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Power and International Relations

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Most definitions of politics involve power. Most international interactions are political or have ramifications for politics. Thus, it is not surprising that power has been prominent in discussions of international interaction from Thucydides to the present day. The long history of discussions of the role of power in international relations, however, has failed to generate much agreement. Scholars disagree not only with respect to the role of power but also with respect to the nature of power. 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) notes that power is a key concept in realist theories of international politics, while conceding that 'its proper definition remains a matter of controversy.' And Robert Gilpin describes the concept of power as 'one of the most troublesome in the field of international relations' (1981: 13) and suggests that the 'number and variety of definitions should be an embarrassment to political scientists' (1975: 24). There is, however, widespread consensus among international relations scholars on both the necessity of addressing the role of power in international interactions and the unsatisfactory state of knowledge about this topic (Guzzini, 2000; Barnett and Duvall, 2005; Berenskoetter and Williams, 2007).

Although it is often useful to distinguish among such power terms as power, influence, control, coercion, force, persuasion, deterrence, compellence, inducement and so on, it is possible to identify common elements underlying all such terms. Robert A. Dahl (1957) has suggested that underlying most such terms is the basic intuitive notion of A causing (or having the ability to cause) B to do something that B otherwise would not do. (In the discussion that follows, 'A' refers to the actor having or exercising influence; while 'B' refers to the actor being, or potentially being, influenced.) Although alternative definitions of power abound, none rivals this one in widespread acceptability. In the following discussion, the term 'power' will be used in a broad generic sense that is interchangeable with such terms as 'influence' or 'control' unless otherwise indicated. This usage is not intended to deny the validity or the utility of distinguishing among such terms for other purposes.

POWER AND THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

International politics has been defined in terms of influencing 'major groups in the world so as to advance the purposes of some against the opposition of others' (Wright, 1955: 130). Although the term 'power politics' has unsavory connotations for some, such a definition implies that the term is redundant (Carr, [1939]1946; Morgenthau, [1948]1960; Sprout and Sprout, 1945; Spykman, 1942; Wright, 1955). From this

perspective, all politics is power politics in the sense that all politics involves power. This is not to say that politics is *only* about power.

Traditionally, the study of international politics assumed the existence of national states with conflicting policies, placing a high value on maintaining their independence, and relying primarily on military force. The states with the most military power were designated 'Great Powers', and the 'game' of international politics was 'played' primarily by them (Spykman, 1942; Sprout and Sprout, 1945, 1962; Wight, 1946). Noting that only a few states possessed the military capabilities to support their foreign policies effectively, an influential text in the 1930s averred that 'these alone constitute the Great Powers' (Simonds and Emeny, 1937: 28.[1]

In the eighteenth century, 'the power of individual states was conceived to be susceptible of measurement by certain well-defined factors' (Gulick, 1955: 24), including population, territory, wealth, armies and navies. In the ensuing years, this approach evolved into the 'elements of national power' approach *to* power analysis reflected in Hans J. Morgenthau's influential textbook *Politics Among Nations* ([1948] 1960 see also Sprout and Sprout, 1945).

States were depicted as seeking to maximize power relative to each other, thus producing a 'balance of power' or as seeking to produce a balance of power (Claude, 1962; Gulick, 1955; Haas, 1953; Morgenthau [1948] 1960). Each version of balance of power theory shared the assumption that it was possible to add up the various elements of national power, sometimes called 'power resources' or 'capabilities', in order to calculate the power distribution among the Great Powers. Modern versions of this approach are found in Waltz's *Theory of International Politics (1979)* and John J. Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001)*.

THE POWER ANALYSIS REVOLUTION

The 'elements of national power' approach depicted power as a possession or property of states. This approach was challenged during the last half of the twentieth century by the 'relational power' approach, developed by scholars working in several disciplines, including psychology, philosophy, sociology, economics and political science (Baldwin, 1989; Barry, 1976; Cartwright, 1965; Dahl, 1957, [1963, 1984] 1991; 1968; Frey, 1971, 1985, 1989; Harsanyi, 1962; Nagel, 1975; Oppenheim, 1981; Simon, 1957; Tedeschi and Bonoma, 1972). Some would regard the publication of *Power and Society* by Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan (1950) as the watershed between the old 'power-as-resources' approach and the new 'relational power' approach, which developed the idea of power as a type of causation. This causal notion conceives of power as a relationship (actual or potential) in which the behavior of actor A at least partially causes a change in the behavior of actor B. 'Behavior' in this context need not be defined narrowly, but may be understood broadly to include beliefs, attitudes, preferences, opinions, expectations, emotions and/or predispositions to act. In this view, power is an actual or potential relationship between two or more actors (persons, states, groups, etc.), rather than a property of anyone of them.

The shift from a property concept of power to a relational one constituted a revolution in power analysis. Despite the ancient origins of the study of power, Dahl maintains that 'the systematic empirical study of power relations is remarkably new' (1968: 414). He attributes the 'considerable improvement in the clarity' of power concepts to the fact that 'the last several decades have probably witnessed more systematic efforts to tie down these concepts than have the previous millennia of political thought' (Dahl, [1963,1984]1991: 27-8; Dahl and Stinebrickner, 2003: 12).

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. Among the more important dimensions of power are the following:

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 of a country like North Korea.

Domain   The domain of an actor's power refers to the number of other actors subject to its influence. In other words, how big is B; or how many Bs are there? 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.

Weight   The weight of an actor's power refers to the probability that B's behavior is or could be affected by A (Dahl, 1957; see also Deutsch, [1968]1988; Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950). Thus, a country that has only a 30 per cent chance of achieving its aims in trade negotiations is less powerful than one with a 90 per cent chance, *ceteris paribus.* This dimension could also be labeled the 'reliability' of A's influence.

Costs   Both the costs to A and the costs to B are relevant to assessing influence (Baldwin, 1989; Barry, 1976; Dahl, 1968; Harsanyi, 1962; Schelling, 1984: 268-90). 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). If A can get B to do something that is costly for B, some would contend that this is indicative of more power than if A can only get B to do things that are cheap for B. Even if A is unable to get B to comply with its demands, it may be able to impose costs on B for non-compliance. Some have argued that this should be viewed as a kind of power (Baldwin, 1985; Harsanyi, 1962; Schelling, 1984: 268-90).

Means   There are many means of exercising influence and many ways to categorize such means. One scheme (Baldwin, 1985) for classifying the means of influence in international relations includes the following categories:

1. Symbolic means. This would include appeals to normative symbols as well as the provision of information. Thus one country might influence another either by reminding them that slavery is bad or by informing them that AIDS is caused by HIV. It would also include what Thomas Risse (2000:33) has called 'communicative action'—'arguing and deliberating about identities, interests, and the state of the world'. Discourses, propaganda, framing, and narratives could also be considered symbolic means of influence.

2. Economic means. Augmenting or reducing the goods or services available to other countries has a long history in world politics.

3. Military means. Actual or threatened military force has received more attention than any other means in international relations.

4. Diplomatic means. Diplomacy includes a wide array of practices, including representation and negotiation.

Which dimensions of power should be specified for meaningful scholarly communication? There is no single right answer to this question. 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 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 (Barry, 1976; Dahl, 1991, 1968; Dahl and Stinebrickner, 2003; Deutsch, [1968] 1988; Frey, 1971, 1989; Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950).

The multidimensional nature of power makes it difficult to add up the various dimensions in order to arrive at some overall estimate of an actor's power. Although there are some similarities between political power and purchasing power (Baldwin, 1989), one important difference is the lack of a standardized measuring rod for the former. Whereas money can be used to measure purchasing power, there is no comparable standard of value in terms of which to add up the various dimensions of power so as to arrive at an overall total. For this reason, estimates of an actor's 'overall power' are likely to be controversial.

Faces of Power

One of the most famous debates in the literature on power during the last half of the twentieth century is known as the 'Faces of Power' debate (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962; Isaac, 1987; Lukes, 1974). The debate

was triggered by reactions to Dahl's study of governance in New Haven, Connecticut (1961). The methodology adopted for the study of power in New Haven identified three issue areas and attempted to determine who could successfully initiate policy proposals in decision making with respect to these issue areas.[2] Bachrach and Baratz (1962; 1963) argued that Dahl's approach neglected a second 'face' of power represented by the suppression of some issues, thus, in effect, keeping them from being considered. That is to say, keeping them off the agenda of the decision makers. A decade later, Lukes (1974) introduced the idea of yet another face of power—the 'third face.' He pointed out that one way for A to get B to do something B would not otherwise do is to affect B's preferences, wants, or thoughts.

Each of these so-called faces of power has some relevance for the study of international relations. The first face, focused on decision making with respect to specific issues, is on view anytime the foreign policy makers of one country try to influence decision making in another country.[3] The second face is illustrated whenever an agenda item is suppressed by some countries despite the desires of other countries. And an example of the third face might be the (alleged) ability of the United States to get other countries to embrace the 'Washington consensus' or 'neo-liberal economic views.' This third face of power is closely related to Nye's concept of 'soft power' and to Antonio Gramsci's idea of 'hegemony.' (Lukes, 2005, 2007).

The significance of the three-faces debate is easily and often exaggerated. Contrary to the understanding of many, the three faces do not imply a need for fundamental reconceptualization of power. Lukes himself admits that the three views 'can be seen as alternative interpretations and adaptations of one and the same underlying concept of power,' in which B is affected by A (Lukes, 1974:27).[4] The one fundamental difference between Dahl's concept of power and that of Lukes was the latter's insistence that power be defined as detrimental to the interests of B. In the second edition of his book, however, Lukes admits that this view was a mistake and adopts a position closer to Dahl's (Lukes, 2005: 12-13; 2007).

INTERNATIONAL POWER ANALYSIS

Although many political scientists have contributed to the power analysis revolution during the past fifty years, very few have been students of international relations (Baldwin, 1971b; Singer, 1963). Harold and Margaret Sprout, who had been proponents of the elements of national power approach in their early work (Sprout and Sprout, 1945), later repudiated that approach and were among the first international relations scholars to call for incorporation of the relational power approach into the study of international politics (Sprout and Sprout, 1956, 1962, 1965). Despite the efforts of the Sprouts and others, however, the elements of national power approach is still deeply embedded in the international relations literature (e.g., Mearsheimer, 2001; Waltz, 1979). This situation has given rise to several problems in the analysis of power in the international arena, some of which are discussed below.

The Potential Power Problem

The elements of national power approach to power analysis is a variant of the power-as-resources approach. In this approach, power resources are treated as if they were power itself. One problem with this approach is that what functions as a power asset in one situation may be a power liability in a different situation. Planes loaded with nuclear bombs may be worse than useless in a situation calling for planes with conventional weapons with insufficient time to unload the nuclear weapons and reload the planes with conventional ones. And the same stockpile of arms that is useful for deterring one country may trigger an arms race with another. Similarly, what constitutes a 'good hand' in card games depends on whether one is playing poker or bridge.

Discussions of the capabilities of states that fail to designate or imply a framework of assumptions about who is trying (or might try) to get whom to do what are comparable to discussions of what constitutes a good hand in cards without specifying which game is to be played. The Sprouts called this set of assumptions a 'policy-contingency framework' (1965, 1971). Focusing on the capabilities of states is simply a way of drawing attention to their potential power. It makes no more sense to talk about state capabilities in general than to talk about state power without (explicitly or implicitly) specifying scope and domain. If one wants to estimate the potential power of Guatemala, it helps to know, nay, it is imperative to know whether it concerns a border dispute with El Salvador or a trade agreement with the United States.

Although it is sometimes suggested that insistence on specification of the scope and domain of potential power relationships makes prediction and or generalization nearly impossible (Guzzini, 2000; Keohane, 1986), this is not true. Specification of scope and domain (or policy-contingency frameworks) need not imply atheoretical 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'. It is, of course, possible to make predictions or generalize about the potential power of Guatemala (or similar states) without reference to Guatemala's goals and without reference to the goals or capabilities of other states; but it is not clear why one would want to do so.

Power resources are the raw materials out of which power relationships are forged. Although it might seem that the predictive value of power resource inventories is impaired by insistence on prior specification of scope and domain, the opposite is true. The accuracy of one's estimate of whether an architect has adequate raw materials to complete his or her project is likely to improve if one first ascertains whether the architect plans to build a birdhouse or a cathedral.

Although it is common practice to refer to the 'power resources' or 'capabilities' of a state as if they were possessions of the state, this practice can be misleading. Strictly speaking, the power resources of a state are not attributes of the state in the same sense that population or territory are attributes. To designate something (time, reputation, weaponry, money, oil, and so on) as a 'power resource' is to imply something about its usefulness in getting others to change their behavior—and thus to imply something about the value system and capabilities of these others. (Threats do not work very well against masochists.)

The Fungibility Problem

'Fungibility' refers to the ease with which power resources useful in one issue-area can be used in other issue-areas. Money in a market economy is the prototypical fungible resource. Indeed, fungibility (that is, liquidity) is one of the defining characteristics of money.[5] 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.

It is sometimes suggested that power plays the same role in international politics that money does in a market economy (Deutsch, [1968]1988; Mearsheimer, 2001; 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 be quite misleading for the political power analyst (Baldwin, 1989).

Some 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 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).

The Problem of Intentions

Max Weber (1947: 152) defined power as 'the probability that one actor within a social relationship will in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests'. This definition clearly makes the intentions of actor A an important part of the concept of power. 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 the Second World War? Can the United States get other countries to join the United Nations? 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? All such questions involve the ability of countries to realize their goals.

But what about unintended effects? 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 is no question about the reality or importance of unintended effects in international politics (Guzzini, 2000; Jervis, 1997; Strange, 1988). The question is whether the conventional concept of power can account for such phenomena. Although intentions are often built into

the causal concept of power, for example, the Weberian version, they need not be. It is quite possible to differentiate between situations in which A intentionally causes a change in B's behavior and situations in which A does so unintentionally (Baldwin, 1989; Frey, 1989). Relational power analysis is historically indebted to the Weberian formulation, but it is not logically bound by it. Thus, there is no need for a fundamental reformulation of the concept of power in order to account for its unintended effects.

Those who call for more attention to the unintended effects of power tend to imply that these unintended effects are detrimental to the interests of those affected (Barnett and Duvall, 2005; 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 improving its own economic welfare; but this may have the unintended effect of improving the welfare of its trading partners also. 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 unintended effect of providing for Canadian security also.[6] Whether the unintended effects of the actions (or inactions) of powerful states tends to be beneficial or detrimental to the interests of those affected is an empirical question. It should be answered by research, not by definition or assertion.

The Measurement Problem

Before one can measure power, one must first have a concept of power. In the field of international relations, the desire to measure power on a single dimension that would allow states to be ranked often gets in the way of – or even precedes conceptual analysis. Frey (1989) has pointed out that the difficulty of measuring power often leads researchers to redefine it so as to make operationalization easier. 'In this fashion, power has frequently been defined in terms of supposed resources --e.g., the ability to mobilize resources, possession of resources, and other forms of what Elster (1976: 252) calls "generalized fetichist theories," that is, theories that attempt to regard relations as properties' (Frey, 1989: 7-8). Dahl (1984: 21) identifies 'confounding power with resources' as a fallacy in power analysis, and another writer labels it as 'the vehicle fallacy' (Morriss, 2002: 18-19).

As noted above, there is no political counterpart for money. There is no standardized measure that facilitates reducing the various dimensions of power to a single dimension. Yet the desire to measure power makes this an inconvenient fact:

> The search for an index of national power has been largely, ... based on the assumption that it is possible and desirable to find a *currency* of politics. As economists view economic transactions of all sorts and at all levels in terms of a standardized unit of currency, ... so, the assumption runs, must the political scientist find an absolute scale along which to evaluate the 'power' of nation-states. (Merritt and Zinnes, 1988: 142)

It is the desire of international relations scholars to rank the overall power of states from highest to lowest that generates the most difficult measurement problems. This requires comparing different dimensions of power relations without any agreed-upon way to do this. Some scholars contend that the question of 'Who's number one?' is as useful in international relations as it is in sports (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 runner and a weightlifter? As Dahl ([1963, 1984J 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 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.

Most indices of overall national power rely primarily on GNP, but are sometimes supplemented with demographic and military measures (Merritt and Zinnes, 1988). The best known of these is that developed by the Correlates of War Project (Singer, 1988). Such measures can be useful if they are set in an appropriate policy-contingency framework. What makes the Correlates of War power index more useful than most such indices is that it was developed and has usually been applied in a military context. It should be noted, however, that even military capabilities may vary greatly from one policy-contingency framework to another. Nuclear weapons, for example, may be useful for deterring attack but may have little or no relevance to prevailing in a counter-insurgency situation.

Although resources should not be confounded with power, they can be useful in measuring it. Countries with large Gross Domestic Products, for example, are likely to be able to influence more people with respect to more issues than countries with smaller GDPs (ceteris paribus). Other measures of the power of A with respect to B (domain) and with respect to C (scope) can be made on the following dimensions: (1) the probability of B's compliance; (2) the speed with which B complies; (3) the number of issues included in C; (4) the magnitude of the positive or negative sanction provided by A; (5) the costs to A; (6) the costs to B; and (7) the number of options available to B (Dahl, 1968; Frey, 1985, 1989). If international relations researchers were to give up the search for a universally valid measure of overall national power, much useful research could be focused on measuring the distribution of power within specified scopes and domains.

POWER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

'The proposition that the nature of international politics is shaped by power relations' is often listed as a 'defining characteristic of Realism' (Wendt, 1999: 96-7). As Wendt (1999: 97) points out, however, this is not a *unique* characteristic of realism. Neoliberals, Marxists, postmodernists, constructivists, dependency theorists, globalists and feminists all think power matters. No attempt will be made here to survey the treatments of power relations in all of these theories. The discussion will confine itself to three well-known and influential theories --the balance of power, neorealism, and offensive realism.

Classic Balance of Power Theory

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 (Brooks and Wohlforth, 2005; Claude, 1989; Guzzini, 2000; Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth, 2007; Little, 2007; Moul, 1989; Nexon, 2009; Paul, Wirtz, and Fortmann, 2004; Schweller, 2006; Walt, 1987; Waltz, 1979). Although many different theories carry the 'balance of power' 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 (1960: 167) 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). It is beyond the limits of this chapter to attempt clarification of this conceptual morass.

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, it's 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.

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 policy-contingency framework, that is, military force conceived in the context of war-winning ability (Claude, 1962; Gulick, 1955; Mearsheimer, 2001; Morgenthau, [1948] 1960; Walt, 1987; Waltz, 1979; Wright, 1965: 743ff). The analytical perspective of relational power prompts one to ask, 'Power to get whom 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) war-winning is what matters most. Only after these assumptions have been made explicit can fruitful debate as to their wisdom occur.

The theory of neorealism (aka structural realism or defensive realism) developed by Waltz (I979) dominated discussions of international relations theory during the last quarter of the twentieth century, much as Morgenthau's (1948) version of the theory of realism dominated discussions during the period between 1950 and 1975. Overall evaluation of neorealism is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, the focus is on the role of power and capabilities in the theory.

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 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' (1979: 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 general or without reference to actual or postulated situations. The idea that American policy-makers spend a lot of time calculating the capabilities of Canada or the United Kingdom in general, or in the abstract, seems rather far-fetched. Still, these are empirical questions and are, in principle, researchable.

Despite his admission that 'states have different combinations of capabilities which are difficult to measure and compare' (1979: 131), 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'. 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' (1979: 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' (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 (Baldwin, 1993: 17-18), 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]1960: 38) 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 indeed as the first and constant one' (Waltz, 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' (Waltz, 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* (1979: 191-2), almost as an afterthought, Waltz launches a confusing and confused attack on the relational concept of power: 'W e 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.' 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 (Barry, 1976; Goldmann and Sjöstedt, 1979; Hagström, 2005; Lukes, 1974; Weber, 1947) 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' which is not necessarily true, and that unintended effects are ruled out of consideration, which is true of some versions of relational power but not others--as noted above.

'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).

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.' 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, the notion proposed is similar to those espoused by Deutsch (1953, 1963) and Frey (1985), both of whom saw themselves as contributing to the development of the relational concept of power. Third, 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 fourth, 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.

Even the critics of neorealism credit it with having enhanced the clarity and rigor of the realist theoretical tradition (Keohane, 1986). 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,[7] 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 to assure survival, while the latter depicts them as seeking all the power they can get 'with hegemony as their ultimate goal' (Mearsheimer, 2001: 22).

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' (Mearsheimer, 2001: 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' (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' (p. 57). This is simply wrong. 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).

Offensive realism has little to say about states' ability to achieve goals other than survival. The concept of power embedded in this theory is zero-sum and based on the material resources relevant to 'conquering and controlling land,' which it considers the 'supreme political objective of states' (86). Regardless of whether one agrees with this view or not, it has the great merit of making its premises and much of its logic explicit.[8]

CURRENT ISSUES

The study of power in international relations has generated a number of issues. Among these are the following: polarity and balancing, the role of military force, structural power and constructivism.

Polarity and Balancing

The end of the Cold War and the disintegration of one of the 'superpowers' in a bi-polar world triggered renewed interest in balance of power theory. Could the theory—or some variant thereof—explain the abrupt end of the Cold War? Was balance of power theory relevant to a post cold War world? Could balance of power theory predict the future evolution of the international system?

Some predicted that balance of power dynamics would lead to a multipolar distribution of power (Layne, 1993; Mearsheimer, 1990; Waltz, 1993), while others expected the post Cold War world to be characterized by unipolarism (Ikenberry, Mastanduno, and Wohlforth, 2009; Wohlforth, 1999). Brooks and Wohlforth (2008) contend that the disparity in power between the United States and other countries is so great that the world is unipolar and likely to remain so for a long time.

Others have argued that the power balancing process continues to operate using methods other than traditional military capability adjustments. This 'soft balancing' provides a check on the power of the United States (Pape, 2005; Paul, 2005).

The renewed attention to the balance of power during the last twenty years has not generated much consensus among scholars. One writer observes that 'recent work on the subject suggests that, despite decades of attempts to give greater analytical precision to the phrases "balancing" and "balance of power," there has not been much progress' (Nexon, 2009: 334). Others scholars find that 'both systemic outcomes and state behavior directly contradict the core balance-of-power hypothesis that balancing behavior prevents systemic hegemony' (Wohlforth *et al*, 2007). Even the question of what is meant by a 'pole' has been contested. According to Wagner:

> It is a remarkable fact that, in spite of all the discussion and debate about bipolarity and multipolarity, not to mention the possible consequences of "unipolarity," since the end of the cold war, neither Waltz nor anyone else has ever specified what the "polarity" of an international system refers to. And therefore no one has ever presented a valid argument in support of the claim that states behave differently in systems with different polarities (Wagner, 2007: 21; 1993).[9]

Military Power

Many writers have commented on the preoccupation with military force by students of international politics down through the ages (Art and Waltz, [1971] 1999; Baldwin, 1989; Osgood and Tucker, 1967; Sprout and Sprout, 1945, 1962, 1965; Wagner, 2007; Waltz, 1979; Wright, 1955, [1942] 1965). Although war is an important phenomenon that international relations scholars 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 to international politics (Art, 1996; Baldwin, 1999; Wagner, 2007); to the study of power as 'a study of the capacity to wage war' (Cline, [1975]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). Even Keohane and Nye ([1977]2001: 15), who have criticized the traditional emphasis on military force, depict force as dominating other means of power.

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 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 pseudosimplification 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).

The preoccupation with military force in the study of international politics has led to the neglect of non-military forms of power, such as economic statecraft (Baldwin, 1985). 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 non-military forms of power has hampered understanding of the conditions under which military force should be used.

Structural vs. Relational Power

The relational power approach 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; Strange, 1988). To the extent that structural power is viewed as unrelated to human agency or based on a non-causal notion of power, it

would be fair to say that relational power and structural power represent fundamentally different approaches to the study of power. Otherwise, the relational concept of power is quite capable of taking account of power structures.

If structural power refers to unintentional power or to power with respect to the creation and/or control of structures (Guzzini, 1993; Krasner, 1985; Strange, 1988), there is no need to seek an alternative to the relational concept of power. The first meaning can be taken care of by excluding intentionality from the concept of power, as noted above. And the second meaning of structural power can easily be accounted for by proper specification of scope and domain. The creation and/or control of structures is simply an instance of influence with a particular scope and domain.

The study of power structures does present difficulties for the relational notion of power if such structures are depicted as unidimensional and monolithic and unspecified as to scope and domain. Thus, the idea of a single power structure dominating all issue areas and all domains to an equal degree is difficult to reconcile with the relational power approach. Some discussions of 'hegemony' in international relations seem to imply this view. There is no reason, however, why structures, defined as persistent patterns of power relationships in specified scopes and domains, cannot be usefully studied using the relational concept of power (Frey, 1971). It is worth noting that Lasswell and Kaplan (1950) devoted a whole chapter to 'structures'.

Constructivism vs. Rationalism

How does the debate between constructivism and rationalism intersect with power analysis in the study of international relations? It depends on which of the many versions of constructivism one examines. If constructivism is viewed as rejecting human agency and causal concepts and theories, there is very little overlap. The postmodernist followers of Michel Foucault, for example, may find the relational power approach of little interest. Subscribers to Wendt's (1999) version of constructivism, however, will find much grist for their mill in the relational power literature. 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'.[10]

From its inception, the relational power approach has included both material and non-material bases of power. Lasswell and Kaplan (1950: 87) cited respect, rectitude, affection and enlightenment as base values of power and influence; and they devoted a whole chapter to 'symbols'. And Dahl ([1963, 1984J 1991: 35) includes information, friendship, social standing and the right to make laws in addition to threats of force and money in a list of political power resources.

In addition, norms, values, ideas and cultural contexts have figured prominently in the relational power approach. Among the factors that a power analyst might want to examine in explaining power relations, Dahl (1968: 412) included values, attitudes, expectations, decision-making rules, structures and constitutions. No constructivist is more emphatic about the importance of cultural context in power analysis than are Lasswell and Kaplan (1950: 85, 94):

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.

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.

In sum, far from being a battleground for the dueling forces of constructivism and rationalism, power analysis may be a point of convergence for at least some members of each camp.

Noting that 'Wendt does not discuss the meaning of power, let alone provide a "rival" conceptualization of it,' Berenskoetter (2007:22n) concludes 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 (2007:23), however, states that 'constructivisim has put some order into its own power concepts, which usually come as variations on the theme of "Lukes-plus-Foucault"'. He cites only articles by himself (1993) and by Barnett and Duvall (2005) in support of this assertion.[11]

Barnett and Duvall (2005) contend that the discipline has shown 'conceptual favoritism' by conceiving of power as the ability of one actor to get another to do something he would otherwise not 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 and Mearsheimer, both explicitly reject a relational concept of power.

The concept of power proposed by Barnett and Duvall (2005: 42) is as follows:

Power is the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances and fate.

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.' 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.

Although Barnett and Duvall depict their concept of power as broader than Dahl's, it is actually narrower in at least three respects: First, it excludes persuasion; whereas Dahl's concept includes it. Second, it excludes cooperation for mutual gain, which Dahl's concept does not. And third, it excludes all power relations in which A's power benefits the interests of B.

POWER ANALYSIS AND POLICY RELEVANCE

The two dominant traditions in power analysis in international relations have been described above in terms of the elements of national power approach, which depicts power as resources, and the relational power approach, which depicts power as an actual or potential relationship. Which is more likely to be useful to policy-makers? Nye (1990: 26; 2011: 240) 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 because it 'makes power appear more concrete, measurable, and predictable' than does the relational definition. 'Power in this sense,' he notes, 'means holding the high cards in the international poker game.'

A case can be made, however, for the opposite conclusion. It is the elements of national power approach that has proved useful in the Correlates of War Project. Various studies based on this project of numerous wars during the past 500 years (Small and Singer, 1982; Stam, 1996; Wang and Ray, 1994) have produced useful knowledge about the causes and outcomes of war. Policy-makers, however, tend to have notoriously short time horizons. If they are considering going to war, it is not very helpful to point out that if they fight fifty wars during the next century, they are likely to win most of them. Nor are they likely to care much about what factors were important in most of the wars for the past 500 years. Most policy-makers are likely to be involved in only one war. They want to know whether their country is likely to win a particular war, fought in a particular context, during a particular time period, against a particular adversary. The gross inventory of American elements of national power was not only of little help in predicting the outcome of the Vietnam War, it was quite misleading. The United States may have been the greatest power in the history of the world, but it was *ill*-equipped to fight a guerilla war in a faraway land with language, culture and history that it understood poorly. In that situation, a relational power approach, setting the capability estimate in the context of a relevant policy-contingency framework, would probably have been more useful to American foreign policy-makers. Context matters, and policy-makers, as practical people, are likely to understand this more readily than academics. It is permissible to depict the elements of power as holding the high cards in *an* international card game, but it is impermissible to imply that there is only one kind of card game in international politics. If the name of the game is bridge, the person with the good poker hand may be in big trouble. Policy-makers need to know the name of the game in order to evaluate the strength of their hands.[12]

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Power analysis intersects with almost every major research program in international relations. It would be impossible to identify all of the promising avenues of research for the power analyst during the next ten years or so. Those discussed here do not begin to exhaust the possibilities for fruitful research.

Power Relations as Dependent Variables

Power may be treated as either a dependent or an independent variable (Dahl, 1968). Dahl's (1961) classic study of community power was entitled *Who Governs?* In this study, power was treated as a dependent variable. The study began, as the title implies, with the assumption that power was being exercised by those who govern and proceeded to ask, 'By whom?'; 'On what issues?'; 'How?'; and so on. International relations scholars may want to devote more attention to power as a dependent variable. Instead of focusing on how a given power distribution affects regime formation or war initiation, international relations scholars could devote more attention to questions like 'Who has power with respect to which other actors, on which issues?' 'By what means is this power exercised?' And 'What resources allow states to exercise this power?' A good example of this kind of research is Cox and Jacobson's (1973) study of influence in international organizations. They focus on the distribution of influence, different issue areas, and different time periods. They also examine the bases of power of various actors. Students of international relations need to devote more attention to treating power as a dependent variable and less to treating it as an independent variable (cf. Caporaso and Haggard, 1989).

Forms of Power

Preoccupation with military power has led students of international relations to neglect other forms of power.

Soft power   The term 'soft power' was introduced by Nye (1990) and has been popularized by him in ensuing years (2004; 2007; 2011). He used it to call attention to the ability to get 'others to want what you want' (Nye, 1990: 31-2). Noting that this ability to affect the preferences of others 'tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions', he distinguished it from 'the hard command power usually associated with tangible resources like military and economic strength.'

In later writings on soft power, Nye emphasized 'attraction': 'What is soft power? It is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments' (2004: x). In *The Future of Power* Nye (2011: 20-21) 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.

Apparently, the tangibility of resources is not an essential defining characteristic of soft power, but rather an empirical association. Military force, which many understand to be the prototypical example of hard power, only 'appears to be a defining characteristic of hard power' (Nye, 2007: 167), since it can also be used to produce soft power. This amalgamation of the discussion of defining characteristics of soft power with empirical observations about it has generated needless confusion.[13] Future research on soft power should clearly distinguish between definitional matters and empirical ones.

Although Nye sometimes refers to himself as having 'coined the term "soft power," at other times he claims to have 'introduced the concept' (2007; 2004; 2011). The former assertion is true, the latter is

not. There is a difference between coining a phrase and inventing a concept. The concept of influencing someone by shaping that person's preferences—getting them to want what you want—has deep historical roots, which have been explored by Gallarotti (2010b).

Nye (2004: 150) suggests that the idea 'builds on what Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz called the "second face of power."' (Bachrach and Baratz, 1963: 632-42). Those familiar with the 'faces of power' debate, however, will recognize that the concept of soft power is closer to Lukes' third face of power than to the second.

Further research would also be helped by recognition that there is little new in the idea of soft power from the standpoint of the literature on relational power. All of the forms of soft power discussed by Nye are familiar to relational power analysts. Further research on soft power should be more firmly rooted in that literature.

Positive sanctions   Positive sanctions are actual or promised rewards. Most of the research on power in international relations focuses on negative sanctions, i.e., actual or threatened punishments (Baldwin, 1971a). Despite a number of recent works on the role of positive sanctions (Cartwright, 1997; Crumm, 1995; J. Davis, 2000; P. Davis, 1999; Kahler and Kastner, 2006; Long, 1996; Newnham, 2000; Nincic, 2010; Solingen, 2011), the opportunities for further research are enormous.

Comparative influence techniques   The instruments of statecraft--diplomatic, economic, military and symbolic --tend to be studied separately. This is a hindrance from the standpoint of both theory and policy relevance. Without comparative research on techniques of statecraft, theorists can say little about the utility of various policy instruments. If the success rate of economic sanctions is estimated at 34 per cent, should one conclude that policy-makers are fools for using an instrument with such a low rate of success? Or is this about the best that can be expected of any instrument of statecraft? There is little or no reliable data on comparative success rates of instruments of statecraft.

Policy-makers have little use for research findings regarding one technique of statecraft. Policy-makers need information that will help them choose among alternative policy options. Thus, what they want to know is: How successful is a given policy instrument likely to be, with respect to which goals and targets, at what cost, and in comparison with which policy alternatives? Without comparative studies of techniques of statecraft, it is hard to answer such questions (Baldwin, *1999/2000).*

Military force   Despite the emphasis on military force in the literature on international politics, much work remains to be done. Three problems are especially deserving of further research. First, the question of whether the utility of military force is declining needs attention. The groundwork for this research was provided by Knorr (1966:5) long ago. The basic questions to be asked were identified as follows: 'How much has it [i.e., force] lost in utility, if there has been any loss at all? And utility for what purpose? And to whom? And under what, if not all, circumstances? And military power in all its forms and modes of employment, or only in some?' Utility for the economist Knorr, naturally, was a function of both costs and benefits. Recent studies that purport to say something about the utility of military power while devoting little or no attention to the costs of using force can be quite misleading (e.g., Art, 1996; Art and Waltz,

[1971]1999; Pape, 1996). The book on the costs of the war in Iraq by Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda J. Bilmes (2008) entitled *The Three Trillion Dollar War* constitutes a major step in the right direction.

Second, the fungibility of military force needs further study. To what extent can military force be used to exercise influence in which situations? 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–guerilla war, civil war, limited conventional war, limited nuclear war, chemical and biological warfare, large scale nuclear warfare, deterrent situations, etc. It is not clear that the military power resources useful in one type of war can easily be transferred to another type. Thus, more studies of the use of particular types of military power in different policy-contingency frameworks are needed (Byman and Waxman, 2002).

The third problem concerns the question of how to define and measure military success (Baldwin, 1999/2000; Byman and Waxman, 2002; Johnson and Tierney, 2006). Despite the voluminous literature on war, very little attention has been devoted to explicating the concept of success. The idea that 'every war has a winner' is deeply embedded in the literature on military force. The persistence of the zero-sum concept of military conflict is troublesome since it is incompatible with many of the topics dominating the scholarly research agenda during the past fifty years. As Schelling (1984: 269) notes: 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.

Institutions and Power

Power can be exercised in the formation and maintenance of institutions, through institutions, within and among institutions. Institutions may reflect power relations, constrain them, or provide the basis for their existence. To what extent do the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund serve as instruments of American foreign policy? To what extent does the United Nations enhance the power of some countries and constrain the power of others? To what extent does the World Trade Organization constrain US power? To what extent does it strengthen US power? How is power distributed within the European Union (Garrett and Tsebelis, 1999; Holler and Widgren, 1999; Steunenberg et al., 1999)? To what extent do international institutions exercise power rather than merely reflecting it (Mearsheimer, 1994/95)? All of these questions provide a rich research agenda for the study of institutions and power relations (Martin and Simmons, 1998).

Domestic Politics

How does domestic politics affect national power? Even classic elements of national power approaches included national morale, quality of government, public support and political stability among the

determinants of a country's power (Morgenthau, [1948]1960). Does regime type matter? Are democracies at a disadvantage in international bargaining? How, if at all, does divided government affect a country's international bargaining position? Although the conventional realist wisdom has depicted democracy as hampering the efficient conduct of foreign policy, recent studies have called this view into question and opened new lines of research on the relationship between domestic politics and the exercise of international power (Fearon, 1994, 1998; Lake, 1992; Mansfield et al., 2000; Martin, 2000; Miiner, 1997, 1998; Milner and Rosendorff, 1996; Mo, 1995).

Strategic Interaction and Bargaining

The bare-bones specification of power in terms of A causing a change in B's behavior is compatible with strategic interaction, but it neither calls attention to strategic interaction nor requires taking it into account. This is unfortunate, since most of what interests students of international politics involves strategic interaction. One of the most important research needs is linking the relational power literature with research on international strategic interaction (e.g., Martin, 2000; Milner, 1997, 1998; Mo, 1995; Powell, 1999; 2004).[14]

This is not to suggest, however, that game theory is the only way to analyze strategic interaction. The work of Jervis (1997), Lake and Powell (1999), Larson (1998), Schelling (1984) and others has demonstrated the value of non-mathematical approaches to strategic interaction. Game theory is a useful tool for analyzing strategic interaction, but the analysis of international strategic interaction is too important to be left to game theorists alone. As Lake and Powell observe: 'The strategic-choice approach is theoretically inclusive .... [It] provides a foundation for integrating and synthesizing many otherwise competing theories of international relations' (1999: 6).

Distribution of Power

The question of how power is distributed needs to be studied using the relational power approach. The work of Frey (1971, 1985, 1989) is especially relevant to this line of research. Rather than striving to produce yet another global ranking of the so-called 'overall power' of every country in the world, scholars need to focus on power distributions within specified issue-areas and perhaps within specified regions. To the extent that persistent patterns are found, issue-relevant structures of power may be identified. Rather than trying to identify a single overall international power structure, scholars should strive to identify multiple structures of power in different issue areas.[15] Admittedly, such research will not try to provide answers to the question of 'Who's number one in the game of international poker?' But simply redirecting attention away from that kind of question would, in itself, constitute progress in international power analysis.

CONCLUSION

Power has figured importantly in discussions of international interaction since the time of Thucydides. Despite the long tradition of power analysis in international politics, scholarly agreement on the nature of power and its role in international relations is lacking. The two principal approaches to power analysis in international interaction have been the 'power as resources' (or 'elements of national power') approach and the 'relational power' approach. The latter was developed during the last half of the twentieth century by scholars in philosophy and a variety of social science disciplines. Both approaches are evident in contemporary international relations scholarship.

Although power is an ancient focus in the study of international relations, there are many opportunities for further research. These include (I) the treatment of power as a dependent variable; (2) the forms of power; (3) institutions and power; (4) domestic politics and power; (5) strategic interaction; and (6) power distributions in different issue areas.

Although scholarly agreement on the nature and role of power in international interaction is unlikely in the near future, research along the lines suggested above may nevertheless enhance understanding of important dimensions of international behavior.

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NOTES

[1] The question of what constitutes a 'Great Power' remains unsettled even today. Harrison Wagner (2007:20-21) observes that the term 'has no standard meaning'. See also, Jack Levy (1983:10-19).

[2] This grossly oversimplifies the highly sophisticated methodology of *Who Governs?*

[3] Lukes calls this first face the 'one-dimensional view of power' and associates it with Dahl. By describing it here, I do not mean to imply that Lukes' portrayal of Dahl's views is either fair or accurate.

[4] This passage does not imply that the three 'faces' are 'useless abstractions' as Nye (2011: 16) contends. It merely points out how broad Dahl's basic concept of power is.

[5] The terms 'liquidity,' 'fungibility,' and 'asset specificity' all refer to the same underlying concept of convertibility and can be used interchangeably. 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 liquid. Even money, it is said, cannot buy love.

[6] Although the degree to which the United States intended its nuclear deterrent to provide for Canadian security can be questioned, I would like to sidestep this issue for the purpose of illustrating the general point. The point is that Canadian security against nuclear attack was provided for regardless of the intentions of the United States.

[7] Gallarotti (2010) argues that it is possible to have too much power, a situation he labels 'the power curse.'

[8] The extent to which the conclusions of offensive realism follow from the premises is a different matter. For an incisive discussion of this and other theories, see R. Harrison Wagner's *War and the State* (2007).

[9] For thoughtful discussions of polarity, see Mansfield (1994) and Fearon (2010).

[10] 'Constructivists like to say that social structures determine the "identities" of individuals. The word *identity* is undefined, and it is not at all clear what it means, especially when applied to states' (Wagner, 2007: 43n; Fearon, 1999).

[11] This formula for describing constructivist power concepts as 'Lukes-plus-Foucault' should probably be written as 'Lukes (1974)-plus-Foucault.' This would make it clear that the formula refers to a concept of power that Lukes now regards as 'a mistake.' (Lukes, 2005:12; 2007).

[12] In *The Future of* Power Nye (2011) acknowledges that specifying the name of the game is important but still underestimates how important it is. 'As a first step in any game,' he says, 'it helps to start by figuring out who is holding the high cards.' It is impossible to do this, however, unless one first specifies what game is to be played. Determining the name of the game is logically prior to figuring out who has the high cards; indeed, one cannot even know what the high cards are until this step is taken. Specifying the game is always the first and most important step—in cards or international politics. Even in poker it is impossible to evaluate one's hand without knowing whether deuces are wild.

[13] Nye's (2011: 81) complaint about the 'misuse' of the term 'as a synonym for anything other than military force' suggests that his numerous attempts at clarification over a twenty-year period have not been completely successful. See the special issue of the *Journal of Political Power* (2011) devoted to soft power.

[14] Forty years ago Wagner (1969: 11) suggested that 'a theory of interdependent decisions in conflict situations' could address many of the problems that concern power analysts. His recent study of war places it in the context of organized violence and depicts war as a bargaining process.

[15] David M. Andrews' (2006) edited volume entitled *International Monetary Power* provides an example of power analysis in a particular issue-area.