



POWER IN WORLD POLITICS

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SUMMARY (POWER IN WORLD POLITICS)

The concept of power derives its meanings and theoretical roles from the theories in which it is embedded. There is hence no one concept of power, no single understanding of power, even if these understandings stand in relation to each other. Besides the usual theoretical traditions common to International Relations and the social sciences, from rationalist to constructivist and post-structuralist approaches, there is, however, also a specificity of power being a concept used in both political theory and political practice. A critical survey of these approaches needs to cast its net wide to see both the differences, but also links across these theoretical divides. Realist understandings of power are heavily impressed by political theory, especially when defining the particular ontology of 'the political'. They are also characterized by their attempt, so far not successful, to translate practical maxims of power into a scientific theory. Liberal and structural power approaches use power as a central factor for understanding outcomes and hierarchies, while generally neglecting any reference to political theory and often overloading the mere concept of power as if it were already a full-fledged theory. Finally, power has also been understood in the constitutive but often tacit processes of social recognition and identity formation, of technologies of government, and of the performativity of power categories when the latter interact with the social world, that is, the power politics that characterize the processes in which we 'make' the social world. Relating back to political practice and theory, these approaches risk repeating a realist fallacy. Whereas it is arguably correct to see power always connected to politics, not all politics is always connected or reducible to power. Seeing power not only as coercive but also productive should neither invite us to reduce all politics to it, nor to turn power into the meta-physical prime-mover of all things political.

INTRODUCTION: WHICH POWER?

For the battle-proof reader of analyses in International Relations, 'Power in world politics' may immediately evoke proclamations of what power really is and where it lies, who has it and who endures it. It may also connect to a specific self-understanding of the field, which thinks of itself as being deserted by possible utopias and reform, forever caught in a world inevitably characterized by power politics, a tragedy not manageable by the faint-hearted and which we can ignore only at our peril.

For its crucial place in the observation and practice of world politics, it comes as no surprise that there is no 'usual' definition of power. But there is more to power's multiple meanings than the different theories which may re-frame it, or the different practical understandings of power which are negotiated in international diplomacy. Its multiple meanings result from the specific role power has in our discourses where it connects many different phenomena in various domains. It stands in for resources or capabilities, status, and rank, cause and its effect (influence), for rule, authority, and legitimacy, if not government, then again for individual dispositions and potentials, autonomy and freedom, agency and subjectivity, but also for impersonal biases (e.g. the power of markets or symbols) or, as bizarre as it might sound at first, for symbolic media of communication. And this is not an exhaustive list.

As this short list shows, power informs not only the language of practitioners and explanatory theories but also of political theory; indeed, it is systematically intertwined with our understanding of politics. For power has become closely connected to the definition of the public domain (*res publica*) in which government is to be exercised.

Moreover, this interrelation of power and politics has become self-conscious in present-day world politics. The last decades of the twentieth century have witnessed a double movement in the practitioners' understanding of power. On the one hand, the contemporary agenda of international politics has exploded. For major diplomatic corps, it now includes virtually everything from monetary to environmental relations, from human rights to cyberspace. With this multiplication of international political domains, there is more 'governance', and that also means more international 'power', because actors have been able to consciously order and influence events which were so far not part of their portfolio. On the other hand, however, practitioners have been anxious for quite some time, because power and actual control seems to be slipping away from them. Power is ever more 'abstract, intangible, elusive' (Kissinger, 1969, p. 61; 1979, p. 67). It has 'evaporated' (Strange, 1996, p. 189). Indeed, the ease with which public debates have seized on topics like the structural forces of globalization, the dilemmas of an incalculable 'risk society', or the awe, if not sense of powerlessness, when confronted with the planetary range of governance problems induced by climate change, testify to the increasing concern that exactly when our expanding agenda would need it most, actual power eludes

our leaders. Paradoxically, or perhaps not¹, the expansion of governance is accompanied by a sense of lost control.

Hence, 'power in world politics' cannot be confined to an unequivocal encyclopaedia entry. Instead, the conceptualizations of power in their respective domains become central (for a more detailed justification, see Guzzini, 2013b). Consequently, this entry will make no further definitional effort to find a generally acceptable view of power (as did, for example, Dahl, 1968). Although the following is informed by such undertakings when avoiding definitional fallacies, such attempts are, as a general strategy, less appropriate for an encyclopaedia, and probably not possible for such a contested term like power, as previous concept analyses have shown (as e.g. Baldwin, 2002; Barnett & Duvall, 2005; Berenskoetter, 2007; Guzzini, 1993, 2016). The interest here is not in reducing the analysis of power to a single definitional core, but in exploring the variety of usages and how they relate to each other.

The first section looks at realist understandings of power which are heavily stamped by political theory, in particular when defining the particular ontology of 'the political'. The second section then follows liberal and structural power approaches which use power as a central factor for understanding outcomes and hierarchies, while generally neglecting any reference to political theory. Finally, the third section looks at attempts to understand how power is understood in the constitutive but often tacit processes of social recognition and identity formation, of technologies of government, and of the performativity of power categories when the latter interact with the social world, that is, the power politics that characterize the processes in which we 'make' the social world.

REALIST POWER ANALYSIS: THE DISTINCTIVE NATURE OF WORLD POLITICS AND ITS EXPLANATION

Knowledge of world affairs was initially tied to the group practicing it. Actors observed themselves and distilled maxims of action from historical experience. While historians, sociologists, and macro-economists look at their field with an external expertise, the knowledge of international politics stems from the way diplomats and generals came to share practical lessons of the past (and this may also apply to the early days of law and management studies). Hence, the first way to think about power in world affairs is by following the meaning and purpose of power in the language of international practitioners.

And since it is fair to say that realism is the translation of that language into a codified system of practical maxims (Guzzini, 1998, 2013a), analyzing classical realism provides such a bridge. For (many) classical realists, power is co-constitutive of politics – and world politics in particular. It is part of a theory of

¹ Others would turn the argument around and claim that this diffusion is a new mechanism that constitutes our present form of governance, a rule without steering. See below in section 3.

domination. It is moreover related to the idea of government, not understood in its steering capacity, but in what constitutes political order. Finally, through the idea of the reason of state, power is related to the normative ideal of an ethics of responsibility as included in the 'art of government'.

It is only in the disciplinary move where realism was to become a school of thought in the establishment of International Relations as a social science, that the analysis of political order was translated into a rational theory of the maximization of power, or put differently, where a theory of domination was subsumed under an explanatory theory of action. In this move, the purpose and understanding of power is narrowed, and, as this section will later show, fraught with internal tensions.

The nature of power and the definition of world politics

A central tenet of classical realism is to look at the constitution of political order. That order is not defined in the Aristotelian sense of a polity organized around a common purpose, the common good, but in terms of the necessity of domination. This necessity of domination, in turn, explains why government has to be understood in a Machiavellian manner, that is, interested in the management of power. Indeed, the European 18th century experienced an increasing reduction of the meaning of politics to *Machtkunst* (approx. the art/craft of power/governing), so typical for realism (Sellin, 1978).

If order is understood mainly through the art of domination, then it becomes easier to understand why for Max Weber, in many regards the proto-typical political (not IR) realist, physical violence and its control are, in turn, connected to the idea of politics and power. The threat or actual use of violence is that characteristic which sets politics aside from economics, law, or other spheres of social relations (Weber, 1980 [1921–22], pp. 531, 539). For realists, politics has specific tasks which can ultimately be resolved only through physical violence (Weber, 1988 [1919]-a, p. 557). Therefore, behind power, understood as the specific means of politics, stands the possibility of physical violence (Weber, 1988 [1919]-a, p. 550). A polity is based on domination, which is possible through the control of physical violence, which, in turn, constitutes not the only, but the politically characteristic and ultimate means of power (for a detailed discussion, see Guzzini, 2017a).

Classical realists stood squarely in this tradition but, as Hans Morgenthau and Raymond Aron respectively show, took different cues from it. Morgenthau added a Nietzschean twist. Just as for Weber, politics is struggle (Weber, 1988 [1918], p. 329) but it is derived from human nature: the lust for power (Morgenthau, 1946, p. 9) or the drive to dominate (Morgenthau, 1948, p. 17), common to all humans. This adds an ontological status to power as being one of the fundamental drives of humans. This also explains why, for Morgenthau, whatever the final goal, power is always the immediate one (Morgenthau, 1948, p. 13), i.e. the inevitable means. From there, Morgenthau builds an ultimately utilitarian theory of international relations that understands action in terms of the maximization of power, and a foreign policy strategy of gauging power in an ethics of responsibility. Just as for Weber (for this argument, see Wolin, 1981), Morgenthau's theory is ultimately guided by his political theory and ontology. In this, power constitutes the link between this

political ontology, his explanatory theory and a foreign policy doctrine (for a detailed account and critique, see Guzzini, 2020).

Also Aron derives from Weber, but he does not follow Nietzsche in the way Morgenthau does, nor in the way Weber occasionally did himself, when he fused national value systems with a view of an existential struggle, his eternal combat of Gods (Weber, 1988 [1919]-b, p. 604f.). Aron is highly critical of such a position (Aron, 1967, p. 650). He starts from the idea that the international system has no world government comparable to the Weberian modern state, and without a legitimate monopoly of the means of violence, it is in a 'state of nature'. He is clear that this state of nature is not to be confused with a state of 'war of all against all' but refers to a sometimes highly conventionalized realm that is not part of a biological but a human order (Aron, 1966, pp. 482–483). Indeed, the parallel existence of a civil society (with a government) and an external sphere of multiplicity is something that has always existed and which defines the backdrop against which politics is to be understood. Although without a Nietzschean touch, here too the management of violence and power becomes the constitutive principle of world politics as power politics, in which collective violence is not antithetical but fundamental to it. The best we can aspire to is a politics of the 'art of the possible', connected to this very particular responsibility that falls on political leaders to use the reason of state correctly.

Power in realist explanations

When moving from political to explanatory theory, power turns from being an ontology of order and politics to being an explanatory variable. Given its central place in realism's political theory, it is perhaps normal that it would also acquire a central place in its explanatory theory. The drive for domination is here translated into a utilitarian theory of power, security, or rank maximization. Power as part of a 'vertical' theory of domination, as in realist elite theories (e.g. Robert Michels or Vilfredo Pareto), becomes subsumed under a 'horizontal' theory of action and its effects.

Such a move affects the underlying understanding of power. Power is understood either as capabilities / resources or, indeed, as their effects (influence). Resourceful actors (regular winners) are poles of power, and the configuration of those poles gives the main characteristic of the international order, namely its polarity. The government of world order is hence but the result of these two steps of the argument. This leads to two typical theoretical applications. Starting from the micro-level of analysis, actors are seen as maximizing relative power or rank with the effect that this competitive behaviour ends up in an always precarious balance of power. Starting from the macro-level, the given polarity of the balance of power provides systemic constraints for internal balancing (arms-race) and external balancing (alliances), which actors may ignore only at their peril.

This translation into a utilitarian theory of action, however, produces a series of conceptual problems. For being able to empirically identify a 'maximization' of power or any 'balance' of power, there must be a measure of power that indicates what is more or less, what is maximized. In other words, it requires a concept of

power akin to the concept of money in economic theory, as also argued by Mearsheimer (2001, p. 12). In this analogy, the striving for utility maximization expressed and measured in terms of money parallels the national interest (i.e. security) expressed in terms of (relative) power. And yet, this central assumption has been challenged both by early realist critiques and institutionalist approaches.

Raymond Aron opposed this aggregated concept of power and the underlying power–money analogy (Aron, 1962, pp. 99–102). Utilitarian economics trades on the possibility of integrating different preferences within one utility function. This is made possible by the historical evolution towards monetarized economies where money would fulfil the function of a shared standard of value. But in world politics, power does not play the same role. There is no equivalent in actual politics (and not just in theory) to money; power does not ‘buy’ in the same way; it is not the currency of world politics. Even supposedly ultimate power resources like weapons of mass destruction might not necessarily be of great help in buying another state’s change in its monetary policies. More power resources do not necessarily translate into more purchasing power (Baldwin, 1971). Without a clear measure, however, it is not clear when power has been maximized or when it is balanced, and also whether this was intended in the first place (Wolfers, 1962, p. 106). Realist theories based on power are indeterminate, as Aron insisted.

In response, realists could insist that diplomats have repeatedly been able to find a measure of power and hence the difference is just one of degree, not of kind (see the answer to Aron by Waltz, 1990). Yet even if actors can agree on some approximations for carrying out exchanges or establishing power rankings, this is a social convention which by definition can be challenged and exists only to the extent that it is agreed upon, as acknowledged by Morgenthau (1948, pp. 151–152) himself. Power resources do not come with a standardized price tag, and no type of resource is generally convertible (‘fungible’). And if power is not providing a standard of value, then neither analysts nor actors know when and how some action is maximizing power, nor how these maximizations ‘add up’ to polarity. If we cannot reduce world politics to solely one of its domains (war and physical violence), and if we cannot add up resources into one pole, then the assessment of polarity is no longer clear – and with this the assessment of the type of international order and its causal effects. The measure of power is internal to a diplomatic convention whose stability is not granted, a point that later power analysis has developed (see below).

It is here where the mix of the normative and explanatory stance of realism pulls the concept of power in opposite directions. The insistence on the almost impossible measurement of power, so important to realists from Morgenthau to Wohlforth (2003), is crucial for realist practice. It instils the realist maxim of a posture of prudence in the diplomats, reminding them that they ‘cannot and should not be sure’. Yet, this indeterminacy is making the explanatory theory unfalsifiable; there is always one way to twist power indicators and understandings so as to make the story fit. In this way, using the central role of power to translate an ontology of order into a utilitarian explanatory theory led to problems for classical realism at both the micro and macro level of analysis, in terms of rank maximization and polarity

analysis. At the same time, it provided the backdrop against which new conceptualizations developed.

POWER AS INFLUENCE: RELATIONAL AND STRUCTURAL POWER IN WORLD POLITICS

International Relations proceeded in its conceptualizations of power mainly with the purpose of fine-tuning the role of power in explanatory theories; political theory fell by the wayside. So institutionalists were aware of the indeterminacy, and at times tautology, of a concept of power that IR scholars used as both a capacity and its effects. One of the possible remedies consisted in qualifying the very idea of a capacity, were it to retain a distinctive causal effect. Another was to open up the black box of the translation process from power as control over resources to power as control over outcomes.

This focus on dyadic interaction reduces the initial purpose of understanding domination to understanding influence in different outcomes, and then to its aggregation. A theory of domination was not just subsumed under a theory of action; it seemed to get lost altogether. A series of scholars tried to counter this tendency. They identified a problem in the explanatory attempts to relate power only to the level of interaction. Instead, they conceived of power in 'structural' terms to re-integrate more vertical components of domination into the analysis of power. Whereas the more institutionalist answer uses a relational understanding of power to qualify capacities as actual influence over outcomes, the structuralist answer was to include more non-agential or non-intentional factors into the analysis of outcomes to recuperate a sense of in-built hierarchical relations. More problematically, however, both approaches do more than just widen the analysis of power relations, but also tend to import this widening into the concept of power itself, as if a reconceptualization alone were sufficient for a comprehensive analysis of power.

Relational power and liberal institutionalism

Power is not in a resource; it is in a relation. This stance was forcefully exposed by Robert Dahl (e.g. 1957, pp. 202–203) in political theory and by David Baldwin (1989, 2016) within International Relations. Such an innocuous-looking statement is very consequential. In its behaviouralist twist, such a relational approach tends to focus on actual influence understood as the causal effect of one actor's behaviour on another's behaviour. And it tends to look for the conditions that make this influence possible in the first place.

Both Dahl and Baldwin treat power and influence, capacities and their effects, interchangeably. That may sound odd, because most Western languages use two different words that capture different, if related, ideas. And yet, it is quite logical, if one thinks about power as a central concept in (linear) causal explanations, as much of IR does. IR is interested in outcomes. If power were just in resources – latent, potential, and hence potentially 'powerless' in affecting outcomes – then, so the

story goes, why should we care about power in the first place? We wish to understand the actualized capacity to affect outcomes, i.e. being able to impose one's will or interests, as the Weberian tradition has it. Indeed, for Dahl that understanding is the main way to understand 'who governs' in an empirically controllable manner (Dahl, 2005 [1961]). 'Government' is constituted by the actual steering effects of elites where certain interests prevail. Dahl could relate power as influence on behaviour to the wider understanding of the domestic political order. Influence in a behaviouralist theory of action was aggregated to an analysis of government that discloses whether its elite is unified or multiple. Translated into IR, however, the absence of a world government means that IR scholars were left with the theory of action. When thinking world political order, influence is all there is.

Therefore, much of the analysis came to focus on the conditions that make such influence possible and the specific situational context which constitutes that certain resources come to constitute capabilities to affect outcomes. Understanding the relation crucially comes before the analysis of power therein. Bachrach and Baratz (1970, pp. 20–21) provide a telling example to show the difference a relational approach makes. Let us assume a soldier returns to his camp. The guard will ask him to stop or she will shoot. The soldier stops. Hence, the guard exercised power as influence. And yet it is not clear how. It could have been simply through the threat of using her arms. But it could also be because the soldier followed the rule of obeying an order, independently of the arms and the threat. Without a close analysis of the relation, indeed the individual motives, we would not know the kind of power relation this represents. But let us further assume that the soldier does not stop. The guard shoots. Now, it is ambivalent whether this shows an exercise of power. On the one hand, one could say that she succeeded in stopping the soldier from coming too close to the camp. But on the other hand, the threat was clearly not successful. As Waltz (1969 [1967]: 309) once noted, the most powerful police force is one that does not need to shoot to get its way in the first place. The exercise of power may paradoxically show the powerlessness of its alleged holder. And one can twist the example even further. The soldier had decided to take his life, and, by advancing, forced the guard to do it on his behalf. In this case, it was the returning soldier who got the guard to do something. Power was on his side in this asymmetrical relation. As the example shows, knowing resources is insufficient to explain the direction in which power is exercised; one needs to know the motives and values of the actors, as well as the general normative system involved. Indeed, once one knows them, the power relation could turn out to be reversed.

In IR, there have been three prominent ways to deal with this relational aspect. David Baldwin almost single-handedly introduced Dahl's approach into international relations. In the wake of the US defeat in Vietnam, he became increasingly tired of analyses in terms of 'conversion failures' or what he also called the 'paradox of unrealized power' (Baldwin, 1979: 163), where the allegedly more powerful actor lost. If power means influence, it cannot fail. If it does, it means that power was either wrongly assessed or, more fundamentally, wrongly understood (Baldwin, 1985, p. 23).

Baldwin was most interested in qualifying the specific context in a relational approach. He shared Aron's critique of what he called the lacking fungibility of power, in which power simply does not have the same standard of value function as money does in real economies (Baldwin, 1979, pp. 193–194; 1993: 21–22). As a result, he insisted that a relational approach to power requires the prior establishment of the specific 'policy-contingency framework' within which power relations are to be understood: the scope (the objectives of an attempt to gain influence; influence over which issue), the domain (the target of the influence attempt), and its weight (the quantity of resources), and the cost (opportunity costs of forgoing a relation) must be made explicit. Resources consequential in one policy-contingency framework are not necessarily so in another. Scholars who do not see this multi-dimensionality and persist in the 'notion of a single overall international power structure unrelated to any particular issue-area' are using an analysis that 'is based on a concept of power that is virtually meaningless' (Baldwin, 1979, p. 193).

A second approach worked by checking the translation between the two classical power concepts in this interactionist tradition, namely control over resources and control over outcomes. Whereas Baldwin packaged much into situational analysis to uphold causal effects of behaviour/policy instruments, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (1977) downgraded a direct link between resources and outcomes which is hampered by bargaining processes and other effects during the interaction. They did, however, also qualify this process for a better assessment of what counts as a power resource in the first place. They expressed the relational component of power in terms of asymmetric interdependence. In this way, power as influence over outcomes is connected, but not reducible, to the resources possessed by one actor, yet valued by the other, and/or by resources of A that can affect the interests of B. Moreover, not just any effect is significant. In their distinction between sensitivity interdependence and vulnerability interdependence, they gave a more long-term twist to it, since the mere capacity to affect B (sensitivity) is only ephemeral if B can find alternatives. Only if such alternatives cannot be found (vulnerability, understood in terms of the elasticity of substitution) is the relation asymmetric in a more significant sense. This way of defining power keeps the link to resources but denies a direct relation from resources to outcomes and qualifies what makes them constitutive by specifying the particular dyadic interaction.

Finally, Joseph Nye's concept of soft power (Nye Jr., 1990, 2007, 2011) adds yet another aspect to the liberal analysis of these power relations. His emphasis on softer resources that can be influential depending on the context is not the original part; indeed, Baldwin's power analysis was very much driven by his attempt to show that economic sanctions, and in particular positive sanctions (carrots, not sticks), can be influential. Rather, what specifically characterizes soft power is the focus on the mechanisms via which actors can have effects. In a way akin to structural power approaches (see below), but also classical realist definitions, the analysis of power starts from the receiving side: soft power lies in the capacity of 'attraction' of an actor, which means that its analysis starts from those attracted.

In all three approaches, the epistemic interest consists in revalorizing foreign policy instruments in which military resources or coercive mechanisms are not necessarily

the most influential; indeed, no resource has such general capacity. Baldwin opens up for positive sanctions and issue-area-specific resources. Keohane and Nye invite for policies that avoid long-term vulnerabilities in interdependent relations or, even better, tie all countries into mutual vulnerabilities to moderate their behaviour. And Nye's soft power focuses on foreign policies that would make countries more attractive and hence often get their way without much further ado. These approaches respond to a vision of an international order fragmented into different issue areas or international regimes.

The innumerable policy-contingency frameworks become confusing however: they make analysts lose sight of the forest for all the trees. With power as influence having subsumed domination under a theory of action, international order and hierarchy got lost. To see the whole forest, Keohane and Nye (1987) envisage developing a generalized theory of linkages. And yet, precisely because of the lacking fungibility which makes power logics not reducible to each other across regimes, such a theory of linkages is not possible within this theoretical framework. If it were, the fragmentation could be subsumed under a meta-regime that effectively substitutes for a linkage theory.

This leaves the institutionalist approaches open to two further developments that are intrinsic to a relational approach. First, taking fungibility seriously excludes a single international power structure, as Baldwin pointed out, and hence severs the link between power and international order. Just as in Dahl, the international order appears pluralistic. But the agent and interaction-centredness of such an approach does not persuade those for whom the absence of intended agential or interaction effects does not yet imply an absence of power or domination. For them, the relational approach needs to be complemented, if not superseded, by a more structural approach. Second, as Bachrach and Baratz's illustration shows, and as soft power further develops, the concept of power looks different if its understanding starts from the position of the alleged power holder or the recipient/subaltern. Add to this that interests or values present in a relation cannot be understood individually, since norms or conventions, indeed meanings, are not private but intersubjective, and we end up with a relational approach that connects power to shared understandings and norms. No longer agent-centred, power analysis experiences a turn to material and ideational structures of power.

Structural power and dependency

In social and political theory, Steven Lukes' seminal approach distinguishes three dimensions of power: a direct behaviouralist one (Dahl), an indirect one about the many issues that are excluded from the actual bargaining (Bachrach & Baratz), and a third dimension where it is the 'supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have' (Lukes, 1974, p. 27). Here, the absence of conflict does not necessarily indicate the absence of a power relation, but possibly its most insidious form. Lukes derives this approach from Gramsci's understanding of hegemony. Domination is not simply imposed from above but must be won through the subordinated groups' consent to the cultural domination which they believe will serve their own interests. It works through a naturalized 'common

sense'. At the same time, Lukes is not merely interested in the origins of domination in the common sense shared by the subordinate. Rather, as a philosopher of liberal democracy, he sees the purpose of power analysis as being connected to what this tells us about individual autonomy or actual freedom (Lukes, 1977) or, in a more structural fashion, how structures 'shape fields of possibility' for agents, as Clarissa Hayward (2000, p. 9) puts it. The more material component of this structural analysis has inspired the approaches in International Political Economy (IPE) taken up in this sub-section; the intersubjective mobilization bias and endogenization of identity and interest formation will be the subject in the final major section.

In international relations, there have been several attempts to understand power beyond dyadic relations and bargaining, by reaching out to a structural level of power (for the following, see Guzzini, 1993). Some of them are still very much in line with Bachrach and Baratz's approach of seeing power not only in direct confrontation, but also in indirect agenda-setting, yet applied here more fundamentally to the rules of the game. Thus Stephen Krasner's use of 'meta-power' in his *Structural Conflict* refers to developing countries' use of institutions and regimes not just as a lever against powerful states, but as a way to affect the rules of global liberalism. 'Relational power refers to the ability to change outcomes or affect the behavior of others within a given regime. Meta-power refers to the ability to change the rules of the game' (Krasner, 1985, p. 14).

Susan Strange's take on power overlaps to some extent but goes further. She uses structural power to refer to the increasing diffusion of international power, in both its effects and its origins, due to the increasing transnationalization of non-territorially linked networks. Structural power is, on the one hand, a concept similar to Krasner's intentional meta-power: the ability to shape the security, financial, productive, and knowledge structures (Strange, 1985, p. 15). Here, power is structural because it has an indirect diffusion via structures, i.e. because of its diffused effects. On the other hand, it is structural because it refers to the increasingly diffused sources and agents that contribute to the functioning of the global political economy (Strange, 1988). Taken together, the provision of global functions appears as the result of an interplay of deliberate and non-intentional effects of decisions and nondecisions made by governments and other actors. The international system appears as if run by a 'transnational empire', whose exact centre is difficult to locate because it is not tied to a specific territory, but whose main base is with actors in the United States (Strange, 1989). A more vertical theory of domination reappears in this specific asymmetry: even though actors in the United States might not always intend or be able to control the effects of their actions, the international structures are set up in a way that decisions in some countries are systematically tied to, and can fundamentally affect, actors in the same and other countries. This becomes visible when looking at power relations not from the standpoint of the power holder and intended action or intended effects, but from the receiving side, where neither matters primarily. Whereas Krasner focused on the hidden power of the weak, Strange emphasizes the tacit power of the strong.

Lukes' focus on autonomy is echoed in the emphasis on questions of in/dependence by dependency and Gramscian scholars. For Stephen Gill and David Law, structural

power refers to 'material and normative aspects, such that patterns of incentives and constraints are systematically created' (Gill & Law, 1988, p. 73). This clearly defines a form of impersonal power, where the impersonal material setting is nearly synonymous with the functioning of markets, and the normative setting corresponds to a form of Gramsci's historic bloc (Cox, 1981, 1983). As a result, contemporary world politics is seen as a *Pax Americana* in which the analysis of transnational elites plays a major role for understanding domination (van der Pijl, 1998). The view from the periphery is central for dependency scholars. Autonomy in International Relations is often translated in terms of sovereignty, yet another power-related concept. Dependency theories stem from the awareness that formal sovereignty did not bring much control for many countries in the Global South of their political processes (O'Donnell, 1973), and their class formation and 'associated-dependent' (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979) or 'crippled' economic structures (Senghaas, 1982), where the structural effects of global capitalism rules through the workings of states and firms (Dos Santos, 1970).

It is not by coincidence that most of these approaches are from what came to be called International Political Economy (IPE) in the late 1970s. They attribute power to non-state actors and indeed to structures like global capitalism. By doing so, they politicize economic relations whose effects are not God-given or natural, but the outcome of political struggles – struggles whose domination effects are left unseen in bargaining power approaches (Caporaso, 1978). In this way, IPE is not just about international economic relations; its focus on structural features of domination redefines the realm of world politics itself.

Yet, while these approaches undoubtedly enrich power analysis by including indirect institutional, non-intentional, and impersonal practices and processes, they also risk overloading the single concept of power in the analysis when trying to keep power as the main explanatory variable (Guzzini, 1993). William Riker once distinguished between power concepts that are informed either by necessary and sufficient or by recipe-like (manipulative) kinds of causality (Riker, 1964, pp. 346–348), or, put differently, power concepts driven by analyzing either outcomes or agency. Baldwin, following a manipulative idea of power, needed to heavily qualify the situational context to keep the causal link between certain policy instruments and their effect, i.e. power as influence – with the problem that such approaches tend to ignore non-manipulative factors in the analysis of power and domination. Structural power concepts include them, but then tend towards a necessary and sufficient explanation in which all that affects the asymmetrical outcome is not just related to power, but included into the concept of power itself, as if the whole analysis of power were to be done by the factor/variable of power.

This raises a series of broader concerns for understanding power. First, it is clear that power needs to be disentangled from the potential tautology of being both resources and their effects. Indeed, it is better thought neither as a resource nor as an event (influence), but as a disposition, i.e. a capacity to effect (Morriss, 2002 [1987]) that does not need to be realized to exist. Second, it seems that reducing political theory to explanatory theory played a bad trick: the phenomenon of power in its many ramifications gets shoehorned into power as a central explanatory

variable that is becoming the wider and more encompassing the more the analysis wishes to take the seemingly endless list of factors into account with which to understand political order. That invites for a strategy of decoupling the analysis of power relations and the concept of power: more factors than 'power' may enter into the analysis of power relations (Guzzini, 1993). But it could also imply something more fundamental, namely that power is not to be used as a causal explanatory variable at all. In this context, Peter Morriss writes that power statements '*summarise* observations; they do not *explain* them' (Morriss, 2002 [1987], pp. 44, emphasis in the original). Put differently, if it were to be used in explanations, the underlying vision of causality would have to be altered; a more dispositional understanding of causation in the social world would allow power a place in our explanatory theories that would turn multifinal or indeterminate (Guzzini, 2017b) and which would be applicable to both agential and structural effects. Also here, the concept/factor of power would not exhaust all there is to say about power relations.

THE POWER POLITICS OF CONSTITUTIVE PROCESSES: SOCIAL RECOGNITION, TECHNOLOGIES OF GOVERNMENT, AND PERFORMATIVITY

So far, power has been understood either as an agency concept that focuses on agent dispositions or asymmetrical effects of action in social relations, or as dispositions of structures, that systematically mobilize biases, dis/empower agents materially, authorize their acts, and make certain actions un/thinkable in the first place. The rise of constructivism and post-structuralism and the establishment of International Political Sociology (IPS) pushes power analysis to take these relational and constitutive processes a step further. What distinguishes these approaches to power in IR is the different underlying process ontology and a social relationism that 'presumes a non-essentialist view of social reality' (Bially Mattern, 2008, p. 696). A relational ontology takes its starting point not from units as fixed items which then interact, but from the relations through which their actual properties are continuously constituted (for IR, see Jackson & Nexon, 1999; Guillaume, 2007; Qin, 2018). The analysis focuses on the profoundly political processes that constitute subjects, their identities as well as material and intersubjective contexts, i.e. 'how the world is made up', in which power appears as an emergent property of such relations and processes (Berenskoetter, 2007, p. 15). This ontological shift characterizes three different research agendas in contemporary power analysis.

A first research line reframes the understanding of power in a more sociological analysis through a theory of action that is no longer utilitarian but based on the fundamental role of social recognition. The analysis of power is based on a certain vision of human nature, in that humans are viewed as profoundly social, their very identity being constituted through the multiple spheres of recognition in which they live. This means, however, that power does not come out of a given drive that finds its expression in asymmetrical social interaction but resides in the constitutive

processes that make up the identity of international actors and 'govern' the practices that define membership and status in international society.

Second, the Foucauldian lineage of power analysis connects power analysis back to political theory. There, rather than seeing in the evaporation of agency control a sign of diminishing power, it looks at the mechanisms that keep the order together, or the 'technologies of government' where government is to be understood as all that which provides political order.

Finally, a third research line, often informed by the previous two, deals with our understanding of power when connected to the idea of the construction of social reality. There, power analysis is tied to the study of performativity, that is, the way discursive practices help create the subject they presuppose, as is prominent, for instance, in feminist theories, and in the study of reflexivity, i.e. the interaction between our knowledge and the social world. Perhaps unexpectedly, it is this line which connects power analysis back to the world of diplomatic and other international practice, since it looks at the social conventions that establish proxies for power and the power of those conventions in world politics.

Having connected explanatory theories with both political theory and practice, this can be seen as a return to the initial realist concern with the nature of politics and order. It surely improves on the links between the three domains. But it risks repeating a realist fallacy. Whereas it is arguably correct to see power always connected to politics, not all politics is always connected or reducible to power. Seeing power not only as coercive but also productive should neither invite us to reduce all politics to it, nor to turn power into the meta-physical prime-mover of all things political.

The power politics of recognition and identity

As mentioned above, IPS is a second answer to the attempt to theorize domination not reducible to a theory of action. In this tradition, power in world politics is not about steering capacity and agent influence. It is about the informal and often tacit ways in which order and hierarchy (stratification) is produced. Rather than seeing in soft and normative power simply mechanisms of institutionalization and socialization, it sees in them identity-constituting processes that end up constituting the borders of international society and its authorized members.

In a first research agenda in IPS, power is framed not within a utilitarian theory of action but in a social theory of recognition (Pizzorno, 2007, 2008). Using recognition for theorizing action and society can be derived from a series of sociological traditions, such as from George Herbert Mead (1934) and Alfred Schutz (1964) to Berger and Luckmann (1966), from Ricoeur (2004), or from different post-Hegelian traditions (Honneth, 1992, 2010; Taylor, 1989, 1992) and has informed IR scholars ever since the sociological turn (e.g. Ringmar, 1996, 2002). There are two social theories of recognition that have been prominent in the re-thinking of power relations in IR: Bourdieu's field theory and Goffman's symbolic interactionism, in particular his approach to stigma.

Bourdieu's is still primarily a theory of domination organized around three fundamental concepts: habitus, practice, and field, which constitute each other (for a succinct presentation, see Guzzini, 2000, pp. 164–169; Leander, 2008). Bourdieu's concept of capital is the closest to the concept of power, sometimes used interchangeably. But it is only one element in the more general theory and analysis of domination (for a more detailed analysis, see Bigo, 2011; Guzzini, 2013c). For the present purpose, it is important to stress Bourdieu's relational understanding of power that is closely tied to phenomena of recognition. Hierarchies in fields are constituted by the distribution of capitals that are specifically relevant to the field. As previous relational approaches to power, Bourdieu's theory of capital is relational in that it is never only in the material or ideational resource itself, but in the cognition and recognition it encounters in agents sharing the field and constantly negotiating their status within the field. Yet Bourdieu adds a further intersubjective component, since his relational analysis of power always insists on the complicity, or, as he sometimes prefers to call it, the connivance that exists between the dominating and the dominated. For this, he mobilizes a theory of symbolic action and symbolic power. Symbolic capital is the form which any capital will take if it is recognized in a strong sense, i.e. perceived through those very conceptual categories which are, however, themselves informed by the distribution of capitals in the field (Bourdieu, 1994, pp. 117, 161). 'Doxic subordination' is hence the effect of this symbolic violence, a subordination which is neither the result of coercion or asymmetrical interdependence nor of conscious consent, let alone a social contract, but of a mis(re)cognition (*méconnaissance*). It is a symbolic, and hence most effective, form of power. It is based on the unconscious adjustment of subjective structures (categories of perception) to objective structures. And so, according to Bourdieu, the analysis of 'doxic acceptance' is the 'true fundament of a realist theory of domination and politics' (Bourdieu with Wacquant, 1992, pp. 143, my translation).

The initial usage of Bourdieu in IR had applied such misrecognition to the field of world politics itself, indeed to its very constitutive practices as applied by its realist elite. From early on, Richard Ashley tied the understanding of power to a social theory based on how relations and recognition constitute agency (Ashley, 1984, p. 259). Ashley tried to understand the specificity of international governance by using Bourdieu's phrase of the 'conductorless orchestration of collective action and improvisations' (Ashley, 1989, p. 255). He argued that, despite realist claims to the contrary, there is an international community under anarchy – and that it exists in the very realists who deny its existence (Ashley, 1987). This community is all the more powerful in the international system as its theoretical self-description conceals its very existence by informing the common sense, shared in particular among practitioners: the power of the common sense.

In IR, a Bourdieusian analysis of how such recognition and misrecognition empowers certain agents has been applied to the study of international elites and the constitution of certain (expert) fields (e.g. Bigo, 1996). Anna Leander has shown how in the military field, commercial actors are not just empowered in a trivial sense by having become more prominent, but how misrecognition has endowed them with *epistemic power* (Leander, 2005, pp. 811–12) – Bourdieu calls it *épistémocratique*

(Bourdieu, 2000, p. 100) – that locks the field (temporarily) into a new *doxa* (Leander, 2011). This *doxa* authorizing arguments and turning symbolic the capital of commercial agents provides, in turn, a vision and division of the worlds that ‘categorically’ pre-empts ways to press for the accountability of commercial security forces (Leander, 2010). Similar Bourdieu-inspired power analyses have focused on the ‘doxic battles’ (Berling, 2012; Senn & Elhardt, 2013) or the ‘never-ending struggle for recognition as competent in a given practice’ (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot, 2014, p. 894). Such struggles are always embedded in the logic of practice that constitutes the field: actors try to win a game whose rules they accept by playing it. Ole Jacob Sending (2015) combines these approaches by showing how authority is not given to an actor but the outcome of a continuous competition for recognition. The so constituted authority defines, in turn, what is to be governed, how, and why. Consequently, power phenomena enter this type of analysis twice: hierarchies within fields are a power phenomenon in themselves, while being constituted by the power politics in the practices of recognition.

Bourdieu’s (1989) analysis of symbolic power is closely connected to his concern with the power of classifications (the visions and divisions of the world). Classifications literally make up the social world by organizing the social space and hence its hierarchy, and by interacting with agent identity and indeed their body (Bourdieu, 1980, pp. 117–134). In the analysis of world politics, this has been picked up mainly through Irving Goffman’s (1963) analysis of stigmatization. Ayşe Zarakol (2011, 2014) shows how Turkey’s, Japan’s, and Russia’s integration into the norms of (initially: European) international society interacts with their state identity. Stigmatization is a process constitutive of international society, its hierarchy, and its in/exclusions. At the same time, any state recognized as not yet normal or inferior within international society will experience ontological insecurity in the state’s self-understandings. Consequently, all action is necessarily informed by stigma-coping mechanisms, defiantly accepting, negotiating, or rejecting the stigma, but never being able to avoid it (see also Adler-Nissen, 2014).

Power practices understood through their interaction with identity processes are also fundamental for Janice Bially Mattern’s concept of ‘representational force’ (Bially Mattern, 2001, 2005b, 2005a). If identity is crucial for interest formation, then it is only a small step to analysing how diplomatic practices, whether intended or not, can end up blackmailing actors by taking profit from contradictions in another actor’s self-understandings or between its action and self-representation.

The social ontology of this approach where the other is part of the self, and where action is driven by the need for recognition, thus gives rise to different practices and processes of domination.

Technologies of government

Foucault reached the analysis of power in IR in the late 1980s and early 1990s (e.g. Ashley & Walker, 1990; Keeley, 1990; DuBois, 1991; Manzo, 1992). Foucault’s political theory revises Weber, and his empirical analysis translates Goffmanian sensibilities into a study of discourses and performativity, where discursive practices help create the subject they presuppose. The Weberian lineage is most

visible in Foucault's political theory which can be seen as a new take on Weber's *stählernes Gehäuse* (Weber, 1904/1920 [2016], p. 171), initially translated as 'Iron Cage', where the development of (Western) capitalism and rationalism created a new modern subject, both emancipated and curtailed. It is the answer to a conservative paradox in modernity: how can the emancipation and empowerment of the citizen lead to more order and control in modern societies?

Here, Foucault develops a dual analysis of modern government. On the one hand, it analyses the interaction between 'regimes of truth' and order, that is, the way in which government is increasingly a set of practices based on knowledge to administer public and private life, using general 'stat(e)'istics and offering services on their base. On the other hand, in a more Goffmanian vein, it looks at the way these regimes of truth, be it in medicine, psychology, education, penal law, etc., establish the 'normal' and 'deviant', classifications that interact with the subjects who take on themselves their own control to stay within the accepted. Government consists in constituting the subject through which, in turn, it achieves order (e.g. Foucault, 1975, p. 223ff.). A branch of postcolonial studies took its inspiration from Foucault for the understanding of how imperial knowledge, for instance in the form of 'Orientalism', constituted the colonial 'other' as a 'lamentably alien' subject in the first place, making it governable, legitimating its governance, within which the subaltern participates in its own subjugation (Said, 2003 [1979], respectively at pp. 94, 97, 207 (quote), 325).

It is not fortuitous that Foucault's analysis of power comes in terms of 'government', which is also a semantic component of the French *pouvoir* (and not *puissance*). Its focus is on the changing mechanisms and technologies in the provision of political order. It shares this focus on order with classical realists but takes a completely different approach. It does not base its analysis in the human lust for power or the inevitable clash of wills, all given before the analysis. The ubiquity of power is not to be found in the struggle for resources that define human relations, but in the impersonal processes that constitute the subjects and their relations in the first place (Brown & Scott, 2014).

Such an approach to government makes the study of world governance its most obvious field in IR. And yet, such study has been mainly conducted in a Weberian way within neo-liberal institutionalism (for a comprehensive reconstruction, see Zürn, 2018). This school tends to think governance mainly in terms of agency (who governs?), scope (what?), and normative content (for what?), raising issues of the various networks of actions, their steering capacity, and their legitimacy and contestation. Foucauldian approaches see governance constituted by its mechanisms (how?) (for a discussion of these four problematiques of governance, see Guzzini, 2012), be they the political economy of populations, the constitution of insurance and risk management (Lobo-Guerrero, 2011, 2012, 2016) or, indeed, the governmentality constituted by the increasing globalization of the fields of practice within which subjects subject themselves to varied 'techniques of the self' (Bayart, 2004). It is through the analysis of those rationalities of government that one can understand agency and scope in the first place.

Such a focus on modes and mechanisms problematizes governance differently. First, it does not assume a public realm (the states), markets, and civil society as something given prior to analysis, but studies how liberal rationalities of order have diffused and enmeshed all of them, producing Hybrid Authority (for a more IPE inspired analysis, see Graz, 2019). Firms have to comply with corporate social responsibility and the state apparatus to becoming efficient in terms of New Public Management. By inventing new indices of productivity, such neo-liberal practices constitute the public realm as a firm-like actor in the first place. And order is achieved through ever-new standards and accounting devices which work through their very acceptance by, for example, governments that need to be rendered 'accountable' in such a way (Löwenheim, 2008; Fougner, 2008).

For the same reason, Foucauldian analysis of NGOs insists that, rather than seeing in this global civil society an anti-power or new power, 'it is it is an expression of a changing logic or rationality of government (defined as a type of power) by which civil society is redefined from a passive object of government to be acted upon into an entity that is both an object and a subject of government' (Neumann & Sending, 2010, pp. 6, 17). Rather than comparing the relative power for the assessment of rank and hierarchy, an analysis of governmentality concentrate on the new mechanisms through which (self-)regulated behaviour, and hence order, is achieved. And here, NGOs are not necessarily a barrier to government located out there with some hegemonic actors; they are themselves, perhaps unwittingly, part of it (Lipschutz, 2005; Hynek, 2008; in a less Foucauldian vein, see Bartelson, 2006).

Power as convention: performative and reflexive power analysis

IPS reconnects not only with the political theory of the nature of order and government but also with the practical concern of its use in world politics. Classical realists plead for prudence in the always indeterminate assessment of power to deal with 'the most fundamental problem of politics, which is not the control of wickedness but the limitation of righteousness' (Kissinger, 1957, p. 206). Akin to previous traditions in peace research, IPS scholars invite practitioners to reflect and potentially counter the discourses and often self-fulfilling processes that constitute and perpetuate social facts. It does not recoil, as classical realists did, from drawing out the implications of the conventional nature of international politics. Confronted with the missing fungibility of resources and the unavailable objective measure of power, Hedley Bull merely declared that an 'overall' concept of power used for comparisons, is 'one we cannot do without' (Bull, 1977, p. 114) and pursued the analysis. IPS was to follow on who that 'we' is.

For while there is no objective measure of power, there are social conventions with which power is measured. The understanding of power is not established by the observer, but by the actor. It becomes a social convention. Diplomats must first agree on what counts before they can start counting (Guzzini, 1998, p. 231). And those conventions are hence the effect of negotiations within the diplomatic field and its processes of recognition and, in turn, constitute technologies of government themselves. Understandings of power inform practices and vice versa. Discourses

of power are both performative in that they intervene in the social world and reflexive in that such practices re-affect those discourses.

This practical component of 'power' has evolved with political discourse, at least in Western traditions. There are two prominent reasons why practitioners cannot do without an overall concept of power, namely the link of power to responsibility and the conventions of hierarchy which tie rank or status to power.

In our political discourse, the notion of power is attached to the idea of the 'art of the possible', identifying agency and attributing responsibility (Connolly, 1974, chap. 3). If there were no power, nothing could be done, and no one could be blamed for it. Therefore, reconceptualizations of power, both among observers and practitioners, often have the purpose of widening what falls into the realm of power in order to attribute agency and responsibility. Things were not inevitable; not doing anything about it requires public justification. Here the ontological stance of the entire section meets a purpose of power analysis. An ontology that focuses on the constitution of things historicizes and denaturalizes issues (Hacking, 1999, pp. 6–7). And in showing how the present was not inevitable, it drags into the open the domination that goes into, and the modes of legitimation that follow, social facts. For instance, attributing power to the social fact of gender and the dispositions sedimented in gender scripts denaturalizes their role in the existing sexual stratification and in its reproduction. In short, in our political discourse, attributing power politicizes issues (Guzzini, 2000, 2005; for an early statement, see Frei, 1969).

A second reason why diplomats cannot do without the overall concept of power is the established convention of organizing international society according to different strata, where 'great powers' have special responsibilities but also privileges, the most important being 'exemptionalism' and impunity. Here, rules, which apply to all others, may apply to them only at their discretion. To establish this special status, proxies of power are agreed to. As in Bourdieu's field of power, where the conversion rates between different forms of capital are (socially) established (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 56), the overall hierarchy is the result of an ever-ongoing fight to establish the rates of convertibility and hence hierarchy of capitals and social groups. It is the struggle for the 'dominating principle of domination' (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 34).

This interaction between our conventions of what counts as power and political practice, be it rank or behaviour, works both ways. Joseph Nye's concept of soft power was meant not only to describe international relations but to influence them. If all actors agreed on this understanding of power for attributing rank, then political competition would be about movies and universities, not military bases and economic exploitation. The understanding of power, if shared, changes social reality, here the very nature of world politics. In reverse, countries who may wish to influence the conventions can also do this through their acts and their recognition. This is only logical for an actor trying to foster a convention for proxies of power that fit its profile. When Russia privileges hard power and its exercise, downplaying economic welfare or human rights and inciting behaviour that strengthens this understanding, it influences the conventions to its benefit. The

more others react in kind, the better. One of the reasons, it is so keen on its 'sphere of influence' is that such a sphere allows it to do things which otherwise would be forbidden. And it makes Russia equal to others who claim such a sphere (for instance, the 'Western Hemisphere' for the US). And precisely because international society knows that impunity is a proxy for rank, it applies economic sanctions and other measures. They are symbolic means in that they are not meant to return matters to the status quo. Yet they are very important ones, expressing a refusal to accept someone as a member of that limited club which has discretion in applying social rules. Obviously, such discretion and acceptance of impunity as a proxy for rank can only thrive when it is shared as a 'gentlemen's agreement' within the club, as during colonial times.

CONCLUSION

Even if careful scholarly discussion can discard some conceptualizations of power, there is no one root concept which we can unravel simply by digging deeper. Concepts derive their meanings from the theories in which they are embedded, like words in a language, and meet there the meta-theoretical or normative divides that plague and enrich our theorizing. Power is particularly complicated since it is a concept deemed important not only across different explanatory theories with their underlying and conflicting ontologies, but also across different domains from philosophy to the lifeworld of the practitioner. It is perhaps not surprising that the realist tradition, in IR and elsewhere, has focused on power as a privileged way to link these three domains. This may indeed be one of its defining characteristics.

Initially, realist writings combined the domains of political theory, centred on the understanding of order in the polity, with the domain of explanatory theory by assuming that, in the absence of a genuine world polity, the analysis of capabilities and influence was all there could be, and a political practice based on power and prudence. Yet having reduced much of power analysis to the disciplinary expectations of a US social science, in particular political theory fell by the wayside. Liberal and structural scholars exposed the weaknesses in realist power analysis, from the fungibility assumption to the double link between agent resources to influence and from there to a balance of power, which subsumed domination under action. They redefined the causal (or not) role for power, be it at the agent or the structural level. Finally, with the post-structuralist and constructivist turn, the analysis of power returns to the links between the three domains of ontology, understanding/explanation, and practice through the analysis of the power in the processes that constitute social facts and hierarchical subject positions.

Yet, what all these approaches risk is falling into the trap of a realist fallacy. It may well be that power is intrinsically connected to politics and the political, but not all politics can be reduced to power. Like geopolitical thinkers before (for a critique, see Aron, 1976), Foucault has reversed Clausewitz's famous dictum that war is but the prolongation of politics by other means, with the effect of making war the

default position of the political.² But this can hardly account for all conceptions (and some would add: for the reality) of politics. Hannah Arendt, for instance, a thinker close to the realist tradition for not propping her theory up by a banister or for having any post-totalitarian illusion about human nature (Isaac, 1992; Kalyvas, 2008; Strong, 2012), strongly criticized the tendency 'to reduce public affairs to the business of dominion'. And while 'power is indeed of the essence of all government', she had redefined power in way to make it the 'opposite' to violence, namely the 'human ability to act in concert' (Arendt, 1969, respectively at pp. 44, 51, 56, 44). Her take on politics offers a way to include solidarity into our understanding of politics (Allen, 1998, pp. 35–37; 2002, p. 143). She unties the link between power and violence in the realist tradition, whether classical or Foucauldian, and hence the reduction of politics to the means or technologies of control. And, as any reflexive analysis immediately realizes, this geopolitical or Foucauldian reversal of Clausewitz is a self-fulfilling prophecy by producing what its discourses presupposes (see the analysis of 'ontogenetic war' in Bartelson, 2018) and hence hardly prudent advice for political practice.

This fallacy is but an expression of the temptation that emanates from 'power' for the understanding of world politics. It is the temptation of a shortcut, where the concept of power is conflated with the analysis of all power phenomena, from symbolic violence to dependency, and where the ontology of power encompasses all there is to the nature of politics. In doing so, power is either taken not seriously enough, or too much so. Realist explanations in IR have not taken power seriously enough by having one of its most reductionist understandings, as witnessed by the many critiques and developments discussed above. At the same time, the political realist tradition has played a bad trick in that it tacitly smuggles into international theory the thinking of politics only in terms of struggle and domination. Power analysis in world politics needs to both apprehend power in its comprehensive nature for its analysis and qualify the role of power in its understanding of politics.

² Given Foucault's own critique of the reduction to command and obedience (as in the Weberian realist tradition) and his nominalist understanding of power (Foucault, 1976, pp. 113, 123), the reversal of Clausewitz is not uncritical, and surely less so than in some later followers.

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