political science. In 2003, Dahl and Stinebrickner observed that "the last half century has probably witnessed more systematic efforts to define these [power] concepts than the previous millennia of political thought. As a result, there has been a considerable improvement in the clarity of the concepts" (12).

Although there were many points of disagreement, scholars working in the tradition of Lasswell and Kaplan, Dahl, Simon, and March agreed on at least four points: first, that power was a causal concept; second, that power should be viewed as a relational concept rather than a property concept; third, that power was a multidimensional concept; and fourth, that the bases of power were many and varied, with no permanent hierarchy among them.[1] These points and their implications for power analysis will be discussed in following chapters.

Purposes of the Study

This study has three main purposes: The first is to clarify and explicate Dahl's concept of power. This is the concept of power most familiar to political scientists, the one most criticized, and the one most likely to be mischaracterized. What now passes for "conventional wisdom" with respect to Dahl's concept of power goes something like the following: "It is primitive, narrow, restrictive, one-dimensional, pluralist, confined to overt conflict of preferences, based on compulsion, unable to account for agenda control or control over *B*'s wants, and has been superseded by more inclusive, more sophisticated, more nuanced, concepts that yield deeper understanding." This narrative is misleading in almost every respect. Why does this matter? Although Dahl's concept of power and the ensuing debate over community power

---

1   In this book these four points will often be referred to as the *Dahlian concept of power* or the *relational concept of power*.

date back more than fifty years, contemporary scholars continue to anchor their discussions of power with references to that literature. It is thus imperative to be clear as to the nature of this intellectual anchor.

The second purpose of this study is to examine twelve controversial issues in power analysis. The goal is not so much to settle these issues as it is to alert the reader to their existence and to the need to come to terms with them.

The third purpose is to describe and analyze the role of the concept of power in the international relations literature with particular reference to the three principal approaches—realism, neoliberalism, and constructivism. It will be argued that a Dahlian perspective is potentially relevant to each of these theoretical approaches.

Structure of the Study

The book is organized as follows: Chapter 2 introduces the social power perspective with a principal focus on the work of Robert Dahl and his critics. This work provides the conceptual foundation for much of the thinking about power during the last half century. The thrust of the argument is that Dahl's approach to the study of power has been mischaracterized by many of his critics. Chapter 3 focuses on power analysis in general and considers twelve contentious "problems" in the power literature. These include theory-laden concepts, interests, essential contestability, zero-sum power, potential power, fungibility, intentions, measurement, reciprocal power, structural power, "power over" versus "power to," and the role of costs in power analysis. Thus, Chapters 2 and 3 lay the conceptual and analytical groundwork for the discussion of international relations theory in subsequent chapters. Chapter 4 is divided into two parts. The first is an intellectual history of the treatment of the concept of power in the international relations literature in America from World War I until the 1960s. The focus is on comparing and contrasting the treatment of power by Hans J. Morgenthau and his followers and the

4

treatment of power by Harold and Margaret Sprout, Arnold Wolfers, Frederick Sherwood Dunn, Quincy Wright, Richard Snyder, Ernst Haas and others who viewed themselves as promoting the study of international relations as a social science. The second part of this chapter is organized in terms of different analytical perspectives on power in the IR literature. These perspectives include the treatment of power as identity, goal, means, mechanism (balance of power), competition, and capability. Chapter 5 discusses the role of the concept of power in generic realism, neorealism, and offensive realism. The purpose is to focus on the role of power, not to provide an overall description or assessment of these theories. Chapter 6 discusses the constructivist approach to the study of power in international relations. The thrust of the argument is that this approach requires fundamental restructuring if it is to contribute to our understanding of power in international relations. The question of whether this approach has made contributions to knowledge in other areas is not addressed. Chapter 7 discusses neoliberalism and focuses on the influential book by Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr. entitled *Power and Interdependence* (1977). The focus is on their treatment of the two central concepts mentioned in the title. The chapter also includes a discussion of Nye's concept of "soft power." It is argued that this is a useful concept for policy analysis but also one in need of further clarification in order to become a useful social science concept. Chapter 8 reviews the evolving role of the concept of power in international relations theories, summarizes the case for the contemporary relevance of a Dahlian approach to power analysis, suggests guidelines for future research on the role of military power in international relations, and concludes with consideration of the overall value of power analysis.

Limits of the Study

It is important to clarify at the outset what this book is *not* about. It does not present a theory of international politics, nor does it attempt to provide an empirical description of the role

of power in international politics. Various theories will be examined, and various empirical examples will be used, but the purpose of the examples is to illustrate theoretical and conceptual points. This book does not attempt to analyze all theories of international politics that refer to power but concentrates instead on three theoretical traditions—realism, neoliberalism, and constructivism.[2] The discussion focuses on developments in the American study of international relations. This limitation is solely for the purpose of keeping the project manageable and is not meant to imply that non-American theories of international politics do not exist or are unworthy of consideration. Lastly, this book does not attempt either to identify or to answer the "big questions" in the study of international relations. Robert O. Keohane's essay on "Big Questions in the Study of World Politics" notes, however, that "behind all these issues lurks the concept of power" (Keohane 2008, 709). Explicating this concept in relation to various theories of international relations is the central focus of the following chapters.

Most importantly, nothing in the following pages should be interpreted as an attempt to identify the "true" or "essential" nature of power or the "only sensible concept." To argue that the Dahlian concept of power remains useful is not to imply that other concepts of power are useless.

Terminology

Before proceeding, it should be noted that the terms *power* and *influence* are used interchangeably throughout the following pages. This practice follows that of Dahl in his 1957 article and Nagel (1975), even though Dahl later adopted the usage

---

2   The importance of these three theories was confirmed by a recent survey identifying the fifteen most influential international relations scholars in the last twenty years. The group included five realists, four constructivists, and four neoliberals. Teaching, Research, and International Policy 2014 Survey, College of William & Mary.

of Lasswell and Kaplan (1950), which treats power as a subtype of influence. At least one writer strongly objects to using these terms interchangeably. Peter Morriss (2002, 8–13) asserts that this practice has had "disastrously stultifying results over the last fifty years or so" (8). He bases this assertion on two lines of argument: (1) that influence has a verb form while power does not; and (2) that the two terms are not *completely* synonymous, that is, they have similar but not identical meanings.[3]

Despite the objections of Morriss, the terms will be used interchangeably here for the following reasons: (1) There is precedent, as the usage by Dahl, Nagel, and others indicates; (2) there is a desire to focus on the broad generic core meaning of various "power terms," such as control, persuasion, coercion, deterrence, compellence, and so on, rather than the distinctions among such terms—important as those may be for other purposes; (3) there is a similarity in meaning of the two terms, as indicated by the fact that nearly all dictionaries list them as synonyms, and they are frequently used interchangeably in common parlance;[4] and (4) whereas Dahl's treatment of the concept of power/influence is clearly intended to facilitate the work of political scientists, Morriss appears to have little interest in this goal. He observes that he has "next to nothing" to say about how his concepts "would work when people are involved in trying to change each other's behavior" (2002, xxxv) and dismisses the suggestion that power is the "subject matter of the discipline of

---

3   It should be noted that Morriss's objections are not based on Lasswell and Kaplan's *Power and Society* (1950), a work that seems to have escaped his attention. His objections also fail to take account of the discussion of this matter by Nagel (1975, 7–9), another work that he seems to have overlooked.

4   Most people would regard the following pairs of statements as expressing similar or identical ideas:

Britain was the most influential country in the nineteenth century.
Britain was the most powerful country in the nineteenth century.

The NRA is the most influential lobby in Washington.
The NRA is the most powerful lobby in Washington.

The United States used its resources to exert influence in the United Nations.
The United States used its resources to exercise power in the United Nations.

political science" as "stupid" (44). Most political scientists and most international relations scholars, however, *are* interested in how some people get other people to change their behavior and do not regard the suggestion as "stupid." The fifth, and perhaps most important reason for using power in a broad sense is that the term has long been embedded in the international relations literature. Even those who would do away with the term *power* altogether are willing to admit that it is too deeply embedded in the vocabulary of politics for this to happen; see, for example, Sprout and Sprout (1971, 168).

The discussion follows standard practice in the literature on power by designating the actor possessing or exercising power as *A* and the actor actually or potentially influenced as *B.* These actors can be individuals, groups, states, or nonstate actors. When giving an actual or hypothetical example, however, the actors may be referred to as individuals, countries, or states. This is solely intended to make the text more readable and should not be interpreted as implying a state-centric approach.

Implications of the Study

Why does it matter how one thinks about power? Definitions are neither true nor false but only more or less useful, so what is wrong with conceptual anarchy? First, even if one accepts this view, a scholar is obligated to state clearly what concept is being used and to defend its usage. Conceptual anarchy is no excuse for muddy thinking. Communication among scholars does not require that everyone use the same concept of power, but it does require one to be clear about which concept one is using. It is also helpful if one chooses a concept with full awareness of the arguments for and against that particular concept.[5] Second, how one thinks about power has important consequences for the real

5   For an exemplary case of thoughtful consideration in choosing a concept of power, see Mansfield (1994).

world—especially for international relations scholars. As Dahl has observed:

> The analysis of "power" is no merely theoretical enterprise but a matter of the greatest practicality. For how one acts in political life depends very heavily on one's beliefs about the nature, distribution, and practices of "power" in the political system one confronts. (Dahl 1970, 15)

In a world where some countries have the ability to destroy not only other countries but also life as we know it on this planet, clear thinking about power is not a luxury but a necessity. International relations scholars debate questions of great importance, such as the following:

1. Is U.S. power declining?
2. Do nuclear weapons make a country more powerful?
3. Should the rest of the world fear the growth of China's power?
4. Does the United States have the power to bring peace to the Middle East?

Such questions can neither be understood nor answered without a clear understanding of what *power* means in each instance.

Modern Power Analysis

> One word of warning. The ideas in this chapter are essentially quite simple; they rest on ordinary, everyday common sense. Nonetheless, this chapter requires close reading. For the concepts of influence and power are full of logical traps, and most people—including many people who write about politics—are not accustomed to thinking logically about power and influence. (Dahl 1963, 40)

THE "REVOLUTION IN POWER ANALYSIS" WAS ROOTED IN WORKS BY Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan (1950), Herbert Simon (1953, 1954), and James March (1955, 1956, 1957), but these forerunners of Robert Dahl are rarely acknowledged by contemporary scholars writing on power. Instead, it has become commonplace to begin a study of power with references to Dahl's "Concept of Power" (1957), his *Who Governs?* (1961), and/or the controversy that followed—usually dubbed *the community power debate*.[1] This chapter will therefore begin with an overview of these works and the ensuing "debate," which continued into the 1970s. Since Dahl continued to write about power for the rest of the twentieth century, the continuities and changes in his

---

1   See, for example, Morriss (2002); Barnett and Duvall (2005a, 2005b); Berenskoetter and Williams (2007); Finnemore and Goldstein (2013); Gruber (2000); Hayward (2000); Guzzini (2013); and Gallarotti (2010b).

thoughts on the subject will be examined. The chapter will conclude with an examination of a number of misinterpretations of Dahl's concept of power and an evaluation of his concept for research in political science.

Dahl and His Critics

Dahl's (1957) definition of power in terms of *A*'s ability to get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do has been both widely accepted and widely criticized. Although alternative definitions abound, none has been so widely accepted as this one; and none has attracted so many critics. Familiarity with the principal foci of the debate between Dahl and his critics provides necessary background for understanding modern power analysis.[2] The most important source of criticism of Dahl's work on power was labeled *the community power debate*. The following discussion focuses on the two most influential sources of criticism—an article by Bachrach and Baratz (1962) and a pamphlet by Steven Lukes (1974).

"The Concept of Power"

Dahl's 1957 article, "The Concept of Power," is the most influential article ever written on the subject. Philip Pettit (2008) views it as a "classic paper on power [that] remains relevant and useful . . . in contemporary discussion." The call for papers for the 2006 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association recognized the importance of the article by citing the approaching fifty-year anniversary of its publication and announcing that

2   Describing the community power debate as one between Dahl and his critics can be misleading since Dahl is more accurately described as a target for his critics than as an active participant in the debate. Shortly before his retirement, he observed that he had not wanted to spend his time "answering critics" and mused that he may have "done less of that than [he was] properly obliged to do" (Baer, Jewell, and Sigelman 1991, 176). Dahl's reluctance to engage his critics may account for some of the later misinterpretations of his concept of power.

the theme of the meeting would be power. Douglas W. Rae (1988) observes that "the modern history of 'power' in U.S. political science begins with the elegant construction in Robert Dahl's 1957 paper." The latter statement, however, may go too far inasmuch as it fails to acknowledge the seminal contributions by Lasswell and Kaplan, March, and Simon before 1957—not to mention the contribution by Dahl and Lindblom in their magisterial *Politics, Economics, and Welfare* (1953).

The paper has only ten published references, four of which acknowledge social psychology and game theory as alternative approaches to the study of power and one referring to Weber's distinction between power and authority. The remaining five references are to works by Lasswell and Kaplan, March, and Simon. The sole footnote refers to the "seminal influence" of Lasswell on the study of power "by demonstrating the importance of concepts such as power and influence, particularly in political analysis, and by insisting upon rigorous conceptual clarity." He notes that March and Simon use an approach similar to that of Lasswell and Kaplan. It is worth noting these references since they seem to have escaped the attention of many of Dahl's subsequent critics.

In addition to offering a definition of power, the paper discusses the properties of power relations, the difficulty of power comparisons, a symbolic notation of the definition, and an illustrative case study of legislative behavior. As with most articles, however, the points the author regards as most important are contained in the introduction and conclusion. Dahl's introduction makes two points essential to understanding the later debate with his critics: First, he states his desire to capture the "central intuitively understood meaning" of power, the "primitive notion that seems to lie behind *all*" power concepts (e.g., influence, control, authority, etc.). Toward that end he offers the idea that "*A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do" (Dahl 1957, 202–3). The second important point in the introduction is often overlooked. It is the lament that the definition will not be "easy to apply in concrete research problems; and therefore,

[that] *operational equivalents of the formal definition, designed to meet the needs of a particular research problem, are likely to diverge from one another in important ways"* (my italics).

What about the conclusion to the article? In lieu of a conventional conclusion, Dahl adopts the format of a Platonic dialogue between a "conceptual" theoretician (the protagonist) and a strict "operationalist" (the antagonist). The conceptualizer defends the abstract definition developed earlier. The operationalist complains about a "host of practical difficulties," such as acquiring the necessary data. The operationalist also points out that since different research problems may require different operational definitions, the idea of a single generic concept of power is useless. The conceptualizer admits that "in practice, the concept of power will have to be defined by operational criteria that will undoubtedly modify its pure meaning." Nevertheless, the conceptualizer argues, the generic "concept provides us with a standard against which to compare the operational alternatives we actually employ [and] in this way . . . helps us to specify the defects of the operational definitions as measures of power." "To be sure," the conceptualizer concludes, "we may have to use defective measures; but at least we shall know that they are defective and in what ways."[3]

Thus, both the introduction and the unorthodox conclusion differentiate between the abstract generic concept of power and operational concepts of power developed for use in particular research projects. Furthermore, both the introduction and conclusion maintain that operational concepts of power are likely to diverge significantly from the abstract concept and from each other. Dahl reiterates these points in later publications (1961, 330; 1968, 414).

---

3 Most of Dahl's critics make no reference to the "conclusion" of this article. Stewart R. Clegg (1989) is an exception. He portrays the conceptualizer ("a nit-picking sort of character") as the antagonist and the operationalist (with whom "we are clearly led to sympathize") as the protagonist (54). The title of the article, the thrust of the argument, and the fact that Dahl gives the first and last word to the conceptualizer would seem to argue against Clegg's interpretation.

The Community Power Debate

The *community power debate* is sometimes characterized as a debate between "elitists" and "pluralists" and at other times as a debate between sociologists and political scientists. The central issue in this debate was whether American communities were governed by a small group (the elite) or whether the most influential groups varied from one issue to another (the position of the pluralists). Although the roots of the debate can be found in the 1950s and even in the 1930s, the debate became a major concern in political science after the publication of Dahl's study of governance in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1961, entitled *Who Governs?*

In order to determine the distribution of influence in New Haven, Dahl examined decision making in three issue-areas: (1) urban redevelopment; (2) public education; and (3) political party nominations. Those who successfully initiated policy proposals in these areas were judged to be the most influential. The overall conclusion was that the influential people in one issue-area were different from those in the other issue-areas—the "pluralist" conclusion.

Since much of the subsequent criticism of *Who Governs?* refers to "Dahl's concept of power" or to the "pluralist concept of power," it is necessary to examine the treatment of the concept of power in this book. Surprisingly, there is no definition of the *concept* of power anywhere in *Who Governs?* Except for the chapters "Indirect vs. Direct Influence" and "Actual vs. Potential Influence," there is very little discussion of conceptual issues of any kind in the main body of the book.[4] There is, however, an appendix entitled "Methods and Data," which contains two subsections respectively entitled "The Definition and Measurement of Influence" and "Operational Measures of Influence" (330ff). Despite its title, the first subsection offers no definition of influence but rather advises those who wish "to consider more rigorous formulations

4   For example, even though the ability to "initiate" successful policy proposals plays an important part in the analysis, the concept of initiation is ignored. For a discussion of the *concept* of initiation, see Baldwin (1966).

of the concept of influence used in this volume" to consult Dahl's 1957 article. The subsection on operational measures offers not one but six different operational definitions of influence.[5] Dahl defends the use of multiple operational definitions on the grounds that one way to "compensate for the unsatisfactory character of all existing operational measures of influence is to be eclectic." Expressing his desire to "avoid putting all our eggs in one methodological basket," Dahl decides to use all six operational definitions. Thus, references to "the concept of power in *Who Governs?*" or to the "pluralist concept of power" may leave one wondering whether they refer to an abstract concept of power that is neither defined nor discussed in the book or to one or more of the six different operational definitions used in the analysis.

A year after the publication of *Who Governs?* Bachrach and Baratz (1962) published an article entitled "Two Faces of Power" in the *American Political Science Review*, which criticized the book for focusing on "the ability to initiate and veto proposals" while ignoring the ability to prevent proposals from even being considered in the first place. In essence, their argument was that influence can derive from the ability to suppress issues or to keep them off the agenda of decision makers. This article was enormously influential and was identified as the most cited article published in the *American Political Science Review* between 1945 and 2005 (Sigelman 2006). During the fifty years after this article was published, it was frequently depicted as having identified a defect or limitation of Dahl's concept of power (e.g., Nye 2011; Hayward 2000). This is misleading. Bachrach and Baratz were criticizing the research methodology and one of the six operational measures used in *Who Governs?* but this criticism had little to do with the abstract concept of power underlying the book and explicated in the 1957 article. Indeed, Bachrach and Baratz do not even cite the 1957 article. The opening sentences in their article, however, may have led some readers to expect a discussion of the *concept* of power:

5   It is common practice for social scientists to use the terms operational definition, operational measure, and empirical indicator interchangeably. Compare King, Keohane, and Verba (1994); Goertz (2006); and Brady and Collier (2010).

> The concept of power remains elusive despite the recent and prolific outpourings of case studies on community power. Its elusiveness is dramatically demonstrated by the regularity of disagreement as to the locus of community power between the sociologists and the political scientists. (947)

Actually, the alleged elusiveness of the concept of power had little or nothing to do with the disagreement at the center of the debate over community power. To the extent that the disagreement concerned power, it was about methodology and operational measures, not about the abstract concept of power. The concept of power explicated by Dahl in the 1957 paper is compatible with the phenomenon described by Bachrach and Baratz. Agenda control is simply one of many means by which *A* can get *B* to do something *B* would not otherwise do. (Meetings run according to parliamentary procedure make this abundantly clear.)

The "community power debate" is sometimes mischaracterized as a debate about the concept of power. Some have even described the "discipline's discussion of power" as dating from the 1950s debate between elitists and pluralists (Valelly 2006, 12). The work on conceptual issues in the 1950s by Lasswell and Kaplan (1950), March (1955, 1956, 1957), Simon (1953, 1957), and Dahl (1957), however, is not concerned with the disagreements between pluralists and elitists; it is concerned with power in general. The "power literature" and the "community power literature" may overlap a bit, but they are not the same thing.[6] To the extent that an abstract concept lay at the heart of the community power debate, it was democracy, not power. A more accurate label for the controversy would have been "the community democracy debate."[7]

6   An influential collection of articles on power that were published between 1950 and 1968 contained twenty-seven entries, of which only five focused on the community power debate (Bell, Edwards, and Wagner, 1969).

7   For an overview of the community power debate, see Ricci (1980). This article hardly mentions abstract concepts of power but focuses instead on methodology and democracy. In a book chapter entitled "Rethinking *Who Governs?*: New Haven, Revisited," the editor interviews Dahl about the book and the ensuing controversy. The discussion focuses entirely on empirical and methodological issues and never mentions the concept of power (Waste 1986). See also Polsby (1980) and Dowding (2011d).

CHAPTER 2

The "Faces of Power"

In 1974 Steven Lukes picked up on the title of the article by
Bachrach and Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," and proposed yet
a third "face." He described a "one-dimensional view of power"
(the first face) based on the methodology and operational defi-
nitions of influence used in *Who Governs?* a "two-dimensional
view of power" (the second face) corresponding to the article by
Bachrach and Baratz, and a "three-dimensional view of power"
(the third face) that differed from the other two in the following
respects: First, whereas the first two involve observable conflicts
of policy preferences, the three-dimensional view allows for the
possibility that *A* can manipulate the preferences of *B* so as to
prevent conflict from occurring. The second difference between
the three-dimensional view and the others is the assumption
that the "real interests" of *B* may differ from the policy prefer-
ences of *B*. In any case, an exercise of power is *always* detrimen-
tal to the interests of *B* according to the three-dimensional view.
Lukes then insists that the concept of power must be defined to
include "interests" and observes that

> the *concept* of power, thus defined, when interpreted and put
> to work, yields one or more *views* of power—that is, ways of
> identifying cases of power in the real world. The three views
> we have been considering can be seen as alternative interpreta-
> tions and applications of one and the same underlying concept
> of power, according to which A exercises power over B when
> A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests. (1974, 26–27)

It is important to note that Lukes differentiates between a *con-
cept* of power and a *view* of power. Lukes' "concept of power"
is essentially the same as the concept of power explicated by
Dahl in 1957—*except*, of course, for the required detrimental ef-
fect on *B's* interests. What Lukes calls a "view of power," how-
ever, is quite different. For Lukes, a "view of power" repre-
sents a way of "identifying cases of power in the real world"
(27). This corresponds with what Dahl and others call an "op-
erational definition," "operational measure," and/or "empirical

18

indicator." Thus, when Lukes refers to Dahl's "view" of power as "one-dimensional," he is not referring to the abstract concept of power explicated in 1957 (and which underlies *Who Governs?* but is not explicitly used therein), but rather to an "operational definition" (one of six?) adopted by Dahl for purposes of a particular research project, that is, a case study of influence in New Haven.[8] As noted earlier, Dahl was sensitive to the difference between a concept and an operational definition adopted for use in a particular project and had warned about the likelihood of significant differences between them. Indeed, the conclusion to his 1957 article was devoted *entirely* to this issue. In 1968, Dahl went even further and warned that "the gap between concept and operational definition is generally very great, so great, indeed, that it is not always possible to see what relation there is between the operations and the abstract definition" (414).

Although Lukes is clearly aware of the difference between a concept of power and an operational definition (or "view") of power, he expresses puzzlement when the two diverge.[9] For example, after noting that pluralist researchers often operationalize power in terms of "actual and observable" conflict, he notes that Dahl's definition of power does not require conflict and cites passages from *Who Governs?* in which "Dahl is quite sensitive to the operation of power or influence in the absence of conflict" (13–14). Lukes dismisses this as "just one among a number of examples of how the text of *Who Governs?* is more subtle and profound than the general conceptual and methodological pronouncements of its author" and declares it "in contradiction" to Dahl's "conceptual framework" (13–14). According to Dahl,

8 Lukes (2015) contests this interpretation, maintaining that his references to Dahl's "view of power" correspond to neither the abstract concept explicated in 1957 nor the operational definitions used in *Who Governs?* Rather, Lukes *imputes* to Dahl the conception described as the "one-dimensional view"—despite Dahl's contrary assertions. In effect, Lukes argues that he is a better judge of the conceptual framework Dahl used in *Who Governs?* than Dahl himself.

9 Whether Lukes was familiar with Dahl's 1968 article on "Power" is problematic. He neither cites it nor includes it in his bibliography in the 1974 edition. Nor does he consider either of the first two editions of *Modern Political Analysis.*

however, the general *conceptual* framework of *Who Governs?* is drawn from Dahl's 1957 article, which is not "in contradiction" with power in the absence of conflict. In another example, Lukes finds it "ironic" that there are passages in the book describing the phenomenon that Lukes labels "the three-dimensional view" (23). "The trouble," Lukes asserts, "seems to be that both Bachrach and Baratz and the pluralists suppose that because power, as they *conceptualize* it (my italics), only shows up in cases of actual conflict, it follows that actual conflict is necessary to power" (23). This assertion might be tenable if Lukes had said "power, as they *operationalize* it," but not as it stands. These are but two of many examples of the failure by Lukes and many other critics of Dahl to distinguish between the operational definition(s) of power used in *Who Governs?* and the abstract concept of power underlying it.

It would be difficult to underestimate the influence of Lukes' treatment of the "three faces" of power on subsequent generations of students.[10] What now passes for "conventional wisdom" with respect to Dahl's concept of power goes something like the following: "It is primitive, narrow, restrictive, one-dimensional, pluralist, focused on overt conflict of preferences, based on compulsion, unable to account for agenda control (second face) or control over *B*'s wants (third face), and has been superseded by more inclusive, more sophisticated, more nuanced concepts that yield deeper understanding."[11] This misleading narrative cannot be attributed entirely to Lukes, since he notes that the concept of power explicated by Dahl in 1957 does not necessitate conflict and that *Who Governs?* acknowledges both agenda control and preference manipulation as instances of power

10 *A* Google Scholar search reveals more than twice as many citations to Lukes' pamphlet as to Dahl's 1957 article—about the same number as the citations to Dahl's article and *Who Governs?* combined.

11 While no single author subscribes to all the elements of this dominant narrative, the following provide examples of various combinations of its elements: Berenskoetter (2007); Nye (2011);Gruber (2000); Finnemore and Goldstein (2013); Grewal (2008); Hayward (2000); Barnett and Duvall (2005a); Clegg (1989); Strange (1994); and Digeser (1992).

(Lukes 1974,13–14). As noted before, Lukes distinguishes between Dahl's *concept* of power and Dahl's *view* (i.e., operational definition) of power and is careful in his use of each term. The problem is that in common parlance, other people tend to use the two terms interchangeably and thereby conflate Dahl's concept of power with an operational definition of power adopted for use in a particular research project—a case study of power in New Haven. Readers may be forgiven, however, if they fail to note the difference between a "concept" and a "view" in Lukes' discussion, for he does not go out of his way to alert them to its importance. The distinction is mentioned only twice—once (parenthetically and in abbreviated form) in the introduction and again *after* the three "dimensions" have been described. The only explanation of the distinction is contained in a cryptic footnote indicating that it is "closely parallel" to a distinction by John Rawls between "concept" and "conception" (9, 26–27).[12] An additional source of confusion may be that the opening sentence asserts that "this short book presents a conceptual analysis of power." Although there is some "conceptual analysis" in the book, the principal focus is on describing and analyzing the three *views* of power, which are basically alternative *operational* definitions of a single underlying *concept* (26–27).[13] Four

12 See Lukes (2015) for an attempt to clarify this distinction.
13 In his annotated bibliography Lukes dismisses Dahl's "Concept of Power" as a "first, rather crude effort to define and operationalise 'power.'" He praises *Who Governs?* as "a finer, subtler work than its critics and defenders might suggest, partly because it contains the evidential basis for criticizing its conclusions."

Berenskoetter (2007, 2) attributes to this writer the idea that the "three faces debate" is "of no importance to IR" and asserts that "for Baldwin the portrait of 'power' is not painted by theory and, therefore cannot be modified by it . . . [since] abstract theoretical debates at best are repetitions on the theme and at worst obscure the true nature of power." The point being made, however, was not that the debate has no relevance to IR, but rather that Dahl's causal concept of power could subsume all three faces. Far from viewing abstract theoretical debates as pointless, this writer's view is that the "three faces debate" was primarily a debate about research methods, operational concepts, and democracy rather than a debate about abstract theoretical concepts of power. Similarly, Nye (2011) attributes to this writer the view that the three faces are "useless abstractions." In the first

CHAPTER 2

years after the publication of *Power: A Radical View*, Lukes (1978, 688) summarized the "community power debate" as one "between disputants who share a general conception of asymmetric power as control . . . but who disagree about how it is to be identified and measured. More specifically, they agree in seeing power as exercised when *A* affects *B* in *A*'s but against *B*'s interests, but they disagree about how this idea is properly to be understood and applied in research."[14]

The "Faces of Power" Revisited

In 2005, more than thirty years after the publication of *Power: A Radical View*, Lukes published a second edition, which included additional essays setting the original in historical context, clarifying its focus, and significantly revising his views with respect to the role of "interests" in power analysis.

Context and Focus

Lukes begins by describing his 1974 book as a contribution to a debate among "American political scientists and sociologists" about "how to think about power theoretically and how to study it empirically." He notes that "underlying that debate another question was at issue: how to characterize American politics—as dominated by a ruling elite or as exhibiting pluralist democracy" (2005, 1). He observes that "both methodological questions (how are we to define and investigate power?) and

---

place, the three faces may be mischaracterized as "abstractions," since they are, in Lukes' words, "ways of identifying cases of power in the real world" (27). In other words, they are ways of making an abstraction (the concept of power) more concrete—and thus described more accurately as "concretizations." And in the second place, pointing out that the three "views" all flow from the same abstract concept does not imply that they are "useless abstractions." The concept of "writers," after all, is broad enough to subsume poets, journalists, scholars, and novelists; but it does not follow that such categories are "useless abstractions."

14 On the question of whether power should be considered as "asymmetric," see Baldwin (1978).

substantive conclusions (how pluralistic, or democratic, is its distribution?) were at issue here, as was the link between them (did the methodology predetermine the conclusions? Did it preclude others?)" (5).

Speaking with the benefit of thirty years of hindsight, Lukes credits Dahl and his followers with having "brought welcome and healthy precision, clarity and methodological rigour" to the study of power. But he notes the "contention of their critics . . . that their method was too restrictive, leading them to biased and complacent conclusions," that is, pluralist conclusions (2005, 60–61).

In the first edition of his book, Lukes defended Dahl and others against the charge that pluralist conclusions were pre-ordained by their "concepts, approach, and method" (1974, 11). Depending on the case at hand, their approach could yield a variety of conclusions about the distribution of power. In the second edition, Lukes describes the central focus of his 1974 book as how "the powerful secure the compliance of those they dominate?—a narrower question than that suggested by its snappy title" (2005, 110). Whereas Dahl's *Who Governs?* focused on *hypothesized* domination, Lukes' focus—as he admits in the second edition—was on *assumed* domination. There is a certain irony here, since phrasing the central question this way presupposes the existence of domination and makes pluralism definitionally impossible—precisely the sort of thing the pluralists had been unfairly accused of doing.

In 1974 Lukes had depicted his "three-dimensional view" as "superior to alternative views" and declared that "the third view allows one to give a deeper and more satisfactory analysis of power relations than either of the other two" (1974, 9–10). In 2005, however, Lukes admits that the original edition was narrowly focused on why people submit to "domination"—hardly the same question that Dahl and other pluralists were addressing. Thus, whereas Dahl's concept of power is relevant to all situations in which some people get other people to do things they would otherwise not do, Lukes' view is narrowly focused on the rare situation in which some people are "dominating"

others.[15] "Power as domination," he now admits, "is only one species of power" (12).

Interests and Power

The most important difference between Dahl's concept of power (1957) and the concept of power proposed by Lukes in 1974 was the requirement that *A*'s power with respect to *B always* be harmful to *B*'s interests. In the 2005 edition Lukes abandons that view and declares, "it was a mistake" to define power that way. He admits that one "can be powerful by satisfying and advancing others' interests," citing examples like seatbelts, teaching, parenting, and "empowering" *B* by increasing his resources or capabilities (2005, 12, 83–84).[16]

Lukes thus severs the conceptual link between *B*'s interests and *A*'s power by admitting that *A*'s influence may be beneficial as well as harmful to *B*'s interests. He is unwilling, however, to sever the link between *A*'s interests and *A*'s power. That is to say, he maintains that power is always beneficial to the interests of *A*. The general question of the relation between interests and power will be examined in the next chapter.

Multiple and Conflicting Interests

In addition to the "mistake" of insisting that power be harmful to *B*'s interests, Lukes admits that the treatment of power in 1974 was "inadequate" in that it assumed that actors had "unitary interests," rather than acknowledging "the ways in which everyone's interests are multiple, conflicting, and of different kinds"

---

15 *Domination* is perhaps the most abused and ill-defined term in the lexicon of power.

16 Any parent of a two-year old or a rebellious teenager, of course, could have identified this defect in Lukes' 1974 definition of power. There are also times when "disempowering" a two-year old by decreasing his or her resources is in his or her interest—for example, "you can't play with that gun, hammer, or knife." Likewise, it may be in the interest of a teenager to "disempower" him or her by taking away the car keys.

(2005, 12–13, 109). This "inadequacy" opens up the whole idea of "trade-offs" or "opportunity costs" and has far-reaching implications for his discussion of Mathew Crenson's (1971) study of air pollution in Gary, Indiana. In considering why steelworkers would submit to breathing "poison" air—presumably an instance of "domination" harmful to their (unitary) interests—Lukes (1974, 42–45) repeatedly slipped in the parenthetical assumption that there were no trade-offs between unemployment and pollution. This is akin to assuming that there is, after all, such a thing as a "free lunch." There is, of course, a whole academic discipline built on the opposite assumption—that is, that "there ain't no such thing as a free lunch" (Dolan 1971).

The discipline of economics is devoted to the study of situations in which actors have multiple and competing goals (or interests), and the concept of opportunity costs is central to the discipline; yet costs (of any kind) play little or no role in either edition of Lukes' book. Oddly, Lukes notes that professional economists "have had little that is interesting to say about power" (2005, 166). He seems to have overlooked the "interesting" contributions to the power literature by such Nobel Prize winners as John C. Harsanyi, Thomas Schelling, Herbert Simon (a political scientist), John Nash, and Lloyd Shapley, not to mention work by Oskar Morgenstern, Charles Lindblom, Jack Hirshleifer, and Kenneth Boulding.[17]

The most puzzling—and least excusable—omission in both editions of Lukes' book is any mention of the work by John C. Harsanyi (1962a, 1962b) on the opportunity costs of power. As noted earlier, the catalyst for the original book—and its principal target—was Dahl's *Who Governs?* In an appendix subtitled "The Definition and Measurement of Influence," Dahl goes out of his way to call attention to "what promises to be a highly important addition to the analysis of influence" that had come to his attention "too late to be incorporated into this study" (330). He is referring to two forthcoming articles by Harsanyi

---

17 In the second edition, Lukes does mention Boulding's 1989 book as a "thoughtful" book.

on costs and power that he describes as explicitly bringing "out what is sometimes only implicit in the present volume, the importance of opportunity costs as dimensions of power and influence." In later works, Dahl reiterated his view of the importance of Harsanyi's contribution to the study of power (Dahl, 1968; 1963; 1970).

In sum, three of the most important amendments to Lukes' 1974 pamphlet are as follows: (1) the admission of a narrow focus on a subspecies of power—domination; (2) the admission that it was a mistake to depict *A*'s power as always detrimental to *B*'s interests; and (3) the admission that everyone has multiple and conflicting interests. These amendments cannot be dismissed as minor tweaks to Lukes' position, and Lukes does not suggest that they should be. Those who have built their theories or analyses of power on the 1974 version of this book may want to reconsider in the light of the amendments contained in the second edition. (On this point, see, especially, Chapter 6, "Constructivism.")

Dahlian Power in Perspective: Fifty Years On

Providing a fair, balanced, and comprehensive summary of Dahl's many insights on the nature of power and its role in social processes is beyond the scope of this book—and beyond the ability of this writer. It is possible, however, to identify some major themes in his thinking about power during a period of fifty years or so. But first, two caveats are in order: First, Dahl's contribution to power analysis did not begin with his 1957 article, "The Concept of Power." His magisterial work with Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics, Economics, and Welfare*, in 1953 treats many topics of continuing relevance to an understanding of power, including direct control, indirect control, control of another actor's subjective field and personality, reciprocity, autonomy, unintentional control, agenda control, cooperation, opportunity costs, bargaining, and numerous other relevant topics. Despite its age, this volume retains its relevance to understanding power and is especially recommended to those with little or no formal

training in the discipline of economics. This work, however, will not be included in the discussion that follows. A second caveat is that no consideration will be given to Dahl's empirical work on power in New Haven, American democracy, or anywhere else. Only his works on power in general will be considered. These works include not only his 1957 article but also Chapters 12 and 24 in *Who Governs?* entitled, respectively, "Direct versus Indirect Influence" and "Actual and Potential Influence"; his article entitled "Power" in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (1968); and all six editions of *Modern Political Analysis* (1963, 1970, 1976, 1984, 1991, 2003).

The various editions of *Modern Political Analysis*, published over a forty-year period, have been largely ignored by subsequent writers, presumably because they are texts addressed primarily to undergraduates. All this means, however, is that Dahl is especially careful to write clearly in these texts, not that he says one thing when writing for undergraduates and another when addressing his fellow political scientists. Given that Dahl's writing is normally clearer than that of most political scientists, this difference has little or no significance. The various editions of this text thus provide a convenient way to track the continuities and changes in Dahl's thinking about power.[18]

Modern Political Analysis: *Continuities*

The discussion of power in the six editions of *Modern Political Analysis* differs from one edition to the next, but it is possible to identify certain themes common to all of them.

Intuitive Notion of Power

The basic idea of influence as a relation in which *A* causes *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do underlies all six editions. There are, however, several clarifications or tweaks

18 For an overview of the various editions of *Modern Political Analysis*, see Stinebrickner (2015).

27

that Dahl makes along the way. First, this is a *social* relation that is confined to human actors or groups thereof and does not include *A*'s ability to cause rocks to move or dogs to obey. Second, the change in *B*'s behavior is not confined to overt acts, but also includes changes in *B*'s beliefs, values, attitudes, feelings, and predispositions. Third, the change in *B*'s behavior must be in response to *A*'s preferences. Normally, this means that *B*'s behavior changes in a direction desired by A; but Dahl also insists on the possibility that *B*'s behavior may change in the opposite direction. He calls this *negative power.* For example, Republican members of Congress may choose to vote against a bill simply because a Democratic president supports it. Generally, however, Dahl and most other political scientists have positive power in mind when they use the terms *power* or *influence.* And fourth, *A* need not act in order to influence *B.* That is to say that *B*'s behavior may change because of *A*'s preferences even in the absence of any explicit attempt by *A* to bring this about. This is the way Dahl attempts to take account of Carl J. Friedrich's famous "rule of anticipated reactions" (Friedrich 1941, 589–591). Largely in response to arguments advanced by Friedrich and Jack H. Nagel (1975), Dahl rephrases his definition of influence as "*a relation among human actors such that the wants, desires, preferences, or intentions of one or more actors affect the actions or predispositions to act, of one or more actors in a direction consistent with—and not contrary to—the wants, preferences, or intentions of the influence-wielder(s)*" (Dahl and Stinebrickner 2003, 17; italics in original). "This definition," he says, "is consistent with our intuitive grasp of what influence means and how political scientists and other social scientists generally understand the term" (17).

Ubiquitous Power and Politics

After noting the similarities and differences among the conceptions of politics advanced by Aristotle, Max Weber (1947), and Lasswell and Kaplan (1950), Dahl depicts himself as building on

their insights in defining politics as the exercise of influence.[19] So defined, both politics and power are ubiquitous and are to be found in "private clubs, business firms, labor unions, religious organizations, civic groups, primitive tribes, clans," and even in "families and romantic couples" (Dahl and Stinebrickner 2003, 24). (One might even add academic departments to this list.) This does not mean, however, that political scientists are equally interested in all forms of politics or power. This broad view of politics and power is found in all six editions of *Modern Political Analysis*.

Ancient Roots versus Recent Rigor

Dahl begins his 1957 article by noting the ancient origins of the concept of power in the works of Plato and Aristotle and continuing on through the works of Machiavelli and Hobbes. Despite these historic roots, Dahl observes that "the systematic study of power is very recent, precisely because it is only lately that serious attempts have been made to formulate the concept rigorously enough for systematic study" (201). Subsequent publications, including *Who Governs?* (1961, 330) and every edition of *Modern Political Analysis*, include similar passages. The exact wording varies but can be paraphrased as declaring that the last decade (several decades, or half century, depending on the date of publication) has witnessed more systematic efforts to define the concept of power than the previous millennia of political thought.[20] Such passages are frequently accompanied by

---

19 Dahl qualifies this depiction by noting that his definition of politics is "more directly in the tradition of Lasswell and countless other contemporary political scientists" (Dahl and Stinebrickner 2003, 24).

20 This favorable comparison between the last half of the twentieth century and previous millennia does not mean that Dahl viewed the period from 1950 to the present as characterized by steady progress in refining the concept of power. In an interview in 2002, he described himself as "enormously disappointed that the study of power and the conceptualization of power has made no progress that I can detect since Lasswell and Kaplan (1950), Jim March's work (1955, 1956, 1957), and my early efforts (Dahl 1957, 1968)" (Munck and Snyder 2007, 146).

references to Lasswell and Kaplan's *Power and Society*. Between 1957 and 2003, Dahl described Lasswell variously as a "seminal influence" (1957, 201n); as "the most influential modern writer" (1963, 112); as a writer that "no student of power can afford to ignore" (1970, 114); and as "one of the most creative and systematic modern pioneers in clarifying the meaning of influence terms" (1991, 22n; Dahl and Stinebrickner 2003, 19n).[21]

Interests and Power

Dahl's intuitive notion of power as *A* getting (or having the capacity to get) *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do makes no mention of the "interests" of either *A* or *B*. Likewise, the first four editions of *Modern Political Analysis* do not discuss interests. The fifth edition, however, takes note of "two quite different ways" of including "interests" in the conceptualization of power (1991, 29–32). The first, which Dahl considers the most influential, is Lukes' formulation in which *A's* exercise of power with respect to *B* is *always* contrary to *B's* interests. And the second, proposed by James March (1988), is the one in which the exercise of power is *always* in *A's* interest. As noted before, in 2005 Lukes abandons the view he advanced in 1974 and embraces the view proposed by March. The relation between "power" and "interests" will be discussed in Chapter 3. For now, it suffices to note that Dahl has never included the interests of either *A* or *B* in the conceptualization of power and that he explicitly rejects the idea of combining the concepts of interests and power in the fifth and sixth editions of *Modern Political Analysis*.

21 Despite Dahl's repeated assertions of the seminal importance of Lasswell and Kaplan's *Power and Society*, many writers on power seem to overlook it (or choose to ignore it)—for example, Lukes (1974, 2005) and Morriss (2002). In 2005, however, Lukes does include it in a "Guide to Further Reading," describing it as a "pioneering social scientific treatment" (165).

Scope and Domain

The importance of specifying both the scope and domain of influence is stressed in every edition of *Modern Political Analysis*. Every edition but the last declares that statements about influence that do not specify the domain (influence with respect to whom?) and the scope (influence with respect to what matters) verge on being meaningless.

Likewise, every edition of the book points out the difficulty of comparing influence with respect to a given scope and domain and influence with respect to different scopes and domains. The absence of a generally agreed-upon standard in terms of which to make such comparisons makes adding up the influence of a given actor, such as a nation-state, with respect to a diverse set of scopes and domains difficult.

Gradations of Power

Nothing is more basic to Dahl's approach to the study of power than the idea that power is a matter of degree. He especially objects to descriptions of the distribution of power in terms of dichotomies, such as "elites and masses"; "the powerful and the powerless"; "the dominant and the subordinate"; "rulers and ruled"; "the strong and the weak"; and so on.[22] He designates this tendency to dichotomize the distribution of power variously as a "common error" (1963, 53); "the "lump-of-power fallacy" (1984, 20–21); and an "elementary mistake" (2003, 19). Although he maintains that power is distributed unevenly in every society,

---

22 Examples abound, but see Lukes (1974); Gaventa (1980); Hayward (2000); Thucydides' Melian dialogue; and almost anything written by a Marxist. Although Waltz generally acknowledges gradations in the distribution of power in international politics, he sometimes seems to be dichotomizing the distribution, for example, "as ever, the distinction between strong and weak states is important" (Waltz 1986, 333).

he regards the dichotomy as a gross oversimplification of the distribution of power.[23]

Modern Political Analysis: *Discontinuities*

The continuities discussed previously could be extended to include many more topics, but they suffice to demonstrate the high degree of continuity from one edition to the next. There are, however, some important differences that should be noted.

Preferences and Power

The preferences, intentions, or wants of *A* receive relatively little attention in the first edition of *Modern Political Analysis*, but they receive progressively more attention in later editions. In the first edition, influence is defined as "a relation among actors in which one actor induces other actors to act in some way they would not otherwise act" (Dahl 1963, 40). It would be reasonable, of course, to interpret "induce" to imply an intentional act on the part of A; but there is not much attention devoted to the role of *A*'s intentions or preferences.

   In 1975, Dahl's student, Jack H. Nagel, published a book entitled *The Descriptive Analysis of Power*, which defined a power relation as "an actual or potential causal relation between the preferences of an actor regarding an outcome and the outcome itself" (29). Citing Nagel's formulation, Dahl acknowledges that defining influence this way "enables one to deal with a long standing difficulty more successfully than" previous definitions, that is, "the problem of *A*'s implicit influence over *B* arising from *anticipations* by *B* as to what *A* wants" (1976, 30). In subsequent editions of *Modern Political Analysis*, Dahl rephrases Nagel's definition and finally arrives at the one contained in the sixth edition:

---

23 What Dahl labels the "lump-of-power fallacy" is also known as the "fallacy of the excluded middle" or the "fallacy of misplaced dichotomies." (Levy 1969).

Influence can be defined as a relation among human actors such that the wants, desires, preferences, or intentions of one or more actors affect the actions, or predispositions to act, of one or more actors in a direction consistent with—and not contrary to—the wants, preferences, or intentions of the influence-wielder(s). (Dahl and Stinebrickner 2003,17, italics in original)

Thus, by 2003, the role of *A*'s intentions is both clearer and more important than in Dahl's earlier definitions of power.

Measurement

The early editions of *Modern Political Analysis* devote considerable attention to ways to observe and measure power. Dahl identifies a number of dimensions for measuring power, such as *B*'s costs of compliance, scope (number of issues influenced), domain (number of *B*'s influenced), and the probability of *B*'s compliance. In later editions less emphasis is placed on measurement. In the fifth edition, he notes that economists can measure the distribution of wealth in terms of money but laments that political scientists have no counterpart to money to facilitate the measurement of the distribution of power (Dahl 1991, 33–34). The following passage suggests that Dahl is not the stereotypical behaviorist obsessed with measurement that some critics (e.g., Clegg 1989) have made him out to be:

Because of the obstacles to creating quantitative measures that capture enough of the richness of meaning in relationships of power and influence, the fullest accounts of real world systems of power relations are rarely if ever purely quantitative. Even the most appropriate quantitative analysis invariably requires additional qualitative interpretation in order to convey sufficient meaning to the analysis. More often, quantitative analysis is a useful and sometimes even indispensable supplement to qualitative accounts, though it does not displace them. It may seem paradoxical that the subtlety and complexity of power relations are often best portrayed in works of fiction. (34)

33

In the sixth edition, Dahl and Stinebrickner observe that "while notions such as distribution, gradations, scope, and domain can serve as guides to observation and analysis of influence, precise and reliable measurement of different actors' influence remains difficult in theory as well as in practice" (2003, 21).

Forms and Levels of Influence

Early editions of Dahl's text treat influence in fairly general terms, but later editions expand the discussion to include a focus on various forms of power and techniques for exercising it. Positive and negative sanctions,[24] physical force, coercion, persuasion, manipulation, trained control, unilateral control, and reciprocal control are among the topics discussed in the last three editions. The last two editions of *Modern Political Analysis* also include sections that Dahl labels "spheres of decision making" or "spheres of influence," which discuss *B*'s choices from a given agenda, *B*'s ability to influence agendas, *B*'s ability to influence the structures that determine *B*'s agendas, and *B*'s consciousness or awareness of reality and the options available *B.* This discussion of the levels of influence makes it clear that Dahl's concept of power does not prevent consideration of the "agenda power" of Bachrach and Baratz (1962), the "consciousness manipulating" power of Lukes, or the "structural power" of various other theorists.

Dahlian Power: Misinterpretations

Even though Dahl writes more clearly than most social scientists, his views are often misinterpreted or mischaracterized. Since his writings on power are distributed over more than half a century, this is understandable—though unacceptable. Some,

---

24 Following Lasswell and Kaplan, Dahl sometimes uses the term *inducement* to refer to influence associated with positive sanctions and the term *power* to refer to influence involving negative sanctions.

but by no means all, of these misinterpretations will be discussed here.

Concept versus Operational Definition

The most common and most important misinterpretation of Dahl's concept of power stems from the failure to distinguish between abstract concepts and operational definitions.[25] As noted before, this distinction is fundamental for Dahl, and operational definitions are likely to diverge significantly not only from each other but from the abstract concept they are designed to operationalize.[26] Thus, any attempt to infer the relevant abstract concept solely from an operational definition is problematic. Many of the misrepresentations of Dahl's concept of power discussed later are attributable to the conflation of generic and operational definitions.

The best indicator that an author is confusing concrete with abstract definitions of power is casting a discussion of Dahl's *concept* of power in terms of the "three faces" debate.[27] As noted earlier, this debate revolved around different ways to operationalize the concept of power, not fundamentally different

25 On the importance of drawing a "clear distinction between measurement issues and disputes about concepts," see Adcock and Collier (2001).

26 The divergence between operational concepts and the abstract concept they are intended to operationalize is not unique to Dahl's concept of power. King, Keohane, and Verba (1994, 109–12) make a similar point.

27 Examples abound, but see Hayward (2000); Clegg (1989); Berenskoetter (2007); Grewal (2008); and Nye (2011). A particularly influential—and misleading—example is Gaventa (1980, 4–5, 2005, 204), who quotes Dahl's 1957 "intuitive idea of power" and immediately follows it with a quote from Polsby (1963, 55) to the effect that community power may be studied by examining "who participates, who gains and who loses, and who prevails in decision-making." Gaventa neglects to point out that Polsby is identifying only one of many different ways to operationalize Dahl's abstract concept of power, thus leaving the reader with the impression that there is some necessary connection between the two. Contrary to this impression, Dahl's abstract concept of power implies nothing about participation, who gains, who loses, or who prevails in decision making.

concepts. Another indicator of such confusion is an author's citations of *Who Governs?* or Lukes rather than of Dahl's general discussions of the concept of power in 1957, 1968, and various editions of *Modern Political Analysis*. Anyone seeking to understand Dahl's concept of power solely by reading *Who Governs?* is likely to be misled.

Preferences of *B*

Dahl's concept of power is often misconstrued to imply that *A* and *B* have conflicting desires or preferences and that a power relation must be one in which *A* "wins" and *B* "loses." According to Barnett and Duvall, "there must be a conflict of desires . . . . *A* and *B* want different outcomes, and *B* loses" (2005a, 49). Similarly, Nye describes Dahl's definition of power in terms of *A*'s "ability to get others to act in ways that are contrary to their initial preferences" (2011, 11–13); and Gelb explains Dahl's concept of power in terms of *A* "pressuring *B* to act against his will or desire" (2009, 32). The preferences or wants of *B*, however, are *not* included in the idea of doing something *B* would not otherwise do. Although Dahl's phraseology for defining power evolves from 1957 to 2003, the focus is always on affecting *B*'s behavior (including feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and predispositions to act), *not on B's wants.* Although the concept of *A* causing *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do includes getting *B* to act contrary to his preferences, it also includes enabling *B* to act in accordance with his preferences when *B* otherwise would not have done so—perhaps because *B* lacked the knowledge, skill, motivation, or resources. Shouting "Watch out!" to a person about to step into an open manhole is likely to cause the person to shift course, but this change in behavior is not likely to be contrary to the person's preferences or desires. Teaching *B* to play the piano, offering *B* a big reward for helping his or her team win, providing a poor country with technical assistance that allows it to grow its own food, and using the Marshall Plan to promote European integration are

all examples of influence that helps *B* to do something that *B* prefers to do.[28]

"One-dimensional" Power

Lukes' characterization of Dahl's "view" of power as "one dimensional" has generated a widespread perception that Dahl's "concept" of power is narrow, restricted, and blind to the agenda control discussed by Bachrach and Baratz as well as the consciousness control described by Lukes' third dimension of power.[29] This is highly misleading. In the first place, the notion of *A* causing *B* to behave otherwise proposed by Dahl in 1957 is broad enough to include changing *B*'s behavior by controlling agendas or suppressing issues as well as affecting *B*'s behavior by manipulating his consciousness. In the second place, neither the methodology of *Who Governs?* nor discussions thereof are appropriate sources for understanding Dahl's abstract *concept* of power. Operational definitions adopted for use in a particular case study often diverge significantly from the abstract concept that underlies them. Therefore, it would seem advisable to base observations about Dahl's concept of power on sources in which he actually discusses the *concept*—for example, 1957, 1963, 1968, 1970, 1976, 1984, 1991 and/or Dahl and Stinebrickner (2003). In the third place, even discussions of Dahl's concept of power based entirely on *Who Governs?* should acknowledge passages that explicitly recognize agenda control and the shaping of preferences as forms of influence. (161–65, 321) In the fourth place, arguments that assert or imply that Lukes broadened Dahl's

28 The Marshall Plan example is solely for illustrative purposes. I should like to sidestep the question of whether European countries really preferred integration.
29 As noted earlier, Lukes himself is careful to distinguish between Dahl's "concept" of power and what Lukes labels Dahl's "view" of power. His readers, however, often overlook this distinction. Dahl's concept of power is depicted as narrow and one dimensional by Nye (2004, 2011), Hayward (2000), Barnett and Duvall (2005a), Gruber (2000); Grewal (2008); Gaventa (1980, 2005), Berenskoetter (2007), and countless others.

concept of power rarely note that whereas Lukes confines the concept of power to instances in which "*A* affects *B* in a manner contrary to *B's* interests," Dahl's concept of power includes all instances that are detrimental to *B's* interests, beneficial to *B's* interests, and/or neutral with respect to *B's* interests. And in the fifth place, Dahl's concept of power has never been one dimensional. Before Lukes published his pamphlet in 1974, Dahl had explicated multiple dimensions of power, including the base, the means, the scope, the amount, the domain, the costs to *A,* and the costs to *B.* No one (with the possible exception of Lasswell and Kaplan) had done more to promote a multidimensional concept of power than Dahl. In 1970, he observed that "power does indeed have many faces. With perseverance, one could define literally thousands of different types of influence" (1970, 25). A footnote to this passage notes that in an appendix to the Italian translation of *Modern Political Analysis* he has shown "how some 14,000 different types might be derived."[30] That someone who has identified 14,000 "faces" of power should be widely regarded as having a "one-dimensional" view of power is more than a little ironic.

Zero-sum Power

The *zero-sum concept of power* is based on the assumption that total power is limited. Consequently, any increase in one actor's power necessitates a decrease in the power of other actors in a social system. Talcott Parsons (1963a, 1963b, 1966) was the first to assert that Dahl's concept of power was an instance of zero-sum power.[31]

30 Dahl also described the process for calculating the 14,000 faces in a paper delivered at the 1964 annual meeting of the American Political Association and reprinted in Dahl (1997, 295–96).
31 Parsons also attributed a zero-sum concept of power to C. Wright Mills, V. O. Key, and Lasswell and Kaplan. For a discussion of whether this applied to Lasswell and Kaplan, see Baldwin (1989, 35–37). Others who have designated Dahl's concept of power as zero sum include Scott (2001), Dowding (2012), Berenskoetter

Neither the concept of power Dahl explicated in 1957 nor any variation described in succeeding editions of *Modern Political Analysis* embodies a zero-sum conception of power. This can be illustrated by considering the examples of Robinson Crusoe and of marriage. Although the exact wording of Dahl's concept of power has varied over a period of fifty years or so, it has always referred to situations in which one actor affects a specified aspect of the behavior of another actor. One has not defined a power relation until one has specified both scope and domain.

Thus, as long as Robinson Crusoe and Friday occupy separate islands, neither can exercise any power in the Dahlian sense. When Friday comes to live on Crusoe's island, either or both may gain power; but neither can lose what he does not have. Dahl's concept can describe this situation as one in which Crusoe and Friday each gain power over the other with respect to similar and/or different aspects of behavior (scopes). Witness the following influence attempts:

Different scopes: "If you will do the fishing, I will pick the fruit."

Similar scopes: "I will do the fishing only if you fish too."

Likewise, when two people marry, each is likely to gain power with respect to the other with respect to similar and/or different scopes:

Different scopes: "I will do the dishes if (and only if) you will take out the garbage."

Similar scopes: "I will attend the Parent-Teacher Association meeting only if you come too."

Each of these scenarios involves an increase in the influence of each actor with respect to the other, and each can be described

---

(2007), and Barnett and Duvall (2005a). The attribution of a zero-sum concept of power to Dahl is usually asserted without explanation of the basis for the assertion, as if it were self-evident.

in terms of A getting B to do x. Although Dahl's concept of power *can* describe situations in which A gains power and B loses power, it can also describe situations in which each gains power with respect to the other.[32]

James H. Read (2012) agrees that Dahl's definition of power in 1957 was not zero sum but suggests that it "*became* zero-sum once operationalized for purposes of research and description" (10). According to Dahl, however, particular operational definitions of a concept "have to emerge from considerations of the substance and objectives of a specific piece of research, and not from general theoretical considerations" (Dahl 1957, 207). Just because a concept is operationalized in zero-sum terms for a specific case study does not change the original concept.

Compulsory Power

Some power analysts associate Dahl's concept of power with command, pressure, coercion, bribery, and/or compulsion. Susan Strange (1994, 9), for example, declares that Dahl's concept of power "assumes that power is exercised only by direct coercion or bribery." Joseph S. Nye (2004, 2) cites *Who Governs?* in support of his assertion that "some people think of power narrowly, in terms of command and coercion." Barnett and Duvall (2005a, 49–50) cite Dahl's 1957 article as an example of "compulsory power." And Gelb interprets Dahl's concept of power as necessitating "pressure" and excluding persuasion (2009, 32).

This is puzzling. Such comments give a misleading impression of Dahl's approach to analyzing power.[33] Dahl takes a very broad approach in discussing the many ways in which A can

32 There are only three possible outcomes to a zero-sum game (win, lose, draw). As Table 1 in the following chapter shows, however, Dahl's concept of power allows for nine possible outcomes.

33 Early on, Dahl often used the terms *power* and *influence* interchangeably. In later editions of *Modern Political Analysis*, he adopts the language of Lasswell and Kaplan in treating power as a subtype of influence. This is more of a terminological change than a conceptual one. This change of terminology, however, does

get *B* to do something *B* would not otherwise do. In 1957, he even mentions "charm and charisma" as possible means for exercising power; in various editions of *Modern Political Analysis*, he discusses persuasion, rewards, friendship; and he often refers readers to Lasswell and Kaplan's (1950, 87) forms of influence and power, which include mentorship, admiration, approbation, suasion, wisdom, love, esteem, benefaction, edification, and other forms of power not normally associated with coercion, command, or compulsion.

Subtlety, Visibility, and Awareness

Nye (2011) depicts the second and third "faces" of power as "more subtle and therefore less visible" than Dahl's "first face" and contends that the latter requires *B* to be aware of *A*'s influence (12–16). Although there are certainly occasions when these characterizations would be accurate, they do not describe inherent qualities of the three faces. North Korean leaders seem to be adept at both restricting the agendas of their citizens and at indoctrinating (or brainwashing) them into wanting to support the "dear leader." Their methods, however, are not particularly subtle. And Dahl's power can take very subtle forms, such as the "charm" he cites in 1957. It can also describe situations in which *B* is unaware of *A*'s influence or even of *A*'s existence. For example, *A* may get *B* to remove his or her sweater by turning up the thermostat in *B*'s room *without B's knowledge*. Or country *A* may affect the behavior of country *B* by using secret agents to mislead or sabotage country *B*. For example, one can imagine agents secretly inserting a computer virus into the nuclear processing facilities of another country in order to slow its progress toward producing a nuclear weapon. In sum, any of the three "faces" of power may be subtle and invisible or crude and blatantly visible, depending on the circumstances.

---

not explain the comments above, since they rely on the 1957 article and on *Who Governs?*

Material Resources

Some writers have implied that Dahl's concept of power is based on material resources. Barnett and Duvall (2005a), for example, maintain that "a widely accepted conceptualization" of power used in "most introductory texts to international relations" is "how one state uses its material resources to compel another state to do something it does not want to do" (40). The similarity to the wording of Dahl's classic formulation is striking.[34] Later, they suggest that this writer relies on a "Dahlian formulation—in which *A* exercises influence over *B*" and then incorporates "nonmaterial means of influence" (44). There is no need, however, to modify Dahl's concept in order to "incorporate" nonmaterial means of influence. At no point during the last fifty years has he ever excluded nonmaterial means from his concept of power.

Dahl has repeatedly cited nonmaterial means of exercising power. In 1957, he mentioned "charm and charisma"; in 1961 and 1968, he mentioned "popularity" and "information"; and every edition of *Modern Political Analysis* includes references to nonmaterial power resources. The illustrative list in the fourth edition is especially instructive: money, information, food, threats of force, jobs, friendship, votes, social standing, and the right to make laws (1984, 31). Although it is obvious that information, friendship, votes, social standing, and the right to make laws are nonmaterial, the status of threats of force and jobs is not so obvious. Threats are signals, ideas, or understandings, which have no material existence. The same is true of jobs. A job is an arrangement between an employer and an employee; it is not something that one can taste, see, hear, feel, or smell. The rewards of a job may be material, but the job itself is not. Thus, Dahl's illustrative list of nine political resources includes at least seven nonmaterial resources. While there are those who restrict power to material resources, Dahl is certainly not one of them.

34 This assertion about "most texts" is not supported by references to specific texts.

Direct and Immediate

In explicating their concept of "compulsory power" in terms of the "direct and immediate" power of *A* over *B,* Barnett and Duvall (47–50) note that power relations that are not direct and immediate are likely to be "more difficult to observe" than those that are. "This approach," they contend, "is nicely summarized by Dahl's famous claim that there is 'no action at a distance.'" They concede that "Dahl intentionally left vague both what counts as 'distance' and the meaning of 'connection' and that his concept of power does "not preclude the idea of power as spatially, temporally, or socially indirect or diffuse"; but, they assert, it does "work against it."

This is a puzzling characterization of Dahl's approach to the study of power. In the first place, characterizing anyone's conceptual approach in terms that they have deliberately left "undefined" is problematic.[35] In the second place, Dahl explains that he is leaving the concept of "connection" undefined because he wishes "only to call attention to the practical significance" of identifying a connection between *A* and *B* (Dahl 1957, 204). He is referring to a practical problem of research, not to a theoretical or conceptual problem. In the third place, the idea that power relations between *A* and *B* must be "direct and immediate" is at odds with Dahl's views expressed elsewhere both before and after 1957. In 1953, Dahl and Lindblom identified various indirect or "roundabout" controls, such as affecting personalities, affecting social roles, and affecting agendas (110–112). In 1961, Dahl noted that "indirect influence might be very great but comparatively difficult to observe and weigh. Yet to ignore indirect influence . . . would be to exclude what might well prove to be a highly significant process of control" (89). *Who Governs?* devoted a whole chapter to "Direct vs. Indirect

---

35 Hayward (2000, 36) goes further than Barnett and Duvall in describing Dahl's comment about "no action at a distance" as "explicit and uncompromising." When terms are deliberately left undefined, however, phrases like "implicit and wishy-washy" would seem to be more apt descriptions.

Influence," citing the influence of citizens over their elected leaders and the ability of leaders to "shape the preferences of citizens" as examples of indirect influence (163–65). In 1968, he noted that some power relationships "are highly indirect" (413). It should also be noted that none of the six editions of *Modern Political Analysis* describes power as direct and immediate and that the last three editions discuss several forms of indirect influence. And in the fourth place, the contention that Dahl's concept of power "works against" the "idea of power as spatially, temporally, or socially indirect" even though it does not preclude it is an empirical proposition unsupported by evidence. It is not even clear what "works against" means in this context.

Evaluating Dahl's Concept of Power

Conceptual analysis is different from empirical analysis. Concepts are neither true nor false but more or less useful for research and communication with other scholars. This does not mean that anyone is free to define terms arbitrarily, without explanation or justification, just by declaring it "useful." Conceptual analysis presupposes guidelines, or "rules of the game," in terms of which such undertakings may be judged. Two sets of guidelines will be considered here, one proposed by a nineteenth-century political economist (Thomas Malthus 1827) and the other by a twentieth-century political scientist (Felix Oppenheim 1975).

Writing in 1827, Malthus offered four rules for "defining and applying the terms used in the science of political economy." First: When terms "which are of daily occurrence in the common conversation of educated persons" are employed, they should be defined "so as to agree with the sense in which they are understood in this ordinary use of them." Second: When common usage does not suffice, "the next best authority is that of some of the most celebrated writers in the science, particularly if any one of them has, by common consent, been considered as

a principal founder of it."[36] Third: Recognizing that changes in meaning are sometimes justifiable, Malthus proposed that "the alteration proposed should not only remove the immediate objections which may have been made to the terms as before applied, but should be shown to be free from other equal or greater objections, and on the whole be obviously more *useful* in facilitating the explanation and improvement of the" subject. Fourth: "Any new definitions adopted should be consistent with those which are allowed to remain" (Malthus 1827, 1–7).

Although I find Malthus' rules eminently sensible and as applicable now as then, others may prefer the more modern criteria for evaluating concepts presented by Oppenheim in the *Handbook of Political Science* (1975). First: Concepts should be operational in the broadest sense, although this should not be interpreted as requiring quantification. Second: Concepts that establish definitional connections with other terms are to be preferred. Third: Concepts that draw attention to theoretically interesting aspects of the subject matter that might easily be overlooked are desirable. Fourth: Concepts should not preclude empirical investigation by making true "by definition" what had better be left open to empirical inquiry. Fifth: Concepts should remain reasonably close to ordinary language.

This chapter concludes with an evaluation of Dahl's concept of power in terms of Oppenheim's criteria:

1. *Operationalization.* Dahl has repeatedly noted the difficulty of operationalizing the concept of power (influence) in a way that captures the basic intuitive notion (1957, 202, 214, 1961, 330, 1968, 414). Any causal concept of power involves specification of the counterfactual condition of what *B* would otherwise have done, and counterfactual conditions are always difficult to operationalize.[37] This is an awkward

36 It is a fair inference that Malthus had Adam Smith in mind here. It would not be much of an exaggeration to describe Robert Dahl as "a principal founder" of rigorous and precise power analysis.
37 On dealing with counterfactual conditions, see Fearon (1991) and Tetlock and Belkin (1996)

situation, but then, no one has ever seriously suggested that power analysis is easy.

2. *Definitional connections.* Here again, the power analyst confronts a difficult challenge due to the lack of a verb form for the word *power* in the English language. This challenge is mitigated somewhat by the semantic overlap between power and influence, since the latter term does not suffer from the lack of a verb form.[38] Also, insofar as Dahl's basic intuitive notion of power does in fact underlie related concepts such as authority, persuasion, manipulation, control, coercion, deterrence, attraction, and so on, it facilitates definitional connections. It also connects easily with commonly used terms such as black power, economic power, military power, symbolic power, soft power, and hard power.

3. *Factual connections.* Dahl's concept of power is broad enough to draw attention to similarities among different kinds of power on many levels, for example, the family, the local community, the church, the office, the nation-state, and the international level. Dahl's concept also directs attention to "certain features of the subject matter which are of theoretical importance but often not readily apparent" (Oppenheim 1975, 305). Counterfactual conditions are examples *par excellence* of "features of the subject matter" that are not readily apparent but are of great theoretical importance.

4. *Not precluding empirical investigation.* Defining power in terms that allow for variations in scope, weight, and domain might be viewed as necessitating a *pluralist* view of power relations as opposed to a view emphasizing monolithic power structures. Such is not the case. Insisting that power relations be specified as to scope, weight, and domain *allows for the possibility* that the pluralists might be right, but it does not prejudge the truth or falsity of their position. The "lump-of-power" approach, however, *does* preclude empirical investigation of variations in the degree of power with respect

---

38 For a study that attaches great significance to the lack of a verb form for "power," see Morriss (2002).

to various scopes and domains. Also, Dahl's concept does not prejudge the question of whether power relations have positive or negative effects on the interests of *A* or *B*. Unlike concepts of power that include the interests of *A* and/or *B* in the definition of power (e.g., Lukes 1974, 2005; Barnett and Duvall 2005a), Dahl leaves this to be determined by empirical investigation.

5. *Ordinary language.* Conformity with ordinary language, with usage by most political scientists, and with usage by most political philosophers for hundreds of years has been an important goal for Dahl during the last fifty years. His success in achieving this goal, of course, will have to be judged by others.[39] One indicator of success is the widespread acceptance of his concept by contemporary political scientists.

---

39 Not everyone accepts the goal of conformity with ordinary language. Morriss (2002), for example, dismisses this criterion as "misguided" on the grounds that philosophers should seek to improve on ordinary usage. He proceeds to use the term "ableness," which strays considerably from common parlance. Morriss also notes in passing that he has "next to nothing" to say about how his concepts "would work when people are involved in trying to change each other's behavior" (xxxiv).

CHAPTER 3

Analyzing Power

> Power has many forms, such as wealth, armaments, civil authority, influence on opinion. No one of these can be regarded as subordinate to any other, and there is not one form from which the others are derivative. (Lasswell and Kaplan (1950) quoting Bertrand Russell (1938, 13–14))

DESPITE THE IMPRESSIVE AMOUNT OF SCHOLARLY ATTENTION devoted to power analysis since World War II—and partially because of it—a number of questions remain unsettled or problematic. These problems include theory-laden concepts, interests, essential contestability, zero-sum power, potential power, fungibility, intentions, measurement, reciprocal power, structural power, "power over" versus "power to," and the role of costs in power analysis. Before addressing these matters, however, some fundamental elements of power analysis in the broad tradition of Lasswell, Simon, March, Dahl, Harsanyi, and other social scientists will be discussed.

FUNDAMENTALS OF POWER ANALYSIS

Three aspects of power analysis are fundamental to the approach used in this book: (1) the distinction between relational

49

and property concepts; (2) the multiple dimensions of power; and (3) and the role of counterfactual conditions.

Relational versus Property Concepts

Power is a relational concept. The height, weight, and hair color of a person or the population, land area, and wealth of a country are all properties of an actor in the sense that they can be defined and measured without reference to other people or countries. Similarly, policies, decisions, influence *attempts*, intentions, and armies are properties of a given actor in that one does not need to know anything about other actors in order to describe them. In contrast to such properties is the power or influence of an actor. Although references to individuals or countries as "having" or "possessing" power are common, they are misleading insofar as they imply that power is a property of a single actor rather than an actual or potential relation between actors. It is impossible to describe actor *A*'s power or potential power without implying something about actor *B*. A gun, for example, may be a property belonging to *A*; as such, it can be used by *A* in an *attempt* to influence *B*. The determination of whether this influence attempt will succeed in influencing *B*, however, is not entirely within *A*'s control. *B* may not know what a gun is; *B* may believe the gun is a toy; or *B* may not be afraid of guns (perhaps because *B* has a gun too). In some situations guns are power resources; in others they are not.

Multiple Dimensions of Power

The relational power perspective views power as multidimensional rather than monolithic and unidimensional. This allows for the possibility that power can increase on one dimension while simultaneously decreasing on another. Some of the more important dimensions of power are scope, domain, weight, base, means, costs, time, and place.

50

Scope

Scope refers to the aspect of *B*'s behavior affected by *A*. This calls attention to the possibility that an actor's power may vary from one issue to another. Thus, a country like Japan may have more influence with respect to economic issues than with respect to military issues, and the reverse may be true for a country like North Korea. And a weapon like a "doomsday machine" may be very useful for deterrence and utterly useless as a first-strike weapon.

Domain

The domain of an actor's power refers to the number or importance of other actors subject to its influence. Thus, a state may have a great deal of influence in one region of the world while having little or no influence in other parts of the world. The domain of influence of Russia today is smaller than that of the former Soviet Union. And while China had very little influence outside of Asia in the first half of the twentieth century, its influence in other regions has rapidly expanded in the twenty-first century.

Weight

The degree to which *A* can change the probability that *B* will do *x* is often referred to as the *amount* or *weight* of *A*'s power over *B*. Thinking about power this way is helpful in distinguishing between powerful actors and *seemingly* powerful ones. Consider the following examples: (1) The powerful but unlucky nation that succeeds in changing the probability that *B* will do *x* from 0.1 to 0.9 but still fails to get *B* to do *x*. (2) The seemingly powerful nation that changes the probability that *B* will do *x* from 0.8 to 0.9, after which *B* does *x*.

Karl W. Deutsch (1988, 29) has compared attempts to promote probable and improbable outcomes as follows:

> The outcome, which is already moderately improbable . . . can be made highly improbable by the application of even a relatively limited amount of power. In such situations, the change in the probabilities of this particular outcome will seem to us quite drastic, and this limited amount of power will seem to us to have changed considerable uncertainty into near-certainty, and thus to have produced spectacular results. . . . [while] the same degree of power produces far less impressive results . . . when it is applied to promoting an outcome which is fairly improbable in the first place.

On the basis of such reasoning Deutsch suggests the need to revise the concept of the amount of power. What really needs changing, however, is not the concept of the amount of power but the concepts of success and failure. Granted that attempts to promote probable outcomes are likely to *seem* more successful than attempts to promote improbable outcomes, it is the job of the power analyst to distinguish between what is true and what merely seems to be true.

Power Base

No distinction is more vital to clear thinking about power than that between power relations and the resources on which the power relations are based. Resources are sometimes labeled *power assets*, *base values*, or *power bases*. Such terms refer to the causal mechanism underlying the power relation between *A* and *B*. Three aspects of power resources are especially important in power analysis:

1. The bases of power are many and varied. No writer is more emphatic than Lasswell and Kaplan on this point:

> Political science is concerned with power in general, with all the forms in which it occurs. Failure to recognize that power may rest on various bases, each with a varying scope, has confused and distorted the conception of power itself, and retarded inquiry into the conditions and consequences of its exercise in

52

various ways . . . . In particular, it is of crucial importance to recognize that power may rest on various bases, differing not only from culture to culture, but also within a culture from one power structure to another. . . . In short, the concepts of influence and power are extremely general, and have reference to a wide range of interpersonal relations. The analysis can be carried to whatever level of refinement is required by the particular problem at hand. But political phenomena are only obscured by the pseudo simplification attained with any unitary conception of power as being always and everywhere the same. (83–94)

2. There is no permanent hierarchy of power resources; no power base is more fundamental than the others; and there is no one base from which the others are derivative.[1] Once again, Lasswell and Kaplan emphasize the point:

None of the forms of power is basic to all the others. As patterns of valuation in a culture are modified, and changes come about in the social order and technology, now one form of power and now another, plays a fundamental role. Political analysis must be contextual, and take account of the power practices actually manifested in the concrete political situation. (94)

3. The concept of a power resource is a relational concept in the sense that it has little or no meaning except within the context of a particular situation specified (at least) as to scope and domain.[2] Although a distinction is sometimes made between a *power-as-resources* approach to power analysis and the *relational power* approach, the same point can be expressed more clearly in terms of a choice between a *resources in the abstract* versus a *resources in context* approach. It is not clear that

1   The propensity of international relations scholars to treat military force as fundamental and to treat other power resources as having importance only insofar as they contribute to war making will be discussed in Chapter 4.
2   The relational nature of the concept of resources is recognized and discussed by Knight (1921); Lasswell and Kaplan (1950); Sprout and Sprout (1956, 1965); Sullivan (1963); Aron (1966); and Baldwin (1979, 1989). The point has recently been reiterated by Morriss (2002).

the concept of a power resource (or any kind of resource) has much meaning except with reference to a context. The economist Frank H. Knight pointed this out long ago:

> It seems that what we call a "resource" is such, not on its own account, but solely because of the uses to which it can be put, and its quantitative aspect, how much resource there is, is still more evidently determinable only in terms of the use. (Knight 1921, 65–66)

Almost anything can be a power resource in some context or another. But what functions as a power asset in one situation may be a liability or irrelevant in another situation. The Bible (Judges 15) tells us that Samson slew an army of a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, but it is not clear that 21st century soldiers should go into battle equipped with similar weapons. Thomas Schelling (1960) provides many examples of power assets in one situation becoming liabilities in another. For example, in discussing "bargaining power" he notes:

> "Bargaining power," "bargaining strength," "bargaining skill" suggest that the advantage goes to the powerful, the strong, or the skillful. It does, of course, if those qualities are defined to mean only that negotiations are won by those who win. But, if the terms imply that it is an advantage to be more intelligent or more skilled in debate, or to have more financial resources, more physical strength, more military potency, or more ability to withstand losses, then the term does a disservice. These qualities are by no means universal advantages in bargaining situations; *they often have a contrary value.* (22, my italics)

The fact that power bases are multiple, nonhierarchical, and relational has many implications for power analysis, which will be discussed in later chapters.

Means

There are many different means for making influence attempts and many different ways to categorize them. Harold Lasswell's

classic work, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*, suggests a fourfold classification scheme in terms of words, deals, goods, and weapons. The corresponding categories in international relations would be propaganda (or symbolic means), diplomacy, economic statecraft, and military statecraft.[3]

It is important to distinguish between the means of influence and the bases of influence. In a sense, the means are used to activate the base; and this may be done well or badly. The means, or influence technique, chosen need not correspond to any particular power base. Thus, a threat to use military force may be conveyed by a diplomatic note, economic sanctions, a speech, or a "shot across the bow."

The "tools," or "techniques," of statecraft are property concepts in the sense that they are controlled by a given actor and imply nothing about other actors or about the outcomes associated with their use. Thus, a foreign policy maker may use *levers* (a property concept) to make influence attempts but not *leverage* (a relational concept).[4] Leverage is an outcome of the use of levers. Similarly, *weapons* (a property concept) may be used to make *war* (a relational concept); and *influence attempts* (a property concept) are made in pursuit of *influence* (a relational concept).

Costs of Power

Both the costs to *A* and the costs to *B* are relevant to assessing influence. Is it costly or cheap for *A* to influence *B*? Is it costly or cheap for *B* to comply with *A*'s demands? Some have suggested that more power should be attributed to an actor that can exercise influence cheaply than to one for whom it is costly (Harsanyi 1962). Also, if *A* can get *B* to do something that is costly to *B*, it would seem that *A* has more power than if it can only get *B* to do things that are cheap for *B*. Even if *A* if is unable to

---

3   For discussion of techniques of statecraft, see Baldwin (1985, 8–28).

4   The question of whether soft power is a property concept and, therefore, a tool of statecraft or a relational concept and, therefore, an outcome of the use of tools of statecraft will be postponed until Chapter 7.

get *B* to comply with its demands, it may be able to impose costs on *B* for noncompliance. Some have argued that this should be viewed as a kind of power (e.g., Baldwin 1985, 2000; Harsanyi 1962; Schelling 1984).

When

Power resources are sensitive to time. The value of the jawbone of an ass, the slingshot David used on Goliath, the spear, the cross-bow, the cavalry, and the battleship have all seen their value as power resources decline over time. In contrast, the value of both petroleum and uranium as power assets has increased over time, since neither had any value as a power resource in world politics prior to the twentieth century. Nye constructs a table showing the major resources relied upon by the leading states between 1500 and 2000 (1990, 34). This table is a useful reminder that the value of power resources may vary from one time period to another.

Where

The value of power resources can also vary with location. The phenomenon of the "home-court advantage" has been well documented in sports. And in military operations soldiers who are familiar with the terrain, the climate, the language, and the culture of the locals often have the advantage. Likewise, heavy tanks are not likely to be very useful in jungle warfare. In desert warfare, however, tanks can be valuable power assets.

Which of these dimensions of power should be specified for meaningful scholarly communication? There is no single right answer to this question. The answer depends on the particular research project at hand. The causal concept of power, however, does imply a minimum set of specifications. The point is well put by Jack Nagel (1975, 14):

Anyone who employs a causal concept of power must specify domain and scope. To say "X has power" may seem sensible, but to say "X causes" or "X can cause" is nonsense. Causation

56

implies an X and a Y—a cause and an effect. If power is causation, one must state the outcome caused. Stipulating domain and scope answers the question "Power over what?"

The idea that a meaningful specification of a power relationship must include scope and domain is widely shared by power analysts committed to social scientific inquiry (e.g., Barry 1976; Dahl 1991, 1968; Dahl and Stinebrickner 2003; Deutsch 1968, 1988; Frey 1971, 1989; Lasswell and Kaplan 1950).

Counterfactual Conditions and Power

The analysis of power always requires consideration of counterfactual conditions. If power relations involve some people getting other people to do something they would not otherwise do, the question of what would otherwise have been done cannot be ignored. The necessity of dealing with this question makes power analysis inherently messy, difficult, and frustrating.

Some have interpreted the relational concept of power as requiring power analysts to postpone judgments about power until *after* the outcome has been determined. Thus, Nye characterizes this approach as judging "power by outcomes that are determined after the action (what economists call 'ex post') rather than before the action ('ex ante')" (2011, 8). Similar comments about relational power abound:

> A relationship of power can never be known until after power is exercised. . . . A truly conclusive test of power that would yield incontestable results is difficult to imagine, short of a general war that destroyed all but one member of the international system. (Wohlforth 1993, 4, 10)

> According to this logic, power exists only when a state exercises control or influence and therefore it can be measured only after the outcome is determined. (Mearsheimer 2001, 57)

> Ultimately, the determination of the distribution of power can be made only in retrospect as a consequence of War. (Gilpin 1975, 24)

57

There are (at least) two arguments against such interpretations. First, the relational power approach to power analysis is not necessarily linked to "ex post" judgments about power. Witness the following examples:

> A can get B to surrender in the next war (future).
> A is in the process of getting B to surrender in the present war (present).
> A got B to surrender in the last war (past).

Although empirical researchers often use past outcomes—of wars, elections, or negotiations—as indicators of power, this is a matter of methodological convenience, not a conceptual necessity. There is no method of measuring (i.e., estimating) power—ex post or ex ante—that yields incontestable results or absolute certainty.

And second, insofar as such comments imply that one can avoid confronting counterfactual conditions by estimating power "after the fact" or "ex post," they are misleading. It is necessary to distinguish between an "event" and the "outcome of an influence relationship." In order to illustrate the need to deal with counterfactual conditions *even when viewing a power relationship in retrospect*, three "events" will be considered: (1) a hypothetical general war that destroyed all but one country; (2) the end of the Cold War; and (3) the deterrence of a Soviet nuclear attack on the United States during the Cold War.

1. In order to attribute the destruction of all countries but one to the power of the surviving country, a power analyst must consider the counterfactual question of whether these countries would have been destroyed even in the absence of the alleged power of the surviving country. Perhaps the other countries destroyed each other, and the survivor's "power" was irrelevant. Perhaps they were destroyed by an earthquake, a tsunami, a volcanic eruption, a nuclear accident, yellow fever, smallpox, and so on. There is a difference between being powerful and being lucky.

2. The Cold War is over, and America "won." The question remains, however, as to what caused this outcome. Was

it caused by President Ronald Reagan's speeches and policies, as some contend? If so, it makes sense to view it as a consequence of American power. Or was it caused by factors within the Soviet Union, such as poor economic performance and a decline in the legitimacy of the regime, as others contend? If so, American power may have been irrelevant to the outcome. In order to answer such questions, one must consider the counterfactual condition of what would have happened in the absence of Reagan's speeches and policies.

3. The American policy of nuclear deterrence, that is, threatened retaliation in response to an attack by the Soviet Union, is often depicted as a successful exercise of power by the United States. Although a Soviet nuclear attack would have provided evidence of the failure of such a policy, the absence of such an attack provides no evidence of success until one asks about the probability of Soviet attack in the absence of an American retaliatory threat.

Regardless of whether one estimates power before or after an influence attempt by *A* with respect to *B*, there will always be some uncertainty; and some estimate of the counterfactual question of what *B* would have done in the absence of *A*'s alleged influence will be necessary.

Problems in Power Analysis

Having reviewed the fundamental elements of power analysis, the rest of this chapter will be devoted to discussion of some problematic or unsettled questions concerning the analysis of power.

Theory Dependence of Concepts[5]

Some have argued that concepts are "theory dependent" and acquire their meaning only in the context of the theories in which they are used. Guzzini observes that "concepts are not

5   For a discussion of this issue and further references, see Davis (2005).

self-sufficient" and that "they derive their meaning . . . from the theories (e.g., realism) in which they are embedded." (1993, 447) Similarly, Mearsheimer notes that "power can be defined in different ways, raising the question of which definition is correct." He defends his definition by asserting that "a scholar's theory, in fact, determines the appropriate definition" (2001, 422).

Even if one stipulates that concepts are in some sense "theory dependent," the following points should be noted: First, concepts such as power may be affected by the theories in which they are used; but they do not derive their meaning *completely* from such theories. Dahl's concept of power may have been used in the theory of pluralism, but it does not follow that it has no meaning outside that theory, nor that it cannot be used in other theories (e.g., realism of neoliberal institutionalism). Second, although concepts must be compatible with the theories in which they are used, they cannot be *completely determined* by those theories. Concepts are the raw material used to construct theories and hypotheses and therefore logically prior to them. One cannot construct a theory of international politics until one first has a concept of what international politics is; and one cannot construct a theory of power without first having a concept of power.[6] And third, as Dahl points out, "it may well be true that in applying any term to the real world we to some extent presuppose a *theory* about the world, [but] some terms are far more theory dependent than others. 'Apple' is less theory dependent than 'atom' and atom less so than 'quark'" (1991, 30). Dahl then points out that the concept of interests is both highly theory dependent and highly controversial—which suggests the next problem in power analysis.

Interests and Power

It is frequently asserted that the concept of power is inextricably intertwined with the concept of interests (e.g., Lukes 1974, 2005, 2015; Guzzini 2013; Dowding 2011b; Gaventa 1980; Hayward

6   It is worth noting that Voltaire did not suggest that one should converse first and define terms later.

2000). As discussed in the previous chapter, Lukes (2005) repudiated his earlier contention that *A*'s power is always detrimental to the interests of *B*. He did not, however, sever the conceptual link between power and interests completely; he continued to insist that *A*'s power is always in the interest of *A* regardless of its impact on *B*.

The case against including interests in the concept of power can be broken into four parts as follows: First, they *can* be plausibly defined separately. Dahl's concept of power demonstrates that by its failure to include the interests of either *A* or *B*. Second, insisting that *A*'s influence is necessarily contrary to *B*'s interests rules out consideration of instances in which *A*'s influence is beneficial to *B*'s interests—for example, parenting, seatbelt requirements, antismoking rules, teaching *B* to play the piano, helping a country cure disease by providing medicine and doctors, enabling a country to grow more food by providing technical assistance, and so on. As Dahl pointed out in the fifth edition of *Modern Political Analysis*, this definition proposed by Lukes in 1974 is "not only contrary to common usage in ordinary language, political science, and political philosophy but seems rather arbitrary as well" (1991, 29). Likewise, insisting that influence is always beneficial to the interests of *A* prevents consideration of cases in which *A*'s power is detrimental to *A*'s interests—for example, bankrupting oneself in order to send the children to college, the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the U.S. escalation of the Vietnam War, U.S. support for the Bay of Pigs invasion, Hitler's invasion of the USSR, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, appeasing Hitler, maintaining the U.S. embargo on Cuba long after Cold War ended, and so on.[7] Third, if interests are included in the concept of power, one must have a theory of human interests before one can make judgments about power. "And theories about human interests," Dahl observes, "are among the most controversial in philosophy, political science, and social theory" (1991, 30). Thus, to include interests in defining power is to make

---

7 Those who object to these examples should have no trouble generating their own list. For further examples of countries acting contrary to their "national interest," see any issue of *Foreign Affairs* or *National Interest*.

Table 1. Possible Outcomes of Dahlian Influence

Scenario	Actor A	Actor B
1	Win	Win
2	Win	Lose
3	Lose	Win
4	Draw	Draw
5	Win	Draw
6	Lose	Draw
7	Draw	Win
8	Draw	Lose
9	Lose	Lose

Win = favorable to actor's interests
Lose = unfavorable to actor's interests
Draw = neutral with respect to actor's interests

power analysis even more difficult. The fourth, and most compelling, reason for keeping the concepts of power and interests separate is that doing so does not rule out anything one might want to say about power, interests, or the relation between them. Power analysis is difficult enough even without including interests in the definition. As Table 1 shows, Dahl's concept of power allows for nine possible outcomes in terms of the interests of *A* and *B*; while the concepts of power proposed by Lukes in 1974 and by Barnett and Duvall in 2005 allow for only one—that is, *A* wins and *B* loses. The concept of power proposed by Lukes in 2005, however, allows for three—that is, those in which *A* wins.[8]

Essentially Contested Concept?

Essentially contested concepts are said to be so value laden that no amount of argument or evidence can ever lead to agreement on a single version as the "correct or standard use" (Gallie 1956,168).

8   Any given instance of *A*'s influence with respect to *B* may have both favorable and unfavorable effects on the interests of either actor. Thus, winning, losing, and drawing are here defined in terms of their *net* impact on the interests of each actor.

The original formulation of this view was put forth by W. B. Gallie in 1956 using the examples of democracy, social justice, and what it means to be a "good Christian" or a "work of art." In 1974 both William E. Connally and Lukes suggested that the concept of power should also be regarded as "essentially contested."

Some international relations scholars have followed Lukes and Connally in asserting power to be an *essentially contested concept*. Barnett and Duvall (2005a, 41), for example, observe

> As famously noted by Gallie, and as repeated by social theorists ever since, power is an essentially contested concept.

This passage is somewhat misleading for the following reasons: First, Gallie did *not* designate power as an essentially contested concept; nor did he refer to the concept of power anywhere in the article.[9] Second, during the eighteen-year period between the publication of Gallie's article and the books by Lukes and Connally, no instance of a social theorist suggesting that power be considered an essentially contested concept has come to the attention of this writer. Third, the concept of an "essentially contested concept" has itself been contested.[10] And fourth, although the arguments put forth by Lukes and Connally in support of treating power as essentially contested were endorsed by some social theorists, they were strongly contested by others.[11]

Guzzini (1993, 446–47) is another international relations scholar who has designated power as an essentially contested concept. He offers three reasons for this view.

The first is that "power always implies an element of counterfactual reasoning." This reason, however, would make *all* causal concepts essentially contested. This would appear to go considerably beyond the boundaries of Gallie's article. The second

9   Dowding (2011b) also misreads Gallie as labeling power as an essentially contested concept.
10 For example, Oppenheim (1981); Swanton (1985); MacIntyre (1973); Gray (1977); Clarke (1979); Collier, Hidalgo, and Maciuceanu (2006).
11 See Oppenheim (1981); Macdonald (1976); Dowding (2006); Haugaard (2010); Lovett 2007); and especially, the incisive article by Hugh V. McLachlan, "Is 'Power' an Evaluative Concept?" (1981).

reason is that a concept of power that incorporates the interests of the actors involved "cannot be disentangled from normative discourse." Although this may be true of the concepts of power defined by Lukes and Connally, it would not apply to the concept of power as defined by Dahl, which explicitly excludes such interests. And the third reason "is a constructivist approach," which implies that concepts are theory dependent and therefore "derive their meaning" from the theories in which they are embedded. This view was discussed above and need not be addressed here.

Gallie set forth a number of criteria for determining whether a concept should be categorized as "essentially contested." Two of the requirements for such a classification are especially questionable with respect to the concept of power. In the first place, the concept must be "*appraisive* in the sense that it signifies or accredits some kind of valued achievement" (171). Gallie uses the concept of a "champion" in sports to illustrate the point, that is, to label a team as champion is to say that it plays the game better than other teams. Is the concept of power similar to the concept of a champion? In Mearsheimer's (2001) theory of "*offensive realism,*" states are viewed as competing with each other in an effort to maximize their power. Just as teams compete to become champions, so states compete for power. And just as the champion is better than other teams at playing the game, so states with more power than other states are better at playing the offensive realist version of the "game" of international politics. Thus, from the perspective of an offensive realist, it is plausible to treat power as an appraisive concept. Many theories of international politics, however—for example, defensive realism or neoliberal institutionalism—do not treat power maximization as the ultimate goal of states.

Likewise, scholars such as Lukes or Connally, who incorporate the interests of the actors into the concept of power, understandably view power as an evaluative concept. If power is defined without reference to the interests of the actors, however, it is not appraisive. An additional requirement specified by Gallie is that there be general agreement on the appraisive nature of a

concept. For example, it is widely agreed that justice, democracy, and being a champion or a good Christian are laudatory. There is no such agreement, however, that being "powerful" is laudatory. The power of God or the power used by the Allies to defeat Hitler during World War II may be widely viewed as "good." But the great power attributed to Hitler, Stalin, Genghis Kahn, and Satan is not usually intended as laudatory.[12] Lord Acton did not regard the possession of power as akin to being a champion—"Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely." In ordinary language, power may have pejorative connotations, laudatory connotations, or neither connotation, depending on who is getting whom to do what in what context. The concept of power, as defined by Dahl, is not inherently appraisive.[13]

A second requirement for classifying a concept as essentially contested—indeed the defining characteristic of such concepts—is that it must actually generate vigorous disputes as to the nature of the concept and its applicability to various cases. Gallie deliberately rules out policy disputes in "practical life" that reflect conflicts of "interests, tastes, or attitudes." These, he suggests, are more likely to involve special pleading and rationalization than deep-seated philosophical disagreement (169). Thus, neither the concern with the "adequacy"[14] of American democracy nor the quibbles over methodology and operational definitions that lay at the heart of the community power debate would qualify as serious conceptual debate by Gallie's standards. For Gallie, essential contestedness implies more than that different parties use different versions of a concept. Each party must recognize the contested nature of the concept it uses, and each must engage in vigorous debate in defense of its particular

---

12 On the unsavory connotation of "power" and "power politics" in America, especially between World War I and World War II, see Furniss (1952, 384) and Kirk (1947, 4).

13 In responding to critics on this point, Lukes (1977, 418) admits that "it is of course true that 'power' is not, overtly and directly, appraisive."

14 Lukes (1974; 2005) frequently refers to the "adequacy" of American democracy, but he fails to provide criteria for judging "adequate" democracy.

conceptual viewpoint[15] (172). Yet, as Dahl has repeatedly pointed out, during the two thousand years prior to World War II, little attention was devoted to conceptual analysis of power, let alone to defending one concept of power versus alternative concepts. There is, therefore, good reason to question the classification of the concept of power as "essentially contested."

Zero-sum Game?

Traditionally, scholars of international relations have distinguished between conflict and cooperation. Power, it has often been argued, has to do with conflict but not with cooperation.[16] Underlying such arguments is the often implicit (but sometimes explicit) assumption that the exercise of power is beneficial to the interests of *A* and detrimental to the interests of *B*. Politics, according to this view, is a "game of winners and losers" (Krasner 1991).

Many international relations scholars have depicted power in zero-sum terms.[17] Although this view of power is often associated with a realist view of international politics, it is not peculiar to this approach.[18] Stanley Hoffman (1975, 191), for example, argues that the model of a zero-sum game is "a valid account for considerable portions of world politics." Robert Gilpin (1975, 22–25, 34, 1981, 94) maintains that international politics *always* takes

15 The assertion by Barnett and Duvall (2005a) that power is an essentially contested concept is puzzling, since their overall argument is that there is *too much* agreement among international relations scholars on the meaning of the concept. This is hardly the situation that Gallie describes as characterizing essentially contested concepts.

16 For recent examples of this perspective, see Barnett and Duvall (2005a, 2005b).

17 For example, Hawtrey (1930); Hirschman (1945); Kindleberger (1970); Gilpin (1975, 1981); and Mearsheimer (2001). The frequent comparisons between international politics and the games of chess or poker also imply a zero-sum perspective.

18 For examples of scholars with different approaches sharing a zero-sum view of power, see Baldwin (1993). There is some irony in the similarity between the realist zero-sum view of power and the view of Barnett and Duvall that power always works "to the advantage of some and the disadvantage of others," especially since the latter portray their views as critical of realism's treatment of power.

the form of a zero-sum game. After noting that "politics is the realm of power," he states that "the essential fact of politics is that power is always relative; one state's gain in power is by necessity another's loss." And John J. Mearsheimer (2001, 34) asserts that "because one state's gain is another state's loss, great powers tend to have a zero-sum mentality when dealing with each other."

Proponents of the zero-sum perspective often suggest that it is especially useful in analyzing international security issues, as opposed to, say, economic issues.[19] Thomas C. Schelling (1984, 269), however, suggests that the zero-sum perspective is incompatible with many of the topics that have traditionally preoccupied security studies scholars:

> Deterrence . . . is meaningless in a zero-sum context. So is surrender; so are most limited-war strategies; and so are notions like accidental war, escalation, preemptive war, and brinkmanship. And of course so are nearly all alliance relationships, arms-race phenomena, and arms control. The fact that war hurts—that not all losses of war are recoverable—makes war itself a dramatically nonzero-sum activity.

Contrary to common belief, the distinction between conflict and cooperation does not necessitate different analytical approaches. As Harsanyi (1969) and Schelling (1960, 1984) have demonstrated, game theory permits "the same theoretical model [to] handle both conflict and cooperation without any difficulty."[20] This is precisely what nonzero-sum models are about. Those who complain that game theoretical approaches neglect or ignore "power" have confused terminology with the concept of power. Game theory may not use the term *power*, but that does not mean that it is not concerned with how some people get other people to do things they would not do otherwise. As J. H. Read (2012, 7) observes, "most of the strategic situations modeled by formal game theory—including deterrence, bargaining and

---

19 For examples, see Baldwin (1993).
20 Social exchange theory also subsumes both conflict and cooperation (Baldwin 1978).

prisoner's dilemma—could readily be classified as power relations, even though the term 'power' itself is largely absent from game-theoretic analysis."[21] Even Dahl began his classic article on the concept of power in 1957 by noting that game theory represented another way to approach the subject.

Games of pure cooperation and pure conflict may be useful heuristic devices for defining opposite ends of a continuum, but real-world situations that correspond to either are rare. Consider three prototypical examples of zero-sum situations: The first, and the most often cited by international relations scholars, is war; but Schelling has shown that "war itself is a dramatically nonzero-sum activity."[22] A second frequently cited example of a zero-sum game is poker. Even though the rules define poker as a zero-sum game, in real life this is hardly ever true. Such values as the mutual enjoyment of the game, concern about the player who is in over his head, and worries about whether the other players will be willing to play again in the future almost always intrude on what is supposed to be a zero-sum game. And a third example is an election in a single-member district. Even though only one "winner" can occupy the elective office at stake, the "loser" may "win" by exceeding expectations, by increasing name recognition, or by otherwise impressing party officials and/or the electorate. As Schelling (1960) has pointed out, "winning" in most conflicts means gaining relative to one's own value system, not relative to one's adversary.

Potential Power

The distinction between "possessing" power resources and using them—between having power and using it—is fundamental. Dahl (1961, 271) labels it "one of the most elementary principles of political life." He adds, however, "the idea of potential influence, which seems transparently clear, proves on examination to be one of the most troublesome topics in social theory." And

21 Dowding (2011a, xxix) makes a similar point.
22 For a recent treatment of war as a bargaining situation, see Wagner (2007).

Nagel (1975, 172) notes that potential power "has been the subject of unnecessary controversy." No effort will be made here to disentangle all of the issues in this controversy. The following points, however, should be noted:

1. Although Dahl did not go out of his way to emphasize the distinction in his 1957 article, his conceptualization—as Pettit (2008, 67) points out—"allows for a distinction between possessing and exercising power." And in later works (e.g., 1961, 1968, 1963, 1970, 1976, 1984, 1991. 2003), Dahl discusses the distinction at length. Indeed, *Who Governs?* devotes a separate chapter to the subject. Thus, associating Dahl with the so-called exercise fallacy is misleading.[23]

2. A causal concept of power does not equate power with its exercise, as some critics have argued. Nagel refutes such critics as follows:

In fact, a causal conception is compatible with any temporal point of view. Try a conjugation: "He can cause" (potential power); "she will cause" (probable or predicted power); "they did cause" (exercised power).[24]

3. An actor may possess power resources but lack either the skill or the motivation to use them. In the international relations literature, this is often referred to as the difference between intentions and capabilities.

4. A focus on potential power (or capabilities) does not obviate the need to specify scope and domain. It is still necessary to specify capability to get whom to do what in order to make a meaningful statement about potential power.

Potential power is sometimes compared with holding the high cards in a card game. The preceding caveats, however,

---

23 Of course, Dahl and others have sometimes used the exercise of power—e.g., getting one's proposals adopted—as evidence of the existence of power. Empirical evidence, however, is not the same thing as a concept of power.
24 Nagel points out that those who define power "as a capability do so in essentially causal terms, though they avoid the word 'cause'" (10n).

make it clear that "holding a strong hand" is meaningless until the name of the game is specified. A strong hand in poker may be a weak hand in bridge. Even then, the player with a strong hand in bridge must possess both the skill and the concentration (i.e., motivation) to play the hand well in order to win.

Fungibility[25]

Fungibility refers to the ease with which power resources useful in one issue-area can be used in other issue-areas. The basic question posed by the problem of fungibility concerns the extent to which power is situational. Money in a market economy is the prototypical fungible resource. Indeed, fungibility is one of the defining characteristics of money.[26] In a market economy one does not usually need to specify the scope or domain of the purchasing power of money because the same euro (yen, dollar, etc.) can be used to buy a car, a meal, a haircut, or a book. Nor is it especially important to specify when, where, or how the purchasing power of money is to be exercised, since dollars can be used anytime (i.e., during normal working hours), anyplace (i.e., within the United States), and take any form (i.e., assuming that checks, credit cards, IOUs, etc. are acceptable). The parenthetical limitations in the previous sentence underscore the point that *even money, the most fungible of assets, is to some extent situational.*

25 John Lewis Gaddis (1987, 9) regards this term as an example of jargon in international relations theory. When terms are used in their ordinary dictionary meaning, however, they are usually not labeled as jargon. Most dictionaries define fungibility in terms of convertibility, exchangeability, and/or substitutability. This is precisely the sense in which the term is used here.

26 The terms *liquidity*, *fungibility*, and *asset specificity* all refer to the same underlying concept of convertibility. Money is high in liquidity and fungibility and low in asset specificity. The liquidity of a resource is a function of time, scope, and domain (Baldwin 1989). The difference between money and other resources is that money permits one to buy a greater variety of things from more people more quickly. It should be noted, however, that no resource is ever completely fungible. Even money, it is said, cannot buy love.

It is sometimes suggested that power plays the same role in politics that money does in a market economy (Deutsch 1963, 1988; Mearsheimer 2001; Parsons 1963a, 1963b, 1966; Wolfers 1962). Political power resources, of course, do vary in degree of fungibility. Money, time, and information tend to be more fungible than most other power resources in that they are useful in many different situations. To the extent that the power-money analogy leads to ignoring the need to specify scope and domain, however, it can lead the power analyst astray (Baldwin 1989).[27]

Some scholars (e.g., Berenskoetter 2007, 6; Guzzini 2001, 2011, 2013) have suggested a link between the fungibility of power resources and the "lump-of-power fallacy." There is, however, no necessary connection between these two ideas. The lump-of-power fallacy refers to the *distribution* of power resources, not to their fungibility. Even if power resources were as fungible as money, the lump-of-power fallacy would remain a possibility—for example, the assumption that the "powerful" have the resources and the "weak" do not.

Other scholars have suggested that the fungibility of power resources increases as the amount increases (Art 1996; Waltz 2000). Thus, power is said to be more fungible for powerful states than for weaker states. It is not clear what this means or why it might be true. It is, of course, true that more power resources allow one to do more things, that is, influence more actors and/or more issues. This implies nothing about the fungibility of any particular

---

27 Although Deutsch was a leading advocate of the analogy between power and money, he was paradoxically also the author of an eloquent passage illustrating the *lack* of fungibility of power resources. In this passage he notes the common assumption that the power "to promote one outcome can be transformed without loss into the same amount of power to produce another. We all know very well that this is simply not true. The power to knock down a man does not give us the power to teach him to play the piano or to do calculus or figure-skating. The power to bomb and burn a village cannot be completely or easily transformed into the power to win the sympathies of the inhabitants, or to govern it with their consent, and even less can it be transformed into the power to produce among them the many skills, values, and freely given loyalties which are essential for democratic government" (1988, 27).

power resource. Fungibility refers to the uses of a *given amount* of a power resource, not to the uses of varying amounts. In the economic realm, rich people can buy more things than poor people; but this is not because a rich person's dollar is more fungible than a poor person's dollar. The contention that fungibility increases with the amount of power resources is based either on a confused concept of fungibility or on a logic that has yet to be spelled out (Baldwin 1999; Guzzini 1998).

One possible explanation for the perception that power is more fungible for those with more of it is suggested by a proposition put forth by Lasswell and Kaplan (1950, 97) as follows:

> *Forms of power and influence are agglutinative: those with some forms tend to acquire other forms also.*

To the extent that this is true, the various forms of power resources "possessed" by a powerful state may *appear* more fungible than they really are. For example, a state with military power resources may acquire more economic and diplomatic power resources. Thus, when power is exercised, it may be difficult to determine precisely which power resources are at work in a given situation. If a powerful country like the United States succeeds in getting concessions during trade negotiations, some might attribute this to its military power, while others might attribute it to economic power or to persuasive arguments by diplomats. Power analysis is not easy.

It should also be noted that *time* is crucial with respect to determining the fungibility of resources. Economists like to say that all resources are fungible "in the long run." Thus, although the trucks possessed by the United States in 1941 could not be converted into tanks *at that point in time*, the resources that otherwise would have been used to manufacture trucks could be redirected to building tanks over a period of years—and they were.

Intentions and Power

In one of the most famous definitions of power, Max Weber (1947, 152) defined it as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will

72

despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this prob-
ability rests." This definition clearly makes the intentions of
Actor *A* an important part of the concept of power. Others, in-
cluding Dahl and many of his critics, have also defined power in
terms of *A*'s ability to affect *B* in intended ways.[28]

But what about the *unintended* effects of *A*'s influence? When
the United States Federal Reserve System raises interest rates, it
usually intends to affect the American domestic economy; but
the actual effects are likely to reverberate around the world.
There can be no question about the reality or importance of un-
intended effects in international politics (Guzzini 2000; Jervis
1997; Strange 1988). The question is whether such effects should
count as power. Some scholars, including this writer, have ar-
gued that such phenomena could be accounted for simply by di-
viding Dahl's concept into intentional and unintentional cate-
gories of power (Baldwin 1989; Frey 1989; Oppenheim 1981).

Those who call for more attention to the unintended effects
of power tend to imply that these unintended effects are det-
rimental to the interests of those affected (Barnett and Duvall
2005a; Guzzini 2000; Strange 1988). This is not necessarily so.
The unintended effects can also be beneficial to the interests of
those affected. When the United States encourages trade with
other countries, it does so primarily with the intention of im-
proving its own economic welfare, but this may have the unin-
tended effect of also improving the welfare of its trading part-
ners. And when the United States took steps to deter Soviet
nuclear attack on North America during the Cold War, it did so
primarily with the intention of providing for its own security,
but this action had the effect (intended or not) of also enhanc-
ing Canadian security. Whether the unintended effects of the
actions (or inactions) of powerful states tend to be beneficial
or detrimental to the interests of those affected is an empirical

28 Oddly, while Barnett and Duvall, Strange, Guzzini, and others criticize Dahl
for including intentions in the concept of power, Clegg (1989, 10, 66–67) criticizes
him for excluding intentions. Although there may have been some ambiguity in
1957, by 1989 Dahl had made it unmistakably clear that *A*'s intentions were inte-
gral to his concept of power.

question. It should be answered by research, not by definition or assertion.

Further reflection on the case in favor of including *A*'s intentions in the concept of power has convinced this writer that the case is compelling for the following reasons:

1. Intentional power is ubiquitous and important. Many of the most interesting and important questions in international relations concern the ability or inability of governments to realize their goals. Can the Allies win World War II? Can the United States get other countries to join the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, or the World Trade Organization? Can Japan get the members of the United Nations to let it join? Can Russia get the approval of member countries to join the World Trade Organization? Can the poor countries get trade preferences from the rich? Can China be persuaded to compromise with respect to its territorial claims in the China Sea? All such questions involve the ability of countries to realize their goals.

2. Intentional power is closer to ordinary usage—and to the usage by Hobbes, Machiavelli, Weber, Russell, Dahl, Wrong, Fox, Deutsch, and many others. As Dahl and Stinebrickner note, such usage "is consistent with our intuitive grasp of what influence means and how political scientists and other social scientists generally understand the term" (2003, 17). The idea that a sick person wandering around unintentionally spreading disease is exercising power is difficult to reconcile with ordinary understandings of power. Likewise, it seems odd to attribute power to someone who yawns and thereby induces others to do the same.

3. It is easier to assign moral responsibility for intentional actions by agents. Structural determinists (e.g., Hayward 2000) have no basis for holding actors accountable for their actions. This is not to say that actors bear no responsibility for unintended effects of their exercise of power, but the extent of this responsibility is much less clear in such cases. Most legal systems, for example, differentiate between manslaughter and murder.

4. As both Nagel and Dahl have pointed out, building intentions into the concept of power allows one to account for the "rule of anticipated reactions."

5. Excluding unintentional effects from the concept of power does not mean that such effects are not important; nor does it imply that they should not be studied. Not every important topic needs to be subsumed by the concept of power.

Measurement

The problem of how to measure power has confounded power analysts for hundreds of years (Gulick, 1955). If Dahl is correct about the lack of conceptual analysis prior to 1945, it would seem that more attention was devoted to measuring power than to figuring out what it means. In international relations not much has changed. Merritt and Zinnes (1988, 142) have pointed out that "the basis is now in place for a highly reliable operational measure of a nation-state's power," but they go on to observe that "without comparable progress along the dimension of *validity*,[29] the reliability factor has little meaning. A concept with high reliability but low validity is simply not useful."

Although there are many pitfalls in attempting to measure power, three of the most common are (1) the "fallacy of inadequate conceptual specification"; (2) the "single-dimension fallacy"; and (3) the "power-as-resources fallacy."

Before one can measure power, one must first have a concept of power. Although power has many dimensions, specification of who is influencing who with respect to what constitutes

---

29 "Validity" is the degree of correspondence between the measure and the concept being measured. King, Keohane, and Verba (1994, 110) point out that "often the specific indicator is far from the original concept and has only an indirect and uncertain relationship to it. It may not be a valid indicator of the abstract concept at all. But, after a quick apology for the gap between the abstract concept and the specific indicator, the researcher labels the indicator with the abstract concept and proceeds onward as if he were measuring that concept directly. Unfortunately, such reification is common in social science work, perhaps more frequently in quantitative than in qualitative research, but all too common in both."

the minimum for meaningful scholarly communication. Unfortunately, many attempts to measure the power of nation-states fail to specify a clear concept of power. For example, the influential Correlates of War (COW) project devotes scant attention to specifying the concept of power that it attempts to measure. Defining power as "the capacity to influence" (Singer 1963, 1988) not only fails to specify scope or domain, it also uses a synonym for power to define power—thus violating the requirement that terms be defined without using the term being defined (or a synonym) in the definition. The COW measure of power may be reliable, but it is severely lacking in validity.[30]

The single-dimension fallacy refers to what Merritt and Zinnes (1988, 142–43) call the belief by many political scientists that it is "both necessary and possible to find a 'power' scale on which to rank nation-states from lowest to highest." As Boulding (1989, 20) points out, however, "because power is a multidimensional concept, it is difficult to quantify and to measure." The problem is that there is no standardized measure that allows one to reduce the various dimensions of power to a single dimension. Some scholars nevertheless contend that the question of "who's number one?" is as useful in international relations as it is in sports (e.g., Ray and Vural 1986). It is not clear, however, that it is either meaningful or useful to ask this question even in the realm of sports. Assessing athletic ability without reference to a specified set of athletic activities is akin to assessing power without reference to scope and domain. How is one to compare a golfer, a swimmer, an archer, a sprinter, and a weightlifter? (Not to mention participants in the Olympic sports of curling, sailing, fencing, and diving!) As Dahl (1963, 1984, 1991, 27) has pointed out, "it is difficult enough to estimate relative influence within a particular scope and domain; it is by no means clear

30 Singer (1963) noted three specific objections to Dahl's concept of power, none of which was tenable. The objections concerned the ability of Dahl's concept to account for reinforcement, *A*'s ability to predict *B*'s behavior, and the alleged failure of Dahl's concept to consider the probabilistic nature of human behavior. For further discussion, see Baldwin (1971b).

how we can 'add up' influence over many scopes and domains in order to arrive at total, or aggregate, influence." This is equally true of attempts to "add up" and compare athletic accomplishments in different sports.

A variation of the single-dimension fallacy might be called the "ultimate measuring rod fallacy." When war is described as the "true end game" in international "chess," when the study of power is portrayed as "a study of the capacity to wage war," when force is described as "the ultimate form of power," or when the "capacity to wage war" is declared to be the ultimate "source of influence in the international system," the existence of an ultimate measuring rod of power is implied (Cline 1977; Gilpin 1975; Walt 1989). Such comments imply that the various forms of power can ultimately be reduced to a single dimension—usually involving force.

Perhaps the most common fallacy in power analysis, especially in international relations, is the *power as resources fallacy*. Numerous textbooks for the last sixty years or so discuss such "elements of national power" as population, natural resources, industrial capacity, weaponry, armies, navies, and so on. Resources, however, are not power. An actor can possess resources without having either the skill or the motivation to use them—as Dahl has repeatedly pointed out. An inventory of resources may, however, be useful as a convenient way to measure or estimate power in a given situation.

The multidimensional nature of power means that it can be measured on many different dimensions, including but not limited to: (1) the number and/or importance of those influenced; (2) the number and/or importance of the types of behavior influenced; (3) the probability of compliance; (4) the speed of compliance; (5) the magnitude of the positive or negative sanctions provided by A; (6) the costs to A; (7) the costs to B (Dahl 1968; Frey 1985a, 1989).

The adequacy of any given measure of power, of course, depends on the purpose at hand. When a five-year old asks what time it is, one often rounds to the nearest hour or half hour; but when a student taking a one-hour timed exam asks the same

question, one usually rounds to the nearest minute. Likewise, an index of power useful for one purpose may not be useful for other purposes. One of the most useful index numbers in social science—perhaps the most useful—is Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This is an index of the production of goods and services in an economy. Yet every student in Economics 101 learns that this index excludes such things as housework and child care by family members, the "underground" economy, and the illicit drug trade. Thus, this otherwise useful index may not be useful for studying these aspects of a state's economy. Likewise, an index of a state's war-winning ability may be less useful as a measure of a state's ability to obtain concessions with respect to tariffs on its exports. Thus, just as there is no single "all-purpose" index of the production of goods and services in an economy, there is no single "all-purpose" index of the power of a nation state.

Ideally, any attempt to create an operational measure of power should begin with the following steps:

1. Clear specification of the concept of power to be measured.

2. Statement of the proposed operational measure.

3. Reasons why this measure is preferable to alternative measures.

4. Acknowledgement of the ways in which the operational measure is deficient, that is, the aspects of the concept that it fails to capture. Dahl ended his 1957 article as follows:

The concept provides us with a standard against which to compare the operational alternatives we actually employ. In this way it helps us to specify the defects of the operational definitions as measure of power. To be sure, we may have to use defective measures; but at least we shall know that they are defective and in what ways. More than that, to explicate the concept of power and to pin-point the deficiencies of the operational concepts actually employed may often help us to invent alternative concepts and research methods that produce a much closer approximation in practice to the theoretical concept itself.

Reciprocal Power[31]

Reciprocal control—the most common form of influence—often goes unnoticed by political scientists, especially specialists in international relations. Contrasting conceptions of "cooperation versus conflict" and of "exchange versus power" make it difficult to conceptualize reciprocal power, let alone recognize it in action. Any zero-sum concept of power, such as that espoused by Lukes (1974), Barnett and Duvall (2005a), Gilpin (1975, 1981), Kindleberger (1970), and countless others, makes reciprocal power appear to be a contradiction in terms.

As Douglas Rae (1988, 24) points out, however, Dahl's concept of power allows for the "possibility that power could be exercised either in a conflictual or cooperative relationship." He goes on to observe that a "transaction could still count as an instance of power even if the power-wielding subject, A, lost something she valued while the object, B, gained." Rae sees this as "a merit, for much of the power wielded in actual practice is associated with the generation and maintenance of cooperative relationships."[32]

In the third edition of *Modern Political Analysis*, Dahl explicitly notes the possibility of mutual or reciprocal control:

> Exchanges or transactions, which are as ubiquitous in political as in economic life, appear always to involve mutual control: each party to the exchange modifies his or her actions in response to the offers or promises of the other. (1976, 51)

The passage by Dahl cited above closely parallels a passage written two hundred years earlier by Adam Smith:

> Man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their

31 For in-depth discussion of the relation between power and exchange, see Baldwin (1978, 1985, 1990).
32 On cooperation in international relations, see Keohane (1984), Milner (1992, 1997), and Baldwin (1993).

self-love in his favour, and shew them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them. Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this. Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. (Smith 1776 [1937, 14])

Structural Power

If any term rivals *power* in generating controversy among social scientists, *structure* may be it. It should not be surprising, therefore, that "structural power" has a variety of meanings. Aristotle classified political systems according to the way power was distributed within the state; Marx explained the behavior of the political "superstructure" in terms of the economic "substructure" defined as control of the means of production; Waltz explained the behavior of nation-states in terms of the structure of the international system defined as the distribution of capabilities; Keohane and Nye (1977) explained state behavior in terms of asymmetrical interdependence. Susan Strange explained outcomes in international relations in terms of structures of power in the world economy in the areas of security, production, finance, and knowledge; and most versions of balance-of-power theory explain state behavior in terms of the distribution of power in the world. Each of these explanations could plausibly be described as employing or implying a concept of structural power. This section will identify some of the conceptions of structural power used in studying international relations, note some pitfalls in using the concept, and compare it with Dahl's approach. Sorting out the conceptual morass surrounding "structural power," however, is beyond the scope of this book—perhaps any book.[33]

33 In an essay entitled "Structure and Structural Change: Weaselwords and Jargon," the economist Fritz Machlup (1963, 75) expressed his fear that structure "is often a weaselword used to avoid commitment to a definite and clear thought." He

For some scholars, for example, Strange (1988), structural power is unintentional power. As noted before, not every topic worthy of study need be subsumed under the rubric of power analysis. Since the arguments for including intentions in the concept of power were discussed before, they will not be repeated here.

Others, such as Krasner (1985), have suggested that structural power refers to the ability to create and/or to control structures. Thus, the role of the United States in creating and/or influencing the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, or the Organization of American States is often described as exemplary of structural power.

Still others, for example, Wendt (1987), view agents and structures as "mutually constituitive" in the sense that each affects the other in a process of "co-determination." Structural power from this perspective is sometimes—but not always—described as "constituting" the identities of those affected by it.[34]

There are (at least) three pitfalls to be avoided in the analysis of structural power that should be noted: (1) determinism versus accountability; (2) the *cui bono* fallacy; and (3) the fallacy of insufficient specification. They will be discussed in turn.

---

went on to identify twenty-five different meanings for the term in economics. He also noted that sociology was the "discipline with the largest weasel-vocabulary, as it seems at least to the layman. Sociologists have a field day with 'structure;' and they have not been satisfied with the noun, the adjective, and the adverb—they have made also a verb, 'to structure.' Sociologists are always busy 'structuring one thing or another and I understand, they are grieved if anything remains 'unstructured.'" It is perhaps no coincidence that IR scholars most enamored by the discipline of sociology have been especially attracted to "structural power." Writing a half-century after Machlup, the author of an entry entitled "Structural Power" for *The Encyclopedia of Power* began by noting that structural power is "particularly hard to define given that the notion of structure has so many different uses across the social sciences" (Joseph 2011, 636–40). The sociologist George C. Homans observed that the word "structure," so prevalent in the social sciences, is used more as an "incantation" than as a rigorous and systematic tool (1975, 57).

34 On this type of structural power, see Wendt (1987, 1999); Guzzini (1993); Barnett and Duvall (2005a); Dessler (1989); Isaac (1987); Hayward (2000); Krasner (2013); and Powell (1994).

Everyone (including Dahl) agrees that structures can serve as constraints on power. The U.S. Constitution, for example, constrains the power of the president in numerous ways. Many would also agree that such structural constraints at least partially determine outcomes, but total *determinism* is cause for concern. Lukes, for example, argues that the point "of locating power is to fix responsibility for consequences held to flow from the action, or inaction, of certain specifiable agents" (2005, 58). To the extent that outcomes are structurally determined, it is difficult to hold specific actors (agents) accountable.[35] Guzzini (2013, 180) contends that "the basic tension in Strange's approach can be summarized as follows: how is it that in a world in which power is increasingly diffused and the capacity to control events is said to evaporate, some actors are still criticized for being basically responsible for the situation and able but not willing to resolve it?"

The *cui bono* fallacy refers to the assumption that those who benefit from a particular distribution of power are responsible for it and therefore members of the "power structure" or the "power elite." Taxi drivers, of course, benefit when it rains; but it does not follow that they control the weather. Likewise, those who benefit from a tax cut may or may not be responsible for making it happen. There is a difference between being lucky and being powerful. This does not mean that the question of "who benefits" is irrelevant to power analysis. The answers to this question may well provide useful clues as to how power is distributed, but they do not constitute proof (Frey 1971). Suspecting that something might be true is not the same as proving that it is.

The fallacy of insufficient specification refers to the need to specify scope and domain in order to make meaningful statements about power. In international relations, it is meaningful to speak of the distribution of power with respect to international environmental regulations (Young 1994), international

---

35 For a thoughtful though inconclusive discussion of this topic, see Hayward and Lukes (2008).

finance (Strange 1988, 1996), international trade rules, or international security issues; but references to a single monolithic "power structure" are likely to confuse more than they clarify. As Frederick Frey (1971, 1086–87) noted long ago:

> We must recognize that the notion of "the power structure" of a social unit is a dangerously misleading siren. There are as many power structures as there are issues fruitfully distinguished. . . . "Power in Oshkosh" is, almost by definition, an insufficiently specific notion. Instead we must always indicate the issue or scope involved.[36]

The relational power approach associated with Dahl has been criticized both for neglecting the study of structural power and for its alleged inability to take account of structural power (Guzzini 1993, 2000, 2013; Strange 1988). Strange depicts relational power and structural power as fundamentally different. Whereas relational power "is the power of *A* to get *B* to do something they would not otherwise do," structural power is "the power to shape and determine the structures of the global political economy" with which states and economic enterprises operate. "Structural power" for Strange confers "the power to decide how things shall be done" (1988, 24–25). This is not much different from the discussion of the structural "level of influence" in the sixth edition of *Modern Political Analysis* (Dahl and Stinebrickner 2003, 45–47).

Dahl and Stinebrickner define structure as follows:

> A relatively enduring institution, organization, or practice that allocates or at least significantly shapes the allocation of important values like prestige, status, money, wealth, education, health and others, including, of course, power, authority, and the like. Thus, structures include relatively concrete organizations like family arrangements, tribes, clans, and kinship

---

36 Waltz's (1979) treatment of the international power structure is akin to "power in Oshkosh" insofar as it fails to specify scope. As will be argued later, however, the issue of war may be implicit in Waltz's discussion.

systems, together with voting systems, political parties, legislatures, universities, corporations, and religious organizations. And they also include much broader systems such as democratic or authoritarian regimes, market and nonmarket economic orders, systems of private and public property, and so on. (2003, 46)

It is misleading to describe the Dahlian perspective as incapable of dealing with structural power. The position of the Dahlian approach may be summarized as follows:

1. Both the existence and importance of power structures are acknowledged.

2. Structures may impose limits on *B*'s behavior and/or enable *B* to do things that *B* could not otherwise do.

3. Structures may be either detrimental or beneficial to *B*'s interests.

4. There are many kinds of power structures—formal and informal—at all levels, including family, village, firm, church, state, and global.

5. Power structures (properly specified) are legitimate subjects of study by power analysts.

6. The approach allows for power structures to vary across issue-areas, but it also allows for the (unlikely) possibility of a single global power structure that is the same for all issue-areas.

There are thus a number of possible meanings for "structural power" in the IR literature. When confronted with this term, it is therefore essential to clarify whether it refers to constraints on agents, the constitution of agents, the determination of agents' behavior, the unintended side effects of their behavior, the ability of agents to create or modify structures, or to some other meaning.[37]

37 Joseph (2011) rightly points out that "structures" not only constrain the behavior of agents, they may *enable* agents to do things they could not otherwise do. This aspect of structures, however, is seldom noted.

"Power Over" versus "Power To"

The distinction between *power over* and *power to* has generated a great deal of unnecessary misunderstanding and controversy. Whereas the first refers to influence with respect to other people, the second refers to the ability to achieve goals regardless of whether this involves influencing other people. Thus, Robinson Crusoe could have the "power to" pick fruit, catch fish, take a nap, or run a marathon before the arrival of Friday; but he could not exercise "power over" anyone because there was no one to influence. While economists can use the idea of a "Robinson Crusoe economy" to illustrate the basic elements of an economic system, there can be no talk of a "Robinson Crusoe polity" until the arrival of Friday. Most political scientists, therefore, have been more interested in "power over" than in "power to"; and it is the former concept they have in mind when they refer to *power* as central to the discipline of political science.[38]

Some writers insist that "power to" is more important than "power over" and that it is a mistake to focus on power over. The sociologist Erik Ringmar, for example, argues that "IR scholars have a poor understanding of the concept of power" because "what really matters is the 'power to' rather than the 'power over'" (2007, 190). What "really matters" to sociologists, of course, may differ from what "really matters" to political scientists.[39]

Other writers insist on making a normative distinction between the two concepts. Whereas "power to" is viewed as liberating, empowering, and morally legitimate, "power over" is depicted as exploitative, illegitimate, and equivalent to violence or domination (Pansardi 2011, 2012). This can be misleading to the

---

38 Morriss (2002) objects to the concept of "power over" on etymological and semantic grounds and suggests that what is normally thought of as social or political power should be labeled "ableness"—a word that Pansardi (2011, 523) notes is "virtually unused in contemporary English."

39 Another argument for the importance of "power to" is that it facilitates study of how a society might go about achieving its goals. To the best of this writer's knowledge, there is no more incisive, comprehensive, or useful work on how a society can do this than Dahl and Lindblom's *Politics, Economics, and Welfare* (1953).

extent that the latter view is associated with Dahl's concept of power. As noted before, his concept is normatively neutral and not equivalent to domination. For Dahl, domination is a subtype of "power over"—and a relatively rare subtype at that.[40]

Costs and Power

Unlike the power analysis problems discussed above, the problem of power costs has generated little or no debate. A debate requires two sides to argue opposing points of view. The division among power analysts with respect to the costs of power, however, is mainly between those who acknowledge the importance of the topic and those who ignore or misunderstand it. Whereas Harsanyi (1962a, 1962b), Deutsch (1963) and Dahl (1961, 1963, 1968, 1970) contend that costs are relevant to both conceptualizing and measuring power, Lukes (1974), Hayward (2000), and many others ignore costs.[41]

The neglect of power costs is unfortunate for at least three reasons: (1) As a practical matter, the costs of power may have far-reaching consequences. James Fearon argues that costs constitute the "central puzzle posed by war" (1995, 410). For most countries, expenditures on national defense constitute a significant portion of the budget. And in the nuclear era, the costs of exercising power during wartime are potentially disastrous for everyone in the world. (2) Whereas those who study *domination* often depict it as widespread, Dahl (1991, 38) describes it as a rare phenomenon due largely to the costliness of domination. One might therefore expect a lively debate with respect to the costs of domination, but no such debate has yet come to the attention of this writer. (3) Assessing the power of an actor or

40 In retrospect, it is unfortunate that Dahl chose to phrase his definition in terms of *A*'s "power over" *B*, since he could have phrased it as *A*'s "power with respect to" *B* without changing the meaning. The connotation of the latter is less menacing.

41 Deutsch (1963, 115n) claims to have preceded Harsanyi by suggesting the notion of the cost of power in *Nationalism and Social Communication* (1953). On this issue, see Baldwin (1971d).

the utility of an instrument of statecraft requires consideration of the costs of exercising that power. Nuclear weapons, for example, seem at first glance to confer great power on their owners; but further consideration suggests that the potential cost of using them greatly limits their utility. Likewise, assessing the success of an influence attempt requires estimating the costs incurred. The concept of a Pyrrhic victory, for example, does not refer to a type of victory. On the contrary, it is a sardonic expression suggesting that what seems like a victory is really a defeat. It is, therefore, puzzling to find a major empirical study classifying "as successful those states or coalitions that 'won' in each dispute and each war, *no matter how pyrrhic the victory*" (Wayman, Singer, and Goertz 1983, 500; my italics). This is comparable to classifying as "profitable" any business firm that generates revenue no matter how large its liabilities (e.g., Enron?).

In the second edition of his book, Lukes (2005, 148) modifies his original assumption of unitary interests in favor of one of multiple and conflicting interests, thus opening the way for consideration of opportunity costs or trade-offs among them. Unfortunately, his attempt to apply this reasoning to Crenson's "steelworkers in Gary, Indiana," muddles the discussion. Instead of acknowledging that it might have been in the interest of the steelworkers to breathe polluted air in order to preserve their jobs, he insists that their "real or best interest" was "to render clean air and employment compatible" by requiring all American communities to adopt pollution controls (148). This, however, was not a realistic alternative for the Gary steelworkers. When someone falls overboard, the alternatives are simple—sink or swim. Advising a person that his or her "real interest" lies in wearing a lifejacket or staying on the boat is neither relevant nor helpful.

Morriss (2002, 89–91) provides a cursory but equally muddled discussion of opportunity costs. He misstates the definition as "a measure of the opportunities foregone" by performing some action. Opportunity cost, however, measures only the highest valued alternative foregone, not all the alternatives foregone. He also distinguishes between the "raw costs" or "pain costs" of an

action and the opportunity costs. This distinction is well known to economists and has been described by them as "a fallacy," "a source of confusion," and "manifest nonsense" for nearly one hundred years. (Knight 1924; Buchanan 1969, 6) As one writer notes, "cost does reflect pain or sacrifice; this is the elemental meaning of the word. . . . The concept of cost as pain or sacrifice is and must be central to the idea of opportunity cost" (Buchanan 1969, 7). Like Lukes, Morriss misapplies the concept of opportunity costs to Crenson's study of Gary, Indiana. He observes that Crenson based his study "on the surely acceptable assumption that polluted air is not in the interests of those who breathe that air" (Morriss 2002, 147–48). He then notes Polsby's (1980, 216–17) suggestion that the steelworkers might have "preferred to have a polluting steel complex that gave employment, rather than no polluting steelworks and no jobs." Morriss dismisses Polsby's suggestion on the ground that "most of us took the power to obtain employment without having to breathe foul air for granted." This line of argument, however, is not only logically irrelevant but also empirically dubious. One does not refute the possibility of a trade-off between employment and pollution by observing what most people "took for granted." Empirically, a plausible argument could be made that such a trade-off has existed ever since the Industrial Revolution and continues to exist today. Industrialization can be a dirty business—as a brief visit to present-day China or India will demonstrate. Even granting Morriss's assertion about what most people "took for granted" in the 1960s, it does not follow that they were justified in doing so. Facts matter.

Many people would "take for granted" that working ten hours a day in a shoe factory in Southeast Asia for a dollar a day is not in the interest of a twelve-year old girl, but if the alternative is working as a prostitute or being sold into slavery, the shoe factory job may well be in her best interest—*given that particular situation.* Likewise, one may detest swimming, but if the alternative is sinking, swimming may well be in one's interest.

In explicating his peculiar distinction between "ability" and "ableness," Morriss observes that "the rich are able to feed off

caviar and champagne" while "the poor have to restrict themselves to beer and pickles, and are unable to eat more expensive food" (2002, 81). This idea that the rich can afford to do things that the poor cannot is unlikely to surprise many economists—or anyone else for that matter. One can, of course *imagine* a world in which everyone can "have his cake and eat it too," a world in which resources are free rather than scarce, a world without opportunity costs, a world in which "choice" is meaningless, a world that has never existed, does not exist, and never will exist. Morriss observes that abilities "become ablenesses for everybody only in utopia" (2002, 83). It is not clear, however, that everyone is "able" to eat caviar, even in utopia. Thomas More's Utopia may have been a social and political utopia, but the economy was like any other in assuming multiple and competing goals and the consequent necessity of choosing how to allocate scarce resources.[42] Even in Utopia, there are only twenty-four hours in the day. It may well be that no one can afford to eat caviar in Utopia.

The concept of opportunity cost lies at the core of the discipline of economics and is often described as "an economist's concept." This can be confusing insofar as it implies that the relevance of the concept is limited to economics. It is one of the most important concepts in social science and deserves consideration comparable to that given to such concepts as power, freedom, democracy, authority, justice, peace, and security—especially since the rational pursuit of any of those requires the sacrifice of one or more of the others.

It is not clear why the concept of opportunity costs is neglected or misapplied in power analysis, but it may be due to the general tendency to overlook the contributions of economics

---

42 Schumpeter (1954, 207) describes the economic system of More's Utopia and observes that it "is not a bad method to put into evidence the essentials of the functioning of *any* economic organism." And the *New Palgrave* notes that "the utopian tradition has tended to accept the central tension between limited resources and insatiable appetites, neither ignoring the problem nor assuming any essential change in human nature" (Claeys 1987, 783).

to the topic. Harsanyi's seminal article (1962a) is never cited by Lukes, Morriss, or Hayward, and rarely, if ever, cited by other power analysts. One is more likely to encounter complaints about the lack of attention to power by economists than to encounter recognition of their actual contributions. Lukes (2005), as noted earlier, complains that economists "have had little that is interesting to say about power"—thus ignoring contributions by Schelling, Harsanyi, Simon, Lindblom, Nash, Morgenstern, Boulding, Shapley, Hirshleifer, and others.[43]

This chapter has reviewed the fundamentals of power analysis, including the difference between relational and property concepts, the multiple dimensions of power, and the relevance of counterfactual conditions, and identified twelve contentious issues in the analysis of power. With these considerations in mind, the following chapters will focus on the role of the concept of power in discussions of international relations.

43 Even when discussing opportunity costs, some power analysts prefer to cite sociologists rather than economists (e.g., Morriss, and Lukes). Contributions by economists such as Jacob Viner, Charles J. Hitch, Albert O. Hirschman, Charles Kindleberger, Thomas C. Schelling, Klaus Knorr, Jack Hirshleifer, Robert Powell, and Kenneth Boulding have been of particular interest to students of international power relations. For a recent survey of contributions by economists to the study of national security, see Kapstein (2002–3). Oddly, even economists writing on power overlook contributions by other economists. For example, two economists discussing power in an economics journal ignore work by the economists cited above and in this footnote (Dugger 1980; Klein 1980). Although Max Weber is widely viewed as a sociologist, he held a PhD in economics and professorships in economics (Schumpeter 1954). His name might well be added to the list of economists who have contributed interesting insights on power.

CHAPTER 4

Power Analysis and International Relations

There is not any thing amongst civil affairs more subject to error than the right evaluation and true judgment concerning the power and forces of a state. Sir Francis Bacon, "Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates" (1612)

So long as there is politics among sovereign states, there will be estimation of power. Even though the best estimates are only rough, they are better than reliance on intuition or emotion. (Jones 1954, 439)

THIS CHAPTER IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS. THE FIRST PROVIDES an overview of the evolution of the concept of power in the discipline of international relations in America from the 1920s to the 1960s. The second part of the chapter discusses six analytical perspectives on the role of power in thinking about international relations. These perspectives include: (1) power as identity; (2) power as goal; (3) power as means; (4) power as mechanism; (5) power as competition; and (6) power as capability.

91

CHAPTER 4

Power and IR: The Evolution

Power and IR: The Interwar Period

It is a commonplace for international relations scholars to observe that the "concept of power is central to international relations" (Barnett and Duvall 2005a, 39) or that it "has always been at the core of our discipline" (Finnemore and Goldstein 2013, 4–5). Such comments are usually intended more as prefatory remarks than as intellectual history. As a description of the role of the concept of power in the evolution of the discipline of international relations in the American academy, however, such observations can be misleading.

Writing in 1947, Grayson Kirk observed that "it is well to remember that the study of international relations as a separate subject in universities is a development of the present century, and for all practical purposes, of the last quarter century" (2). During the 1920s the study of international relations was composed mostly of courses on international law, diplomatic history, international economics, and international organization. Notably missing were courses on international politics which focused on power. "Power" and especially "power politics" were regarded more as terms of vilification than as useful analytical concepts. According to Kirk, "international power politics were castigated without being properly studied" (4).

Kirk points out that most of the teachers of international relations during the interwar period "were strong partisans of American membership in the League of Nations" who viewed the study of war as "tainted with the stigma of moral reproach" (1947, 4). Thus, he observes, "an emphasis upon what has been variously called 'sentimentalism,' 'idealism,' and 'Utopianism' dominated" teaching in the field.

During the 1930s interest began to grow in power as an analytical concept and in international politics as a field of study, but, as Harold Sprout later observed, this change occurred "gradually" and "against great initial resistance" (1949, 404–5). In 1933, Nicholas J. Spykman delivered a paper at the Fifth Conference of Teachers

of International Law entitled "Methods of Approach to the Study of International Relations," which described international political relations as a struggle for power. In the same year, Frederick L. Schuman published a textbook entitled *International Politics*. The text is described by Sprout as sweeping "a fresh breeze of new thinking into the academic classrooms of the middle 1930's."

Schuman explicitly disassociates his book from previous treatments of international relations as follows:

> The analysis of international politics attempted in the following pages does not postulate the inevitability of sweetness and light or support the illusion that the law of the jungle in the international anarchy has, by some late magic, been superseded by the morality of the millennium. The approach is rather that of Realpolitik, characterized by Machiavellian detachment and an earnest effort to delve beneath phraseology to underlying realities. (1933, vii)

After noting that the study of international relations had been dominated by international lawyers and diplomatic historians, he portrayed his approach as follows:

> In the present study an effort has been made to escape from the limitations of the traditional approaches and to deal with the subject from the point of view of the new Political Science. The adjective is used advisedly, since the old Political Science— still all-too-prevalent in the centers of higher learning—has been circumscribed by barren legal and historical concepts. The approach adopted here assumes that Political Science . . . is concerned with the description and analysis of relations of power in society. (viii)

Schuman portrayed all politics as a struggle for power but described power in domestic politics as a means toward other ends while viewing power in international politics as an end in itself. Armaments are depicted as both the prime "means of power and the measure thereof" (516).

Schuman was a product of the interdepartmental graduate program in international relations established at the University

of Chicago in 1931 under the direction of Quincy Wright.[1] At the time, of course, both Charles Merriam and Harold Lasswell were members of the Chicago political science department. Given the interest in power among faculty members at Chicago, it is surprising that international politics was not among the courses available to graduate students in the IR program—at least in the early years. William T. R. Fox, Klaus Knorr, and Bernard Brodie all lamented the absence of such a course during the early 1930s (Fox 1989; Knorr 1989). Knorr noted that he and Brodie felt that "what we learned about international politics originated for the most part in the asides, often lengthy and always sharp, of Jacob Viner in his famous economics course on international trade" (282).[2] Later in the 1930s, international politics was added to the Chicago IR program.

In 1935 the Institute of International Studies was established at Yale and became known for its emphasis on national power and national security. Arnold Wolfers, Frederick S. Dunn, and Nicholas J. Spykman were joined later in the 1930's by Fox, Brodie, and Almond. Despite Schuman's text, the strong graduate program at Chicago, and the research center at Yale, the concept of power was not yet ensconced as the core of the discipline of international relations. "One conspicuous need," according to Harold Sprout, "was the need for a conceptual structure and methodology with which to explore and analyze the nature and role of power in the relations of national states" (1949, 405). He describes the English author E. H. Carr as "one of the pioneers who tackled this problem" in his *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, published in 1939, and praises him for presenting "a theory of international politics based squarely upon a concept of power that combined psychological and economic as well as military elements." This book was widely read by American IR

1   Other students in this program included William T. R. Fox, Annette Baker Fox, Klaus Knorr, Bernard Brodie, and Gabriel Almond.
2   In the preface to his *War and Politics* (1975), Brodie describes Viner as his "greatest teacher."

scholars—and still is--despite its lack of a definition of the concept of power.[3]

Power and IR: War and Postwar

In 1942 Spykman published *America's Strategy in World Politics*, which argued forcefully for power as the central focus for the study of international relations and as the primary objective of any state's foreign policy. Spykman began by noting that "the basic power aspect of international relations has received but little attention in the United States," that "power has a bad name," that the "use of power is often condemned," and that "in the United States the word has a connotation of evil." As a goal of individual or state action, he pointed out, power "is considered both undesirable and wicked" (7, 11).[4]

Another book widely used during World War II was edited by the Sprouts, who prepared a book of readings on world affairs for use in the Navy's college training program. This book, published in 1945 with the title *Foundations of National Power*, was used during the war in courses at the University of California, the University of North Carolina, Northwestern University, the University of Pennsylvania, Yale, Princeton, and forty-seven other universities. The first chapter observed that "the role of national power is basic to any discussion of international politics" (4).

One year after the publication of *Foundations of National Power*, the Council on Foreign Relations organized a series of six regional conferences on teaching and research in international relations. One hundred twenty-six faculty members from seventy-six institutions of higher learning participated. Among the participants were John S. Dickey (president of Dartmouth College), Frederick S. Dunn, Leland M. Goodrich, Harold Sprout,

3   Barnett and Duvall (2005a), for example, conclude their essay on the concept of power by eulogizing Carr's treatment of the subject.
4   Publication of Spykman's book generated considerable controversy. See the discussion of Spykman's contributions to the study of international politics by Furniss (1952).

CHAPTER 4

Jacob Viner, Arnold Wolfers, Frederick Schuman, Kenneth Boulding, Hans Morgenthau, and Quincy Wright. Grayson Kirk (1947) summarized and synthesized the views expressed at these conferences, concluding that the study of international politics, centered "around an analysis of national power" should be the intellectual "nucleus" of the field of international relations.

Thus, by 1947 there was a widespread consensus among IR scholars that power and international politics should be central to the field. This consensus provided fertile ground for the publication in 1948 of the influential textbook by Hans J. Morgenthau, entitled *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace.* Like Spykman, Morgenthau asserted the centrality of power as a foreign policy goal and as a concept for understanding international politics. Also like Spykman, he began by noting the tendency both to neglect and to depreciate the role of power in international politics—especially in the United States.

Morgenthau devoted chapters to "political power," "the struggle for power," "the elements of national power," "the essence of national power," the "evaluation of national power," "the balance of power," and so on. Compared to most previous books on international politics, Morgenthau's attention to conceptual analysis was a remarkable advance. After noting that the concept of political power "poses one of the most difficult and controversial problems of political science," he defines power as "control over the minds and actions" of others and defends its use in the study of international politics (1948, 13). In 1949 Morgenthau's book was favorably reviewed in the *American Political Science Review* by John B. Whitton, who described it as "the most mature and scholarly book yet to appear in its field" (1949, 1291) and in *World Politics* by Harold Sprout, who praised it as an "impressive treatise" (404).

Power and IR: The 1950s

By 1950 there was widespread agreement on "power" as an important and useful concept in the study of international relations. This consensus owed much to the previous intellectual

96

efforts of a number of scholars besides Morgenthau, especially Schuman, Spykman, Carr, the Sprouts, the Foxes, Dunn, Wolfers, Earle, Lasswell, and Kirk. Given this (seeming) convergence of views, one might have expected the 1950 publication of Lasswell and Kaplan's landmark work, *Power and Society*, to be enthusiastically welcomed by IR scholars. Morgenthau's review in the *American Political Science Review* (1952), however, suggested otherwise. He disparaged the definitions offered by Lasswell and Kaplan as "platitudinous, circular, or tautological," accused them of demonstrating a "thorough misunderstanding of the nature of political theory and of its relationship to empirical research," and expressed his opinion that "the intellectual barrenness of the present work, its logical aimlessness and diffuseness, and its excessive concern with verbal artifices are the results of this fundamental misunderstanding." If a more negative book review has appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, it has yet to come to the attention of this writer.[5]

Morgenthau's review of *Power and Society* exposed an ongoing debate in the discipline with respect to the applicability of science to the study of politics. His review must be understood in terms of his *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, published in 1946. There he argued that politics and power were not amenable to study by the methods of science. Politics is described as "an art and not a science," as too "complicated, incongruous, and concrete" to be understood by "scientific reason" (9–10). This debate, of course, continued in the discipline of political science—and continues to this day in various forms. The relevance of this debate for understanding the evolving role of the concept of power in international relations theory is to demonstrate that the consensus on the role of power in 1950 lacked firm intellectual foundations.

In 1951 the Yale Institute of International Studies moved to Princeton, bringing the journal *World Politics* with it and

5   Since writing this passage, I discovered the even more vitriolic review of Lasswell's *World Politics and Personal Insecurity* (1935) in the *American Political Science Review* (Whittlesey 1935).

changing its name to the Center for International Studies. Thus, the Sprouts, Jacob Viner, and Richard Snyder were joined by Dunn, Knorr, and Almond—making Princeton overnight the intellectual center for the effort to incorporate international politics into the social sciences.[6]

Shortly after the publication of *Power and Society*, three important articles citing it appeared in *World Politics*: Wolfers' "The Pole of Power and the Pole of Indifference" in 1951; Haas's "The Balance of Power: Prescription, Concept, or Propaganda" in 1953; and Stephen B. Jones's "The Power Inventory and National Strategy" in 1954. While the first two became classics and are familiar to most contemporary IR scholars; the third made the most use of *Power and Society* and is arguably the most valuable from the standpoint of conceptual analysis. Unfortunately, it has been neglected and is likely to be familiar to only a few contemporary scholars.[7] All three, however, remain relevant and can be read with profit by twenty-first-century IR scholars.

During the 1950s power became firmly ensconced in discussions of international relations. A review of more than twenty textbooks used during the period 1945–60 found them preoccupied with power and concluded that by 1960 "the neglect of power so deplored by Carr and Morgenthau had been overcome. Indeed, power has become the hallmark of the discipline, at least in standard American texts" (Olson and Groom 1991, 121).

Despite this widespread focus on power during the 1950s, there were rumblings of discontent with the treatment of power

---

6   William T. R. Fox also left Yale for Columbia the previous year and continued to edit *World Politics*. For an overview of the field and the evolution of the study of international politics at Princeton from 1932 to 1959, see Sprout (1959).

7   All three articles were included in Rosenau's influential reader in 1961, but none was cited by Dahl in his article on power in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* in 1968. Jones was a political geographer rather than a political scientist, which may partially explain the neglect of his article. This writer contributed to the neglect of Jones' article by failing to mention it in his article on "Power and International Relations" in the *Handbook of International Relations* (2013).

in IR textbooks. The decade began with a revised edition of the Sprouts' *Foundations of National Power* (1951), which featured an expanded emphasis on power analysis. The Sprouts noted that the term "power" was ubiquitous in most theoretical discussions of international politics. But they warned that the same word was often used to refer to different *concepts* (39–40). The decade ended with the Sprouts observing that "the notion of power as a quantifiable mass is giving way to the concept of power as a behavioral relationship," complaining that the term *power* "tends more often than not to denote *military* power," and suggesting that "it might help to think more clearly about the relations of states if the word *power* could be stricken from the vocabulary of international politics altogether" (Sprout and Sprout 1962, 136–41; Sprout 1963). Thus, two scholars at the forefront of the effort to incorporate the concept of power into the study of international politics in the 1940s and 1950s began the 1960s by expressing second thoughts about the concept—or at least the word.

In 1955 Richard C. Snyder reviewed five textbooks in *World Politics*. Noting that all devoted at least one chapter to "specification of the 'elements of national power'" and that all stressed power as the "dominant theme," he pointed out that "conceptual difficulties continue to beset the field of international politics." Citing power as an example, he complained that "central concepts appear to be either undefined, imprecisely defined, or defined so broadly as to lose analytic strength." Despite the increased emphasis on power, he pointed out, "power is *not* subject to any rigorous analysis *as a concept*" (italics in original). Suggesting that two of the textbooks did not really define power at all, he criticizes Morgenthau for offering too many definitions—as "mutual relations of control," as "interest," and as a psychological relationship. "As sometimes employed," he concluded, "the power concept comes close to being meaningless" (1955, 462, 467–72).

In 1963 Snyder's advisee, Denis Gartland Sullivan, presented a doctoral dissertation submitting the field of international relations, especially the concept of power, to the most rigorous and

CHAPTER 4

incisive conceptual analysis it had received to date.[8] Grounding his discussion in the social power literature, including Lasswell and Kaplan, Dahl, Simon, March, Oppenheim, and others, Sullivan analyzed fourteen textbooks and found: (1) a "failure to rigorously clarify the concept of power"; (2) a tendency to confuse definition with theory by "a subtle substitution of the determinants [i.e., elements] of power for power"; (3) a failure to understand the difference between power as a relational concept and the relative power of countries based on a comparison of their respective power resources (1963, 99–141).

From the neglect or vilification of power during the 1920s to the slow emergence of power in international relations scholarship in the 1930s and the rapid spread of the concept after World War II, those arguing that the concept of power should be central in the study of international politics would seem to have won by 1960. The omnipresence of the word power, however, did not imply agreement on the concept. "Power" was more of a chapter heading than a theoretical concept. It was not so much a matter of what role power played in IR theory; power in a sense *was* IR theory—or at least a place marker for IR theory.

In the 1960s, according to Olson and Groom (1991), attention drifted away from "the power politics approach"; and "behavioralism now challenged the accepted system of the analysis of power." This view is illustrated by Klaus Knorr's plaintive testimony:

> I experienced . . . the punishment for cultivating research that had dropped out of fashion. During the 1960's and 1970's, I continued with my work on international power although the concept had fallen from fashion. International power was being ignored to an amazing extent as if the realities behind the concept did not exist or were of no consequence. . . . The personal penalties for being out of fashion are . . . considerable. It

---

8   Sullivan's critique may well be the most rigorous and incisive the field has received to this day.

is harder to get published and if published, reviews and readers will be few. (Knorr 1989, 289)

It may be that the behavioral movement shifted emphasis from conceptual analysis and the kind of "theory" promulgated by Morgenthau and his followers toward searches for empirical indicators of power and "middle-level" theory. In IR the so-called grand debate of the 1960s focused on methodology rather than the concept of power. In *Contending Approaches to International Politics*, edited by Knorr and Rosenau (1969), power does not even appear as an index entry, let alone as a chapter heading or subject for debate.

This explanation, however, fails to explain why behavioralism did not seem to have a similar effect on the field of American politics. There, the community power debate was in full force—largely due to the impact of the behavioral movement. Did the Vietnam War play a role in undermining the interest of IR scholars in power politics, as some have suggested? An answer to this question is beyond the scope of this book. It should also be noted that power was not completely neglected in the 1960s. J. David Singer and his colleagues were at work creating the empirical indicators of power for the influential Correlates of War Project. And 1960 marked the publication of Schelling's *Strategy of Conflict*, which sparked interest in explaining how some countries get other countries to do things they would not otherwise do using game theory, bargaining theory, and strategic interaction analysis—modes of explanation that continue to this day (Lake and Powell 1999).[9]

The seeming consensus on the centrality of power in the study of international relations was also challenged by an influential essay by Stanley Hoffmann entitled "International Relations: The Long Road to Theory," appearing in *World Politics*

---

9   It should also be noted that K. J. Holsti published "The Concept of Power in the Study of International Relations" in 1964. This article brought the concept of relational power to bear on international relations and was later incorporated into his influential textbook entitled *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis* (1967).

in 1959. Hoffmann denied that the field of IR had a "core" and questioned the wisdom of placing "so much methodological weight upon one concept," even a "crucial one" like power. Nevertheless, he asserted, the "need for conceptualization and theory remains." He then laid out his proposal for the study of IR through "historical sociology,"[10] which involved references to "how power is distributed," the "pattern of power," and "power configurations"—without offering a definition of power. It was not clear how such "power configurations" were to be identified in the absence of a clearly defined *concept* of power.

Power and IR: Analytical Perspectives

The following discussion will shift from a chronological perspective on power in the study of international relations to an examination of six different analytical perspectives on power in the IR literature.

Power as Identity

International power analysis is complicated by a long-standing practice of identifying states as "great powers," "small powers," "middle powers," "superpowers," "regional powers," "world powers," "declining powers," "rising powers," "sea powers," "land powers," and so on. The principal "players" in the "game" of international politics were traditionally designated as "great

---

10 Hoffmann began his essay with the odd observation that "the two social sciences whose contributions have been most vital for the development of international relations" were political science and sociology (347). Other than Raymond Aron, it is not clear which sociologists Hoffmann had in mind. Only four years earlier, Wright (1955, 408) had declared sociology to be "only on the threshold of providing methods and conclusions directly relevant to international relations" and made no reference to Aron. Prior to publication of Hoffmann's article, *World Politics* had published only twenty-three contributions by sociologists, compared with fifty-eight by economists; and the editorial board included three economists but no sociologists.

powers." Thus, a formidable vocabulary was in place even be-fore American scholars began to give serious consideration to the role of power in theories of international politics—*and long before the revolution in power analysis triggered by the publication of Lasswell and Kaplan's book in 1950.*

Despite protestations by the Sprouts (1951, 1962, 1971) and others, the practice of identifying some states as "great pow-ers" remains common. Mearsheimer's title, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001), provides but one example. The meaning of the term, however, remains unclear. A popular book entitled *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* published in 1987 goes on for more than five hundred pages without defining the term. On the next-to-last page, however, the author suggests that a "great power" is "by definition, a state capable of holding its own against any other nation" (Kennedy 1987, 539).[11] Moreover, Waltz's influential *Theory of International Politics* fails to define "great power" even though such states play an important role in his theory (Waltz 1979). The question, according to Waltz, is an empirical one that can be answered by common sense (131). As Harrison Wagner points out, however, "common sense cannot answer the question, since the term *great power* has no standard meaning" (2007, 22–23).[12]

---

[11] "Not only does the author never attempt to develop a comprehensive defini-tion of national power, he never even defines the term 'Great Power' with real precision" (Kaiser 1989, 738).

[12] Art (1999, 185) asserts a contrary view that "in every historical era since the birth of the modern state system in 1648, both the wielders and analysts of state power have been in general agreement about which states qualified as great powers." From a conceptual standpoint, however, the question is whether this "agreement" is based on the same underlying concept of "great power." One can imagine a group agreeing that Mercedes makes the "best cars" but arriving at that conclusion by different conceptual routes. One might be using speed as a criterion, while others might be basing their judgment on comfort, handling, and/or appearance. Just because they agree of which is the "best car" does not necessarily mean that they share the same concept of what it means to be "best car." Likewise, there might be widespread agreement that the United States is the "most powerful state" in the world, but there may be little agreement on precisely what that means.

The traditional meaning of great power—never very precise—was to designate a state's ability to wage a major war against another "great power." Such a definition, of course, begs a number of questions: How large must the war be? Total war? Must it be fought with conventional weapons? What about nuclear war? Must a state be able to win or just to "hold its own"? What does "holding its own" mean? The continued use of this eighteenth-century term in the twenty-first century is disconcerting—especially since "the consensus among scholars and, more importantly, elites is that the most powerful states will not fight each other" (Jervis 1998, 991).

Power as Goal

Is power a goal or a means? Kenneth Waltz (1979, 126, 1986, 334) asserts that "power is a means" and that states "cannot let power, a possibly useful means, become the end they pursue." The question implies that power must be one or the other. There are, however, very few ultimate goals; most goals are intermediate goals and can therefore be viewed as means to higher-ranked goals. Dahl and Lindblom contend that "one of the most formidable problems of politics arises because with many people power is so easily converted from a goal that is mostly instrumental to one that provides enormous direct satisfactions" (1953, 17).

Many writers—Schuman in 1933, Spykman in 1942, Morgenthau in 1948, Mearsheimer in 2001, and others—have posited power as the goal of states and described international politics as a struggle for power. Waltz (1986, 334) notes that "the belief that states do or should try to maximize power is quite widespread among realists," although he disassociates himself from this view. Grieco (1997, 188) contends that "the question of whether states seek maximum power or maximum security is . . . of major importance to realist theory."

The important question, however, does not concern *which* goal to maximize, but whether it makes sense to try to maximize *any* single goal. States have many goals, such as security, economic welfare, clean air, potable water, prestige, and so

on. Waltz (1990, 27–28) acknowledges that states have "not one but many goals" and points out that attempting to construct a theory that takes account of all of them makes theory virtually impossible. He suggests that economic theorists dealt with this problem by creating "Economic man," a construct in which "men were assumed to be single-minded economic maximizers." Waltz then suggests that political theorists might find it useful to endow actors with a "single aim," while recognizing that this is a "radical simplification" of the real world.

Waltz is right, of course, to insist that simplification is necessary for any theory or theoretical model. The question is: how much simplification is too much? Waltz's suggestion that political scientists can learn from the economist's concept of "Economic man" begs the question of precisely *what* is to be learned. To the extent that it encourages the belief that assuming states to have a single goal like security, power, or economic welfare is comparable to the economists' assumptions with respect to Economic man, Waltz's analogy can be misleading. The concept of Economic man was not created in order to deal with the problem of multiple goals by the "radical simplification" of positing only a single goal for Economic man. On the contrary, attributing to Economic man the goal of maximizing *utility* was a way of describing how a rational actor deals with *multiple goals*. Economic man with but a single aim would have nothing to do. Neither the concept of choice nor the concept of cost would have any meaning for an actor with only one goal (Buchanan 1969). Such a concept of Economic man would be absurd.

Economic man deals with multiple goals by allocating resources among them up to the point that an increment of additional benefit equals an increment of additional cost for each goal. This is what it means to be a utility maximizer (or value maximizer).[13] The terms *value maximization*, *utility maximization*,

---

13 As Frank Knight (1941, 254) pointed out long ago, "the concept of economic man is merely an analytical, essentially terminological, device for referring to the economic aspect of behavior, *an aspect universal to all behavior in so far as it is purposive"* (my italics).

satisfaction maximization, and *success maximization* all mean roughly the same thing. None of them is a "goal" in the same sense that security, power, wealth, or tranquility are goals of nation states or other actors. To say that a rational actor pursues the goal of value maximization is to say *nothing* about the kinds of goals being pursued. It is simply a tautology, that is, true by definition.

The international relations counterpart of "Economic man" is not "power-maximizing man," but rather "National Interest person." The goal of National Interest person is to maximize the national interest. National Interest person allocates resources among multiple goals up to the point that the marginal contribution to the national interest of an increment of each goal (e.g., power) is equal to the marginal cost to the national interest of that increment. "National Interest person," of course, is familiar to students of international relations as Graham Allison's "rational actor model" (Allison and Zelikow 1999).

Since all social actors—including nation states—have multiple goals, the idea of trying to "maximize" any one of them makes little sense. The logical implication is that resources would be allocated to that goal *without limit*. Economists like to use the story of King Midas to illustrate the law of diminishing marginal utility. The overall lesson of the King Midas story, however, is to demonstrate the absurdity of attempting to maximize *any* particular goal.[14]

Three years after publication of Morgenthau's case for maximizing power, Arnold Wolfers (1951, 48–50) presented the case against such a policy. After noting that "states are not single-purpose organizations," Wolfers emphasized the consequent need for them to "parcel out" scarce means among various goals "in order of preference and by a constant process of weighing, comparing, and computing of values." Wolfers bolstered his argument against power maximization with the following passage:

---

14 Long before William Stanley Jevons and the Marginal Revolution in economic value theory, Aristotle's *Politics* used the King Midas story to illustrate this same absurdity. Possible labels include "power maximization fallacy," "King Midas fallacy," "single-goal fallacy," "costs-don't-matter fallacy," and/or "free-lunch fallacy."

As Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan put it in *Power and Society*: "No generalizations can be made a priori concerning the scale of values of all groups and individuals. What the values are in a given situation must in principle be separately determined for each case." Though they state earlier that a certain element of invariance must be assumed to "make a political science possible," they cannot be pleading for the assumption that all actors uniformly prefer some single value, *such as power* [italics added]. For they also say (p. 57) that: "it is impossible to assign a universally dominant role to some value or other."[15]

In a similar passage, Schelling and Palmatier (1971, 148) addressed the idea of goal maximization as follows:

> It is peculiar to the training of an economist that he is continually aware of the need to optimize rather than just to maximize, of the need to weigh explicitly the value of more progress toward one objective at the expense of progress toward another. By training, he is suspicious of any analysis that singles out one conspicuous variable, some "dominant" feature, on which all attention is to be focused, and which is to be maximized by putting arbitrary limits on the other variables.

It is not clear why Schelling and Palmatier attribute the preference for *optimization* in lieu of *maximization* to the "peculiar" training of an economist. This peculiarity is—or should be—as typical of National Interest person as it is of Economic man, since both are examples of Allison's rational actor model.

Realists usually acknowledge the existence of goals other than power even when they assume the goal of power maximization. Mearsheimer (2001, 46), for example, observes that "offensive realism certainly recognizes that great powers might

15 Wolfers was not alone in arguing that neither power nor security should be viewed as the primary goal of all states at all times but rather as one among several goals, the relative importance of which varied from one state to another and from one historical context to another—for example, Lasswell, Dunn, and Brodie (Baldwin 1995).

pursue" other goals, "but it has little to say about them." In a world of scarce resources, however, to place a value on one goal is to imply something about the value of all other goals. Logically, one cannot assert the primary value of power (or security) without simultaneously implying the secondary (or tertiary) value of other goals. Some address this problem by asserting that power (or security) is more valuable than other goals because it is a prerequisite to the attainment of those goals. But the same argument can be made with respect to the goals of health, shelter, clothing, food, breathable air, and potable water. It may well be that no state can survive without some minimum amount of power or security, but it is certain that no state can survive without some minimum amount of health, shelter, clothing, food, breathable air, and potable water. "A state can have no higher goal than survival," asserts Mearsheimer (1992, 222), since other goals "matter little when the enemy is occupying your country and slaughtering your citizens." It is equally true, however, that security against external military threats is likely to "matter little" if the populace is dying from disease, exposure, starvation, thirst, or foul air. Marginal analysis, of course, provides guidelines for allocating resources among these various objectives so as to maximize the overall national interest (or utility). It may well be that the *total* value of power or security is larger than the total value of other goals, but it is the *marginal* value of such goals that determines the allocation of scarce resources at any given point in time. And marginal value is not intrinsic to the goal itself; it is determined by the situation. Thus a choice between a diamond and a glass of water may be valued differently by a person stranded in the desert and a drowning person. Power can be a goal for states, but the contention that power maximization is and/or should be the primary goal of all states in all situations is intellectually difficult to defend.[16]

16 An important exception to the realist tendency to posit power maximization as a goal is Gilpin (1981, 19)

Power as Means

Despite the many—perhaps infinite—number of means by which *A* can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do, the study of international relations has been preoccupied with a single category of means—those concerning military force. Schuman (1933, 512) declared that "military force has ever been the decisive means by which State power has been created, increased, reduced, or destroyed." E. H. Carr (1946, 109) referred to "the supreme importance of the military instrument," to "every act of the state, in its power aspect," as "directed to war," and to military strength as "a recognized standard of political values." For Spykman (1942, 18–19), international politics is a struggle for power, and this struggle is "a struggle for war power, a preparation for war . . . power is in the last instance the power to wage war."

Even Morgenthau, who begins by defining power in nonmilitary terms and attempts to draw a clear line between political and military power, reveals a preoccupation with military power when describing his famous "elements of national power." Why is the geography of Italy important? "For, under all conditions of warfare of which we know, this geographical situation has made it extremely difficult to invade Central Europe from Italy." Why is self-sufficiency in food production important? Because "countries enjoying self-sufficiency, such as the United States and Russia, need not divert their national energies and foreign policies from their primary objectives in order to make sure that their populations will not starve in war." Why are raw materials important? Because "what holds true of food is of course also true of those natural resources which are important for industrial production and, more particularly, for the waging of war." Why is industrial capacity an important element of national power? Because "the technology of modern warfare and communications has made the over-all development of heavy industries an indispensable element of national power. Since victory in modern war depends upon the number and quality of highways, railroads, trucks, ships, airplanes, tanks, and equipment and

weapons of all kinds, from mosquito nets and automatic rifles to oxygen masks and guided missiles, the competition among nations for power transforms itself largely into competition for the production of bigger, better, and more implements of war." And in discussing military preparedness as an element of national power, Morgenthau removes all doubt about the means of power underlying his analysis: "What gives the factors of geography, natural resources, and industrial capacity their actual importance for the power of a nation is military preparedness" (Morgenthau 1948, 80–88).

Quincy Wright's survey of the study of international relations noted that the "methods of politics are infinite" (1955, 133–39). Despite the infinite variety of means available, he added, writers on international politics have "usually given a primary weight to military force and military potential" (133–39). Inis Claude's *Power and International Relations* (1962) begins by acknowledging that power may be defined broadly to include a "variety of means by which states may pursue their purposes and affect the behavior of other units" and supports this acknowledgment by citing Lasswell and Kaplan's *Power and Society* but "nevertheless" confines use of the "term *power* to denote what is essentially military capability." For Kenneth Waltz (1979, 113, 186), international politics is a realm in which "force serves, not only as the *ultima ratio*, but indeed as the first and constant one." He declares that "the use of force and the possibility of controlling it have been the preoccupations of international-political studies" ever since "Thucydides in Greece and Kautilya in India."

Although the end of the Cold War caused many IR scholars to question the preoccupation with military power,[17] the emphasis on military force in the study of international relations remains strong. For example, a RAND Corporation study purporting to offer a "comprehensive framework for evaluating the national

17 For a review of several books published after the Cold War, see Baldwin (1995). Although the emphasis on military force has remained strong, it has waxed and waned from time to time at the margins—for example, the 1970s and 1980s.

power of countries in the postindustrial age" focused on "the one element that is still fundamental to international politics: effective military power" (Tellis, Bially, Layne, and McPherson 2000, xi, 177). Also, a study entitled *War and the State* carried the subtitle *The Theory of International Politics* (Wagner 2007). "The central question debated by students of international politics," the author began, "is the relation between organized violence and political order at the global level" (ix).

No one objected to this continuing preoccupation with military power more strongly or more often than the Sprouts. From 1951 on, they repeatedly decried the militarization of power analysis in the study of international politics (Sprout and Sprout 1951, 1962, 1971). In addition to military force, they pointed out, states have many other methods of exercising power—for example, inducements of many kinds, ideological appeals, bargaining, barter, negotiation, and the examples set by their way of life, their ideals, their intellectual achievements, their wealth, their economic productivity, their culture, and many other nonmilitary means[18] (Sprout and Sprout 1951, 4). Despite such efforts by the Sprouts, the study of nonmilitary techniques of statecraft has been meager. Propaganda, diplomacy, and economic statecraft have received some attention from IR scholars, but nothing comparable to that devoted to military statecraft.

Power as Mechanism

The *balance of power* was used by Thucydides to explain the onset of the Peloponnesian War, was the subject of an essay by David Hume (1742) in the eighteenth century, and continues to fascinate international relations theorists even today (e.g., Brooks and Wohlforth 2008; Claude 1989; Guzzini 2000; Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007; Little 2007; Moul 1989; Nexon 2009; Paul, Wirtz, and Fortmann 2004; Schweller 1998, 2006; Walt 1987; Waltz 1979). Although many different theories carry the "balance of power"

18 Many of these, of course, are instances of what Nye (1990, 2011a) would later call "soft power."

CHAPTER 4

label, the term itself "implies that changes in relative political power can be observed and measured" (Wright 1965, 743).

The question of precisely *what* is being observed and measured, however, has remained elusive. In the nineteenth century, Richard Cobden argued that the term "balance of power" could "be discarded as fallacious, since it gives no definition—whether by breadth of territory, number of inhabitants, or extent of wealth—according to which, in balancing the respective powers, each state shall be estimated" (quoted in Gulick 1955, 27). Pollard (1923, 58) concluded that the term "may mean almost anything; and it is used not only in different senses by different people, or in different senses by the same people at different times, but in different senses by the same person at the same time." Morgenthau (1948) discussed the balance of power at length but admitted to using the term to mean four different things. One is tempted to despair when one writer dismisses the term as meaningless (Guzzini 2000), while another contends that the problem is "not that it has no meaning, but that it has too many meanings" (Claude 1962, 13; Haas 1953).

No matter which version of balance of power theory one considers, the idea of power as a property rather than a relation is firmly embedded. It could hardly be otherwise, since any attempt to interpret balance of power theory using the relational concept of power would immediately encounter the difficulties flowing from the multidimensionality of power and the lack of a standardized measure of value in terms of which these dimensions could be expressed. Suppose a country drains resources from its domestic economy in order to increase its military strength, as the Soviet Union did. Its military power may be increasing at the same time—and partly because its economic power is decreasing. How is one to calculate the net effect on the overall balance of power, given the difficulty of adding up various scopes and domains of power? It is precisely these difficulties that lead Guzzini (1998; 2000) to pronounce the term meaningless, Nexon (2009, 334) to conclude that not much progress has been made toward giving "greater analytical precision to the phrases 'balancing' and 'balance of power,'" and Jack S.

Levy (2004, 29) to declare the concept of balance of power as "one of the most ambiguous and intractable" ideas in the field of international relations.

To the extent that balance of power theory has been meaningful, it has been based on a conception of power as a particular type of power resource used in a particular situation—that is, military force conceived in the context of war-winning ability (Claude 1962; Gulick 1955; Mearsheimer 2001; Morgenthau 1948; Walt 1987; Waltz 1979; Wright 1965, 743ff). The analytical perspective of relational power prompts one to ask, "Power to get who to do what?" One of the benefits of bringing this perspective to bear on balance of power theories is that it brings to light the underlying assumptions that (1) military force is the measure of power; and (2) winning wars is what matters most. Only after these assumptions have been made explicit can fruitful debate as to their wisdom occur.

Power as Competition

When international politics is depicted as a "competition" for power or a "struggle for power," a zero-sum concept of power is implied. In non-zero-sum games, one does not define winning in terms of defeating an adversary, but rather in terms of each party's own value system. Students of international relations often define power in zero-sum terms, wherein more power for *A* means less power for *B*. Examples abound, including Hirschman (1980), Hawtrey (1930), Gilpin (1975, 1981), Kindleberger (1970), Grieco (1988), Mearsheimer (2001), and countless others. The "power as resources" approach almost always implies a zero-sum view of power. Those who adopt this approach usually emphasize that it is *relative* power that matters—that is, the size of the gap between one country's power resources and another country's resources. If one country's (relative) power increases, another country's (relative) power decreases. Thus, even if writers do not *explicitly* embrace a zero-sum concept of power, they should be understood as doing so *implicitly* to the extent that they describe international politics as a competition for

power or to the extent that they view power in terms of a comparison of resources or "elements of national power."

Power as Capability

"States," Waltz (1979, 131) observes, "spend a lot of time estimating one another's capabilities." Three questions need to be asked about this statement: (1) What does it mean? (2) Is it true? (3) How should capability analysis be done?

Treating power as capability is sometimes viewed as a way to circumvent the difficulties associated with the relational concept of power, such as the need to specify scope and domain. Unfortunately, this ploy does not work. Any description of a state as having a lot of "capability" begs the question of capability for what? Just as the phrase "*A* causes" has little meaning without specification of the effect that *A* causes, so the concept of capability has little meaning in the absence of specification of capability for what. The question of "who has the high cards" at the card table has little meaning without specification of the game to be played. A good hand in poker may not be a good hand in bridge. A person who is capable of playing the piano may not be capable of playing the violin. And a country that is capable of winning a large conventional war may lack the capability to win a war against guerillas in the jungle. Power resources are a function of the context in which they are viewed. Prior to the twentieth century, uranium was just dirt and petroleum was just a messy liquid that occasionally bubbled to the surface. And what functions as a power asset in one situation may be a liability in another. First-strike weapons, for example, may be an asset for a state preparing to attack, but they may be a liability for a state seeking to deter attack (cf. Schelling 1960). Both the concept of capability and the concept of resources imply actual or potential causal effects and are, therefore, relational concepts in the same sense that power is a relational concept.

Some have described this situation in terms of the need to contextualize capability analysis (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950); others refer to the situational nature of power (Snyder 1955); and

still others adopt the Sprouts' terminology calling for the speci-fication of a "policy-contingency framework" when estimating capabilities. All are making the same point:

> There is no sensible concept of capabilities in the abstract—in a vacuum, so to speak. . . . Without some set of given under-takings (strategies, policies), actual or postulated, there can be no estimation of political capabilities. (Sprout and Sprout 1965, 215)

The Sprouts also note that failure to set discussions of capabili-ties in context makes much of "what has been said in textbooks and elsewhere about the 'elements' or 'foundations' of national power" seem "footless and even irrelevant" (1971, 176; 1965, 217). They cite the first edition of their own *Foundations of National Power* as an example of such "footless and irrelevant" capabil-ity analysis.[19]

The American experience in the Vietnam War provides a convenient example of the need to specify policy-contingency frameworks when estimating capabilities. Few would deny that the United States possessed more military capabilities with re-spect to more policy-contingency scenarios than any country the world had ever known at the time of the Vietnam War; yet it could not prevail in a war against a Third World country. To this day, there are many who believe that America could have—and would have—won that war were it not for feckless civilian leadership and/or irresponsible journalists. The only war ever lost in the editorial pages of the *New York Times*, as General Westmoreland (1976) and others have noted. America had the resources but either misused them or failed to use them. Yet a capability estimate based on an appropriate set of assumptions with respect to the context of the war—the policy-contingency framework—might have yielded a more accurate prediction of the outcome of that war. Power resources are *defined* by their usefulness, but many of the so-called power resources of the

19 The Sprouts seem to have been influenced by Jones's article on "The Power Inventory and National Strategy," published in 1954.

United States had little or no relevance to winning that kind of war, in that place, at that time, against that kind of adversary. Nuclear weapons, tanks, and battleships have little usefulness in jungle warfare; they were, in effect, not resources at all in that situation. The most valuable power resources in that war were those that could win the hearts and minds of the people—for example, soldiers who looked like the Vietnamese (and not like the French), soldiers who spoke Vietnamese, soldiers who were familiar with Vietnamese culture, soldiers familiar with the local terrain and climate, and soldiers who viewed themselves as fighting to rid their country of foreign troops. The Americans had the bombs, the napalm, the firepower, and the airpower, but they were sorely lacking with respect to the power resources that mattered most *in that particular situation.*[20]

The second question to be asked regarding the contention that states devote a lot of attention to estimating each other's capabilities is whether it is true. Do states estimate each other's *overall* capabilities in the abstract—that is, without regard to an implicit or explicit set of policy-contingency assumptions? Do policy makers discuss "power resources" in a vacuum? The Sprouts deny that they do:

> Military planners in particular have been traditionally reluctant to admit that their projects are conceived with reference to specified future enemies. It may be inexpedient for responsible politicians and officials to be specific in public. But students of international politics should not be deceived thereby. Whenever military forces or other aspects of a state's capabilities are discussed, they are discussed implicitly if not explicitly in the context of anticipated future relations with other nations. (Sprout and Sprout 1971, 176)[21]

---

20 Rosenau (1976, 33) rightly notes that "had the conventional usage of the concept of 'power' been more precise, with its empirical referents more accurately identified, there would have been no surprise with respect to Vietnam."

21 Nye (1990, p. 26) suggests that the relational power approach is likely to seem "too ephemeral" to "practical politicians and leaders." The idea of power as the "possession of resources," he contends, holds more appeal for policy-makers

Those who maintain that states do indeed make context-free estimates of each other's capabilities could bolster their case by citing examples of such estimates. None to date has done so.[22] It may well be, of course, that such estimates exist, but none has yet come to the attention of this writer. Any intelligence analyst tasked with making an estimate of a country's capabilities should—and would—immediately seek guidance with respect to capabilities to do what, where, when, with respect to which other countries, and by what means. Any intelligence analyst foolish enough to attempt a capability estimate in the absence of such guidance would surely incur the wrath of the intellectual godfather of American intelligence analysis, Sherman Kent:

> Calculations on strategic stature[23] which are not based on some sort of anticipated, imagined, or rationally assumed situation are not likely to be meaningful. It is the context of the situation alone which gives point and meaning to the subsequent elements of the speculation. To talk about non-military and military instrumentalities without setting the limits of the situation in which they are to be used, to talk of them as if they would be the same for all situations, is to me, without much sense. There can be no such thing as calculable national potential—potential for the achievement of goals by peaceful

---

because it "makes power appear more concrete, measurable, and predictable" than does the relational definition. Nye (2011a, 240) cites his experience in government in support of the idea that "policymakers do tend to focus on resources." There is no reason to doubt that policy makers tend to focus on resources rather than explicitly specifying the details of the situations in which their use is envisioned. As the Sprouts point out, however, "students of international politics should not be deceived thereby."

22 Art (1999, 184–86) asserts that "we have concrete evidence that state leaders do make estimates of one another's overall assets." The concrete evidence, however, is the practice of referring to some states as "great powers" and others as "small powers." This practice, however, is not compelling evidence that those who use such terminology do not have in mind certain policy-contingency scenarios. As the Sprouts point out, "students of international politics should not be deceived" by such rhetoric.

23 Kent uses the term *strategic stature* to mean capabilities.

or warlike means—so long as the calculation proceeds in a vacuum. Only when you fix the adversary, the time, place, and the probable means to be used can the calculation have point. (Kent 1949, 44–45)

It is sometimes suggested that specification of scope and domain (or policy-contingency frameworks) in making capability estimates makes prediction and/or generalization nearly impossible (Guzzini 2000; Keohane 1986a). This is not true. Such specification need not imply a theoretical empiricism. Policy-contingency frameworks may be defined more or less broadly to suit the purpose of the analyst. As Nagel (1975, 14) observes, "domain and scope need not be particularistic or unique. Depending on one's purpose and the limits imposed by reality, the outcome class may contain a few similar members or many diverse elements." Dahl (1957, 209) makes a similar point about the possibility of comparing policy-contingency frameworks:

> Power comparability will have to be interpreted in the light of the specific requirements of research and theory, in the same way that the decision as to whether to regard any two objects—animals, plants, atoms, or whatnot—as comparable depends upon general considerations of classification and theoretical import. To this extent, and to this extent only, the decision is "arbitrary"; but it is not more "arbitrary" than other decisions that establish the criteria for a class of objects.

The third question raised by Waltz's observation about the propensity of states to estimate each other's capabilities is how such estimates should be made. Before addressing this question, two caveats are in order: (1) Capability estimates are probabilistic in the same sense that weather forecasts are probabilistic. There are no absolute truths in capability analysis, just as there are none in social science in general (or any other kind of science for that matter). The fact that such estimates are often inaccurate does not mean that one might as well flip coins. (2) Capability estimates are based on an assumption of *ceteris paribus*—as is any other prediction or generalization in social science (or any

other kind of science for that matter). Thus, when a capability estimate goes awry because of an unforeseen epidemic, earthquake, tsunami, or lightning strike, it does not mean that the estimate was worthless and never should have been done in the first place.

Some scholars are skeptical about any method of estimating capabilities. John Mearsheimer (2001, 57–60), for example, asserts that "one has to choose between material capabilities and outcomes" when defining power. Defining power in terms of the "balance of tangible assets," however, is not "a highly reliable predictor of military success" because "non-material" factors, such as strategy, weather, and disease, sometimes "profoundly affect outcomes." It is not clear why Mearsheimer resists incorporating such "nonmaterial" factors into estimates of national power, especially since he admits that they may be important. The United States military certainly takes account of such "non-material" factors as weather and disease in doing capability estimates. Weather received considerable attention from military planners prior to the Inchon invasion in South Korea and the Normandy invasion in France. And American troops receive shots for yellow fever before they are sent into an area where the disease is present.

Even though the "outcome" definition of power—which Mearsheimer associates with Dahl—"effectively incorporates the non-material as well as material ingredients of military success," he rejects it for three reasons:

> First, when focusing on outcomes it becomes almost impossible to assess the balance of power before a conflict, since the balance can be determined only after we see which side wins.

Comment: Estimates of relative power cannot be done with certainty but certainty is rare in social science predictions. Capability estimates are simply probabilistic predictions of outcomes under specified circumstances. It is "almost impossible" to predict the winner of a basketball or tennis tournament, but betting on one of the top seeds is more prudent than picking a player or team at random.

Second, this approach sometimes leads to implausible con-
clusions.

Comment: Far from being a reason to reject the outcome or rela-
tional power approach, this is a reason to embrace it. Concepts
and approaches that direct attention to counterintuitive facts
that might otherwise be overlooked are to be prized. It was "im-
plausible" to suggest that Napoleon's troops would not be able to
defeat Toussaint L'Ouverture's rebels in Haiti, but a capability
estimate that took account of their vulnerability to yellow fever
might have come to such an "implausible conclusion." It was im-
plausible to suggest that "the greatest power in the world" could
suffer defeat at the hands of a "collection of night-riders in black
pajamas"; but a capability estimate based on a properly specified
set of policy-contingency assumptions might well have made
such a suggestion somewhat more plausible:[24]

> Third, one of the most interesting aspects of international re-
> lations is how power, which is a means, affects political out-
> comes, which are ends. But there is little to say about the mat-
> ter if power and outcomes are indistinguishable; there would
> be no difference between means and ends.

Comment: If means-ends analysis is properly done, there need be
no confusion between them. Mearsheimer himself treats power
as both a means and an end at different places in the book. In ca-
pability estimates based on Dahl's relational concept of power,
it is not difficult to distinguish between the predicted outcome
of an influence attempt and the resources, motivation and skill
that make that outcome possible—or probable. It is not clear
what it means to say that "power is a means." This is only in-
teresting—or meaningful—if power is viewed as one of several
means available, that is, if power is viewed as a subtype of influ-
ence. For example, if "power" is simply a euphemism for force,

---

24 "I still believe he [President Johnson] found it viscerally inconceivable that
what Walt Rostow kept telling him was 'the greatest power in the world' could
not dispose of a collection of night-riders in black pajamas" (Schlesinger 1971, 41).

it makes sense to treat power as a means. Otherwise, responding to a presidential request for advice on how to deal with the situation in Ruritania by suggesting that "power" be used is not likely to be helpful. What the president wants to know is which instruments of statecraft, if any, should be used in order to influence the situation.

What then are the components of a properly done estimate of national power?

> *Step 1.* Specification of a policy-contingency framework
>
> > Who? Which country's capabilities are being estimated?
> > Who is the target? (domain)
> > To do what? (scope)
> > By what means?
> > Under what circumstances? When? Where? How?
>
> *Step 2.* Inventory of resources relevant to the situation
> *Step 3.* Estimate costs
>
> > To target
> > To power wielder
>
> *Step 4.* Estimate probability of success. This should be a rough estimate with a degree of precision indicating "high," "medium," or "low" levels of confidence.

As noted earlier, such a capability estimate has many limitations and may prove inaccurate; but if the alternatives are flipping coins, wild guesses, or intuition, there is much to be said for it. Capability analysis may be difficult (or as Mearsheimer puts it, "almost impossible"), but it is neither impossible nor useless.[25]

The study of power in international relations in American universities has gone through several stages. During the 1920s it was ignored or disparaged; during the 1930s it attracted the attention of a few scholars, such as Shuman, Spykman, Dunn,

---

25 Skepticism about capability estimates is not a recent phenomenon. Long ago, the Sprouts noted "a cynical and rather widespread belief" that such estimates were "pure guess-work" (Sprout and Sprout 1951, 105).

CHAPTER 4

Wolfers, Lasswell, the Foxes, and the Sprouts; during the 1940s and 1950s it rapidly became the central focus of the study of international politics—even though analysis of the concept remained at a superficial level. As the preceding discussion of six analytical perspectives on power in international relations indicates, many conceptual, theoretical, and methodological problems remain.

Realism

The concept of power is central to realist theory, yet there is still little agreement on how it should be conceived and measured. We still lack a firm conceptual foundation on which to base valid measures of national power. (Walt 2002, 222)

Although most theories of international relations take account of "power," none emphasizes it as much as realism. Power is often described as central to realist theories—realism's core concept. This chapter will discuss realism in a generic sense and two influential recent versions commonly labeled *neorealism* and *offensive realism*.

Realism

Although the intellectual roots of realism are sometimes traced to Thucydides, Machiavelli, or Hobbes (e.g., Gilpin 1984, 1996), the discussion here is concerned with the study of international relations in the American academy. It is worth noting that Frank Russell's comprehensive survey of theories of international relations published in 1936 did not contain a single index entry for power or realism. Realism in American universities grew out of the debate during the interwar period between those who wanted to rely on economic sanctions and other devices

123

associated with the League of Nations to deal with the rise of Fascism in Europe and the aggression by Japan in Asia and those who argued that "power" would be necessary. "Power" in the context of this debate meant military force. An intellectual residue of this debate remains in contemporary realism.

The subsequent failure of the League of Nations and the onset of World War II seemed to vindicate those who advocated military force. Both E. H. Carr and Hans J. Morgenthau labeled their opponents as "utopians" or "idealists." The first decade or so after World War II is sometimes described in terms of a debate between "realists" and "idealists."[1] As William T. R. Fox (1989, 239) observed, however, this "debate" was rather "one-sided" as far as political scientists were concerned. "In the political science fraternity authentic self-proclaimed idealists were hard to find."

Few would question the importance of realist thinking in the study of international relations. Joseph M. Grieco asserts that ever since the publication of Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* in 1948, "realist international theory has been at the heart of the study of world politics in the United States" (Grieco 1997, 163). Stephen M. Walt (2002) contends that "the realist tradition remains the single most important approach for understanding international politics" and that "no serious scholar can safely disregard its arguments and implications." Even the critics of realism acknowledge its importance. Robert O. Keohane, for example, points out that the many critiques of realism only "reconfirm the centrality of Realist thinking in the international political thought of the West" (1986a, 158).[2]

It may well be true that any serious international relations scholar must come to terms with realism, but this is no easy task, as R. Harrison Wagner points out:

---

1 This interpretation has been questioned by Schmidt (1988, 2013) and others.
2 The question of whether realism is a theory, an approach, a tradition, or a way of thinking will be sidestepped here. These terms will be used interchangeably in this discussion. This is not to imply that such distinctions are not useful in other contexts.

> One impediment to settling the issues raised by Realists and their critics is that it is not entirely clear what Realism is. There is now an embarrassment of Realisms. There is classical Realism, neoclassical Realism, structural Realism (aka Neorealism), human nature Realism, defensive Realism, and offensive Realism. (Wagner 2007, 12)

One problem with attempts to define Realism is the failure to differentiate between "characteristics" of Realism and "essential defining characteristics." Humans, for example, have hair, teeth, and one head; but these characteristics do not differentiate them from a host of other animals. Thus, they are not "essential defining characteristics." Likewise, when realism is defined in terms of such characteristics as treating states as actors, assuming that the international system is "anarchic" or assuming that states are rational actors, it is not clear how such characteristics are supposed to differentiate realism from other approaches to the study of international relations with similar characteristics. One characteristic that is *not* often mentioned in definitions of realism is the emphasis on military power. Realists ever since the 1930s have tended to attribute more utility to military force as an instrument of statecraft than other approaches.[3] Thus, it is not just power that lies at the heart of realist theories, but a particular kind of power. The military assumptions underlying Morgenthau's "elements of national power" were discussed in the previous chapter and will not be repeated here.

What is the relation between realism and the tradition of power analysis spawned by Lasswell and Kaplan, March, Simon, Dahl, and others, as described in previous chapters? Guzzini states that the origin of his "conceptual analysis lies in a basic

---

3 There are, of course, exceptions—George Kennan being a notable one. One variant of classic realism placed at least as much emphasis on intentions as on power. One of its central tenets was the need to balance resources and undertakings. The emphasis was less on building up resources than on limiting intentions. *Prudence* was the watchword; beware of overextension was the recommendation. An example of this kind of realism is Walter Lippmann's *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic.*

puzzle. How did power analysis increasingly turn from a defense to a critique of realism" (1993, 443)? The answer, of course, depends on what is meant by "power analysis." If "power analysis" is tantamount to agreement that power is important, if "power analysis" is just a matter of sprinkling the word *power* throughout one's writing, if "power analysis" means nothing more than using "power" as a chapter heading, if "power analysis" means lumping all foreign policy goals under the heading of power, or if "power analysis" refers to what Claude (1962, 37) has called a "realistic and prudent concern with the problem of power in international relations," then Guzzini may well be right in equating power analysis with a defense of realism. This view of "power analysis" is analogous to Claude's depiction of the treatment of the concept of balance of power by some writers:

> These cases illustrate the widespread tendency to make balance of power a symbol of realism, and hence of respectability, for the scholar or statesman. In this usage, it has no substantive content as a concept. It is a test of intellectual virility, of he-manliness in the field of international relations. The man who 'accepts' the balance of power, who dots his writing with approving references to it, thereby asserts his claim to being a hard-headed realist, who can look at the grim reality of power without flinching. The man who rejects the balance of power convicts himself of softness, or cowardly incapacity to look power in the eye and acknowledge its role in the affairs of states. (Claude 1962, 39)

If, however, "power analysis" is conceived as the tradition of rigorous conceptual analysis stemming from Lasswell and Kaplan, March, Simon, Dahl, and others, there is reason to question the existence of Guzzini's "basic puzzle." Power analysis in the sense elucidated in previous chapters has never been a "defense" of realism. On the contrary, it has been a persistent source of criticism of realism. Morgenthau's negative review of Lasswell and Kaplan's *Power and Society* in 1952 foreshadowed the intellectual gulf between the realism promulgated by Morgenthau and his followers and power analysis as developed by the followers of Lasswell and Kaplan.

During the first fifteen years after publication of Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* in 1948, scholars devoting serious attention to the concept of power as it applied to international politics—that is, those doing serious power analysis—included Dunn (1949), the Sprouts (1949, 1951, 1956, 1957, 1960, 1962, 1963), Rosenau (1963), Haas (1953), Jones (1954), Wolfers (1951, 1962), Snyder (1955), Wright (1952, 1955), Deutsch (1953, 1963), Claude (1962), and Sullivan (1963)—and each was implicitly or explicitly critical of the treatment of power by realism as promulgated by Morgenthau and his followers. None could be described as a defender of Morgenthau's version of realism.[4]

Criticisms of Morgenthau's brand of realism included the following:

1. *Vague or confusing definitions of power.* Haas (1953, 442), for example, noted the "philological, semantic, and theoretical confusion" with respect to the term "balance of power." Others making similar criticisms included Rosenau, Sullivan, Claude, and Snyder.

2. *Under-specification of power contexts.* Failure to specify scope and domain or to acknowledge the situational nature of power was noted by Jones, Snyder, Wolfers, the Sprouts, and Sullivan. Jones, for example, pointed out that capability "is a vague word unless we are told, capability for *what*" (Jones 1954, 444). Wolfers observed that treating the quest for power "outside the context of ends and purposes which it is expected to serve, robs it of any intelligible meaning" (1951, 48). And Harold Sprout maintained that "it is utterly meaningless to speak of capabilities in the abstract" (1957, 325).

3. *Power as a goal to be maximized.* Several scholars pointed to the multiple foreign policy goals of states and the need to establish priorities and distribute resources among them. Wolfers, for example, noted that "states are not single-purpose organizations" and therefore must parcel out "relatively scarce

---

4   Thomas Schelling (1960) could plausibly be included in this list of power analysts. In any case, he certainly could not be described as a defender of Morgenthau's brand of realism.

means" among various goals "in order of preference and by a constant process of weighing, comparing, and computing of values" (1951, 49). Dunn suggested the importance of keeping in mind "that individuals and groups at all times seek many different values, and these are often in conflict with each other" (1949, p. 87). And in describing the intellectual milieu of the Yale Institute of International Studies, Fox noted that "concern with 'the uses of power' rather than with its maximization fitted nicely with Professor Dunn's empirically realistic range-of-choice approach" (1989, 240). Other critics of the power maximization assumption included Wright (1952; 1955), Sprout (1949), and Sprout and Sprout (1962).

4. *Overemphasis on military power.* No scholar complained more strongly or more often about the military denotations and connotations of "power" than the Sprouts (1949, 1951, 1957, 1960, 1962, 1963). They described "the thesis that the power of a national political community is a function primarily of its mobilizable and deployable military force" as "one of the main tenets of the so-called 'realist school' of international politics" (1962, 137). And Wright noted the tendency to neglect such nonmilitary means for exercising power as "rational argument; education and information; emotional propaganda; appeals to tradition, custom, law and ideals; criminal and civil action, economic inducements ranging from bribery to co-operation for general welfare; withholding of expected benefits" and so on (1955, 140).

5. *The power as resources fallacy.* The clearest and most telling criticism of realism with respect to the power as resources fallacy came from Jones (1954), Sullivan (1963), and the Sprouts (1957, 1960,1962, 1963). The Sprouts pointed out that discussion of the power resources, the "elements" or "foundations" of national power is often "footless and seemingly irrelevant":

The data of physical geography have no intrinsic political significance whatever. Nor have demographic, technological, economic, or any other data. Such data acquire political significance only when related to some frame of assumptions as

to what is to be attempted, by whom, when and where, and vis-à-vis what adversaries, associates, and neutral bystanders. (1962, 164)

6. *Power as the only goal of foreign policy.* Morgenthau began the first edition of his famous textbook with the statement that "international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics," he asserted, "power is always the immediate aim" (1948, 13). Positing a single goal for all states, of course, rules out consideration of trade-offs (opportunity costs) between power and other goals. A number of critics noted that states have multiple goals, including Wright (1952, 1955), Wolfers (1951), and Dunn (1949); but Harold Sprout's review of Morgenthau's text was especially telling with respect to this point:

More difficult to appraise is Morgenthau's unqualified statement that power is always the "immediate" objective of state policy. . . . The subtle effect on most readers may well be to exaggerate coercion and conflict, and to minimize unduly such factors as persuasion and compromise. . . . Too insistent emphasis on power as the universal objective of state policy may easily depreciate in the reader's mind the importance of other specific objectives, their relative priority in the states political strategy, and possible cause-and-effect relationships between short and longer term objectives.

Take, for example, the hotly debated subject of Soviet foreign policy. To say that power is the immediate aim of Soviet foreign policy, tells one nothing new or distinctive. What one wants to know is which has higher priority in Russian statecraft: security, territorial expansion, or world communism; and how these and other aims may be intertwined in Russian thinking. (1949, 408)

Power is the conceptual Achilles' heel of realist theory. The three leading realist theorists—Morgenthau (1952), Waltz (1979), and Mearsheimer (2001)—have all explicitly rejected the relational concept of power developed and promoted by Lasswell

and Kaplan, Simon, March, Dahl, Harsanyi, and a host of other social scientists; yet realists cannot agree on a substitute. This would not be a problem, of course, if realists were willing to discard the concept of power or relegate it to a minor place in their theory; but they are unwilling to do so.

In 1986 Waltz noted that while "power is a key concept in realist theories of international politics. Its proper definition remains a matter of controversy" (333). Writing in 2002—more than fifty years after publication of Morgenthau's text—Stephen M. Walt asserted that "the concept of power is central to realist theory"; yet he conceded that "there is still little agreement on how it should be conceived" and concluded his essay with the admission that "the core concept of power is not well conceptualized" (222, 230). Walt's essay includes a "Research Agenda for the Realist Tradition" with a subsection entitled "Conceiving and Measuring Power." Unfortunately, this subsection is devoted mostly to measurement and contains little or no conceptual analysis (222–23). Before one can measure power, however, one must first have a *concept* of power.

Despite this acknowledged conceptual difficulty, realists seem to agree that their theory is superior to other theories of international politics. As Walt puts it, "the realist tradition is the *worst* approach to the study of world politics—except for all the others" (2002, 230). It is difficult to evaluate a claim of superiority on behalf of a theory with an acknowledged unclear core concept. In order to evaluate a theory, one must first be able to understand it; and understanding a theory with a fuzzy central concept is no easy task. The next two sections will discuss how two prominent writers in the realist tradition dealt with this conceptual difficulty.

NEOREALISM

The theory of neorealism (aka structural realism or defensive realism) developed by Waltz (1979) dominated discussions of international relations theory for more than twenty-five years after

130

its publication, much as Morgenthau's (1948) version of the theory of realism dominated discussions during the period between 1948 and 1975. This is not to say that other international relations theorists agreed with either Morgenthau or Waltz, but they had to come to terms with their arguments.

Waltz advances a structural theory of international politics. One of the defining characteristics of the structure of the international system is the distribution of capabilities. Since judgments must be made about how capabilities are distributed, Waltz must confront the issue of how to measure and compare them. Realizing that his theory requires the rank ordering of states according to their capabilities, he resists the specification of scope and domain necessitated by a relational notion of power. Ranking the capabilities of states is much harder if power (or capability) is conceived as multidimensional. Thus, he asserts that "the economic, military, and other capabilities of nations cannot be sectored and separately weighed" (1979, 131). He provides neither argument nor evidence to support the assertion that different kinds of capabilities *cannot* be measured separately; he simply asserts it. It may be that Waltz has in mind the constraints of his theory in the sense that permitting capabilities to be weighed separately could make ranking states excessively difficult. Waltz goes on to say that "states are not placed in the top rank because they excel in one way or another. Their rank depends on how they score on *all* of the following items: size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence. States spend a lot of time estimating one another's capabilities, especially their abilities to do harm" (131). The use of the term *score* is revealing. It implies a measuring rod, or standard, in terms of which the various elements of national power can be evaluated; but there is no indication of what this standard is. The assertion that states devote "a lot of time to estimating one another's capabilities" is unsupported and contestable. The defense ministries of states formulate contingency plans with respect to a variety of policy-contingency frameworks, but it is unlikely that they spend much time estimating each other's

capabilities in a vacuum—that is, without reference to actual or postulated situations. And no example of a state estimating the capabilities of another state in a vacuum has yet come to this writer's attention.

Despite his admission that "states have different combinations of capabilities which are difficult to measure and compare," Waltz proclaims that "ranking states . . . does not require predicting their success in war or in other endeavors. We need only rank them roughly by capability" (1979, 131). This assertion, of course, begs the question of how "capabilities" are to be defined—a definition that Waltz never provides. We are told only that capabilities are "attributes of units" (98). Clearly, the relational concept of power or capabilities is ruled out, since that concept of power depicts capabilities as potential relationships rather than as properties of a single state or unit. The question of "Capability to get whom to do what?" is simply begged; and the power as resources concept underlying Waltz's theory becomes apparent.

At some level, however, most international relations theorists recognize the wisdom of the Sprouts' contention that "without some set of given undertakings (strategies, policies), actual or postulated, with reference to some frame of operational contingencies, actual or postulated, there can be no estimation of political capabilities" (Sprout and Sprout 1965, 215). In most treatments of the elements of national power in international politics, an implicit set of policy-contingency assumptions can be identified, usually having to do with military power. Just as Morgenthau's discussion of the elements of national power implies that war-winning is the standard of judgment (see the discussion in Chapter 4, pp. 109–10), careful reading of Waltz generates a strong suspicion that war-winning ability is the unstated standard by which states are being ranked. Morgenthau's contention that "nations active in international politics are continuously preparing for, actively involved in, or recovering from organized violence in the form of war" (1948, 21) is remarkably similar to the outlook in Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*:

The possibility that force will be used by one or another of the parties looms always as a threat in the background. In politics force is said to be the ultima ratio. In international politics force serves, not only as the ultima ratio, but also as the first and constant one. (1979, 113)

The daily presence of force and recurrent reliance on it mark the affairs of nations. Since Thucydides in Greece and Kautilya in India, the use of force and the possibility of controlling it have been the preoccupations of international-political studies. (1979, 186)

Given the absence of any explicit standard for "scoring" the capabilities of states in Waltz's text, there is more than a little reason to suspect that war winning is the implicit standard being applied.

Although the book is nearly devoid of references to the scholarly literature on relational power, at the end of *Theory of International Politics*, almost as an afterthought, Waltz launches a confusing and confused attack on the relational concept of power:

We are misled by the pragmatically formed and technologically influenced American definition of power—a definition that equates power with control. Power is then measured by the ability to get people to do what one wants them to do when otherwise they would not do it. (191–92)

This is a puzzling and misleading criticism. It is unclear why Waltz uses the phrases "pragmatically formed," "technologically influenced," or "American." The relational concept of power was developed by non-Americans as well as Americans (e.g., Barry 1976; Goldmann and Sjöstedt 1979; Hagström 2005; Lukes 1974, 1978, 2005, 2007) and has no intrinsically ethnocentric biases. And neither the meaning nor the significance of pragmatism and technology is self-evident or explained.

Waltz goes on to assert that "the common relational definition of power omits consideration of how acts and relations are affected by the structure of action." It is not clear why Waltz

thinks that such a "consideration" should be included in the definition of power. This seems to be an example of what Levy labels "the fallacy of circular concepts":

> The science game . . . requires that one apply the principle of parsimony to definitions as well as to other things. One uses a definition as economically as possible to identify what it is one wishes to refer to and keep it as distinct as possible from everything extraneous that might be confused with it. The greater the number of elements in the definition the greater the number of things made true by definition. It is always a mistake to single out the 'most important' elements of the thing concerned for parts of the definition because that makes all of those important elements true by definition. Similarly, it is a great mistake to build into the definition matters which one regards as of great causal significance. (Levy 1969, 99)

The implication of this passage is that the question of "how acts and relations are affected by the structure of action" should be treated as an empirical rather than a definitional matter. As noted earlier, Dahl's concept of power does not preclude consideration of structural effects, even though it does not build them into the definition.

"According to the common American definition of power, a failure to get one's way is proof of weakness." In a sense, this is true. Actors that consistently try and fail to influence other actors are unlikely to be viewed as powerful. Indeed, Waltz himself appears to believe this, since he later observes that "the stronger get their way—not always, but more often than the weaker" (Waltz 1993, 77–78).

Waltz then asks: "What then can be substituted for the practically and logically untenable definition? I offer the old and simple notion that an agent is powerful to the extent that he affects others more than they affect him" (1979, 192). There are several remarkable aspects of this proposed definition of power. First, after rejecting both causal and relational concepts of power, he proposes a definition that is both causal and relational. Second, after criticizing the common relational definition of power for

omitting consideration of the structure of action, he proposes a definition that makes no mention of structure. Third, the notion proposed is similar to those espoused by Deutsch (1953, 1963) and Frey (1985a), both of whom viewed themselves as contributing to the development of the relational concept of power. Fourth, it is inconsistent with the statement in the very next paragraph that "the extent of one's power cannot be inferred from the results one may or may not get." And fifth, the proposed concept of power seems to have little or nothing to do with the concepts of power and capability used throughout the earlier sections of the book. If capability is defined as the potential power to affect others more than one is affected by others, it is no longer a property of a single actor and thus not a unit level characteristic.

Even the critics of neorealism credit it with having enhanced the clarity and rigor of the realist theoretical tradition (Keohane 1986a). With respect to its treatment of power and capability, however, *Theory of International Politics* seems to have introduced a considerable amount of confusion and contradiction.

Offensive Realism

Offensive realism (Mearsheimer 2001) differentiates itself from both the realism of Morgenthau and the neorealism of Waltz. Although both Morgenthau and Mearsheimer depict states as striving to maximize their power, the former attributes this to a "lust for power," while the latter views it as a necessary consequence of the anarchical international system. And although both Waltz and Mearsheimer derive state goals from the structure of the international system, the former views states as pursuing only enough security (or power) to assure survival,[5] while the latter depicts them as seeking all the power they can get "with hegemony as their ultimate goal" (Mearsheimer 2001, 22).

5   Waltz begs the question of how much power (or security) is necessary in order "to assure survival." The question of precisely what "survival" means is also less clear than one might wish. For a discussion of these questions, see Baldwin (1997).

For Mearsheimer, "calculations about power lie at the heart of how states think about the world around them. Power is the currency of great-power politics, and states compete for it among themselves. What money is to economics, power is to international relations" (2001, 17). Like other realists, including Morgenthau and Waltz, Mearsheimer views power largely in military terms. Unlike them, however, his emphasis on military force is quite explicit: "In international politics . . . a state's effective power is ultimately a function of its military forces. . . . The balance of power is largely synonymous with the balance of military power. I define power largely in military terms because offensive realism emphasizes that force is the *ultima ratio* of international politics" (55–56). It is not just military power that matters for offensive realism, it is "land power." Armies matter more than navies or air forces because of their superior ability to conquer and control land, "which is the supreme political objective in a world of territorial states" (86).

Critics of realism often portray it as emphasizing the material bases of national power. Although such characterizations are somewhat unfair to Morgenthau and Waltz, this is not the case with respect to offensive realism. For Mearsheimer, power "represents nothing more than specific assets or material resources that are available to a state" (2001, 57).

Like Waltz, Mearsheimer considers and explicitly rejects Dahl's relational concept of power, which he views as equating power with outcomes. "According to this logic," he asserts, power exists only when a state exercises control or influence, and therefore it can be measured only after the outcome is determined" (2001, 57). For reasons discussed in the previous chapter (pp. 119–21), this assertion is problematic. Capability analysis may be difficult, but it is not impossible—which Mearsheimer seems to admit when he describes attempts to determine the balance of power in advance as "*almost* impossible" (60, my italics).

Even though offensive realism asserts that "survival is the number one goal of great powers," it recognizes that states pursue other goals as well—though Mearsheimer notes that "it has little to say about them" (2001, 46). Once the possibility of multiple

goals is acknowledged, however, any assessment of the value of one of them implies an assessment of the others. To say that one goal is primary is to say that others are secondary or tertiary. One cannot ignore goals other than power once one admits their existence, for to expend resources on military power is to forego expending those same resources on alternative goals. In order to know whether an increment of defense spending is justified or not, one must compare the marginal value of military spending with the marginal value of spending on other goals, such as education, environmental protection, health, highways, social welfare, and so on. Mearsheimer's inclusion of a section subtitled "Diminishing Returns" (76–79) suggests that he recognizes the importance of opportunity costs in allocating resources and intends to use marginal utility analysis. Unfortunately, this is only partially true. The only limits on defense spending acknowledged by offensive realism are situations in which "spending more would bring no strategic advantage" and situations in which spending more now might weaken the economy "which will ultimately undermine state power, since economic might is the foundation of military might" (37, 78). In other words, the only trade-offs taken into consideration by offensive realism are between short-run and long-run military power. Although offensive realism acknowledges that "states sometimes keep a lid on their military budgets," it fails to recognize that the main reason is likely to be competition for scarce resources from goals other than military power.[6]

Although offensive realism's operational definition of power is clearly zero sum, and based on the material resources relevant to conquering and controlling territory, it is not clear what abstract concept underlies this operational definition—what Mearsheimer calls "the true nature of power" (2001, 13). Mearsheimer concedes that "power can be defined in different ways" and declares that "whether his definition makes good

6   Mearsheimer's use of the word *sometimes* in this context is troubling. It seems to suggest that there might be situations in which costs do not matter. There are no such situations.

sense depends of how well offensive realism explains international politics" (422). This depends, of course, on what it means to "make good sense." Is conformity with the basic intuitive notion of power an important criterion? Do any of the criteria for evaluating concepts discussed in Chapter 2, pages 44–47, apply? Such questions are begged by offensive realism.[7]

In sum, realism remains an important way of thinking about international relations. No other approach places so much emphasis on the concept of power; thus no other approach has greater need for a clear and valid concept of power. Unfortunately, most realists agree that such a concept is lacking.

---

7   The extent to which the conclusions of offensive realism follow from the premises is not considered here. For an incisive discussion of this matter, see Wagner (2007).

Constructivism

> Among the multiple determinants of the political process to
> which we give particular emphasis are various cultural and per-
> sonality factors often neglected by specialized conceptions of
> politics (for instance, the economic). . . . The role of symbols in the
> political process will be elaborated to a considerable degree in the
> following chapters, particularly as expressions of expectations,
> demands, and identifications. (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950, xviii)

What Is Constructivism?

Unlike realism, which traces its origins to the 1930s in
the study of international relations in the American academy,
constructivism appeared on the scene only in the last twenty-
five years or thereabouts. "Today," according to Emanuel Adler
(2013, 112), "constructivism has become firmly established in
mainstream IR theory, both in North America and around the
world." Like realism, however, the question of whether it is a
theory, an approach, a tradition, or a way of thinking is unset-
tled. Wagner (2007, 42) quotes Wendt's (1999, 7) declaration that
"constructivism is not a theory of international politics" and
asks, "what, then, is it?" Wagner goes on to observe that "like
much else about Constructivism, the answer to that question is
not entirely clear." "Like structural Realism," Wagner suggests,

CHAPTER 6

"Constructivism is more nearly a family of like-minded people than a system of logically related propositions." No attempt to sort out this matter will be made here. Instead, as with realism, the terms theory, approach, tradition, and way of thinking will be used interchangeably in the following discussion.[1]

Stefano Guzzini (2013, 190–92), a leading constructivist scholar, notes the difficulty of pinning down the meaning of constructivism and proposes three "understandings," or assumptions, that underlie the approach: (1) social construction of social reality; (2) social construction of knowledge; and (3) the interaction between the first two.[2] Guzzini (2011, 138, 2013, 201) explains the social construction of reality using Searle's (1995) "famous example of money." Money is defined primarily by its ability to serve as a medium of exchange and a measure of value in particular societies. In different societies and different historical epochs, money has taken a variety of forms, including woodpecker scalps, beads, shells, cattle, salt, precious metals, and cigarettes. Clearly, "moneyness" is not an intrinsic quality of any of these examples; what makes something "money" is the extent to which people use it as a medium of exchange and/or a measure of value. As one textbook on money and banking observes, "anyone who begins his study of money with the belief that there is some one thing that 'is by nature money' and that has been used as money at all times and in all places will find monetary history very disconcerting" (Chandler 1959, 15). It is obviously an excellent example of a "socially constructed fact."

The frequent use of money as an example of socially constructed reality by constructivists (e.g., Ruggie 1998, 856) is both odd and ironic. It is odd in so far as constructivists imply—or seem to suggest—that this insight is in some sense a contribution to our understanding of money generated by the constructivist approach. The observation that money is a social convention, however, would be regarded by economists as a commonplace.

1   For an incisive overview of constructivism in international relations, see Kolodziej (2005, 259–304).
2   Adler (2013, 113) embraces the first two of these "understandings."

Long before the emergence of constructivism in the study of international relations, before the publication of Searle's book in 1995, and before Searle was born in 1932, the discipline of economics recognized that money was a social convention—for example, Robertson (1922) and Gregory (1933). The first edition of Samuelson's famous textbook in 1948 describes money as "an artificial, social convention" (55).[3] Since constructivists tend to be especially critical of the discipline of economics and the rational choice approach associated with it, their frequent use of money as an example of a social fact, is more than a little ironic.

The second constructivist "understanding" discussed by Guzzini is the social construction of knowledge. Like the social construction of reality, this idea did not originate with constructivism. The sociology of knowledge can be traced to Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* (1936), originally published in 1929, and to Marx before that. Mannheim described his task as establishing "the thesis that in politics the statement of a problem and the logical techniques involved vary with the political position of the observer" (117). This comment was echoed later by the international relations scholar Robert Cox, "theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose" (1981, 128). Maja Zehfuss (2013, 145) describes Cox's statement as "one of the most overquoted lines in IR scholarship." Like Mannheim and Cox, Guzzini depicts the study of politics as a political act and the analysis of power as an exercise of power (2013). Guzzini (215) acknowledges that some scholars might object to this line of argument on the grounds that it equates social science with ideology. He tries to rebut such objections with the observation that "saying that social science has political implications does not imply that social science is *nothing but* politics." Unfortunately, Guzzini fails to support this attempted rebuttal by describing *where* the line between social science and politics is to be drawn. Without such a line, the contention that his

3   Adam Smith (1937, 22–29) also recognized the socially constructed nature of money, as did Aristotle before him (Schumpeter 1954, 60–64). The social convention of money is discussed at length in Baldwin (1971a).

position does not imply that social science is nothing but politics is troublesome.

Guzzini's third constructivist "understanding" is that the study of the interaction of the first two understandings is an important topic for social science research. The second and third "understandings" raise the question of whether objectivity is possible in social science and, more importantly, whether it is even a worthwhile goal. This topic raises questions regarding the sociology and philosophy of science that lie beyond the scope of this book, but this writer offers the following observations in order to give the reader a better understanding of the assumptions underlying this book: (1) Complete objectivity, of course, is impossible since everyone has biases. Social science offers a number of techniques for minimizing the effects of personal biases on scholarship—anonymous peer review, footnotes, making data available for inspection, reliance on intersubjectively transmissible evidence, random sampling, and so on. The impossibility of achieving complete objectivity is no excuse for not trying to be as objective as possible. As Jacob Viner was fond of saying, "A scholar's first duty is to speak the truth as he or she believes it to be." (2) The followers of Mannheim must confront what Clifford Geertz called "Mannheim's paradox." If all social science is ideology, then why not regard this observation itself as nothing but ideology?[4] (3) The position of Mannheim, Cox, and Guzzini makes it permissible—perhaps even obligatory—to question the motives of other scholars and thereby undermines or threatens the civility of scholarly debate. This is more of a practical consideration than a theoretical one. In parliamentary debate it is impermissible to criticize the motives of others. One would think it would be even less permissible in an academic

4   Schumpeter (1954, 37) rejects allowing Mannheim a "fire escape" as follows: "Professor K. Mannheim taught that, though ideological delusion is the common fate of mankind, there are nevertheless 'detached intelligences,' floating freely in space, who enjoy the privilege of being exempt from this fate. Slightly more realistically, everyone is a victim of ideological delusion except the modern radical intellectual who stands indeed upon the rock of truth, the unbiased judge of all things human." Schumpeter's discussion of "The Sociology of Economics" (33–47) is still well worth reading.

forum. Indeed, *ad hominem* argument has long been considered anathema in scholarly discourse. Perhaps a term like "practical epistemology" is needed to deal with this problem. This is especially important in international relations, a field in which nationalistic biases are likely to play a role. It would be unfortunate if scholarly debates in international relations were to devolve to the point at which scholarly arguments were refuted by pointing to the nationality, race, gender, class, or ideology of the author rather than to the reason and evidence supporting the argument.[5] Identity is a legitimate object for study; it is not a legitimate device for refuting a scholarly argument.[6]

Materialism versus Culture

Wendt (1999, 97) divides international relations theories into those that emphasize "brute material forces" as bases of power and those that view power as "constituted primarily by ideas and cultural contexts." The emphasis on norms, ideas, values, and cultural contexts is often cited as a distinguishing characteristic

5 This is not to deny the importance of trying to minimize nationalistic biases. Requiring students to write term papers on countries other than their own usually results in better work. Requiring teachers of international relations to practice their profession in a country other than their own would also be helpful, but this proposal is unlikely to be adopted anytime soon. The attempt to distinguish between normative and empirical inquiry does not mean that one is more important than the other. Those who deny the dichotomy between facts and values, of course, will object. They must confront the evidence and argument presented long ago by Arnold Brecht in his magisterial *Political Theory* (1959). No convincing challenge to Brecht's position has yet come to this writer's attention.

6 Dahl was aware of the constructivist approach and addressed it in his speech accepting the Johan Skytte Prize: "While the social construction of reality can be, when prudently used, a highly revealing way of interpreting the world, I would recommend that we reject the temptation to pursue that path as far as some seem to propose. It eventually leads, I think, to fruitless discourse about a world that is epistemologically indeterminate, ontologically chaotic, morally so relativistic as to deny all ethical criteria, and ultimately meaningless. Taken to its extreme, the view that all 'reality' is socially constructed and nothing more is, I think, inherently self-contradictory: one cannot both claim that this particular view should be taken seriously and still adhere strictly to the premises on which it is based" (1997, 1113).

of constructivism. This may well be true with respect to many areas of research, but it does not distinguish it from power analysis based on a relational concept of power. No constructivist is more emphatic about the importance of cultural context in power analysis than Lasswell and Kaplan (1950):

> In particular, it is of crucial importance to recognize that power may rest on various bases, differing not only from culture to culture, but also within a culture from one power structure to another. (85)
>
> None of the forms of power is basic to all the others. As patterns of valuation in a culture are modified, and changes come about in the social order and technology, now one form of power and now another, plays a fundamental role. Political analysis must be contextual, and take account of the power practices actually manifested in the concrete political situation. (94)

It is not entirely clear what constructivists mean when they say that other theories of international relations are "materialist" (Wendt 1999, Ruggie 1998, Hurd 2008).[7] Even theories that posit military capabilities as the most important variable are likely to point out that nonmaterial things like morale, competence, and legitimacy can affect such capabilities. At times, constructivists seem to suggest that a concern with causality has some connection to materialism (Wagner 2007, 42–47).[8] To the extent that this is true, of course, it would have important implications for a causal notion of power.

Constructivism and Power

Unlike realism, constructivism does not place the concept of power at the center of its approach. A recent survey of constructivist literature notes the neglect of power in the past but adds

---

7   Wendt (1994, 393) describes materialism as the "essence" of realism, and Hurd defines realism as "at its core about materialism" (2008, 299).
8   On the confusions of constructivism, see especially Wagner (2007) and Kolodziej (2005).

that "it has become a centerpiece of constructivism's analytical and research concerns in recent years" (Adler 2013, 125).[9] Writing in 2007, Berenskoetter notes that "Wendt does not discuss the meaning of power, let alone provide a 'rival' conceptualization of it" (22n). He adds that Wendt's "promise to present an alternative understanding of 'power constituted primarily by ideas and cultural contexts' rather than 'brute material forces' remains unfulfilled." Guzzini, however, observes that "constructivism has put some order into its own power concepts, which usually come as variations on the theme of 'Lukes-plus-Foucault'" (2007, 23). He cites articles by himself (1993) and by Barnett and Duvall (2005a) in support of this observation.

Guzzini's characterization of Lukes and Foucault as the intellectual pillars of the constructivist concept of power necessitates a closer look at each of these scholars. Explicating the writings of Foucault has become something of a cottage industry and calls for interpretive skills beyond those of this writer.[10] This writer does, however, have some experience with assessing the work of other social scientists through the system of peer review. Standard criteria used in such reviews will therefore be applied to Foucault's work:

1. *Clarity.* This is a fundamental criterion for evaluating work in the social sciences—or any other kind of scholarship. The following comments give one pause with respect to this criterion:

The insights that Foucault and other structuralists provide are purchased at too high a price in terms of conceptual complexity and clarity. (Nye 2011a, 242)

Several of Foucault's less sycophantic commentators have complained that his use of language is distorted. (Morriss 2002, xvi–xvii)

9   An important exception to the neglect of power by constructivists is the work of Guzzini (1993, 2007, 2011, 2013).
10   For a bibliography of commentators on Foucault, see *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Gutting 1994). See also Gutting (2005), Fillingham (2007), and Mchoul and Grace (1997). Interestingly, there are no comparable "reader's guides" for the works of Robert Dahl.

Far too much of the voluminous writing about his view of power is either obscurantist when friendly or dismissive when critical. (Lukes 2005, 88)

Foucault's conception of power is novel. Part of its novelty is that it relies upon a vocabulary differing dramatically from what is found in mainstream political science. This not only frustrates attempts to assess its significance, but also engenders charges of deliberate obfuscation, muddled thinking, and precious insularity. (Digeser 1992, 978)

Certain authors . . . present themselves as so immediately and intrinsically "difficult" as to require special interpretative efforts even for those well equipped to understand them. (Gutting 1994, 1)

The frequency of such comments and others like them suggests caution in awarding high marks to Foucault for clarity.

2. *Coherent and logical argument.* It is difficult, of course, to assess the logic of an argument in the absence of clear writing. The task is made harder if "Foucault's work is at root ad hoc, fragmentary, and incomplete" (Gutting 1994, 2). The use of the word *nonsense* in such assessments is seldom a good sign. Morriss blames "lax translation" and notes that "this often produces nonsense, which Foucault's followers then solemnly declare is some extraordinary new insight" (2002, xvii). Lukes examined "the key idea central to [Foucault's] view of power— that power is 'productive' through the social construction of subjects" and concluded that it "made no sense" (Lukes 2005, 96–98). He also found Foucault's treatment of power to be "entirely free of methodological rigor" (60–61).

3. *Familiarity with relevant scholarly literature.* This criterion is supposed to ensure that the author has demonstrated understanding and appreciation of the contributions of other scholars who have written on the same topic. Once again, it is difficult to evaluate Foucault's work by this standard since he pays little or no attention to the work of other scholars who have written on power. As John Scott notes, "Foucault's

writings are tantalizingly cryptic and—it has to be said—calculatedly ignorant of what most other writers have actually said about power" (2001, 158n). One exception is Foucault's discussion of Clausewitz's *On War* (1976). In that discussion he reverses Clausewitz's famous aphorism that "war is politics by other means" (Foucault 1980, 90; Gutting 1994, 19; Taylor 1984; Hayward 2000, 7). Unfortunately, it makes no sense to reverse Clausewitz's aphorism, which depicts war as a subtype of the larger category of politics—a subtype defined by its peculiar means.[11] One cannot reverse the statement that sparrows are a special type of bird by saying that birds are a special type of sparrow.

4. *Originality*. Lukes asks, "So how are we now to understand the Foucauldian idea of power 'constituting' the subject?" He concludes that Foucault's view of power

amounts to restating some elementary sociological commonplaces. Individuals are socialized; they are oriented to roles and practices that are culturally and socially given; they internalize these and may experience them as freely chosen. (Lukes 2005, 96–97)

The two ideas most often associated with Foucault's view of power are the ubiquity of power and the idea that knowledge is a power resource. Neither idea is particularly original; both were discussed by Dahl earlier and in clearer language.[12]

Guzzini's description of constructivist power concepts as "variations on the theme of Lukes plus Foucault" cites his 1993 article and the 2005 article by Barnett and Duvall, both

11 In fairness to Foucault, Clausewitz is often misunderstood. On understanding Clausewitz, see Bernard Brodie, "A Guide to the Reading of *On War*" in Clausewitz (1976).

12 Dahl (1997, 801) expressed puzzlement about suggestions that the ubiquity of power is a "distinctive characteristic of postmodernist thought." Noting that he had made this point in the first edition of *Modern Political Analysis* (1963), he observed: "Perhaps I was unwittingly postmodernist in 1963, but I doubt it. Although my view may not have been widespread at that time, even among political scientists, it was hardly original."

CHAPTER 6

published in *International Organization.* Both of these articles rely on the concept of power elucidated by Lukes in the first edition of his pamphlet (1974)—a concept of power that the second edition describes as "a mistake" (2005, 12). If Guzzini is correct in identifying Lukes' first edition and the writings of Foucault as the intellectual foundations of the conceptual analysis of power by constructivists, some reconstruction—or rethinking—of the constructivist concept of power may be in order. As things stand now, the intellectual foundations consist of the work of two scholars—one of which has repudiated his own, earlier, concept of power, and who regards the work of the other as obscurantist, unoriginal, and making no sense.[13]

Barnett and Duvall (2005a, 2005b) contend that international relations scholars have shown "conceptual favoritism" in conceiving of power as the ability of one actor to get another actor to do something that it would not otherwise do. Their characterization of this as a "realist conception of power" is puzzling since realism is usually associated with the power-as-resources approach rather than the relational power approach and since the two most prominent realists, Waltz (1979) and Mearsheimer (2001), explicitly reject a relational concept of power.

In order to correct this "conceptual myopia," Barnett and Duvall propose: (1) "a new conceptualization" that captures the different forms of power and "offers a richer and more nuanced understanding of power in international relations"—a "general concept" of power; (2) a taxonomy of subtypes of this general concept of power; and (3) a case study using the taxonomy.

After suggesting that other international relations scholars suffer from "theoretical tunnel vision," Barnett and Duvall present their definition, which will not only broaden and deepen the concept of power but also provide an alternative to the narrow, materialistic, realist, compulsory conception of power, which they associate with Dahl's concept of power. Their general definition is as follows:

13 Guzzini's characterization of constructivist concepts of power may not be entirely accurate. Barkin's (2010) attempt to integrate realism and constructivism, for example, makes no reference to either Lukes or Foucault.

148

> Power is the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances and fate. (2005a, 42)

They concede that this concept is restricted in comparison with an alternative view that "sees power as the production of any and all effects and thus as nearly synonymous with causality." What does this alternative approach include that Barnett and Duvall leave out? "It includes social relations of joint action through mutual agreement and interactions in which one actor is able to convince another actor to alter voluntarily and freely its beliefs, interests, or action" (42). They thus admit that their proposed concept of power excludes both cooperation and persuasion. They justify this exclusion by asserting that "most scholars interested in power are concerned not simply with how effects are produced, but rather with how these effects work to the advantage of some and the disadvantage of others." This view of power as working to the advantage of *A* and the disadvantage of *B*, of course, is the same as that espoused by Lukes in 1974 and repudiated by him in 2005.

Barnett and Duvall construct a taxonomy of four subtypes of the general concept of power—compulsory, institutional, structural, and productive—and declare that this taxonomy offers four "advantages for scholars of international relations theory" as follows:

> 1. "Because it is founded on an explicit and logically systematic decomposition of the general concept of power, it is able to detach discussions of power from the limitations of realism and to encourage scholars to see power's multiple forms."

Comment: This is only true so long as "power's multiple forms" do not include persuasion, cooperation, or any of the myriad other forms of power not detrimental to the interests of *B*.[14]

---

14 Finnemore (2014, 221) praises Barnett and Duvall's "typology of power's many forms" and their investigation of "the myriad ways that power is exercised within the (global) system." As noted earlier, however, their typology excludes many forms of power.

2. "Our approach provides a framework for integration."
Comment: Taxonomies are usually more useful if they exhaust all cases and the categories are mutually exclusive. Unfortunately, as noted in the previous comment, many forms of power are excluded from this taxonomy. Also, as Barnett and Duvall admit, some of the categories overlap (2005a, 55).

3. "Our approach represents a decisive advantage over recent contributions to the debate about power in international relations because it incorporates both social relations of interaction and constitution. . . . [An] actor-oriented approach is incapable of recognizing social relations of constitution. . . . Constituitive relations cannot be reduced to the attributes, actions, or interactions of given actors" (2005a, 44–46).

Comment: As noted in the preceding discussion of Foucault, Lukes examined this claim and concluded that so-called constituitive relations amount to little more than sociological commonplaces, having to do with socialization (2005, 88–98). This "decisive advantage" would be more compelling were it not so at odds with ordinary language and common sense. It is quite common to hear phrases like the following, which imply a relation in which *A* has caused a change in *B*'s "identity:"[15]

The Marine Corps builds men.

Bloggs was a changed person after . . . (she divorced him, his conversion to Christianity, eight weeks in rehab, ten years in prison, etc.).

His mother made all the difference. He would have become quite a different person without her influence.

Professor Henry Higgins transformed Eliza Doolittle into a different person.

The point is that it is quite common in everyday language to talk about influence in terms of *A* causing a change in *B*'s identity. The idea that parents should do things to make their children grow into better adults is often heard. The phrase "Mary is

---

15 On the definition of identity—or lack thereof—in discussions of this sort, see Wagner (2007, 43n) and Fearon (1999). Barnett and Duvall do not define identity.

a different person" does not mean what it seems to say. It means that her behavior, attitude, beliefs, values, feelings, and/or pre-dispositions have changed so radically that it is *as if* she is a different person—*and everyone understands that is what it means.*[16]

    4. "Our taxonomy does not map precisely onto different theories of international relations. To be sure, each theoretical tradition does favor an understanding of power that corresponds to one or another of the concepts distinguished by our taxonomy" (2005a, 44–45).

Comment: It is not clear how theories using a concept of power that includes persuasion, mutually beneficial cooperation, or any other form of power that works to the advantage of *B* can use any of the concepts of power in the taxonomy since the general concept of power on which the various forms are based excludes such forms of power.[17] Their contention that "understanding the operation of power in multiple forms makes it much more difficult to approach global governance purely in terms of cooperation, coordination, consensus, and normative progress" is an understatement. It not only makes it "difficult"; it makes it conceptually impossible (2005a, 62).

    Toward the end of their article, Barnett and Duvall apply their approach to a case study of "American Empire" (2005a, 62–66). The insights generated by this case study may be summarized as follows:

    1. "Power is central to global governance" (57).
    2. "Agendas enable some actors to further their interests . . . to exercise control over others" (58).
    3. Institutions can create "winners" and "losers" (58).

---

16 After asserting that an actor-oriented approach is "incapable of recognizing social relations of constitution," Barnett and Duvall appear to back away from this assertion two pages later—that is, pages 46–47, 53n. For an in-depth discussion of the agent-structure divide and the ways in which it can be bridged, see Dowding (2008) and Frey (1985b).

17 Even the arch-realist Nicholas J. Spykman considered persuasion and exchange (i.e., purchase and barter) as forms of power (1942, 12). On exchange and power, see Baldwin (1978, 1990, 1998).

4. Great powers can establish international institutions to further their interests in the future (58).

5. Governance is not just a matter of cooperation, coordination, consensus, and normative progress, but "also a matter of compulsion, institutional bias, privilege, and unequal constraints on action" (62).

6. "Any systematic discussion of empire must consider power in multiple forms" (62).

7. "Any consideration of American empire . . . must be attentive to institutional power" (64).

These are not startling insights. Most scholars using the conventional—or Dahlian—concept of power would have no trouble accepting these propositions. Indeed, they would most likely regard them as obvious. More importantly, they do not identify insights about global governance or American empire that could not be derived by scholars using the standard relational concept of power.

Institutions and structures can and do work to the advantage of some and the disadvantage of others, but they can also work to the advantage of all. They do not *necessarily* work to the disadvantage of those who are influenced by them—that is, to the disadvantage of *B*. Examples of institutions and structures that can and have worked to the advantage of those influenced by them include the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations, the European Union, churches, bowling leagues, nuclear families, and capitalism. This is not to say that these structures/institutions always do augment the interests of *B*, but they can and sometimes do.[18] They need to be studied using a concept of power that allows for such outcomes, not one that makes it conceptually impossible to recognize outcomes that work to the advantage of the world's *B*'s.

18 For example, for a story about someone who was "transformed" by capitalism, see Lydia Polgreen, "Scaling Caste Walls with Capitalism's Ladders," *New York Times*, December 22, 2011, page 1. Capitalism does not always transform people's lives for the better, but it can and sometimes does.

Oddly, they conclude the article with a eulogy to the work of E. H. Carr—who has barely been mentioned in the earlier discussion, who writes of the "supreme importance of the military instrument," who regards military strength as "a recognized standard of political values," and who never defines what he means by power (Carr 1946, 109). They add that no "'master' theory of power is possible," that "there is no foundational element of power that is generative of the other forms," and that "there is no most basic form" of power—observations that echo those by Lasswell and Kaplan in 1950 (85, 92–94).

Constructivist Contributions to Power Analysis in IR

Adler (2013) concludes his survey of constructivism in international relations by urging constructivist scholars to "tone down" their emphasis on ontological, epistemological, and theoretical debates in order to "concentrate more directly on building constructivist IR theory" (134–35). He cites recent constructivist theoretical and empirical work on identity, securitization, international practices, civilizations, and power as "steps in the right direction." Whatever the contributions of constructivism might be to the other areas of inquiry cited by Adler, the preceding discussion suggests that conceptual, theoretical, and empirical constructivist contributions to power analysis have thus far been rather limited.

It is not clear why so few constructivists have focused on power. It may be because the intellectual "space" that is usually filled by constructivism is already occupied by power analysts working in the tradition of Lasswell and Kaplan, March, Simon, Dahl, Harsanyi, and their followers. The comparative advantage of a constructivist perspective lies in calling attention to the role of norms, values, institutions, ideas, identities, and cultural contexts in social analysis. It would be difficult to place more emphasis on cultural contexts than Lasswell and Kaplan do. Many of the IR scholars influenced by them referred to power as "situational." This was simply a different word for describing what

constructivists now mean when they refer to power as "socially constructed." One would expect that a relational concept of power would appeal to constructivists.

Far from serving as a battleground for the dueling forces of constructivism and rationalism, power analysis is a potential point of convergence for at least some members of each camp. Barkin's *Realist Constructivism* (2010) is a step toward such convergence.[19] It is worth noting that Barkin makes no reference to Lukes or Foucault, but does include references to Lasswell and Kaplan, Dahl, and Wolfers. Constructivists may yet make significant contributions to power analysis but not so long as they cling to a concept of power rooted in Foucault and the 1974 edition of Lukes.

19 See also Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, and McDermott, *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists* (2009) and Akerlof and Kranton, *Identity Economics* (2010).

CHAPTER 7

Neoliberalism

It cannot be concluded, as many have, that the essence of the power situation is force, in the sense of violence and physical brutality. Altruism as well as egoism has a place in human relations and organization, and cooperation has as genuine a position as coercion. (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950, quoting Merriam 1934, 20)

NEOLIBERALISM—LIKE REALISM AND CONSTRUCTIVISM—IS NOT A logically coherent theory but rather a loosely related set of ideas criticizing the neorealist (and realist) treatment of actor designation, institutions, cooperation, international anarchy, the hierarchy of state goals, the role of power in international politics, and/or some combination of these topics. A bewildering assortment of terms has been used in this context, including liberalism, neoliberalism, neoliberal institutionalism, institutionalism, and interdependence theory. This chapter will not attempt to provide a comprehensive description or evaluation of the various dimensions of this approach or the many scholars who have contributed to it.[1] Instead, this chapter will focus on the foundational book in this approach—*Power and Interdependence* (Keohane and Nye, 1977)—and the concept of "soft power" explicated by Nye between 1990 and 2011.

1 For an overview, see Keohane, *Neorealism and its Critics* (1986a) and Baldwin, *Neorealism and Neoliberalism* (1993).

Although neoliberalism and its semantic cousins are often treated as alternatives to a realist approach, it should be noted that neither Keohane nor Nye shared this view. The preface to *Power and Interdependence* describes their goal as putting "into a broader context the classic realist analysis that Hans Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* . . . had bequeathed to the current generation" (1977, vii). And in a retrospective review of their book, they deny viewing "realist theory as an alternative to liberal 'interdependence theory' and depict the two perspectives as "necessary complements to one another" (1987, 728). Both approaches, they contend, "view politics as a process of political and economic exchange, characterized by bargaining" (728). Nye also views the concept of soft power as compatible with realism (Nye 2007, 170, 2011a).[2]

Power and Interdependence has been enormously influential with respect to theorizing about international relations. A reviewer for *World Politics* observed that it "may well become the *Politics Among Nations* of the 1970s" (Michalak 1979, 150); and Robert Jervis (1998, 991) cited its "path-breaking analysis."[3] It remains essential reading even today. The would-be theorist of international relations must, of course, be familiar with many books; but three are essential—Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations*, Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, and Keohane and Nye's *Power and Interdependence*. They are arguably the three most influential contributions to international relations theory since World War II.

Power and Interdependence: Contributions

The contributions of the book to understanding the role of power in international relations will be discussed with respect to the

2   Applying labels like neorealist and neoliberal to various scholars can be misleading unless those scholars apply those labels to themselves. Carr, Morgenthau, and Mearsheimer apply the realist label to themselves, but Keohane prefers the term institutionalism to characterize his work; and Nye prefers liberal realist. Thus, apologies are due to both Keohane and Nye for the title of this chapter—and to any other scholars mentioned in this book that have been given labels they would not apply to themselves.
3   It should be noted that both Michalak and Jervis regard themselves as realists.

concept of power, the concept of interdependence, the hierarchy of foreign policy goals, the fungibility of power resources, the utility of military force, and international bargaining.

Power

Whereas Waltz explicitly rejects the relational concept of power, Keohane and Nye quietly embrace it. "Power," they observe, "can be thought of as the ability of an actor to get others to do something they otherwise would not do (and at an acceptable cost to the actor)" (1977, 11). This embrace is described as quiet because it is done with little or no effort to link the concept with the social power literature from which it arose. There are only two references to that literature in the whole book—both to Bachrach and Baratz (1962, 1963).

Interdependence

The central argument in the book is that asymmetrical interdependence provides the less dependent actor with a power resource. As Keohane and Nye put it, "it is *asymmetries* in dependence that are most likely to provide sources of influence for actors in their dealings with one another" (1977, 10–11). Given the importance of this linkage between power and interdependence, it was essential that the concept of interdependence be clearly defined and explicated. In order to understand the difficulty of this task, it is necessary to review both the intellectual history of the concept and the treatment of the concept by international relations scholars during the 1970s, when Keohane and Nye were writing their book.

Two basic concepts of dependence can be traced back for at least four hundred years.[4] On the one hand, dependence is used in a causal sense to refer to situations in which an effect is contingent on or conditioned by something else. Keohane and Nye are apparently referring to this usage when they note that "in

4   For documentation and extended discussion, see Baldwin (1980). The following discussion draws on that source.

common parlance, *dependence* means a state of being determined or significantly affected by external forces" (1977, 8). On the other hand, dependence is also used to refer to a relationship of subordination in which one thing is supported by something else or must rely upon something else for fulfillment of a need. This usage corresponds to what Keohane and Nye call *vulnerability* dependence.

In the context of discussions of world affairs, the second meaning of dependence, referring to relationships that would be costly to forgo, was by far the most common from 1568 until 1968. It appears in the writings of Machiavelli, the early Mercantilists, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Adam Smith, and Malthus. And in the twentieth century, one finds it in writings by Sir Norman Angell (1914), Francis Delaisi (1925), Parker Thomas Moon (1926), Ramsay Muir (1933), Frank H. Simonds and Brooks Emeny (1935), Nicholas John Spykman (1942), Albert O. Hirschman (1945), Clyde Eagleton (1948), Karl Deutsch (1954), Quincy Wright (1955, 1965), and Kenneth Waltz (1970), among others.

The renewed interest in international interdependence in the 1970s provides a striking example of the importance of intellectual history in the study of international relations. Rather than drawing on—and building on—the insights generated during the previous four centuries, international relations scholars seemed to "start from scratch." The massive bibliography on interdependence compiled by Keohane and Nye for the *Handbook of Political Science* (1975), for example, omitted Hirschman's landmark study and made virtually no reference to scholarly treatments of interdependence prior to World War II. One writer even suggested that "the analysis of interstate interdependence begins with a central political problem that arose in international economic interchange after World War II" (Morse 1976, 117). A book by Richard N. Cooper, entitled *The Economics of Interdependence* (1968) and associated with the idea of interdependence as contingency rather than as a relation that is costly to sever, triggered an outpouring of writings on "interdependence." Katzenstein (1976, 9n) describes Cooper's book as having "been central to the reformulation of international relations theory attempted

by Keohane and Nye." Ruggie (1972, 875n) asserts that "much of the political science work with the concept [of interdependence] was stimulated" by this book. Whitman (1979, 161) refers to Cooper's "now classic book," and Morse (1976, 117) refers to it as a "seminal study" and as a "classic study of interdependence." Unfortunately, this "classic study of interdependence" not only diverted attention away from four hundred years of traditional usage, it failed to provide *any* explicit definition of interdependence.

The neglect of Hirschman's *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade* (1945) by international relations scholars in the 1970s was especially notable and regrettable.[5] This book was virtually ignored by economists and political scientists alike for nearly thirty years after its publication in 1945. Since about 1980, however, scholars have come to recognize it as a major contribution to discussions of international power and interdependence—a fact noted by Keohane and Nye in 1987 (728). Much of the confusion that characterized discussions of interdependence during the 1970s could have been avoided if writers had been more familiar with Hirschman's book.[6] Hirschman (1945, 18) drew attention to the intimate connection between the concept of "gain from trade" and the concept of dependence:

> The influence which country A acquires in country B by foreign trade depends in the first place upon the total gain which B derives from that trade; the total gain from trade for any country is indeed nothing but another expression for the total impoverishment which would be inflicted upon it by a stoppage of trade. In this sense the classical concept, gain from

---

5 Important exceptions to this neglect were Cohen (1973), Knorr (1975), and Krasner (1976, 1978). Krasner was instrumental in arranging for publication of an expanded edition of Hirschman's book in 1981. It should also be noted that every edition of Morgenthau's famous textbook cited Hirschman's book.

6 Hirschman's book is cited once by Keohane and Nye (1977, 251n), but only to support an empirical observation about German trade policy and not with respect to the *concept* of dependence. For a critical explication of Hirschman's treatment of power, see Baldwin (1985, 210–14).

trade, and the power concept, dependence on trade, now being studied are seen to be merely two aspects of the same phenomenon.

It should be noted that Hirschman did not view the conceptual linkage between gains from trade and dependence as redefining the latter concept, but rather as clarifying it. And rightly so, for he simply provided a more precise statement of the second basic meaning of dependence. This concept of dependence in terms of the opportunity costs of forgoing trade has been implicit in many discussions of international economic relations both before and after Adam Smith.

If Keohane and Nye had constructed their concept of (vulnerability) interdependence along the lines indicated by Hirschman's discussion, they could have avoided a basic contradiction in their discussion. Hirschman's concept of interdependence *requires* that both parties *gain* from an exchange, but not necessarily equally. In their effort to avoid the normative connotation that rising international interdependence "is creating a brave new world of cooperation to replace the bad old world of international conflict," they object to defining interdependence in terms of situations involving mutual benefit:

> Such a definition would assume that the concept is only useful analytically where the modernist view of the world prevails: where threats of military force are few and levels of conflict are low. It would exclude from interdependence cases of mutual dependence, such as the strategic interdependence between the United States and the Soviet Union. (1977, 9–10)

But mutually unpleasant relationships of interdependence, such as the strategic interdependence between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, were maintained because the likely alternative would have been even worse. The "benefits" of interdependence are simply another way of stating the opportunity costs of severing the relationship. No matter how "bad" an interdependent relationship may be, it is presumably

preferable to the most likely alternative. The "benefits" implied by the traditional concept of interdependence are not defined in absolute terms but rather in terms of the difference between the current situation and the next-most-likely alternative. Avoiding value deprivation, after all, is just as much a "benefit" as is value augmentation. Thus, contrary to the view of Keohane and Nye, defining interdependence in terms of the mutual benefits to the parties involved does *not* limit it to situations in which the modernist view of the world prevails, where threats of military force are few and levels of conflict are low; and it does *not* exclude such cases as the strategic interdependence between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The benefits of interdependence are defined in terms of the values of the parties and the likely effects on those values of breaking the relationship. If there is little or no effect, or if either of the parties would actually be better off, the relationship should not be described as interdependent. It is in this sense, *and in this sense only*, that interdependence always involves mutual benefits.[7]

Foreign Policy Goals

Power and Interdependence challenged the conventional wisdom with respect to the goals of foreign policy on three dimensions: (1) *Multiplicity*. Whereas Morgenthau had reduced multiple foreign policy goals to the immediate aim of power and Waltz had focused primarily on security, Keohane and Nye directed attention to multiple goals, including economic and environmental goals. (2) *Priority*. Even when multiple foreign policy goals were acknowledged, they were traditionally subordinated to the goals of power and security. Keohane and Nye suggested that priorities could vary with the situation and that the hierarchy of goals should be treated as an empirical question rather than

---

7   Even states at war may be described as interdependent if each would prefer to continue the war relationship rather than incur the costs of ending that relationship—for example, surrender, defeat, or mutual annihilation.

as an initial assumption. (3) *Maximization.* Keohane and Nye called into question the assumption that states will always try to maximize their power. Their emphasis, however, was more concerned with the empirical accuracy of this assumption than with the logic underlying such an assumption (cf. discussion of maximization in Chapter 4).

Fungibility

Keohane and Nye are especially effective in demonstrating that power resources are likely to have limited fungibility. Previous writers, of course, had pointed out that scope matters, that is, that the power of a given resource or actor is likely to vary from one issue-area to another. But no one had provided such impressive evidence as to why students of international politics should take it seriously. Whereas systemic theorists had been especially oblivious to issue areas, Keohane and Nye showed that a systemic approach that takes account of different issue areas can be very useful.

Military Force

Noting that "political scientists have traditionally emphasized the role of military force in international politics," Keohane and Nye construct an "ideal type" of international system called "complex interdependence," in which military force plays a "minor role" (1977, 27–29). Their treatment of the utility of military force as an instrument of statecraft, however, is characterized by qualifications at almost every turn. They identify situations in which military force is unlikely to be very useful, such as Canadian-American relations or issues of economic and ecological welfare but are reluctant to push such arguments very far. And the whole discussion of the "minor role" of military force is conducted against a background assumption that military force "dominates" other means of exercising power (16–17). Thus, although Keohane and Nye mount a challenge to traditional assumptions about the utility of military

force as an instrument of statecraft, they do so only in a cautious and muted way.[8]

Zero-Sum Game

The overall purpose of *Power and Interdependence* can be characterized as an attempt to identify differences between "traditional international politics and the politics of economic and ecological interdependence" (Keohane and Nye 1977, 10). Keohane and Nye emphasize that the difference is not equivalent to the difference between zero-sum and non-zero-sum games. Even military interdependence, they note, "need not be zero-sum" (10). Once again, they seem to be overly cautious. Whereas Keohane and Nye seem to leave open the question of whether military interdependence *may be* zero sum under some circumstances, Schelling (1984, 269) declares it *meaningless* to treat deterrence, alliances, brinksmanship, escalation, arms control, and even war itself in a zero-sum context.

Overall Contribution

Keohane and Nye's *Power and Interdependence* contributes to the analysis of power in international relations in each of the areas discussed above—power, interdependence, foreign policy goals, fungibility, military force, and the zero-sum game. With respect to each of these topics, however, others have made similar points in ways that are more incisive, more comprehensive, more firmly grounded in the scholarly literature on power, and more original—as preceding chapters have shown. The contribution of *Power and Interdependence* does not flow from any one of these topics in isolation from the others. It flows from *combining* them into a "lens," a "model," a "theoretical/conceptual approach," an "analytical framework," or whatever. This is truly a

8   The treatment of this topic in *Power and Interdependence* will be considered further in the context of a general discussion of how to evaluate the utility of military force in the following chapter.

case of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. This book stimulated valuable research on international regimes in various issue areas, international bargaining, interdependence, power resources, and a host of other topics. Its effects still reverberate throughout the community of international relations scholars. In their retrospective ten years after the book was published, Keohane and Nye also note that "ironically" their work has also contributed to broadening neorealism and providing it with new concepts (1987, 733).

SOFT POWER

The term *soft power* was introduced by Nye in 1990 in the context of a debate about the alleged decline in American power. He used it to counter arguments that American power was declining by suggesting that intangible assets, such as culture, ideology, and institutions, could be viewed as power resources. The "hard power" usually associated with "tangible resources like military and economic strength," he argued, was not the only way to measure national power. Soft power, he suggested, was the ability to get others to "want what you want" (1990, 31–32). During the next twenty years, Nye continued to explicate the concept of soft power and provide examples (1990, 2004, 2007, 2011a, 2011b). During that period the term entered the public discourse, appearing in the writings of journalists, editorial writers, politicians, bureaucrats, and public intellectuals in many different countries.

    Although the term soft power is familiar to students of international relations, agreement on its precise meaning and proper use is lacking. For example, after twenty years of clarification by Nye, one finds in the *Journal of Political Power* an article describing the concept as constituting "an ambiguous signifier with a nebulous theoretical core" and suggesting that this very ambiguity may account for its acceptance "in the policy realm" (Kearn 2011, 66). In the same issue of the journal, Nye complains about misuse of the term and misunderstanding by his critics

(Nye 2011b). A closer look at the underlying concept would seem to be in order.

Nye's discussion of soft power is not always as clear as one might wish with respect to the difference between definitions and empirical observations.[9] In 1990, for example, he noted that the "distinction between hard and soft power resources is one of degree, both in the nature of the behavior and in the tangibility of the resources" (267n).

In later writings, Nye observes that the difference between hard and soft power is a function of the extent to which the resources are "attractive" rather than the degree to which they are "tangible." Thus, military force only "appears to be a defining resource for hard power" (2007, 167). Both the economic and military power resources, which seemed to define hard power came to be viewed as soft power—depending on how they are used in particular situations. Indeed, it appears that anything can be a soft power resource—depending on the situation. Although military force and economic payment may be "associated" with hard power, they apparently do not define it—*and therefore cannot be used to differentiate hard power from soft power*. The question then becomes, how *does* one make the distinction?

In 2004, Nye posed the question, "What is soft power?" and answered it as follows: "It is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments" (2004, x). Seven years later he offered a "longer, more formal definition of the concept":

> Fully defined, soft power is the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes. (2011a, 20–21)

---

9   "As Dahl (1970) has observed, failure to distinguish between definitions and hypotheses is common in political analysis. Nowhere is the tendency more prevalent than in the study of power. An odd prestige attaches to the 'concept' of power, so that writers prefer to present ideas as definitions even when they might be posed as empirical propositions" (Nagel 1975, 175).

In order to explicate the concept of soft power, Nye offers a continuum with "command power" on one end and "co-optive power" on the other (1990, 267). A spectrum is a way of illustrating different degrees of a *single dimension* of something. For example, water has many dimensions, including taste, mineral content, bacteria content, odor, and temperature. Any one of these can be represented by a continuum. Thus water temperature would presumably have hot on one end and cold on the other, since everyone agrees that hot and cold are opposites.

Power, like water, has many dimensions, any one of which can be represented by a continuum. Nye defines command power as "the ability to change what others *do*" and cooptive power as "the ability to change what others *want*" (1990, 267). The problem is that changing what others do is *different from* changing what others want, but it is not the *opposite* of changing what others want. The opposite of commanding is begging or beseeching, and the opposite of wanting or preferring is being repulsed by, repudiating, or repelling. The intermediate parts of a spectrum showing water temperature would presumably carry labels like lukewarm, warm, cool, and so on. Juxtaposed on Nye's continuum, however, are examples of different influence techniques, such as threats, agenda setting, framing, payments, and so on, depending on which version of the continuum one is viewing (Nye 1990; 2004; 2011a). The fact that any of these techniques can be used to exercise soft power in some situation or another may contribute to some of the confusion in the minds of readers.

It is clear that Nye wants to exclude exchange relations from soft power, but it is not clear precisely why this is so. "Payment or economic inducement to do what you initially did not want to may seem more attractive to the subject," he says, "but any payment can easily be turned into a negative sanction by the implicit or explicit threat of its removal. A year-end bonus is a reward, but its removal is felt as a penalty" (2011a, 12). Although it is true that payments or economic inducements *can* be turned into negative sanctions under certain circumstances, this is not true of all such payments. Nonpayment of the year-end bonus

that was never expected in the first place is not a penalty; the payment made in the form of a "golden parachute" upon retirement cannot easily be turned into a negative sanction; the foreign-aid package given with the clear understanding that no further aid will be forthcoming is not easily turned into a negative sanction. The question of how easily a payment can be turned into a negative sanction is an empirical one, not a matter of definition.[10]

If money were a defining characteristic of hard power, the exclusion of exchanges involving money would be understandable; but Nye has clarified his position as one in which "tangibles such as force and money" merely "tend to be associated" with hard power rather than one in which they are viewed as essential defining characteristics (2011a, 20–21). Monetary payment, of course, is one of the most common ways of changing the preferences of other people. The farmer offering to pay $500 per hour is likely to find many people who *want* to work for him; the prospective buyer who offers three times the asking price for a car will find many sellers who *want* to provide her with a car; and the factory that offers wages of $1000 per hour will *attract* many workers. The heart of any bargaining process—involving money or not—is the attempt by each party to make an offer that *attracts* the other party.

It is even more difficult to understand why relations of *social* exchange would be excluded from soft power. Such relations often take very subtle forms involving no coercion, no formal negotiation, no explicit contract, and no money. The norm of reciprocity often plays subtle but important roles in such exchanges. If Bloggs does a favor for his neighbor in order to make his neighbor like him and be more willing to help him in the future, does that count as an instance of soft power? The answer is not clear.[11]

---

10 On positive sanctions (i.e., inducements) and power, see Baldwin (1971c).
11 On social exchange, see Blau (1964) and Baldwin (1978). On reciprocity, see Keohane (1986c) and Baldwin (1990).

Although coercion and attraction do not define the ends of any of Nye's continuums, they are always near opposite ends. Coercion, of course, is usually defined in terms of a lack of choice—"sink or swim." But attraction is not usually defined in terms of choice. The conceptual problem here is that attraction can itself be coercive. Perhaps the most famous example in Western literature is that of Odysseus lashing himself to the mast in order to resist the coercive attraction of the Sirens.

One source of confusion—perhaps the most important one—in Nye's discussion of soft power is failure to maintain a clear distinction between the instruments of foreign policy (or techniques of statecraft) and the power resources that determine whether they succeed or fail. The concept of a power resource, as explained in Chapter 3, is a relational concept in that one cannot identify such a resource without reference to the value system of another actor—individual, group, or state. Policy instruments or techniques of statecraft, however, are property concepts in that one does not need to know anything about other actors in order to describe them. They are in a sense possessed by and under the control of the state to which they belong. The study of techniques of statecraft is complicated and confused by the tendency to treat the power resources of states as if they were property rather than relational concepts. Thus, policy makers are often described as "employing" or "using" their power resources as if they were possessions of the state. The instruments or techniques of statecraft are used to make influence *attempts*, but it is power bases that determine how successful they will be. Only thus can one maintain a clear distinction between foreign policy *undertakings* and foreign policy *outcomes*.

At times, Nye's discussion of soft power is clear about the distinction. In response to the complaint that soft power seems to include everything, Nye argues that "these critics are mistaken because they confuse the actions of a state seeking to achieve desired outcomes with the resources used to produce them" (2011a, 20). The explication of the formal definition of soft power also emphasizes the relational nature of the concept. Consider the following passages:

> Agenda-setting that is regarded as legitimate by the target, positive attraction, and persuasion are the parts of the spectrum of behaviors I include in soft power. (2011a, 20)

Although agenda setting by itself could plausibly be viewed as a policy instrument, the requirement that it be considered legitimate by the target clearly makes it relational—and therefore not (completely) under the control of the agenda setter.

> Because attraction depends upon the mind of the perceiver, the subject's perceptions play a significant role in whether given resources produce hard or soft power behavior. (2011a, 21)

Here again, it is clear that soft power is an outcome rather than an undertaking. The statement, however, does not appear to go far enough. The subject's perceptions (and values) not only play a "significant role"; they apparently *determine* whether a resource produces hard or soft power.

> With soft power, what the target thinks is particularly important, and the targets matter as much as the agents. Attraction and persuasion are socially constructed. Soft power is a dance that requires partners. (2011a, 84)

Once more, the relational nature of soft power is illustrated by this passage. The connotation that this passage is peculiarly applicable to soft power relations, however, is puzzling. Soft power is no more dependent on the perceptions and values of the target than other forms of power. Nuclear deterrence, after all, is primarily a function of the perceptions and values of the target.[12]

As the preceding passages indicate, soft power seems to be an outcome rather than an undertaking. At other times, however, Nye appears to treat soft power as a technique of statecraft. The

---

12 In order to deter a nuclear attack, it is useful to possess a secure retaliatory capacity, but it is not a conceptual or theoretical necessity. If one can make the target country believe that one possesses, say, a "doomsday machine," it does not matter whether one actually has one or not.

question of whose behavior is represented on the continuum between hard and soft power is not as clear as one might wish. For example, Nye suggests that the behaviors on the spectrum "can be conceived in terms of the degree of voluntarism in B's behavior" (2011a, 243n). Thus, the behavior on the spectrum seems to be B's. The conceptual problem is that *all* the words juxtaposed on the spectrum seem to refer to A's behavior—that is, command, coerce, threat, pay, sanction, frame, persuade, attract, and co-opt (2011a, 21). These are actions by the agent, not by the target. At times, he describes attraction as something that "A uses" in order to influence B rather than as a response by B to something A does—like giving foreign aid, praising B in a speech to the UN, or voting in favor of a UN resolution proposed by B.

Soft power is not an instrument to be used by foreign policy makers, but rather an outcome to be sought by a wide variety of means. It is difficult to imagine any technique of statecraft that could not be used in some situation with respect to some target in order to produce soft power as an outcome. The term *soft power* may be recent, but the concept of attraction as a base value is hardly new. Similar base values include endearment, allurement, respect, affection, rectitude, enlightenment, admiration, esteem, and so on. Lasswell and Kaplan (1950) discussed many of these, and Gallarotti (2010b) has traced the general idea of soft power back more than two thousand years.

Despite the lack of agreement with respect to the meaning of soft power, the impact on policy and policy analysis has been both significant and beneficial for a number of reasons: (1) It has directed (attracted?) the attention of students of international relations away from their traditional preoccupation with military force and toward alternative techniques of statecraft. (2) It has reminded scholars, journalists, bureaucrats, politicians, and the public that national images matter and that they can be manipulated.[13] Being perceived as an international policeman, an

---

13 Robert Jervis's discussion of national images seems to dovetail nicely with Nye's discussion of soft power. See Jervis (1970). See also Boulding (1959, 1963, 1989).

international bully, or an international empire builder may or may not be in a country's national interest; but concern about the image a country projects to the rest of the world is always in the national interest. (3) It has stimulated a number of panel discussions, conferences, articles, and books focusing on soft power and thereby enhancing our understanding of power in an international context. Nye's discussions of soft power stimulated and clarified the thoughts of policy makers and scholars alike—even those who misunderstand or disagree with his views.

Conclusion

For though management and persuasion are always the easiest and the safest instruments of government, as force and violence are the worst and the most dangerous, yet such, it seems, is the natural insolence of man, that he almost always disdains to use the good instrument, except when he cannot or dare not use the bad one. (Adam Smith, 1776, quoted by Boulding 1989, 2)

Power is not strongest when it uses violence, but weakest. It is strongest when it employs the instruments of substitution and counter attraction, of allurement, or participation rather than exclusion, or education rather than of annihilation. Rape is not evidence of irresistible power in politics or in sex. (Merriam 1934, 179–80, quoted by Lasswell and Kaplan 1950, 265–66)

PRECEDING CHAPTERS HAVE EXAMINED POWER ANALYSIS AS A tool of social science and the concept of power in international relations theory from both historical and analytic perspectives. This concluding chapter will address four topics as follows: (1) international relations theory and power in retrospect; (2) the contemporary relevance of a "Dahlian approach" to the study of power in international relations; (3) power and military statecraft; and (4) the overall value of power analysis.

CHAPTER 8

IR Theory and Power in Retrospect

Although it is often said and widely believed that the concept of power has been central to the study of international relations by American academics, this has not always been true. During most of the period between World War I and World War II, the concept of power was either disparaged or neglected in favor of a focus on international law, international organization, diplomatic history, and/or international economics. During the 1930s, however, power began to receive more attention from such international relations scholars as Frederick Sherwood Dunn, Nicholas J. Spykman, Harold Sprout, Frederick Schuman, Arnold Wolfers, and others. In the 1940s and 1950s power emerged as a central concept—indeed, *the* central organizing concept—in the field of international relations. During the fifty years since 1960, scholars have become more sophisticated in their approach to power analysis, but agreement on many conceptual and methodological issues remains elusive. This lack of agreement, however, is not peculiar to the field of international relations; it typifies the study of power in other realms as well.

Although the view of international politics as a zero-sum competition for military power is still widespread (e.g., Mearsheimer 2001), other views, such as complex interdependence and soft power have also gained adherents. Although the "elements-of-power" or "power-as-resources" approach is often used (e.g., Tellis, Bially, Layne, and McPherson 2000), the relational power approach is also commonly used (e.g., Keohane and Nye 1977; Baldwin 1985). And although fuzzy concepts and lack of agreement on concepts remain, increased attention is being given to conceptual analysis (e.g., Barnett and Duvall 2005a; Guzzini 2013; Gallarotti 2010b; Barkin 2010; Read 2012; Berenskoetter and Williams 2007).

States are still often referred to as "great powers" even though there is no general agreement on what this means. The

174

CONCLUSION

traditional meaning of states with the ability to "hold their own" against other "great powers" in a major conventional war seems increasingly irrelevant in a world in which major war between the most powerful states is widely viewed as extremely unlikely, if not unthinkable.

Military statecraft continues to be the means for exercising power in the international arena that receives the most attention. There are even academic journals devoted primarily to military power—for example, *International Security* and *Security Studies.* Interestingly, there are no political science journals devoted primarily to economic statecraft or diplomacy.

The goal of maximizing power in realist theory has been challenged by those who think that security should be the goal to be maximized. Other approaches, such as complex interdependence, however, that emphasize *optimal* allocation of resources among a number of important goals have also emerged.

The concept of power as a mechanism in the form of "balance-of-power" theory still attracts the attention of international relations theorists despite the lack of agreement on what it means and whether it is empirically reliable (e.g., Brooks and Wohlforth 2008; Guzzini 2000; Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007; Little 2007; Nexon 2009; Schweller 2006; Paul, Wirtz, and Fortmann 2004).

And the idea of power as capability is still prevalent. Policy makers as well as scholars recognize the importance of capability analysis even though they lack agreement on what it means and the proper methods for carrying out such analyses. A recent study by the RAND Corporation, for example, asserted that the objective of estimating national capabilities "is best served by *severing all connection with any effort at relating how such power [resources] could be used to secure certain political outcomes*" (Tellis, Bially, Layne, and McPherson 2000, 19). This approach stands in stark contrast with the Sprouts' contention that such resources have no significance whatever until placed in an actual or postulated "policy-contingency framework" (Sprout and Sprout 1971, 177).

Contemporary Relevance of a Dahlian Approach

Despite its many critics and despite its age, the Dahlian approach to power analysis discussed in previous chapters retains its relevance for students of international relations. Consider the following aspects of power analysis:

Basic intuitive notion. Dahl's concept of power as relations in which some people get other people to do something they would otherwise not do still seems to capture the intuitive notion that underlies terms like control, persuasion, influence, deterrence, compellence, and so on. To date, no proposed definition seems to conform more closely with what most people have in mind when they use such terms. This probably explains why it has been so widely embraced.

Resources distinguished from power. The importance of distinguishing between power relations and the resources that make them possible retains its relevance. Possession of tanks, bombs, money, ships, or soldiers does not ensure that an actor has the skill and/or motivation to use them efficiently. Nor does it ensure that an adversary will be vulnerable to such "resources."

Situational analysis. Specifying scope and domain (at least) remains necessary in order to make meaningful statements about power. "Power in Oshkosh" begs the question of "Power to get whom to do what?" "Who has the high cards?" begs the question of whether the game is poker or bridge. And if someone asks which countries have the most power resources, the immediate response should be, "What policy-contingency framework are we talking about?" Power in the abstract has little or no meaning without further specification. "Who is number 1 in international politics?" has no more meaning than "Who is the best athlete in the world?"

Separating power and interests. It is hard enough to determine whether France has the power to get Lower Slobbovia to vote for a United Nations resolution. There is no reason to make it more difficult by insisting that the question of whether it is in either party's national interest to do so be answered at

the same time. Simple explanations are better *if there is no loss of explanatory power*. And treating power and interest separately still allows one to say anything one wants to say about either or both.

Abstract concept versus operational definitions. Maintaining a clear distinction between concepts and operational definitions adopted for purposes of specific research projects remains useful. In order to formulate an operational measure or definition, it is necessary to have a clear idea of what concept one is operationalizing. As Dahl continually reminds us, the concept of power is not easy to operationalize, and particular operational definitions are likely to diverge from the abstract concept.

Power as a matter of degree. Sorting all countries into two categories—the "strong" and the "weak"—is not likely to be very helpful for many purposes. Although power is always distributed unevenly, ignoring gradations of power is likely to lead to oversimplification. Appropriate labels for such dichotomies include "reductionism," "fallacy of the excluded middle," "lump-of-power fallacy," and "fallacy of misplaced dichotomies."

Costs of power. Regardless of whether one incorporates costs into the concept of power as Harsanyi suggests, the costs of power should not be ignored by the power analyst. This is especially relevant for the student of international relations because the potential costs of exercising power in international relations can be disastrous. As Thomas Jefferson reminded us long ago, "the most successful war seldom pays for its losses."

Conflict and cooperation. Concepts of power such as Dahl's can accommodate both conflict and cooperation. Since both are important in international relations, concepts of power that can explain only one or the other (e.g., Barnett and Duvall 2005a) should be used sparingly, if at all.

In sum, the Dahlian approach to power analysis has not been outmoded by time and remains relevant for the analysis of international politics. It is not the only approach and may not even be the best, but it remains both useful and relevant. It certainly has more relevance and wider applicability than its critics have recognized. The first response to an assertion that "Dahl's approach

cannot explain *x*" should be to ask, "Have you made a serious attempt to do so?"

Power and Military Statecraft[1]

Many writers have commented on the preoccupation with military force by international relations scholars down through the ages (Art and Waltz 2009; Baldwin 1989; Osgood and Tucker 1967; Sprout and Sprout 1945, 1951, 1962, 1965, 1971; Wagner 2007; Waltz 1979; Wright 1955, 1965). Although war is an important phenomenon that international relations specialists regard as their special province, the field of international relations has paid a price for its preoccupation with military force. The importance of military force has been exaggerated; the role of nonmilitary forms of power has been underestimated; and the field of international relations has been impoverished by its insulation from studies of power in other realms.

The privileged place of military power in the study of international politics is demonstrated and reinforced by references to the "centrality" of force in international politics (Art 1996; Baldwin 1999; Wagner 2007); to the study of power as "a study of the capacity to wage war" (Cline 1997); to force as "the ultimate form of power" (Gilpin 1975, 1981); or to international security studies as "the study of the threat, use, and control of military force" (Walt 1991, 212). There is, of course, no other subfield in international relations defined in terms of the threat, use, and control of particular techniques of statecraft.

The tendency to single out force as the ultimate measuring rod to which other forms of power should be compared is anathema to the approach advocated by Lasswell and Kaplan (1950, ix, 76, 85, 92, 94). Although they gave "special consideration to

---

1   The following discussion of statecraft focuses on what a rational actor would do, not on the political process by which techniques of statecraft are actually chosen. For an incisive discussion of the impact of domestic politics on statecraft, see Milner and Tingley (2015).

the role of violence," they repeatedly denied that power rests "always, or even generally, on violence"; and they maintained "that power may rest on various bases"; that "none of the forms of power is basic to all the others: and that "political phenomena are only obscured by the pseudo simplification attained with any unitary conception of power as always and everywhere the same." Despite the vigorous efforts of Lasswell and Kaplan and the tradition of relational power analysis they spawned, the contemporary literature on international relations often exhibits the same tendencies to exaggerate the role of military power as did earlier works (Baldwin 1995; Mearsheimer 2001; Ray and Vural 1986; Walt 1991; Waltz 1979; Tellis, Bially, Layne, and McPherson 2000).

The preoccupation with military force in the study of international politics has led to the neglect of nonmilitary forms of power, such as economic statecraft. In addition, it has ironically limited understanding of military statecraft itself. The question of when military force should be used cannot be answered without consideration of alternative instruments of statecraft (Baldwin 1995, 1999/2000). Thus, the neglect of nonmilitary forms of power has hampered understanding of the conditions under which military force should be used.

Three topics concerning military power are especially deserving of further study: (1) the fungibility of military power; (2) the utility of military techniques of statecraft; and (3) the definition and measurement of military success.

Fungibility. In order to demonstrate the limits on the fungibility of military power, Keohane and Nye (1977) discussed issue areas like money, the environment, and trade. Although military force is not completely useless with respect to these issues, it normally plays a minor role, if any. Although it is usually assumed that force is quite fungible with respect to military issues and conflicts, this assumption needs to be questioned. Wars and militarized conflicts come in a variety of sizes and shapes: guerrilla war, civil war, limited conventional war, nuclear exchange, mutual deterrence, chemical and biological warfare, large-scale nuclear war, cyberwar, cold war, and so on. It is not

clear that the military power resources useful in one type of war can easily be transferred to another type. As one writer put it, "This whole notion of a simple, unitary 'capability' fundamentally misrepresents military potential, which is inherently multidimensional. Different military tasks are very dissimilar—the ability to do one (or several) well does not imply the ability to master others" (Biddle 2004, 192–93). Thus, more studies of the use of particular types of military power in different policy-contingency situations are needed.[2]

Utility. Quincy Wright points out that the utility of military statecraft has "varied in history according to the character of military technology, the character of the international system, the particular policy involved, and the power position of the group utilizing this instrument" (1965, 1521). Some have suggested that the utility of military techniques of statecraft has declined since World War II, since the Vietnam War, since the end of the Cold War, and so on.[3] Although evaluating such claims is beyond the scope of this book, some suggestions and guidelines for future research on this topic will be considered.

As noted in the previous chapter, Keohane and Nye (1977) contend that "military power dominates economic power in the sense that economic means alone are likely to be ineffective against the serious use of military force," a view they reiterated ten years later (1987, 733). This observation raises a number of questions: First, there is the question of whether power is specified adequately enough to allow for evaluation. The lack of specification as to scope and domain begs the question of "power to get whom to do what?" Second, the proposition is difficult—perhaps impossible—to falsify in the sense that the "serious use of military force" is open ended. That is to say, examples to the contrary can always be dismissed by arguing that

---

2   For an example of the type of research that is needed, see Byman and Waxman's *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might* (2002).

3   See the recent review symposium, "Has Violence Declined in World Politics?" (Fortna, Mearsheimer, and Levy 2013).

the use of force was not serious enough. (There are, after all, many people who still think that the Vietnam War was lost because not enough bombs were dropped.) Third, the empirical test implied by the passage is puzzling. The obvious way to compare the utility or effectiveness of military and economic power would be to evaluate them with respect to given tasks in given situations. And fourth, there are both real-world and hypothetical examples of the use of economic means against the use of force that contravene the proposition. In August 1990 the United States chose to use economic sanctions instead of military attack to counter Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. With respect to the immediate U.S. goals in that situation at that point in time, economic measures were clearly preferable to military measures (Baldwin 1999/ 2000). Schelling (1966, 69) relates an incident at the end of World War II in which French forces occupied a portion of northern Italy with the intention of annexing it and declared their willingness to use force to stay there. Rather than meeting force with force, President Truman merely informed the French that no more supplies would be issued to the French army until the forces were withdrawn. There are, of course, many historical cases of "siege warfare" in which the ultimate compliance of the target is due to economic rather than military concerns. And a hypothetical comparison of economic and military power with respect to a total embargo/boycott of commercial intercourse between China and the rest of the world does not yield the self-evident conclusion that economic power is "dominated" by military power. The question of the relative effectiveness or utility of military and economic power is best considered in the context of a policy-contingency framework.

Attempts to evaluate the utility of military techniques of statecraft should avoid three fallacies: (1) The fallacy of equating effectiveness and efficiency. The difference is that efficiency takes account of costs; whereas effectiveness does not. Studies that purport to say something about the utility of military power while devoting little or no attention to the cost of using force can be quite misleading (e.g., Art 1996; Art and Waltz 2009; Pape 1996). (2) The lump-of-utility fallacy. This is most likely to

appear in response to arguments that the utility of force is declining. Although such an argument is almost always framed as a matter of degree, critics sometimes accuse those who say the utility of force is declining of suggesting that military power has no utility whatsoever.[4] (3) The single technique of statecraft fallacy. This occurs when attempts are made to evaluate one technique in isolation from others. The question, "Does crime pay?" for example, does not make much sense unless there is an alternative to a life of crime available. Thus, if someone seeking career advice asks this question, the appropriate response is "Compared to what?" If the opportunity cost of pursuing a life of crime is forgoing a career as a lawyer, a doctor, or investment banker, crime may not "pay." But if the alternatives are either to join a criminal gang or be killed by another gang, a life of crime may seem cost effective. Likewise, the appropriate response to the question, "Does conquest pay?" is "Compared to what?" The relevant question is not, "Does conquest pay?" but rather, "Compared with alternative ways of allocating the resources required for conquest, are the net benefits of conquest larger or smaller?"[5]

An additional example of the single instrument fallacy is found in Waltz's classic study entitled *Man, the State and War* (1959):

> Each state pursues its own interests, however defined, in ways it judges best. Force is a means of achieving the external ends of states because there exists no consistent, reliable process of reconciling the conflicts of interest that inevitably arise among similar units in a condition of anarchy. (238)[6]

4   Keohane and Nye (1987, 731) complain about receiving such criticism, an experience shared by this writer—such as Art (1996) and Nye (2011a, 49). This is a variation of the "straw man fallacy." For another example, see Freedman (1998, 764).
5   Liberman's book entitled *Does Conquest Pay?* (1996) is often cited in support of the argument that conquest pays. The title, however, is misleading. The book does not address the question posed by the title but rather addresses the question of whether *occupation* pays after conquest is achieved. See Brooks (1999).
6   It is not clear whether this passage is suggesting that force *is* a "consistent, reliable process of reconciling" conflicts of interest. If so, there is massive evidence to the contrary—for example, the Arab-Israeli conflict, Iraq War, Vietnam War, Korean War, Afghanistan War, World War I, and so on.

Even if one stipulates the absence of a "consistent, reliable process of reconciling" conflicts of interest, it does not necessarily follow that force must be used in lieu of nonmilitary techniques of statecraft. Nonmilitary techniques such as diplomacy, economic statecraft, and propaganda may not be *completely* consistent and reliable means of reconciling conflicts of interest; but they may have—and often do have—more utility for such purposes than military force (e.g., Solingen 2012). There is, however, no reason to accept at face value the assertion that there exists no "consistent, reliable process of reconciling" conflicts of interest. Two hundred years ago Adam Smith described just such a process:

> Man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and shew them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them. Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this. Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. (1937, 14)[7]

He is, of course, describing the process of exchange and reciprocity—a process that has reconciled conflicts of interest at every level, including individual, family, national, and international—with respect to a wide variety of issues involving social actors of all kinds since time immemorial. It is not *perfectly* consistent and reliable, but it is a more consistent, reliable, and efficient means than military force in a great many instances—nay, the vast majority of instances. Conflicts of interest are not immutable. When a state's interests conflict with those of another state, most states most of the time do not use force; instead, they do what most other people do most of the time—they try to create

---

7   Although this quotation was used earlier, it is worth repeating. It is the single most important passage in Smith's magisterial book.

a situation in which it is in an adversary's interest to do what is wanted. As previous chapters have pointed out, there are a wide variety of means other than military force for doing this, including diplomacy, economic statecraft, propaganda, framing, agenda control, persuasion, and so on.[8]

Military force is often described as the *ultima ratio* of politics. This is usually interpreted to mean that it is an instrument of last resort. The implications of this for judging the utility of military force as an instrument of statecraft are seldom pointed out. A rational foreign policy maker will use the technique of statecraft with the most utility *first*, not last. Thus, to describe force as the ultima ratio of politics is to admit that it has lower utility than other techniques.[9] Waltz, however, contends that in international politics, "force serves, not only as the *ultima ratio*, but indeed as the first and constant one" (1979, 113). He attributes this "first and constant" role to the fact that "the constant possibility that force will be used limits manipulations, moderates demands, and serves as an incentive for the settlement of disputes" (114). Although this is true, this moderating effect applies not only to military force but also to any other technique of statecraft based on negative or positive sanctions—for example, "we better behave or they will cut off our foreign aid" or "if we behave, they might reward us with more aid." Although Waltz adds that the threat of force in the background is analogous to the threat of a strike in labor and management bargaining, he overlooks the fact that threats of economic or diplomatic sanctions also play this role in international relations. The threat of force may indeed be always in the background, but it is not the

8   For recent work on positive inducements as instruments of statecraft, see Davis (2000), Kahler and Kastner (2006), Nincic (2010), and Solingen (2012).

9   This paradox is an implication of opportunity costs. As Simon points out, a "choice is incorrectly posed, then, when it is posed as a choice between possibility A, with low costs and small results, and possibility B, with high costs and large results. For A should be substituted a third possibility C, which would include A *plus* the alternative activities made possible by the cost difference between A and B" (1976, 179). Of course, if one treats states as having only a single goal, alternative activities do not matter and Simon's view of choice makes no sense.

only threat in the background. Nor is it necessarily the most credible threat or the one most likely to be used.[10]

In describing force as the "first and constant" foreign policy instrument, Waltz seems to suggest that it has more utility than other techniques. Clearly, not everyone thinks that the utility of military statecraft is declining. Although the comparative utility of military force and other policy instruments is an empirical matter, a brief overview of the kinds of arguments advanced in favor of declining utility is in order.

Although published in 1966, Klaus Knorr's *On the Uses of Military Power in the Nuclear Age* remains the best single guide to thinking about the utility of military force. As an economist, he is aware that estimates of utility depend *equally* on costs and benefits. He is also aware that risks are a particular type of cost. Political scientists often seem to overlook this and sprinkle their discussions with references to "risks and costs" as if they were different things. When people play Russian roulette with a six-shooter and live, it is incorrect to describe them as having paid no costs for playing. They have just paid the cost of one-sixth of whatever value they place on their lives. And when states arm themselves with massive inventories of nuclear weapons capable of destroying life as we know it on this planet and manage to avoid such a catastrophe for seventy years, it is incorrect to omit the (cumulative) risk of such an event when calculating the costs of nuclear armories.

In order to determine whether force has declined in utility as an instrument of statecraft, the following topics must be addressed:

Legitimacy. For most of the history of the sovereign state system, military force was viewed as a legitimate technique of statecraft to be used as needed by the sovereign. In the twentieth century, however, the ease of legitimating the use of military force declined. The League of Nations Covenant, the Kellogg-Briand

---

10 For similar comments about the threat of military force lurking in the background of policy makers' minds, see Art (1980, 35) and Osgood and Tucker (1967, 27–28).

Pact, the United Nations Charter, and the emergence of informal norms all made it harder to legitimate the unilateral use of military force.

Goals. Some goals are more easily achieved by force than others. For Mearsheimer, the "supreme political objective" of states is "conquering and controlling land" (2001, 86). Military force has been especially useful in conquering and controlling territory, but the priority of such a goal has declined for most states. It is also worth noting that the single most important acquisition of territory for the United States was not the result of war but of economic statecraft—that is, the Louisiana Purchase (1804). Military force has, to be sure, been useful to colonies in acquiring independence, such as the United States. Again it is worth noting that independence has also been gained by nonviolent techniques, such as India. Military force can be and has been used to acquire economic benefits from other countries, but the emergence of an efficient global trading system offers a more useful way to attain such benefits (Rosecrance 1986). Military force has not proven especially useful with respect to such goals as promoting democracy, human rights, and/or particular ideologies. Notable exceptions, of course, include Japan and Germany after World War II; but it is not clear that these examples have much applicability in the twenty-first century.

Costs. The costs of war have increased for two basic reasons. It is easier to destroy, and there is more to be destroyed. When people lived at or near subsistence levels, as most did for most of human history, there was less to be lost by war. In the twenty-first century, however, the losses are potentially much higher. Modern technology has increased the destructive power of weaponry to the point that life as we know it is threatened. The government officials who authorize and conduct wars have an incentive to downplay or misrepresent the costs of war. It is the responsibility of scholars to identify the true costs of war. The book on the costs of the Iraq War by Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda J. Bilmes (2008) entitled *The Three Trillion Dollar War* constitutes a major step in the right direction. It is an embarrassment to the community of international relations scholars that

more books seeking to identify and publicize the actual costs of military force have not been written.

Success. Waltz begins his famous study of *Man, the State and War* (1959, 1) as follows:

> Asking who won a given war, someone has said, is like asking who won the San Francisco earthquake. That in wars there is no victory but only varying degrees of defeat is a proposition that has gained increasing acceptance in the twentieth century.

Waltz, however, is not interested in the substantive content of the passage, but only in the implied analogy between "natural occurrences," such as earthquakes, and wars.

Waltz's observation about wars having no victors becoming an increasingly accepted view may have been true when he wrote it, but it has not held up well since then—at least among international relations scholars and diplomatic historians. Evidence to support this contention is hard to come by. The predominant assumption underlying most discussions of war seems to be that "every war has a winner." Most large-*n* studies of war code most of the outcomes of war either as victory or defeat—although some do include a few instances of draws. If any include instances of war outcomes coded as "varying degrees of defeat" for all parties, it has escaped the attention of this writer.[11]

Many studies of war estimate "success" without regard to the costs incurred by each party. This makes no sense. It is comparable to estimating the "success" of Enron as a business firm by considering only the revenue generated while ignoring the liabilities incurred in the process.[12] Small and Singer (1982, 182) ignore costs in coding winners and losers of wars, but they at least admit that this is a possible weakness in their approach.

[11] "Of the 69 interstate wars from 1816 to 1976 studied here, there were only two in which the scholarly consensus ruled the outcome a 'draw'" (Wayman, Singer, and Goertz 1983, 500). For an extended discussion of success and failure in foreign policy, see Baldwin (2000).
[12] It also analogous to "successfully" ridding oneself of athlete's foot by amputating one's legs.

Other writers (e.g., Wang and Ray 1994) include no such admission. Still others blithely assert that they "will classify as successful those states or coalitions that 'won' in each dispute and each war, *no matter how pyrrhic the victory*" (Wayman, Singer, and Goertz 1983, 500; my italics).

A Dahlian approach to power analysis along the lines described in this book would allow for consideration of the legitimacy of the use of military force, the varying degrees of effectiveness with respect to different policy-contingency frameworks, and the costs to all parties involved. Most importantly, it would allow for the coding of war outcomes as "varying degrees of defeat" for all parties involved. In a world with weapons of mass destruction, the possibility of such war outcomes should not be ignored.

What Good Is Power Analysis?

The overall goal of this book is to argue for more clarity, rigor, and precision in thinking about power in international relations, but the question of "Why bother?" has been set aside until now. The following are some of the possible answers to this question:

Clarify policy options for A.[13] As Harsanyi points out, "one of the main purposes for which social scientists use the concept of A's power over B is for the description of the policy possibilities open to A" (1962a, 69). As previous chapters have argued, there are a multitude of ways for *A* to get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do. Foreign policy makers (and citizens) often need reminding that there are many alternatives to military force.

Clarify policy options for B. Although power analysis often focuses on the power wielder, this is neither a conceptual nor a logical necessity. Harsanyi identifies clarifying *A*'s options as

---

13 Designating an actor as *A* is merely a way of describing a role in a particular situation. It is important to note that *A*'s can be *B*'s, and vice versa. From a Dahlian perspective, an actor may be weak with respect to some situations and strong with respect to others. Gandhi was not much of a warrior, but he nevertheless was very influential.

one of the main purposes of power analysis, but he neither says nor implies that it is the *only* purpose. Both the values and policy options of *B* form an integral part of power analysis in the Dahlian tradition. There are a variety of ways for *B* to respond to *A*'s influence attempts that go beyond the overly simple categories of "compliance" and "noncompliance." Examples of power analysis focused on *B*'s options, see James C. Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990) and *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (1985).

Understanding success and failure. Power analysis is helpful not only in understanding the outcomes of past influence attempts but also in estimating the likely success of future influence attempts. Capability analysis, of course, cannot provide absolute certainty with respect to the future, but neither can weather forecasters or economists. Despite the limitations of capability estimates in international relations, they are preferable to relying on guesses, intuition, or coin flipping.

Understanding the role of power in the international system. Contrary to the Melian dialogue, the "strong" cannot always do what they want; and the "weak" do not always have to suffer what they must. Military power cannot be ignored, but there are many other forms of power at work in the international system. Concepts such as "hegemony," "empire," and "domination" may well be useful to international relations scholars—*but only if they are clearly defined and adequately specified.*

Accountability. Power analysis is needed in order to give credit or lay blame for events in international relations. Did *A* cause *B* to be poor; or would *B* have been poor anyway? Did *A* cause *B* to become rich; or would *B* have become rich anyway? Was the war lost because of inept or pusillanimous leaders or because of lack of critical resources?

Clear thinking about power, of course, is useful in all spheres of life, not just international relations. It is difficult to improve on the description of the utility of power analysis in Dahl's second edition of *Modern Political Analysis*:

> The analysis of "power" is no merely theoretical enterprise but a matter of the greatest practicality. For how one acts in politi-

cal life depends very heavily on one's beliefs about the nature, distribution, and practices of "power" in the political system one confronts. If one acts on the belief that power is dispersed rather widely in the community, when in fact it is highly concentrated, or if one acts on the assumption that power is tightly held, when in fact it is dispersed to a variety of individuals and groups who must negotiate, bargain, persuade, and cajole in order to get along, then one is likely to make serious political blunders. People frequently do act on a mistaken diagnosis—usually, perhaps, one too simple for the situation. Nothing is more likely to lead to bad political strategies than to misunderstand "power," to misperceive "the power structure," for to be misled about "power" is to be misled about the prospects and means of stability, change, and revolution. The graveyards of history are strewn with the corpses of reformers who failed utterly to reform anything, of revolutionaries who failed to win power, or revolutionaries who successfully seized power and failed to make the revolution they intended, and anti-revolutionaries who failed to prevent a revolution—men (and women) who failed not only because of the forces arrayed against them but because of the pictures in their minds about power and influence were simplistic and inaccurate. (1970, 15)

Bibliography

Abdelal, Rawi, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose Mc-
Dermott, eds. 2009. *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists*.
New York: Cambridge University Press.

Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A
Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *Ameri-
can Political Science Review* 95 (3): 529–46.

Adler, Emanuel. 2013. "Constructivism in International Relations:
Sources, Contributions, and Debates." In *Handbook of International
Relations*, ed. Thomas Risse, Walter Carlsnaes, and Beth A. Simmons.
London: Sage, 112–44.

Akerlof, George A., and Rachel E. Kranton. 2010. *Identity Economics*.
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Allison, Graham, and Philip Zelikow. 1999. *Essence of Decision: Explain-
ing the Cuban Missile Crisis*. New York: Longman.

Angell, Sir Norman. 1914. *The Foundations of International Polity*. Lon-
don: William Heinemann.

Aron, Raymond. 1966. *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*.
Translated by Richard Howard and Annette Baker Fox. Garden City,
NY: Doubleday.

Art, Robert. 1980. "To What Ends Military Power?" *International Security*
4 (4): 3–35.

——. 1996. "American Foreign Policy and the Fungibility of Force." *Se-
curity Studies* 5 (4): 7–42.

——. 1999. "Force and Fungibility Reconsidered." *Security Studies* 8 (4):
183–89.

Art, Robert, and Kenneth Waltz, eds. 2009. *The Use of Force*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Bachrach, Peter, and Morton S. Baratz. 1962. "Two Faces of Power." *American Political Science Review* 56 (4): 947–52.

———. 1963. "Decisions and Nondecisions: An Analytical Framework." *American Political Science Review* 57 (3): 632–42.

Baer, Michael A., Malcolm Jewell, and Lee Sigelman, eds. 1991. *Political Science in America: Oral Histories of a Discipline*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Baldwin, David A. 1966. "Congressional Initiative in Foreign Policy." *Journal of Politics* 28 (4): 754–73.

———. 1971a. "Money and Power." *Journal of Politics* 33 (3): 578–614.

———. 1971b. "Inter-nation Influence Revisited." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 15 (4): 471–86.

———. 1971c. "The Power of Positive Sanctions." *World Politics* 24 (1): 19–38.

———. 1971d. "The Costs of Power." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 15 (2): 145–55.

———. 1978. "Power and Social Exchange." *American Political Science Review* 72 (4): 1229–42.

———. 1980. "Interdependence and Power: A Conceptual Analysis." *International Organization* 34 (4): 471–506.

———. 1985. *Economic Statecraft*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

———. 1989. *Paradoxes of Power*. New York: Basil Blackwell.

———. 1990. "Politics, Exchange, and Cooperation." In *Generalized Political Exchange*, ed. Bernd Marin. Frankfurt/New York: Campus/Westview, 101–18.

———. ed. 1993. *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*. New York: Columbia University Press.

———. 1995. "Security Studies and the End of the Cold War." *World Politics* 48 (1): 117–41.

———. 1997. "The Concept of Security." *Review of International Studies* 23 (1): 5–26.

———. 1998. "Exchange Theory and International Relations." *International Negotiation* 3 (2): 139–49.

———. 1999. "Force, Fungibility, and Influence." *Security Studies* 8 (4): 173–83.

——. 1999/2000. "The Sanctions Debate and the Logic of Choice." *International Security* 24 (3): 80–107.

——. 2000. "Success and Failure in Foreign Policy." In *Annual Review of Political Science*, ed. Nelson W. Polsby. Palo Alto, California: Annual Reviews, 167–82.

——. 2013. "Power and International Relations." In *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons. London: Sage, 273–97.

Barkin, J. Samuel. 2010. *Realist Constructivism: Rethinking International Relations Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Barnett, Michael, and Raymond Duvall. 2005a. "Power in International Politics." *International Organization* 59 (1): 39–75.

——. 2005b. "Power in Global Governance." In *Power in Global Governance*, eds. Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–32.

Barry, Brian, ed. 1976. *Power and Political Theory*. New York: Wiley.

Bell, Roderick, David V. Edwards, and Harrison R. Wagner, eds. 1969. *Political Power: A Reader in Theory and Research*. New York: Free Press.

Berenskoetter, Felix. 2007. "Thinking About Power." In *Power in World Politics*, eds. Felix Berenskoetter and M. J. Williams. London: Routledge, 1–22.

Berenskoetter, Felix, and M. J. Williams, eds. 2007. *Power in World Politics*. London: Routledge.

Biddle, Stephen. 2004. *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Blau, Peter M. 1964. *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York: Wiley.

Boulding, Kenneth E. 1959. "National Images and International Systems." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 3 (2): 120–31.

——. 1963. "Toward a Pure Theory of Threat Systems." *American Economic Review* 53 (2): 424–34.

——. 1989. *Three Faces of Power*. London: Sage.

Brady, Henry E., and David Collier, eds. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry,* 2nd ed. New York: Rowman & Littlefield,

Brecht, Arnold. 1959. *Political Theory: The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Political Thought*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Brodie, Bernard. 1975. *War and Politics*. New York: Macmillan.

——. 1976. "A Guide to the Reading of *On War*." In *On War*, eds. Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 641–711.

Brooks, Stephen G. 1999. "The Globalization of Production and the Changing Benefits of Conquest." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 43 (5): 646–70.

Brooks, Stephen G., and William C. Wohlforth. 2008. *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Buchanan, James M. 1969. *Cost and Choice: An Inquiry in Economic Theory*. Chicago, IL: Markham.

Byman, Daniel, and Mathew Waxman. 2002. *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carr, Edward Hallett. 1939 *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

——. 1946. *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. 2nd ed. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Cartwright, Dorwin, ed. 1959. *Studies in Social Power*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Catlin, George E. G. 1927. *The Science and Method of Politics*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Chandler, Lester V. 1959. *The Economics of Money and Banking*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Claeys, Gregory. 1987. "Utopias." In *The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics,* Vol. 4, eds. John Eatwell, Murray Milgate, and Peter Newman. London: Macmillan, 783–86.

Clarke, Barry. 1979. "Eccentrically Contested Concepts." *British Journal of Political Science* 9 (1): 122–26.

Claude, Inis L. 1962. *Power and International Relations*. New York: Random House.

——. 1989. "The Balance of Power Revisited." *Review of International Studies*. 15 (2): 77–85.

Clausewitz, Carl Von. 1976. *On War*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Clegg, Stewart R. 1989. *Frameworks of Power*. London: Sage.

Cline, Ray S. 1977. *World Power Assessment, 1977: A Calculus of Strategic Drift*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Cohen, Benjamin J. 1973. *The Question of Imperialism*. New York: Basic Books.

Collier, David, Fernando Daniel Hidalgo, and Andra Olivia Maciuceanu. 2006. "Essentially Contested Concepts: Debates and Applications." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11 (3): 211–46.

Cooper, Richard N. 1968. *The Economics of Interdependence*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Cox, Robert W. 1981. "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10 (2): 126–55.

Crenson, Mathew. 1971. *The Un-Politics of Air Pollution: A Study of Non-Decisionmaking in the Cities*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Dahl, Robert A. 1957. "The Concept of Power." *Behavioral Science* 2 (July): 201–15.

——. 1961. *Who Governs?* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

——. 1963. *Modern Political Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

——. 1968. "Power." *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. New York: Free Press: 405–15.

——. 1970. *Modern Political Analysis*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

——. 1976. *Modern Political Analysis*. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

——. 1984. *Modern Political Analysis*. 4th ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

——. 1991. *Modern Political Analysis*. 5th ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

——. 1997. *Toward Democracy: A Journey, Reflections: 1940–1997*. 2 vols. Berkeley, CA: Institute of Governmental Studies Press, University of California, Berkeley.

Dahl, Robert A., and Charles E. Lindblom. 1953. *Politics, Economics, and Welfare: Planning and Politico-Economic Systems Resolved into Basic Social Processes*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Dahl, Robert A., and Bruce Stinebrickner. 2003. *Modern Political Analysis*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Davis, James W. 2000. *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

——. 2005. *Terms of Inquiry: On the Theory and Practice of Political Science.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Delaisi, Francis. 1925. *Political Myths and Economic Realities.* London: Noel Douglas.

Dessler, David. 1989. "What's at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?" *International Organization* 43 (3): 441–73.

Deutsch, Karl W. 1963. *The Nerves of Government.* New York: Free Press.

——. 1953. *Nationalism and Social Communication.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

——. 1954. *Political Community at the International Level: Problems of Definition and Measurement.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

——. 1988. *The Analysis of International Relations.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Digeser, Peter. 1992. "The Fourth Face of Power." *Journal of Politics* 54 (4): 977–1007.

Dolan, Edwin G. 1971. *TANSTAAFL.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Dowding, Keith. 2006. "Three-Dimensional Power: A Discussion of Steven Lukes' *Power: A Radical View.*" *Political Studies Review* 4 (2): 136–45.

——. 2008. "Agency and Structure: Interpreting Power Relationships." *Journal of Power* 1 (1): 21–36.

——. 2011a. "Introduction." *Encyclopedia of Power.* London: Sage.

——. 2011b. "Essentially Contested Concept." *Encyclopedia of Power.* London: Sage.

——. 2011c. "Interests." *Encyclopedia of Power.* London: Sage.

——. 2011d. "Community Power Debate." *Encyclopedia of Power.* London: Sage.

Dugger, William M. 1980. "Power: An Institutional Framework of Analysis." *Journal of Economic Issues* 14 (4): 897–907.

Dunn, Frederick S. 1949. "The Present Course of International Relations Research." *World Politics* 2 (1): 80–95.

Eagleton, Clyde. 1948. *International Government.* New York: Ronald Press.

Elster, Jon. 1976. "Some Conceptual Problems in Political Theory." In *Power and Political Theory*, ed. Brian Barry. New York: Wiley, 245–70.

Fearon, James D. 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43 (2): 169-195.

———. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49 (3): 379–414.

———. 1999. "What Is Identity (As We Now Use the Word)?" Department of Political Science. Stanford University.

Fillingham, Lydia Alix. 2007. *Foucault for Beginners*. New York: For Beginners.

Finnemore, Martha. 2014. "Dynamics of Global Governance: Building on What We Know." *International Studies Quarterly* 58 (1): 221–24.

Finnemore, Martha, and Judith Goldstein, eds. 2013. *Back to Basics: State Power in a Contemporary World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Fortna, Page, John J. Mearsheimer, and Jack S. Levy. 2013. "Has Violence Declined in World Politics?" *Perspectives on Politics* 11 (2): 566–77.

Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.

Fox, William T. R. 1944. *The Superpowers*. New York: Harcourt.

———. 1949. "Interwar International Relations Research: The American Experience." *World Politics* 2 (1): 67–79.

———. 1975. "Pluralism, the Science of Politics, and the World System." *World Politics* 27 (4): 597–611.

———. 1989. "A Middle Western Isolationist-Internationalist's Journey toward Relevance." In *Journeys through World Politics: Autobiographical Reflections of Thirty-four Academic Travelers*, eds. Joseph Kruzel and James N. Rosenau. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 235–45.

Freedman, Lawrence. 1998. "Military Power and Political Influence." *International Affairs* 74 (4): 763–80.

Frey, Frederick W. 1971. "Comment: On Issues and Nonissues in the Study of Power." *American Political Science Review* 65 (4): 1081–1101.

———. 1985a. "The Distribution of Power in Political Systems." Paper presented at World Congress of the International Political Science Association. Paris.

———. 1985b. "The Problem of Actor Designation in Political Analysis." *Comparative Politics* 17 (2): 127–52.

———. 1989. "The Location and Measurement of Power: A Critical Analysis." Paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Meeting and Study Group on Power of the International Political Science Association. London.

Friedrich, Carl J. 1941. *Constitutional Government and Democracy*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Furniss, Edgar S., Jr. 1952. "The Contribution of Nicholas John Spykman to the Study of International Politics." *World Politics* 4 (3): 382–401.

Gaddis, John Lewis. 1987. "Expanding the Data Base: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Enrichment of Security Studies." *International Security* 12 (1): 3–21.

Gallarotti, Giulio M. 2010a. *The Power Curse: Influence and Illusion in World Politics*. London: Lynne Rienner.

——. 2010b. *Cosmopolitan Power in International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gallie, W. B. 1956. "Essentially Contested Concepts." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, N.S.* 56: 167–98.

Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

——. 2007. "Levels, Spaces and Forms of Power." In *Power in World Politics*, ed. Felix Berenskoetter and M. J. Williams. London: Routledge, 204–24.

Gelb, Leslie. 2009. *Power Rules*. New York: HarperCollins.

Gilpin, Robert. 1975. *U.S. Power and the Multinational Corporation: The Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment*. New York: Basic Books.

——. 1981. *War and Change in World Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

——. 1984. "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism." *International Organization* 38 (2): 287–304.

——. 1996. "No One Loves a Political Realist." *Security Studies* 5 (3): 3–26.

Goertz, Gary. 2006. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Goldmann, Kjell, and Gunnar Sjöstedt, eds. 1979. *Power, Capabilities, Interdependence: Problems in the Study of International Influence*. London: Sage.

Gray, John N. 1977. "On the Contestability of Social and Political Concepts." *Political Theory* 5 (3): 330–48.

Gregory, T. E. 1933. "Money," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,* vol. 9. New York: Macmillan, 601–13.

Grewal, David Singh. 2008. *Network Power*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Grieco, Joseph M. 1988. "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism." *International Organization* 42 (3): 485–507.

——. 1997. "Realist International Theory and the Study of World Politics." In *New Thinking in International Relations Theory*, eds. Michael W. Doyle and G. John Ikenberry. Boulder, CO: Westview, 163–201.

Gruber, Lloyd. 2000. *Ruling the World: Power Politics and the Rise of Supranational Institutions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Guilhot, Nicholas, ed. 2011. *The Invention of International Relations Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

——. 2011. "The Realist Gambit." In *The Invention of International Relations Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 128–61.

Gulick, Edward V. 1955. *Europe's Classical Balance of Power*. New York: Norton.

Gutting, Gary, ed. 1994. *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

——. 2005. *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Guzzini, Stefano. 1993. "Structural Power: The Limits of Neorealist Power Analysis." *International Organization* 47 (3): 443–78.

——. 1998. *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy*. London: Routledge.

——. 2000. "The Use and Misuse of Power Analysis in International Theory." In *Global Political Economy: Contemporary Theories*, ed. Ronen Palan. London: Routledge, 53–66.

——. 2007. "The Concept of Power: A Constructivist Analysis." In *Power in World Politics*, ed. Felix Berenskoetter and M. J. Williams. London: Routledge, 23–42.

——. 2011. "Constructivist View of Power in International Relations." *Encyclopedia of Power*. London: Sage.

——. 2013. *Power, Realism, and Constructivism*. London: Routledge.

Haas, Ernst B. 1953. "The Balance of Power: Prescription, Concept, or Propaganda?" *World Politics* 5 (4): 442–77.

Hagström, Linus. 2005. *Japan's China Policy: A Relational Power Analysis*. London: Routledge.

Harsanyi, John C. 1962a. "Measurement of Social Power, Opportunity Costs, and the Theory of Two-person Bargaining Games." *Behavioral Science* 7 (1): 67–80.

——. 1962b. "Measurement of Social Power in n-Person Reciprocal Power Situations." *Behavioral Science* 7 (1): 81–91.

Hawtrey, R. G. 1930. *Economic Aspects of Sovereignty*. London: Longmans, Green.

Hayward, Clarissa. 2000. *De-Facing Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hayward, Clarissa, and Steven Lukes. 2008. "Nobody to Shoot? Power, Structure, and Agency: A Dialogue." *Journal of Power* 1 (1): 5–20.

Hirschman, Albert O. 1945. *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

——. 1980. *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hoffmann, Stanley H. 1959. "International Relations: The Long Road to Theory." *World Politics* 11 (3): 346–77.

——. 1975. "Notes on the Elusiveness of Modern Power." *International Journal* 30 (2): 183–206.

Holsti, K. J. 1964. "The Concept of Power in the Study of International Relations." *Background* 7 (4): 179–94.

——. 1967. *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

——. 1989. "Rooms and Views: Perspectives on the Study of International Relations." In *Journeys through World Politics: Autobiographical Reflections of Thirty-four Academic Travelers*, eds. Joseph Kruzel and James N. Rosenau. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 27–40.

Homans, George C. 1975. "What Do We Mean by Social 'Structure'?" In *Approaches to the Study of Social Structure*, ed. Peter M. Blau. New York: Free Press, 53–65.

Hume, David. 1742 [1953]. "Of the Balance of Power." In *David Hume's Political Essays*, ed. Charles W. Hendel. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.

Hurd, Ian. 2008. "Constructivism." In *Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 298–316.

Isaac, Jeffrey C. 1987. *Power and Marxist Theory: A Realist View*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Jervis, Robert. 1970. *The Logic of Images in International Relations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

——. 1997. *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

——. 1998. "Realism in the Study of World Politics." *International Organization* 52 (4): 971–91.

Jones, Stephen B. 1954. "The Power Inventory and National Strategy." *World Politics* 6 (4): 421–52.

Joseph, Jonathan. 2011. "Structural Power." *Encyclopedia of Power*. London: Sage.

Kahler, Miles. 1997. "Inventing International Relations: International Relations Theory after 1945." In *New Thinking in International Relations Theory*, eds. Michael W. Doyle and G. John Ikenberry. Boulder, CO: Westview, 20–53.

Kahler, Miles, and Scott L. Kastner. 2006. "Strategic Uses of Economic Interdependence." *Journal of Peace Research* 43 (5): 523–41.

Kaiser, David. 1989. "Review of the Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500–2000 by Paul Kennedy (New York: Random House, 1987)." *Journal of Modern History* 61 (4): 736–42.

Kapstein, Ethan B. 2002–3. "Two Dismal Sciences Are Better Than One—Economics and the Study of National Security." *International Security* 27 (3): 158–87.

Katzenstein, Peter. 1976. "International Relations and Domestic Structures: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States." *International Organization* 30 (1): 1–45.

Katznelson, Ira, and Helen V. Milner, eds. 2002. *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*. Washington, DC: American Political Science Association.

Kaufman, Stuart J., Richard Little, and William C. Wohlforth, eds. 2007. *The Balance of Power in World History*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kearn, David W., Jr. 2011. "The Hard Truths about Soft Power." *Journal of Political Power* 4 (1): 65–85.

Kennedy, Paul. 1987. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500–2000*. New York: Random House.

Kent, Sherman. 1949. *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Keohane, Robert O. 1984. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

——. 1986a. "Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond." In *Neorealism and Its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane. New York: Columbia University Press, 158–203.

——, ed. 1986b. *Neorealism and Its Critics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

——. 1986c. "Reciprocity in International Relations." *International Organization* 40 (1): 1–27.

——. 2008. "Big Questions in the Study of World Politics." In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 708–15.

Keohane, Robert O., and Joseph S. Nye Jr. 1975. "International Interdependence and Integration." In *Handbook of Political Science*, Vol. 8: *International Politics*, eds. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, pp. 363–414.

——. 1977. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co.

——. 1987. "*Power and Interdependence* Revisited." *International Organization* 41 (4): 725–53.

Kindleberger, Charles P. 1970. *Power and Money*. New York: Basic Books.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kirk, Grayson. 1947. *The Study of International Relations in American Colleges and Universities*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations.

Klein, Philip A. 1980. "Confronting Power in Economics: A Pragmatic Evaluation." *Journal of Economic Issues* 14 (4): 871–96.

Knight, Frank H. 1921. *Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

——. 1924. "Some Fallacies in the Interpretation of Social Cost." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 38 (4): 582–606.

——. 1941. "Anthropology and Economics." *Journal of Political Economy* 49 (2): 247–68.

Knorr, Klaus. 1957. "The Concept of Economic Potential for War." *World Politics* 10 (1): 49–62.

——. 1966. *On the Uses of Military Power in the Nuclear Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

——. 1975. *The Power of Nations: The Political Economy of International Relations*. New York: Basic Books.

——. 1989. "Reflections on a Life in IR." In *Journeys through World Politics: Autobiographical Reflections of Thirty-four Academic Travelers*, eds. Joseph Kruzel and James N. Rosenau. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 279–92.

Knorr, Klaus, and James N. Rosenau, eds. 1969. *Contending Approaches to International Politics.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kolodziej, Edward A. 2005. *Security and International Relations.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Krasner, Stephen D. 1976. "State Power and the Structure of International Trade." *World Politics* 28 (3): 317–47.

——. 1978. *Defending the National Interest.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

——. 1985. *Structural Conflict: The Third World against Global Liberalism.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

——. 2013. "New Terrains: Sovereignty and Alternative Conceptions of Power." In *Back to Basics: State Power in a Contemporary World*, eds. Martha Finnemore and Judith Goldstein. New York: Oxford University Press, 339–56.

Kruzel, Joseph, and James N. Rosenau, eds. 1989. *Journeys Through World Politics: Autobiographical Reflections of Thirty-four Academic Travelers.* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Lake, David A., and Robert Powell, eds. 1999. *Strategic Choice and International Relations.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Lasswell, Harold D. 1935. *World Politics and Personal Insecurity.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

——. 1936 [with postscript 1958]. *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How.* New York: Meridian Books.

Lasswell, Harold D., and Abraham Kaplan. 1950. *Power and Society: A Framework for Political Inquiry.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Levy, Jack S. 1983. *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495–1975.* Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.

——. 2004. "What Do Great Powers Balance Against and When?" In *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, ed. T. V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michel Fortmann. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 29–51.

Levy, Marion J. 1969. "'Does It Matter if He's Naked?' Bawled the Child." In *Contending Approaches to International Politics*, eds. Klaus Knorr and James N. Rosenau. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 87–109.

Lewis, George Cornewall. 1970 [1832]. *Remarks on the Use and Abuse of Some Political Terms.* Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press.

Liberman, Peter. 1996. *Does Conquest Pay?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Lippmann, Walter. 1943. *U. S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*. New York: Little, Brown.

Little, Richard. 2007. *The Balance of Power in International Relations: Metaphors, Myths, and Models*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lukes, Steven. 1974. *Power: A Radical View*. London: Macmillan.

——. 1977. "A Reply to K. I. Macdonald." *British Journal of Political Science* 7 (3): 418–19.

——. 1978. "Power and Authority." In *A History of Sociological Analysis*, ed. Tom Bottomore and Robert Nisbet. New York: Basic Books, 633–76.

——. 2005. *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

——. 2007. "Power and the Battle for Hearts and Minds." In *Power in World Politics*, ed. Felix Berenskoetter and M. J. Williams. London: Routledge, 83–97.

——. 2015. "Robert Dahl on Power." *Journal of Political Power* 8 (2): 261–71.

Macdonald, K. I. 1977. "Is 'Power' Essentially Contested?" *British Journal of Political Science* 6 (3): 380–82.

Machlup, Fritz. 1963. "Structure and Structural Change: Weaselwords and Jargon." In *Essays on Economic Semantics*, ed. Fritz Machlup. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 73–96.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. 1973. "The Essential Contestability of Some Social Concepts." *Ethics* 84 (1): 1–9.

Malthus, Rev. T. R. 1827. *Definitions in Political Economy, Preceded by an Inquiry into Their Terms the Rules Which Ought to Guide Political Economists in the Definition and Use of; With Remarks on the Deviations from These Rules in Their Writings*. London: John Murray.

Mannheim, Karl. 1936. *Ideology and Utopia*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World.

Mansfield, Edward D. 1994. *Power, Trade, and War*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

March, James G. 1955. "An Introduction to the Theory and Measurement of Influence." *American Political Science Review* 49 (2): 431–51.

——. 1956. "Influence Measurement in Experimental and Semi-experimental Groups." *Sociometry* 19 (4): 260–71.

——. 1957. "Measurement Concepts in the Theory of Influence." *Journal of Politics* 19 (2): 202–26.

Mchoul, Alec, and Wendy Grace. 1997. *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power, and the Subject*. New York: New York University Press.

McLachlan, Hugh V. 1981. "Is 'Power' An Evaluative Concept?" *British Journal of Sociology* 32 (3): 392–410.

Mearsheimer, John J. 1992. "Disorder Restored." In *Rethinking America's Security: Beyond Cold War to New World Order*, eds. Graham Allison and Gregory F. Treverton. New York: Norton, 213–37.

——. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: Norton.

Merriam, Charles E. 1934. *Political Power*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Merritt, Richard L., and Dina A. Zinnes. 1988. "Validity of Power Indices." *International Interactions* 14 (2): 141–51.

——. 1989. "Alternative Indexes of National Power." In *Power in World Politics*, eds. Richard J. Stoll and Michael D. Ward. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 11–28.

Michalak, Stanley J. 1979. "Theoretical Perspectives for Understanding International Interdependence." *World Politics* 32 (1): 136–50.

Milner, Helen V. 1992. "International Theories of Cooperation Among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses." *World Politics* 44 (3): 466–96.

——. 1997. *Interests, Institutions, and Information*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Milner, Helen V., and Dustin Tingley. 2015. *Sailing the Water's Edge: The Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Moon, Parker Thomas. 1926. *Imperialism and World Politics*. Toronto: Macmillan.

Morgenthau, Hans J. 1946. *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

——. 1948. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

——. 1952. "Review of Power and Society, by Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950)." *American Political Science Review* 46 (1): 230–34.

——. 1964. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Morriss, Peter. 2002. *Power: A Philosophical Analysis*, 2nd ed. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

Morse, Edwin I. 1976. *Modernization and the Transformation of International Relations*. New York: Free Press.

Moul, William B. 1989. "Measuring the 'Balances of Power': A Look at Some Numbers." *Review of International Studies*. 15 (2): 101–21.

Muir, Ramsay. 1933. *The Interdependent World and Its Problems*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Munck, Gerardo L., and Richard Snyder. 2007. *Passion, Craft, and Comparative Politics*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

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

——. 1988. "The Marriage of Normative Values and Empirical Concepts: Mutual Integrity or Reciprocal Distortion?" In *Power, Inequality, and Democratic Politics: Essays in Honor of Robert A. Dahl*, eds. Ian Shapiro and Grant Reeher. London: Westview Press.

Nexon, Daniel H. 2009. "The Balance of Power in the Balance." *World Politics* 61 (2): 330–59.

Nincic, Miroslav. 2010. "Getting What You Want: Positive Inducements in International Relations." *International Security* 35 (1): 138–83.

Nye, Joseph S., Jr. 1990. *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books.

——. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.

——. 2007. "Notes for a Soft-Power Research Agenda." In *Power in World Politics*, ed. Felix Berenskoetter and M. J. Williams. London: Routledge, 162–72.

——. 2011a. *The Future of Power*. New York: Public Affairs.

——. 2011b. "Power and Foreign Policy." *Journal of Political Power* 4 (1): 9–14.

Olson, William C., and A. J. R. Groom. 1991. *International Relations Then and Now*. London: HarperCollins.

Oppenheim, Felix E. 1975. "The Language of Political Inquiry: Problems of Clarification." In *Handbook of Political Science Vol. 1: Political Science: Scope and Theory,* eds. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 283–336.

——. 1981. *Political Concepts: A Reconstruction*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Osgood, Robert E., and Robert W. Tucker. 1967. *Force, Order, and Justice*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Pansardi, Pamela. 2011. "Power to and Power Over." *Encyclopedia of Power*. London: Sage.

——. 2012. "Power to and Power Over: Two Distinct Concepts of Power?" *Journal of Political Power* 5 (1): 73–89.

Pape, Robert A. 1996. *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

——. 1997. "Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work." *International Security* 22 (2): 90–136.

Parsons, Talcott. 1963a. "On the Concept of Influence." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 27 (1): 37–62.

——. 1963b. "On the Concept of Political Power." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 107 (3): 232–62.

——. 1966. "The Political Aspect of Social Structure and Process." In *Varieties of Political Theory*, ed. David Easton. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 71–112.

Paul, T. V., James J. Wirtz, and Michel Fortmann. 2004. *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Pettit, Philip. 2008. "Dahl's Power and Republican Freedom." *Journal of Power* 1 (1): 67–74.

Pollard, A. F. 1923. "The Balance of Power." *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 2 (2): 51–64.

Polsby, Nelson W. 1980. *Community Power and Political Theory*, 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Powell, Robert. 1994. "Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate." *International Organization* 48 (2): 313–44.

Rae, Douglas W. 1988. "Knowing Power: A Working Paper." In *Power, Inequality, and Democratic Politics: Essays in Honor of Robert A. Dahl*, eds. Ian Shapiro and Grant Reeher. London: Westview Press, 17–49.

Ray, James Lee, and Ayse Vural. 1986. "Power Disparities and Paradoxical Conflict Outcomes." *International Interactions* 12 (4): 315–42.

Read, James H. 2012. "Is Power Zero-sum? Old Arguments and New Beginnings." *Journal of Political Power* 5 (1): 5–31.

Ricci, David. 1980. "Receiving Ideas in Political Analysis: The Case of Community Power Studies, 1950–1970." *Western Political Quarterly* 33 (4): 451–75.

Robertson, D. H. 1922. *Money*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosecrance, Richard. 1986. *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World*. New York: Basic Books.

Rosenau, James N., ed. 1961. *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory*. New York: Free Press.

——. 1963. *Calculated Control as a Unifying Concept in the Study of International Politics and Foreign Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Center of International Studies, Princeton University.

——. 1976. "Capabilities and Control in an Interdependent World." *International Security* 1 (2): 32–49.

Ruggie, John Gerard. 1972. "Collective Goods and Future International Collaboration." *American Political Science Review* 66 (3): 874–93.

——. 1998. "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge." *International Organization* 52 (4): 855–85.

Russell, Bertrand. 1938. *Power: A New Social Analysis*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Russell, Frank M. 1936. *Theories of International Relations*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co.

Samuelson, Paul A. 1948. *Economics: An Introductory Analysis*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Schelling, Thomas C. 1960. *The Strategy of Conflict*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

——. 1966. *Arms and Influence*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

——. 1984. *Choice and Consequence: Perspectives of an Errant Economist*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Schelling, Thomas C., and Malcolm Palmatier. 1971. "Economic Reasoning in National Defense." In *Perspectives in Economics: Economists Look at their Fields of Study*, eds. Alan A. Brown, Egon Neuberger and Malcolm Palmatier. New York: McGraw-Hill, 143–59.

Schlesinger, Arthur, Jr. 1971. "The Quagmire Papers." *New York Review of Books*. December 16.

Schmidt, Brian C. 1998. *The Political Discourse of Anarchy: A Disciplinary History of International Relations*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

——. 2013. "On the History and Historiography of International Relations." In *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Thomas Risse, Walter Carlsnaes, and Beth A. Simmons. London: Sage, 3–28.

Schuman, Frederick L. 1933. *International Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Schumpeter, Joseph A. 1954. *History of Economic Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schweller, Randall L. 1998. *Deadly Imbalances*. New York: Columbia University Press.

——. 2006. *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Scott, James C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

——. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Scott, John. 2001. *Power*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Searle, John R. 1995. *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York: Free Press.

Sigelman, Lee. 2002. "Notes from the (New) Editor." *American Political Science Review* 96 (1): viii.

——. 2006. "*American Political Science Review* Citation Classics." *American Political Science Review* 100 (4): 667–69.

Simon, Herbert A. 1953. "Notes on the Observation and Measurement of Political Power." *Journal of Politics* 15 (4): 500–16.

——. 1954. "Spurious Correlation: A Causal Interpretation." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 49 (267): 467–79.

——. 1957. *Models of Man*. New York: Wiley.

——. 1976. *Administrative Behavior*. New York: Free Press.

Simonds, Frank H., and Brooks Emeny. 1935. *The Great Powers in World Politics: International Relations and Economic Nationalism*. New York: American Book Co.

Singer, J. David. 1963. "Inter-nation Influence: A Formal Model." *American Political Science Review* 57 (2): 420–30.

——. 1988. "Reconstructing the Correlates of War Dataset on Material Capabilities of States, 1816–1985." *International Interactions* 14 (2): 115–32.

Small, Melvin, and J. David Singer. 1982. *Resort to Arms: International and Civil Wars*. London: Sage.

Smith, Adam. 1937 [1776]. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. New York: Modern Library.

Snyder, Richard C. 1955. "Toward Greater Order in the Study of International Politics." *World Politics* 7 (3): 461–78.

Solingen, Etel, ed. 2012. *Sanctions, Statecraft, and Nuclear Proliferation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Somit, Albert, and Joseph Tanenhaus. 1964. *American Political Science*. New York: Atherton Press.

Sondermann, Fred A. 1957. "The Study of International Relations: 1956 Version." *World Politics* 10 (1): 102–11.

Sprout, Harold. 1949. "In Defense of Diplomacy." *World Politics* 1 (3): 404–13.

——. 1957. "Environmental Factors in the Study of International Politics." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 1 (4): 309–28.

——. 1959. "International Politics and the Scholar." *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, January 23, 1959, 8-15.

——. 1960. "Geography and International Politics in an Era of Revolutionary Change." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 4 (1): 145–61.

——. 1963. "Geopolitical Hypotheses in Technological Perspective." *World Politics* 15 (2): 187–212.

Sprout, Harold, and Margaret Sprout, eds. 1945. *Foundations of National Power*. New York: Van Nostrand.

——, eds. 1951. *Foundations of National Power*. 2nd rev. ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

——. 1956. *Man-Milieu Relationship Hypotheses in the Context of International Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Center of International Studies, Princeton University.

——. 1962. *Foundations of International Politics*. New York: Van Nostrand.

——. 1965. *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs: With Special Reference to International Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

——. 1971. *Toward a Politics of the Planet Earth*. New York: Van Nostrand.

Spykman, Nicholas John. 1942. *American Strategy and World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*. New York: Harcourt-Brace.

Starr, Harvey. 2013. "On Geopolitics: Spaces and Places." *International Studies Quarterly* 57 (3): 433–39.

Stiglitz, Joseph E., and Linda J. Bilmes. 2008. *The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict*. New York: Norton.

Stinebrickner, Bruce. 2015. "Robert A. Dahl and the Essentials of *Modern Political Analysis*: Politics, Influence, Power, and Polyarchy." *Journal of Political Power* 8 (2): 189–207.

Stone, Julius. 1958. *Aggression and World Order*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Strange, Susan. 1988. *States and Markets*. New York: Blackwell.

——. 1994. "Who Governs? Networks of Power in World Society." *Hitotsubashi Journal of Law and Politics* (22) Special Issue (June): 5–17.

——. 1996. *Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the Market Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sullivan, Denis Gartland. 1963. *Towards and Inventory of Major Propositions Contained in Contemporary Textbooks in International Relations*. PhD Dissertation, Northwestern University, Ann Arbor, MI.

Swanton, Christine. 1985. "On the 'Essential Contestedness' of Political Concepts." *Ethics* 95 (4): 811–27.

Taylor, Charles. 1984. "Foucault on Freedom and Truth." *Political Theory* 12 (2): 152–83.

Tellis, Ashley J., Janice Bially, Christopher Layne, and Melissa McPherson. 2000. *Measuring National Power in the Postindustrial Age*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Tetlock, Philip E., and Aaron Belkin, eds. 1996. *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Tucker, Robert W. 1958. "The Study of International Politics." *World Politics* 4 (4): 639–47.

Valelly, Richard M. 2006. "Power Reconsidered." *Official Program: 102nd Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association*, 12–15.

Wagner, R. Harrison. 2007. *War and the State: The Theory of International Politics*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Walt, Stephen M. 1987. *The Origins of Alliances*. London: Cornell University Press.

——. 1989. "The Case for Finite Containment: Analyzing U.S. Grand Strategy." *International Security* 14 (1): 5–49.

——. 1991. "The Renaissance of Security Studies." *International Studies Quarterly*. 35 (2): 211-39.

——. 2002. "The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition." In *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, eds. Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner. Washington, DC: American Political Science Association, 197–230.

Waltz, Kenneth N. 1959. *Man, the State and War*. New York: Columbia University Press.

——. 1970. "The Myth of Interdependence." In *The International Corporation*, ed. Charles Kindleberger. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

——. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. London: Addison-Wesley.

——. 1986. "Reflections on *Theory of International Politics*: A Response to My Critics." In *Neorealism and Its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane. New York: Columbia University Press, 322–45.

——. 1990. "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory." *Journal of International Affairs* 44 (1): 21–37.

——. 1993. "The Emerging Structure of International Politics." *International Security* 18 (2): 44–79.

——. 2000. "Structural Realism after the Cold War." *International Security* 25 (1): 5–41.

Wang, K., and James Lee Ray. 1994. "Beginners and Winners: The Fate of Initiators of Interstate Wars Involving Great Powers Since 1495." *International Studies Quarterly* 38 (1): 139–45.

Waste, Robert J. 1986. *Community Power*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Wayman, Frank W., J. David Singer, and Gary Goertz. 1983. "Capabilities, Allocations, and Success in Militarized Disputes and Wars, 1816–1976." *International Studies Quarterly* 27 (4): 497–15.

Weber, Max. 1947 [1922]. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. New York: Free Press.

Wendt, Alexander E. 1987. "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory." *International Organization* 41 (3): 335–70.

——. 1992. "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46 (2): 391–425.

——. 1994. "Collective Identity Formation and the International State." *American Political Science Review*. 88 (2): 384-96.

——. 1999. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Westmoreland, William C. 1976. *A Soldier Reports*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Whitman, Marina von Neuman. 1979. *Reflections of Interdependence: Issues for Economic theory and US Policy*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Whittlesey, W. L. 1935. "Review of H. D. Lasswell, World Politics and Personal Insecurity." *American Political Science Review* 29 (3): 500–501.

Whitton, John B. 1949. "Review of *Politics Among Nations* by Hans J. Morgenthau." *American Political Science Review* 43 (6): 1291–92.

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

Wolfers, Arnold. 1951. "The Pole of Power and the Pole of Indifference." *World Politics* 4 (1): 39–63.

——. 1962. *Discord and Collaboration*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Wright, Quincy. 1952. "Realism and Idealism in International Politics." *World Politics* 5 (1): 116–28.

——. 1955. *The Study of International Relations*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

——. 1965. *A Study of War*. 2nd ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Wrong, Dennis H. 1988. *Power: Its Forms, Bases, and Uses*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.

Young, Oran R. 1994. *International Governance: Protecting the Environment in a Stateless Society*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Zehfuss, Maja. 2013. "Critical Theory, Poststructuralism, and Postcolonialism." In *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons. London: Sage, 145–69.

Index

coercion: concepts of, 2, 7; Dahlian
power and, 34, 40–41, 46; neolib-
eralism and, 155, 165, 167–70; real-
ism and, 129

Cold War, 58, 61, 73, 110, 160–61,
179–80

community power, 3, 11–12, 15–17,
22, 35n27, 65, 101

competition, 5; international rela-
tions and, 91, 110, 113–14, 174;
realism and, 137

compulsory power, 40–41, 43, 148–49

conceptual analysis, x, 21, 44, 66,
75, 96, 98, 100–101, 125–26, 130,
148, 174

Connally, William E., 63–64

constructivism: concept of, 4–6,
139–43; concept of power and,
144–46, 148–49, 151–52, 154; coop-
eration and, 149–52; culture and,
139, 143–48, 153–54; Dahl and, 26,
143n6, 145n10, 147n12, 148, 153–54;
identity and, 150–51; Lukes and,
145–50, 154; materialism and,
143–44, 148; persuasion and, 149–
51, 169; social conventions and,
140–41

contestability, 4, 49

Cooper, Richard N., 158–59

cooperation: constructivism and,
149–52; Dahlian power and, 26,
177; neoliberalism and, 155, 160;
problems in power analysis and,
66–68, 79

Correlates of War (COW) project,
76, 101

costs of power, 25–26, 55–56, 86–
90, 129, 137, 160, 177, 182, 184n9,
186–88

Council on Foreign Relations, 95

counterfactual conditions, 45–46,
50, 57–59, 63, 90

Cox, Robert, 141

Crenson, Matthew, 25, 87–88

Cuba, 61

cui bono fallacy, 81–82

culture: constructivism and, 139,
143–48, 153–54; fundamentals of
power analysis and, 53, 56; inter-
national relations and, 111, 116;
materialism and, 143–44, 148;
neoliberalism and, 164

Dahl, Robert, ix; benefits of power
analysis and, 188n13, 189; "Con-
cept of Power" and, 2, 11–14,
21n12; concepts of, 2–6, 9, 152;
constructivism and, 143n6,
145n10, 147n12, 148, 153–54; critics
of, 12–21; fundamentals of power
analysis and, 49, 57; impact of,
xi–xii; international relations
and, 98n7, 100, 104, 118–20; Johan
Skytte Prize and, 143n6; *Modern
Political Analysis* and, 19n9, 27,
29–36, 38–44, 61, 79, 83, 147n12,
189–90; modern power analysis
and, 12–13, 45n36; neoliberalism
and, 165n9; political science and,
xii; *Politics, Economics, and Wel-
fare* and, 13, 26, 85n39; problems
in power analysis and, 60–69, 73–
80, 82–83, 85n39, 86; realism and,
125–26, 130, 134, 136; terminol-
ogy of, 6–7; *Who Governs?* and, 11,
15–20, 21n12, 23, 25, 27, 29, 36–37,
40, 43–44, 69

Dahlian power, ix, 173; agenda con-
trol and, 16–17, 20, 26, 34, 37, 41,
43; community power and, 11–12,
15, 17, 22, 35n27; compulsory
power and, 40–41, 43; concepts of,
2–4; conflicting interests and, 24–
26; constructivism and, 26; con-
temporary relevance of, 176–77;
context and, 22–24; control and,
13, 17, 20–22, 26, 34, 37, 43, 46, 176;
cooperation and, 26, 177; costs of

Machiavelli, Niccolò, 2, 29, 74, 93, 123, 158

Machlup, Fritz, 80n33

McPherson, Melissa, 111, 175, 179

Malthus, Thomas, 44–45, 158

Man, the State and War (Waltz), 182

March, James G., 3, 11, 13, 17, 29n20, 30, 49, 100, 125–26, 130, 153

Marginal Revolution, 106n14

Marshall Plan, 37

Marxism, 31n22, 80, 141

materialism, 143–44, 148

Mearsheimer, John J., 57, 60, 64, 66n17, 67, 71, 103–4, 107–8, 113, 119–21, 129, 135–37, 148, 156n2, 174, 179, 186

measurement, 4; Dahlian power and, 15, 25, 33–35; fallacy of inadequate conceptual specification and, 75; force and, 178–79; fundamentals of power analysis and, 49; gradations of power and, 31–32; influence and, 75–77; military and, 179; power-as-resources fallacy and, 75, 77, 128–29; problems in power analysis and, 75–78; realism and, 130; single-dimension fallacy and, 75–77; validity and, 75–76

Merriam, Charles, 2, 94, 155, 173

Merritt, Richard L., 75–76

"Methods of Approach to the Study of International Relations" (Spykman), 93

Modern Political Analysis (Dahl): forms of influence and, 34; gradations of power and, 31–32; interests and, 30; intuitive notion of power and, 27–28; levels of influence and, 34; measurement and, 33–34; power analysis and, 19n9, 27, 29–36, 38–44, 61, 79, 83, 147n12; preferences and, 32–33; ubiquitous power and, 28–29

monolithic power structures, 46, 50, 83

Morgenthau, Hans J., 2, 4, 96–99, 101, 104, 106, 109–13, 124–32, 135–36, 156, 159n5, 161

Morgenstern, Oskar, 25, 90

Morriss, Peter, 7, 11n1, 30n21, 46n38, 47n39, 53n2, 85n38, 87–90, 145–46

Morse, Edwin I., 158–59

Nagel, Jack H., 6–7, 28, 32, 56, 69, 75, 11, 165n9

Nash, John, 25, 90

National Interest person, 106–7

National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade (Hirschman), 159

neorealism, 5, 123, 125, 130–35, 155, 156n2, 164

Nexon, Daniel H., 112

Nye, Joseph S., 2, 5, 16, 20n11, 21n13, 35n27, 36, 37n29, 40–41, 56–57, 80, 111n18, 116n21, 145, 155–71, 174, 179–80, 182n4

Olson, William C., 98, 100

one-dimensional power, 3, 18–20, 37–38, 50

On the Uses of Military Power in the Nuclear Age (Knorr), 185

Oppenheim, Felix, 44–46, 73, 100

opportunity costs, 25–26, 87–90, 129, 137, 160, 182, 184n9

Palmatier, Malcolm, 107

Parsons, Talcott, 38, 71

persuasion: concepts of, 1–2, 7; constructivism and, 149–51; Dahlian power and, 34, 40–41, 46, 176; military and, 184; neoliberalism and, 169; realism and, 129; Smith on, 173

Petit, Philip, 12, 69

Plato, 14, 29

pluralism, 3; community power and,
15–17; Lukes and, 19–20, 22–23;
monolithic power structures and,
46; problems in power analysis
and, 60
"Pole of Power and the Pole of Indif-
ference, The" (Wolfers), 98
Politics, Economics, and Welfare (Dahl
and Lindblom), 13, 26, 85n39
*Politics Among Nations: The Struggle
for Power and Peace* (Morgenthau),
96, 124, 127, 156
Politics: Who Gets What, When, How
(Lasswell), 54–55
Pollard, A. F., 112
Polsby, Nelson W., 88
potential power, 4; fundamentals of
power analysis and, 49–50; prob-
lems in power analysis and, 68–
70; realism and, 135
power: as capability, 91, 114–22, 175;
as competition, 91, 113–14; as goal,
91, 104–8; as identity, 5, 91, 102–4;
as means, 91, 109–11; as mecha-
nism, 91, 111–13
Power and Interdependence (Keohane
and Nye), 5, 155–56, 161, 163
Power and International Relations
(Claude), 110
Power and Society (Lasswell and Kap-
lan), 2, 7n3, 30, 97–98, 107, 110, 126
power as resources, 176; construc-
tivism and, 148; as fallacy, 75, 77,
128–29; fundamentals of power
analysis and, 53, 56; international
relations and, 113, 174; neoliber-
alism and, 157, 164, 168; problems
in power analysis and, 71, 75, 77;
realism and, 128, 132
power assets, 52, 54, 56, 114
power base, 52–55, 168
"Power Inventory and National
Strategy, The" (Jones), 98

power terms, 2, 6–7, 28, 40n33
preferences, 3; Dahlian power and,
18, 20, 28, 32–33, 36–37, 44; inten-
tions and, 32–33; international re-
lations and, 106–7; neoliberalism
and, 167; problems in power anal-
ysis and, 74; realism and, 128
probability, 33, 51–52, 59, 72–73,
76n30, 77, 118–19, 121

Rae, Douglas W., 13, 79
RAND Corporation, 110–11, 175
rational actor model, 106–7
Rawls, John, 21
Ray, James Lee, 76, 179
Read, J. H., 67–68
Reagan, Ronald, 59
Realist Constructivism (Barkin), 154
reciprocal power, 4; Dahlian power
and, 34; fundamentals of power
analysis and, 49; problems in
power analysis and, 79–80
relative power, 100, 113, 119
resources, 189; constructivism and,
147–48; costs of power and, 25,
55–56, 86, 177; Dahlian power
and, 24, 35n26, 36, 42, 176; distin-
guished from power, 176; distri-
bution of, 71, 127–28; fungibility
and, 71–72; international relations
and, 100, 105–16, 120–21, 174–75;
location and, 56–57; lump-of-
power fallacy and, 71; material,
35n26, 42, 136–38; military and,
180, 182; neoliberalism and, 157,
162, 164–65, 168–69; power, 42,
50, 52–54, 56, 68–72, 100, 113–16,
128, 147, 157, 162–65, 168, 175–76;
180; problems in power analysis
and, 68–72, 75, 77, 89; realism and,
125n3, 127–28, 131–32, 136–37;
relational nature of, 53n2; time
sensitivity and, 56

INDEX