Conceptualising Power in International Politics: Theories and Meanings

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "**Conceptualising Power in International Politics: Theories and Meanings**" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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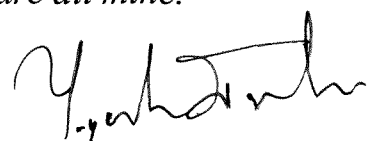
The true credit for this work goes to my teachers; errors are all mine.



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Chapter 1

Introduction

The concept of power in International Relations, as in any other domain of Social Sciences, is an 'essentially contested concept' (Gallie 1956). It is not only hard to pin down power in definitional terms but also to empirically analyse the workings of power. Different theoretical schools locate power in different domains. In other words, the forms, bases and uses of power are essentially dependent upon the theoretical standpoints from which the concept of power is analysed. These differences engender from metaphysical as well as substantive claims which a theory seeks to purport. Ontological and epistemological commitments leads to myriad narratives of power, which though may not be highly exclusive of each other, still embody substantial differences and lead to multiple conclusions about social phenomena.

This study aims to ground the concept of power within the major theoretical impulses – Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism – in the discipline of International Relations. Situating power in the major narratives of international relations may help us to understand the similarities and differences among the major theoretical schools. This kind of an exercise is unique since it involves a particular concept- in this case 'power' – as a heuristic devise to unravel the necessary apparatus which underlie theoretical endeavour. It may also generate some traction among those who seek meeting points between different theoretical enterprises.

However, this exercise is not merely an idealistic academic enterprise to score brownie points in the abstract realm of international relations. The centrality of the concept of power in international relations and rapidly unfolding character of power in global politics further underlines the importance of such a study. In the rapidly changing space of international political discourse, power appears in highly polymorphous forms. Though there is no doubt that in a highly interdependent world characterized by increasingly sophisticated patterns of global governance,

devolution of power is taking place and power is increasingly taking a cross-cutting role, it is still hard to prognosticate the level of dispersal of power, both vertically as well as horizontally, in the domain of international politics. The actors and sites involved in power relationships are expanding underlined by the trans-governmental networks, international institutions and international legal personalities. However, world has also never witnessed such a concentration of power than the years after the Cold War and more so after 9/11 where the world hegemon resorted to extreme unilateral action. These developments are self-contradictory and lead astray any astute political observer of power phenomena in the contemporary world. Understanding global outcomes necessitates a more robust typology of power where the transformations taking place in the contemporary international relations should be appropriately contextualized. Another phenomena which beckons serious analysis is the disconnect between capabilities and outcomes. The situations in Iraq and Afghanistan are just concrete reflections of what Baldwin calls the paradoxes of power.

Hence, theoretically and at a very substantive level, an informed understanding of what power means and how it works in international political space is an imperative. The proposed study seeks to understand the concept of power in international relations by locating the specific meanings which power holds for three major schools of thought in the field. Such an exercise would involve use of power as a heuristic device to understand the metaphysical as well as substantive claims which these theories seek to purport.

Power in Social and Political Thought

What is power? The answer to this question has been both a cherished objective and nuisance for people involved in social and political thought. Power was a central concept in the Athenian understanding of politics. They divided power into *nomos* and *hubris*. Whereas the latter referred to individual's glorification, and hence was illegitimate, the former was the power of the law and therefore, legitimate (Houggard and Clegg 2009). Aristotle used power to classify systems of governance and produced a six-fold typology of governmental structures. For

Machiavelli, the flows and movements of power are essential for the prince to maintain its domination and control over the subjects. According to Fontana, following the Hellenic tradition, he subsumes the legitimacy and illegitimacy of power into the categories of success and failure encountered in the exercise of power (Fontana 1993). Hobbes on the other hand, concentrated power in the sovereign which in turn empowered the individual but this was only possible through social contract (Schmidt 2007). The contract itself was an embodiment of power of the individual who has abdicated its personal power for the sake of the leviathan. Power, in its ultimate form, was sovereign in nature and it was the sovereign who could employ violence and coercion to maintain its monopoly over the individuals. Weber, however, was the first to provide a working definition of power. According to him, A has power over B, if A can alter B's behaviour, even under resistance (Weber 1978). He also explicated difference between raw power and legitimate power. For the former, he used the word *Macht* (power); the later he called *Herrschaft* (domination).

The cursory glimpse of political thought which enveloped the concept of power, as used by these thinkers, leaves many questions unanswered. How is power legitimate and illegitimate? What is the difference between coercion and authority? Corresponding to the ubiquitous agent-structure debate in Social Sciences is power a systemic phenomenon or can individuals also possess power? Is power a capacity or a relationship? Are intentions intrinsic to the concept of power or can power be exercised without explicit intentions to do so? What is the difference between force and authority?

These questions provoked a series of debates among sociologists and political scientists. Most famous of these debates which the concept of power has witnessed over the century is the so called dimensions debate, neatly summarized by Lukes as the 'three dimensions of power' debate. It all started with the work of Robert Dahl who defined power as 'control of behaviour'. According to Dahl, A has power over B, if A can make B do something which B would not have otherwise done (Dahl 1961). Clearly the definition has an empirical undertone and Dahl was working well within the ambits of behaviouralism, prevalent in USA at that point of time. The conclusions which Dahl reached by employing his understanding of

power was a pluralist one: power is equally divided among the major actors in a democratic set up because they all have capability to influence decision making. This was challenged by Bachrach and Baratz, who focused their attention on non-decision making as a source of power (Bachrach and Baratz 1962; 1972). By focusing on agenda-setting, Bachrach and Baratz revealed the process through which the powerful can disallow debate on substantive issues inimical to their own interests not incorporating those issues in the agenda itself. Not deciding on certain issues is itself an act of power. However, Lukes added another face to this dimensions or faces of power argument (Lukes 2005). For him, decision making and non-decision making, though two very important facets of power, does not exhaust the possibilities of existence of power. The most sinister workings of power lie in the domain of artificial formation of interests. Towing Foucault's line, he argues that power works through streamlining the interests of the subjects of power with those of the powerful. Powerless pursue interests which are not their real interests. This corresponds well with the Marxian analogy of 'false consciousness. Since, people do not know their real interests they conceive the interests of the powerful as their own. This modification of desires, for him, is the ultimate form of power. Three important results followed for power analysis. First, power came to be accepted as a relational phenomenon that needs to be grasped within particular social relationships. This would eventually lead to what Sprout and Sprout called the power the 'policy-contingency framework' (Quoted in Baldwin 2005: 183). To understand power and its exercise, one needs to understand the scope, domain, weight, means and costs associated with exercise of power (Baldwin 2005). Second, conflict of interest became embedded in the power relationships. Following Weber, conflict became central to application of power and the fundamental interest in studying power was to understand how the powerful secure the compliance of the weak by overcoming or averting their opposition (Lukes 2005: 34)

Another debate which characterizes power scholarship is the 'power to' and 'power over' debate. Gerhard Gohler has termed this debate as ground-breaking (Gohler 2009). His reasons are: first, that before this debate surfaced the complex concept of power was hard to disentangle into something precise and conclusive, and second, that it has helped in discovering new characteristics of power. So what

exactly the 'power over' and 'power to' debate brings on the power analysis table? The answer would require digging into those arguments which followed Weber's exposition on power. Weber's conception of power, as has been delineated above, is one in which conflict is intrinsic to the exercise of power. His focus on resistance in the power relationship makes this dimension explicitly clear. Even one commentator has proposed resistance to acts of power as a measurement of power itself. In Weber, power can only be exercised over others. There always needs to be a subject (over which power is exercised) and a principal (who exercise power). Power relationships were by necessity a zero-sum game. Power for one would be mean constrain on the other. Sociologists such as Parson and Hannah Arendt disagreed. For them, cooperation lies at the heart of power, not conflict. Power, as in their conception, was an ability to act together and constitutes the society itself. Power, in its essence was a productive relation, not a conflictual one. This difference between conceptualizing power as productive or a constraining factor is the difference between 'power to' and 'power over'. Another way of locating this debate is to conceive 'power to' as capability to act i.e. power as resource or property and 'power over' as actual exercise of power i.e. power as relationship. This goes well with Aron's formulation, by semantically differentiating the two concepts, of power as *Puissance* and *Pouvoir.* Whereas *puissance* in French means power as a capability, *Puovoir* is specific to act of power (Aron 2003). However, it has been hard to figure out how to disentangle the idea of power as property and power as a relationship. As Gerhard Gohler puts it," 'Power over' can only be effective if it exists as a potential- on the other hand, the mere potential of power remains undefined and therefore non-existent until it is realized and becomes visible in social relations" (Gohler 2009: 31). This tension between power as an ability to act and power as an actual exercise continues to embattle power scholarship to this date.

International Relations and Power

Power has been a defining attribute of international politics (Cerny 2009). Whereas within the domestic politics, relations of power have been considered to be integrally bestowed in the sovereign and therefore, sorted out, international politics constitutes a space in which power dynamics is intercursive in nature. Intercursive power relations are characterized by a power balance of power and there exists a division of scopes between the parties involved in the power relationship. Integral power, on the other hand, involves highly concentrated decision making and exercise of monopoly power (Baldwin 1983). The intercursive nature of power in the realm of international politics is a direct result of the anarchical nature of international relations where no integral authority exists. Relations of power constitute the bottom line of international politics. All other goals such as fairness, justice, equality, democracy and redistribution are trumped by power rivalries and only stabilized by balance of power amongst states (Little 2007). In fact, whereas in domestic realm power is considered as a means to pursue highest good of the individual; in international politics, narrow self-interests of the states constituting the international system define the workings of power.

The reason for this dichotomous conceptualization of power flows from a number of assumptions fundamental to the construction of international Relations as a discipline (Cerny 2009). First, the absence of a world government makes the system one of self-help and provides power with a primordial priority in the relations between states and especially of raw force or military power. Second maintaining the Aristotelian logic that principles of justice and friendship operate within the states, the goals pursued within the sovereign space and amongst sovereigns are considered to be fundamentally different. Third major difference exists in the organization of power. Whereas power within the state is hierarchically organized, power is diffused in the international system and is intercursively maintained. In brevity, bases, forms and uses of power in international politics are fundamentally different from that of domestic politics.

This conception of role of power in international politics is basically a realist one.

Power as the most important determinant in inter-state relationships and a crucial factor in the dynamics of war and peace has been the realist mantra from the time of the Thucydides (Schmidt 2007). For realists, calculations of power lie at the heart of how states behave in their external environment (Mearshimer 2001). Morgenthau and E. H. Carr can be considered to be the quintessential realists who were the first to systematically treat the concept of power in international relations. In fact, the first great debate between the utopians and the realists made power the most important explanatory variable in international political discourse. Carr in his scathing critique of utopian illusion of harmony of interest makes explicit the power hierarchies inherent in utopian peace (Carr 1964). For Carr, the peace has always been a by-product of power. Though, Carr agrees that power is indivisible, he still considers power basically in terms of economic and military strength and in the form of propaganda. Military power, for him is the ultimate form of power, since ultima ratio of power in international relations is war (Carr 1964: 199).

Morgenthau defined power as the influence or domination of one man over another which flows from basic human tendencies to dominate (Morgenthau 1954). 'Lust for power' is driven by both desire to survive and desire to dominate: the *animus dominandi*, though he placed more importance on the latter (Morgenthau 1946: 192). In other words, the hunger for power lies in the evil nature of human beings themselves. In Morgenthau, power is both a proximate goal for states as well as a universal means for attaining objectives which state set their eyes on (Aron 1986). He also makes a distinction between threat of use of force and its actual use. Actual use of force, for Morgenthau is not an exercise of power rather its ultimate collapse (Aron 1986). For classical realists, power became the essence of international politics. The human 'lust for power' was just projected on the international plane and hence, international politics became power politics as all other domains of human relationships. This perpetual struggle for power was characterized by the only law of international politics: the balance of power. Since, there was no way to calculate the relative distribution of power, all nations seek to balance each other by maximizing their own (Morgenthau 1954: 155).

Structural Realism of Kenneth Waltz shifted the focus of the source of power struggles in international politics from idiosyncratic nature of human species to the

very structure of international politics (Waltz 1979). Evil, which explained perpetual power struggles for classical realists, was replaced by tragedy in structural politics as a source of competition for power, amongst states (Schmidt 2007: 53). By substituting human nature with the condition of anarchy, Waltz argued that survival rather than the quest of power is what drives state behaviour in international relations. This resolved the contradiction in Morgenthau's assertion that power, for states, is both a proximate objective as well as a means for attaining other goals. Waltz relinquished power to the domain of means and heralded survival as the goal of the state. However, Waltz conception of power lacks an explicit definition of power. Whatever he says about power resembles the idea of power as a resource rather than a relationship. He supports a lump-sum conception of power which primarily depends on overall capabilities of states. For Waltz, "size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence" are domains in which states have to score in order to aggregate power (Waltz 1979: 131). Since power as a resource brings forth the problem of unrealized power or what David Baldwin has called the 'the paradox of unrealized power', there is also present a probabilistic conception of power in Waltzian thesis. According to Waltz, "an agent is powerful to the extent that he affects others more than others affect him" (Waltz 1979: 131). For Waltz, powerful are powerful because they most often get their ways. "The stronger get their ways- not always but more often than others"- argues Waltz (Waltz 1993). In Neorealism, power plays an extremely crucial role and accounts for most of the explanatory capacity of the neorealist theory. The third principle of international structure- the relative distribution of capabilities- is the most important of all explanatory variables or one can say the only one. Distributions of capabilities define the structure of the system, and therefore stability of the system and the nature of alliances. However, Mearsheimer, though accepting the structural logic of Waltz, still prefers power as the ultimate goal in international politics (Mearsheimer 2001). His theory, called offensive realism, purports that the structure forces states to amass power since it is hard to understand the exact nature of balance of power and there is always a problem of comprehending the ultimate intentions of other players.

Neo-classical realism or which Schmidt has called modified realism accepts that

international politics is a continuous struggle for power. However, the source of this power struggle not only emanate from anarchy but also from the nature of states and they seek to explain the behaviour of states by locating explanatory variables in the nature of domestic regimes, decision- makers perceptions, lobbies and special interest groups working within the confine of domestic political space etc. (Schweller 2004; Zakaria 1998; Rose 1998).

However, new questions have enveloped the concept of power with the emergence of new patters of change in international system. Cerny locates four of these changes (Cerny 2009). First is the emergence of global governance. Global governance structures and processes do not have direct sanctioning power or what Barnett and Duvall would call 'compulsory power' (Barnett and Duvall 2005). They have rather diffuse character and would correspond well with Luke's third dimension of power. Second, the goals of states are changing rapidly. These goals reflect new political, social and economic values. Fairness, justice and equality which the conventional notions of power had side-lined to the margins of international politics are now considered as legitimate and pursued as national interests. Third, reorganization of power is taking place in cross-cutting, transnational ways. To locate authority with any particular actor is increasingly becoming difficult. Fourth, the use of force and violence is being questioned heavily. In Cerny's words " the international system is undergoing a fundamental process of structural change that is transforming the way power is conceived, shaped, built-up and used" (Cerny 2009).

This transformation in the conceptualisation of power can be seen in liberal and constructivist discourse. Liberals challenge the state-centric, power driven conceptualization of international politics by the realists and underline the importance of markets, interdependence, trans-governmental networks, international institutions and international law as mitigating the nature of international politics as a site of struggle for power especially quest for military power. In fact, the conventional nature of power politics, according to liberal school of thought, is changing in radical ways. According to Cerny, for liberals, the transnational market forces have been the most important source of this change, which by creating range of norms, practices, policies and institutions spin new

webs of power within, below as well as across borders (Cerny 2009).

Peter Morris in his discussion on *Power and Liberalism* juxtaposes power with freedom. He argues that whereas freedom in liberal discourse has a non-specific value of its own in so much that there is an underlying moral component in the liberal conception of freedom, which is not to be found in the liberal conception of power (Morris 2009). He argues that liberalism portrays freedom and power in a positive correlation: freedom is considered synchronous with ability which is in turn considered as a measure of power. Mitchell Dean has a different conception of the relationship between power and liberty (Dean 2009). Whereas neo-liberalism considers power to operate by shaping of liberty and through the exercise of choice, neo-paternalism is an exercise of power which seeks to shape a specific form of freedom by means of close supervision and detailed administration of the individual. The authority of democratic peace and hence, the authorization of waging wars on the pretext of establishing democracies would correspond to the exercise of power through the neo-paternalism, whereas complex interdependence would correspond to neo-liberal conceptions of inter-state relationships entered voluntarily. Dean's emphasis is however on the juridical relationship between power and liberty. If one takes note of Isaiah Berlin's conception of negative liberties, power and liberty would appear antithetical to each other. However, argues Dean, in the relationship between the sovereign and the individual, the condition of power is the condition of freedom itself. By giving away the right of individual freedom or power to the sovereign, the individual enjoys more liberty or power in the form of community liberty- the greater good of all. This juridical conception of liberty corresponds well with Parson and Arendt conception of productive values of power.

In International relations, the idea of complex interdependence is mostly related with neoliberal institutionalism (Keohane and Nye 1989). Keohane and Nye, in their book *Power and Interdependence* , mainly argue the loss of state as a the ultimate unit of analysis and of military power as the *ultima ratio* of international politics. The logic of interdependence, for them, changed the nature of power relationship in international politics. Power has not only shifted from states to trans-governmental actors, but also the nature of power has itself undergone

change. However, they still considered power to be an important element in international politics and also located asymmetrical interdependence as a major source of influence. Democratic Peace thesis negates the element of power as of any consequence between democracies (Doyle 1993). Though, close to the most empirically valid theory in the domain of international politics, democratic peace argument does not take into account the subtleties involved in relationship between democracies. Conflicts between democracies are not neglected but what is also not looked into is how the process of conflict- resolution is mired with power differentials, albeit of different kinds (Layne 1999).

Flowing from the third debate in the field of International Relations, the discipline today is basking under a sort of methodological pluralism, which Yosef Lapid so passionately argued for (Lapid 1989). The coming of sociological approaches, under the rubric of constructivism, has opened up new vistas for theory development with in the field. By bringing in the meta physical claims in the theory building enterprise, the constructivist turn in IR has made the discipline more self-conscious of its ontological (claims about existence) and epistemological claims(claims about what would constitute valid knowledge and the grounds for such claims).

Constructivism is rather a meta-physical commitment than an explicit theory of international relations (Guzzini 2007). Epistemologically constructivists believe in social construction of meanings and knowledge. In other words, the very facts which theories seek to further as evidence in support of their claims has no single meaning; facts have multiple meanings which depend upon the perceptions and values of the observer. Concomitant with this epistemological claim is an ontological claim: reality is not out there but is again socially constructed by the meanings which actors attribute to the environment around them. The third commitment of constructivist is to understand the dialectics between social construction of knowledge and social construction of reality under a reflexive gaze. This notion basically underlines the strong point of constructivism where by knowledge claims themselves constitute reality and claims over facts create social knowledge. For constructivist, power analysis is important for number of reasons, two of which have been explicitly recognized by Guzzini. For constructivist, there

is a connection between the idea of responsibility and the idea of power, to attribute power to an agent is to fix responsibility for her behaviour. This has also been argued by Lukes who argues that fixing responsibility is one of the main reasons why one seeks to understand the workings of power. Second, is to look at how attribution of power is directly relevant to the act of politicization. According to Guzzini, the "very concept of [power is fundamentally identical to the concept of the 'political' i.e., to include something as a factor of power in one's calculus, means to 'politicise' it" (Guzzini 2007:34). The cats of politicization and de-politicization are extremely important since this phenomenon decides which issues will be debated and which will be neglected. This conceptualization of power is synonymous with the second dimension of power as propounded by Bachrach and Baratz. For Lukes, this answers the question of who gains from power and this interest in locating power underlies the complex notion of exploitation.

Reflections on Method, Research Questions and Initial Hypothesis

Following Hollis and Smith, this study would seek to employ both explanatory tradition and understanding tradition or hermeneutics to situate power in the theoretical discourse of international politics (Hollis and Smith 1990). To separate the methodology neatly into either of these approaches is difficult since different theories work in different realms of knowledge. To study realism without appreciating the role of causal analysis would be as mistaken as to study constructivism without employing the hermeneutical tradition. The multiplicity of methodology would allow both an understanding of the knowledge claims, as they are made by theoretical schools and an independent analysis of these claims by the researcher himself. This study is primarily based upon secondary literature on power in the discipline of International Relations. However, by explicitly borrowing from notions of power from Sociology and Political Science, this study seeks to undertake an interdisciplinary approach to the problem of power in international politics.

There is hardly any doubt that Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism are the major theoretical approaches in the contemporary study of International Relations.

However, it is important to mention that above mentioned theories does not exhaust the theoretical boundaries of the discipline. The choice of studying the concept of power within these theoretical impulses is therefore determined by dearth of time and resources. Also, crucial is to disclaim pretence of theoretical unity within these schools of thought. As has been made a case in the review of literature, there are major cleavages within realism, liberalism and constructivism. However, the important point is that power as an analytical concept may help in making these intra-theoretical conflicts more explicit in nature.

The dissertation revolves around three basic questions. First question concerns the definitional aspects of the concept of power as defined by the three major schools – Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism – in international relations. This pertains to the importance of the concept of power in the explanatory logic of these three theoretical schools of thought in international relations. Why power is important in international politics therefore is one of the most basic question which this study seeks to address with the help of three fundamental theoretical pillars of contemporary international relations. Second question concerns with where these schools locate the sources of power. Differing ontological and epistemological assumptions regarding international politics within these schools provide a very disparate set of answers with respect to locations of power. This line of enquiry is crucial for locating the effects of the concept of power on international politics. Concepts define and construct our worlds and therefore, the way in which power is defined and its sources located in the international political space has tremendous influence on how international relations both as practice and an academic discipline is managed and regulated. Lastly, the dissertation is concerned with how different theoretical treatment of the concept of power in international relations is embedded in the larger 'faces of power' debate in social and political science. This is an important aspect of the study under process since the "three faces of power debate" is useful in locating the power debate in international relations in the context of similar debates over power in social and political science providing this study an interdisciplinary touch. .

Some preliminary observations warrant a discussion. At the onset, it appears that power in international relations is a polymorphous concept with multiple meanings

and these meanings depend on what initial assumptions a particular school of thought makes about the nature of international politics. In other words, metaphysical commitments interpellate the meanings of power. If this be so, it is more than obvious that conceptualisation of power in international relations would result in a number of differing and often incompatible notions but all equally reasonable. The epistemic validity of a particular conceptualisation of power as defined by the respective school of thought is hard to challenge due to difference in fundamental assumptions. In other words, metaphysical dissimilarities produce conceptual difference. Second, this characteristic – multiple meanings of the power concept – not only informs inter-theoretical space of the discipline but also considerable differences accompany the notion of power within particular theoretical traditions. Lastly, it also appears that the three schools of thought in question – Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism - fits neatly onto the three faces of power – direct coercion, agenda setting and manipulation of interest- respectively.

Organisation of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organised around an exercise of conceptualisation of power among the three major schools of thoughts – realism, liberalism and constructivism. To this end, the dissertation starts with a discussion situating the concept of power in realist thought. To start with realism on this course of action is not an innocent choice. Being the oldest of theoretical traditions in international relations, realism commands a venerable position in any dealings in the discipline of international relations. However, the most pressing reason is the fact that most other school of thoughts in international relations identify themselves in opposition to the basic tenets of realism. Realism has historically played the role of a springboard for the development of other theoretical schools in international relations. Therefore, to put in perspective other approaches, dealing with realism at the onset of the study can be extremely helpful. Since realism and its treatment of power would form the edifice of this chapter, this would entail a systematic account of power as present in the writings of realist thinkers in international politics. The chapter would discuss how and where all strands of realism –

Classical Realism, Neorealism and Neoclassical Realism – define and locate power in international politics. The chapter would further try to approach the problems in power research, as delineated in the earlier on the discussion on the concept of power in social and political science, through the theoretical lenses of realism. The second section deals with the second major school of thought in international relations – liberalism. Locating power is liberal discourse, this chapter would discuss the forms, bases and uses of power as perceived by the liberal mind. Seeking liberalism's light to excavate problems related to power research; this chapter would shed light on liberal conceptions of the role of power in international politics and concomitant problems associated with liberal power research. Following liberal account of power will be the constructivist narrative. Constructivist analysis of power would draw on a number of resources provided by the post-positivist turn in international relations for conceptualizing the role of power in international scene. Who are the power wielders and what does it mean to wield power is fundamental to constructivist notions and would form the basis of this chapter. Finally, the concluding section of this study will entail an assessment of Realist, Liberal and Constructivist postulations of power. This will render explicit the differences and similarities amongst these approaches to problems of power. It would also seek to shed some light on the possible meeting points between these theoretical approaches for a more unified study of power problematic.

Chapter 2

Realism and Power in International Politics

In the academic world of International Relations, political realism is the only theoretical model which can boast of a lineage of thought going back more than 2000 years in history. First witnessed in the narratives of great thinkers such as Kautilya, Sun Tzu and Thucydides in the ancient times, the realist tradition has continued to leave its impressions on international politics in the medieval as well as modern times. If Niccole Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes were the quintessential realist scholars during 13th and 16th century respectively, the modern protagonists of realism constitutes of famous names such as Hans Morgenthau, E. H. Carr, Reynold Niebuhr, Kenneth Waltz and John Mearshimer.

However despite this continuity of realist thought, it is surprising that realists disagree among themselves on a number of issues vital to an informed understanding of international politics. It is not only hard but literally impossible to try to obtain a monolithic narrative on realism. Realism at best is an umbrella term, a "big tent" as Elman puts it (1996: 26), which may said to be housing a number of different understandings of how international politics is carried out. Some calls it an "attitude of mind" (Garnet 1984: 110) and for some it represents "a philosophical disposition" (Gilpin 1986: 304). In the similar vein, Jack Donnelly calls realism "a general orientation". He refrains from calling realism as a theory of international politics. Rather he claims realism to be an " inspiration for and source of social scientific theories" (2004: 75). Elaborating further, he says, " Realism in an approach to international relations that has emerged gradually through the work of a series of analysts who have situated themselves within, and thus delimited, a distinctive but still diverse style or tradition of analysis" (2004: 6). Clearly, there appears both continuity as well as diversity in realist thought accumulated over a period of more than two millennia.

A number of scholars in international politics have tried to locate the hard core of realist thought. This exercise has become doubly important under recent accusations by some scholars that realism lacks a theoretical hard core and

therefore, is a degenerate research programme (Vasquez 1997). Donnelly identifies a realist hard core which in turn is based upon Kenneth Waltz formulation (Donnelly 2004: 75; Waltz 1997: 915). Four basic assumptions are highlighted: first, interests provide the basic motivation for state action; second, anarchy creates structural necessities and pressures for states; third, these pressures feed into the formulation of policies; and lastly, survival is the ultimate goal for all states in the system.

Legro and Moravsik also attempts to discern some basic assumptions underlying the realist thought (1999). They identify three core assumptions. First, according to the authors, all realists assume international politics is a realm of anarchy dominated by rational and unitary actors which are primarily states. States are rational in so far that they choose the most efficient available means to achieve their ends and unitary because they are supreme within their sovereign territory and represent single notion of authority. Second, interests of the state are fixed and are mutually exclusive. The notion of constant preference and exclusivity of objectives make international politics a realm of war and conflict. Third, realism is primarily concerned about the distribution of material capabilities which also accounts for variation in global politics. This is so because in an environment of anarchy, when rational and unitary actors with mutually exclusive goals interact, differences in capabilities are the only determinant of states success in achieving its priorities.

However, Wohlforth identification is most apt. Not only it incorporates other works which enumerate upon the same issue but the most defining feature of his formulation is that his assumptions are bare minimum and which all realists would readily agree with. According to Wohlforth, "even if definitions of realism vary considerably" there exists some family resemblance among different strands of thought with in realism (2008: 132). This he calls the "central propositions" which can provide a "working definition of the tradition of realism" (2008: 132). According to him, there are four points of agreement among realist scholarship (2008: 133).

1) Groupism: All realists believe in the centrality of groups for the very

conduct of politics; politics is a product of the interaction of groups. However, for realism, the nature of these groups in inconsequential. In modern times, the state represents the highest possible level of group behaviour and therefore and rightly, is the primary concern of the realists.

2) Egoism: Realists consider political conduct of groups to be driven by narrow self-interest. This is called the phenomena of Egoism.

3) Anarchy: Anarchy constitutes the third element of consensus among the realists. All realists agree that international politics is anarchic in nature since no ombudsman sits atop states to regulate their international conduct. In an anarchic realm, self-help is the rule.

4) Power Politics: Following the logic of interaction between groupism, egoism and anarchy is the phenomena of power politics. According to Wohlforth "The interaction of groupism and egoism in an environment of anarchy makes international relations, regrettably, largely a politics of power and security" (2008: 133).

Indeed the last assumption is fundamental to understanding the realist conception of power when it comes to international politics. For realists, where as domestic politics is a realm of authority; international politics is a space of power. The authority of state is recognised as the supreme law of the land and the relationship between individuals and the state is one of hierarchy where position of each individual with respect to the leviathan is one of subordination. On the other hand, in international politics, the lack of a single overarching authority means that states are free to deal with each other in the manner they feel like. Waltz says in *The Theory of International Politics*, "National politics is the realm of authority, of administration, and if law. International politics is the realm of power, of struggle and of accommodation"(1979: 113). Clearly authority in this kind of formulation means deference to a higher entity which is the norm of domestic politics, whereas power signifies contestation among equals which is the characteristic of international politics. In the similar fashion, Nicholas Spykman calls international relations as "a contest for power in which players are not subordinate (as in

domestic politics) to any superior authority" (1942: 9). International order, therefore, unlike domestic political order which is super imposed from above by the state, is one which engenders out of an interaction between states which are at least juridically equal. Power of individual states, therefore, becomes crucial in determining what kind of international order would evolve in a particular context. For realists such inside-outside distinction between domestic and the international is key to the understanding of the role which power plays in global politics.

This chapter locates the idea of power in the realist literature. Having dealt with the basic tenets of realism in the introduction to this chapter, the first section will elaborate upon three specific schools with in realism: classical realism, the structural realism and modified realism. Thereupon, I will try to answer three specific questions. First, is pursuit of power fundamental to realism and if so, why? A more elaborate answer to this puzzle would require a comparative analysis of different reasons which the three prominent schools within realism associate with such a phenomenon. Second, if power holds a pride of place in realist world view, then where specifically realists locate power? Third question pertains to the consequences which power has on the conduct of international politics? This section is divided into two parts. In the first part, I will discuss the issue pertaining to different kinds of state behaviour – balance of power, bandwagoning and hegemony - under extreme concentration or deconcentration of power in international political structure. The second part focuses on the distribution of power and its implication for system stability. The last section will situate the realist conception of power developed here within the larger debate on power in Social Sciences specifically with reference to the three faces of power debate.

Realism: The Three Schools

Though realism as a theoretical tradition is connected through a thread of minimum common assumptions, it is important to note that three different variant of realism exist, depending upon which particular variable is most emphasised in particular a narrative. These three schools are: classical realism; structural realism; and neoclassical realism. Often, these are also referred in terms of three

generations of realist scholars in the 20th century, the classical realist being the first to systematically purport a realist theory of world politics. The work of two particular scholars is most identified with the birth of classical realism. E. H. Carr's critique of liberal utopianism during the inter-war period – The Twenty Years Crisis – laid the foundations of classical realism. It was followed by Morgenthau's *Politics among Nations* which provided a cult following to classical realism in the post-Second World War period to the extent that realism acquired the most dominant theoretical position in international relations scholarship. The classical realists approach to international politics was built upon the abstraction of human nature which, for classical realists, by its very existence was evil in character and its transposition to the behaviour of the state. States like humans, therefore, were supposed to behave in self-regarding and conflicting manner. For Morgenthau, the rules of international politics were rooted in human nature and if human nature was by necessity conflictual, interests of the state could only be realised on the altar of power: "international politics is the concept of interests defined in terms of power" (1954: 4). The dependence on the evil of human nature is the cornerstone of classical realist thought.

The second generation of realist scholars challenged the 'human nature' explanations of classical realists on the pretext that classical realists did not theorise sufficiently the anarchical structure of international politics. For them, doing so has led to a serious analytical handicap: classical realism can only explain divergent state behaviour but is unable to account for continuities in international politics. Kenneth Waltz was the first to raise this problematique. The most important puzzle for Waltz in the realm of International Politics, which he clearly sets out in his 1979 work, was that how war has always been a constant characteristic of human history, especially with regard to state behaviour. In other terms, he sets up the puzzle by claiming that the erstwhile theorists in the field, especially classical realists, have neglected regularities and recurrences and have exclusively concentrated upon particularities of international relations. Calling them reductionist theories, he claims that these theories draw mainly upon the internal characteristics of the states. However, if all the states being different in different ways, whether it be the internal organization of the state, its factor endowment, differing cultures and many other attributes, the question remains that

why did they all behave in the same way when it comes to the institution of 'war'. Therefore, for Waltz, reductionist theories are intrinsically deficient in explaining the regularities in International Politics (Waltz, 1979, 60-78).

The answer for Waltz was that the causes for international political outcomes lie at two different levels. One is at the level of the characteristics of units or actors which are pre-dominantly states and other at the level of the structure of the international political system[1]. For him whereas the specific actors are responsible for particular decisions, the structure in which they are embedded provides the logic for their action. The outcomes in international politics do not necessarily follow from the intentions and actions of the states', which are always mediated by the constraints imposed by the structure and which, according to him, is ignored by the reductionist.

For Waltz, therefore, the outcomes in international politics, not only have causes with in the units but also at the systemic level. However, the logical question then is that what the structure of international politics is? According to Waltz, there are three defining elements of international political structure. First being the principle by which parts are organized, the second is the characteristic of units and third is the distribution of capabilities across the system. In the case of international politics, Anarchy is the organizing principle on which the system works which means that there is no authority over and above the sovereign state and therefore all states are autonomous entities. This is characteristically different from the domestic political system where there is a hierarchical relationship and an overarching authority constituted by the sovereign. This makes international system a self-help system. Second, for Waltz, unlike the domestic societies, there is no formal division of labour among states in the international system. Since anarchy forces states help themselves, states try to become self-sufficient, at least in the domain of security. Finally, the structure of international system is conditioned by the number of great powers. Though capability of individual units is a unit-level attribute, the distribution of capabilities is systemic. No matter which particular state becomes a great power, the number of great powers will define the

[1] International System for Waltz consists of both structures and interacting units(Waltz 1979: 79)

system's structure and the impact of great powers will not be defined by their nature but by their numbers (Waltz 1979: 81-101). The last attribute of the structure, therefore, is fundamental to the working of structural realism. Distribution of capabilities is fundamental to structural realist explanations as human nature is to classical realism.

However, the third generation of realist scholars found anomalies with the structural logic of Kenneth Waltz which according to them lacked a serious appreciation of the diversity of state behaviour in international politics. If for structuralists, not all state behaved differently, neoclassical realists argue that all states neither behave in exactly similar ways. Neoclassical realists have attempted to use the fundamental insights of classical realism without abandoning the background conditions which the structure of international political system imposed upon state behaviour. For them, the pressures generated by the anarchical nature of international politics does not directly translate into state action and are qualified or modified by a number of intervening variables which lie at the level of domestic politics or in other words, with in the realm of the state (Walt: 2003). Unlike structural explanations which consider states to be 'like units', neoclassical realists emphasize upon the nature of the state as critical to understanding foreign policy behaviour of states. To this effect, neoclassical realists have tried to theorise a number of different variable such as the perceptions of elites (Wohlforth 1993), domestic state structures (Zakaria 1998; Rose 1998) and even the intentions of states with regard to the distribution of status in international order (Schweller 1994; 1996).

Why Pursue Power?

Identification of power with realism is far too often and far too obvious in the field of international relations. Most realists accept the centrality of power in the quotidian functioning of international politics. Power as the most important determinant in inter-state relationships, and a crucial factor in the dynamics of war and peace has been the realist mantra from the time of the Thucydides. Brian C. Scmidt claims that "realists throughout the ages have argued that power is the the

decisive determinant in the relations among separate political communities and of crucial importance to understanding the dynamics of war and peace" (2007: 44). Proclamations made by a number of realist scholars bear witness to the Schmidt's assertion. Commenting on the universality and inevitability of power politics, Morgenthau says "it is sufficient to state that the struggle for power is universal in time and space and undeniable fact of experience. It cannot be denied that throughout historic time, regardless of social, economic and political conditions, states have met each other in the contest of power" (1965: 33). Without doubt then, for Morgenthau, "international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power" and particularly so (1954: 25). Carr was hinting the same when he reduced international politics to mere power politics (1964). According to John Mearshimer for all realists "the calculation of power lies at the heart of how states think about the world around them" (2001: 12). Even the detractors of realism underline the role which the variable of power has played in the purported dominance of International Relations by realists. The "struggle for power", says John Vasquez, is the "single most important vehicle for establishing the dominance of the realist paradigm with in the field" (1998: 36).

If the relationship between power and realism is an organic one, the question which serious contemplation is that why power has become such an important variable in realist schema. Is the essentialist character of power politics in the realist world bears the markings of an unqualified assumption (Schmidt 2007; Wohlforth 2008) or does there exist more theoretically sound reasons to accept the indispensability of power in the realist pantheon. This section deals with the question of why power has become such an important analytical tool for realists of all hues and colours.

For classical realists like Morgenthau, the centrality of power emanates from the fecundity of human nature. His core assumption about human nature was that all men hold an insatiable "lust for power". The pursuit of power in international politics, for him, could be reduced to the fundamental drive for dominance among human beings. To this end, Morgenthau said "man is a political animal by nature that is born to seek power" (Morgenthau 1946: 168). This lustfulness towards power as an essential attribute of human nature, defined Morgenthau, is located in two basic human characteristics. First of these is the necessity of survival and

survival in turn meant securing those needs which remain essential for human existence. The real problem, for Morgenthau, was that since these vital supplies – food, shelter and sex – are not in abundance and in fact scarce, the scarcity of these resources leads to competition. The second important human drive is what Morgenthau called the *animus dominandi*- the universal desire of man to dominate the fellow human beings. Not only man seeks power for preserving its existence since the competition for scarce resources is indeed tough but also for glory. The drive for glory was a more sinister human emotion, since, Morgenthau argued, and that whereas the competition and struggle for physical resources can be limited, the desire for power for the sake of power is infinite. Sheehan provides a brilliant summary of the "human nature as evil" hypothesis-

"Power politics perspective is underpinned by a particular view of human nature. This emphasizes its worst aspects and therefore argues that in order to be successful, people and states must protect themselves against the evil of others..... Humans are seen as dangerous and untrustworthy. Conflicting rather than complementary interests are emphasized" (1996: 83).

In international politics, Morgenthau transposed human characteristics to the characteristics of states. He equated individuals with collectivities such as states. To this effect, he quotes Michael Proust in *Politics among Nations*

"The life of nations merely repeats, on a larger scale, the lives of their components cell; and he who is incapable of understanding the mystery, the reactions, the laws that determine the movements of the individual, can never hope to say anything worth listening to about the struggles on nations. For the realists, therefore conflict is inevitable and natural" (1954: 117).

By necessary analogy, states covet for power for maintaining their existence as well as the will to dominate other states in the international system. His view of international politics hence subscribed to a picture where states interact "to maintain and to increase power of one's own nation and to keep in check or reduce the power of other nations" (1954: 211). In his understanding of the power politics of international relations, states struggle for power for three reasons: first, to

maintain power or the status quo; second, to increase power which he called the drive towards imperialism; and third, to demonstrate power which he attributed as prestige seeking endeavour on the part of states. According to Morgenthau all these three characteristics are quintessentially human in nature and he compares status quo, imperialism and prestige seeking to human drive for power conspicuous in the "desire to maintain one's own person with regard to others, to increase it, or to demonstrate it" (1946: 36).

Though fickleness of human character accounts for constant drive to acquire more and more power, Morgenthau does point to another important facet of the concept of power to account for its insatiable thirst often noticed in the practice of international politics. According to Morgenthau, notwithstanding the human nature explanation for an indefinite search for power resources, the phenomena of pursuit of power is emboldened by a very important characteristic of the concept itself - the difficulty to measure power accurately (1954: 228). Evaluation of national power, argues Morgenthau is susceptible to miscalculations. These miscalculations emerge from three important factors. First is the fallacy of thinking about national power in absolute terms (1954: 174). Morgenthau argues that power is a relative concept in so much that power of nations can be judged only by a relative comparison between power resources of state A with the power resources of state B. Since in international politics, states have to constantly engage each other, whether for survival or glory, without such relative comparison, idea of national power loses all its significance. Second, significant error in evaluation of national power emanates from the fallacy of thinking about power as if it remains unchanged across time and space. Morgenthau called this problem of "permanent character of power" (1954: 176). Lastly, evaluation of national power is also prone to "fallacy of the single factor" - the practice of "attributing to a single factor an overriding importance, to the detriment of all the others" (1954: 178). For Morgenthau, superiority in any attribute of power should never be conceived as ultimate measure of the superior power for it is the function of number of factors combined in right proportions. In *Politics among Nations*, he writes

" ....nation that in modern times could maintain a continuous position of preponderance owed that position to a rare combination of potential superior

power, a reputation for superior power, and the infrequent use of that superior power" (1954: 183).

The consequences, however, of the impossibility of accurate evaluation national power for international politics are appalling. In an environment where states continuously jostle with each other for reasons ranging from maintaining the status quo to satisfying their imperialistic aspirations, the elusiveness of power to precise measurement creates a situation where states continuously strive for accumulating more and more power. For Morgenthau, the problem of "uncertainty of power calculations" augur that " no nation can be sure that its calculations of the distribution of power at any particular moment in history is correct" and therefore " it must at least make sure that its errors, whatever they may be, will not put the nation at the disadvantage in the contest for power" (1954: 227). Such safety precautions necessitates "that all nations who are actively engaged in the struggle for power must actually aim not at a balance – that is, equality – of power, but at superiority of power in their own behalf" (1954: 228). The real significance of power politics does not lie in that fact that states pursue power for increasing their influence in international politics. Rather the fact is that states have little choice but not too aggrandize power if they have to remain relevant in international politics. Hence in the life of a nation, accumulation of power becomes an end in itself for "all nations must ultimately seek the maximum of power obtainable under the circumstances" (Morgenthau 1954: 228).

Discussing military power in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, E.H. Carr also arrives at similar kind of a conclusion. By taking cues from the conduct of states in the First World War, he is able to make obvious how power feeds on power itself. Miscalculations of power and potential asymmetries of power were the chief reasons behind the outbreak of the First World War. In an environment where states constantly feared each other, any increase in the power of a single state augured instability for the whole system and hence threatened the very survival of other states. During the First World War, the rise of Germany threatened the European state system and hence, to correct such imbalance of power in the continent other states resorted to war. Therefore, the First World War, explains Carr, "in the minds of all principal combatants, had a defensive or preventive character": prevention of

absolute asymmetries of power (1964: 112). However, the real import of Carr's arguments is a little different. What Carr's exposition on the roots of the First Great War signify is that in anarchical environment where states have to take care of themselves, power becomes an obsession rather than a necessity since in a scenario of such paranoia, accumulation of power is the only insurance in which states could depend for their survival and "it is precisely for this reason that exercise of power always beget the appetite for more and more power" (1964: 112).

For structural realists such as Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer, the struggle for power in international politics is as important for their theoretical architecture as it is for the classical realists. In *The Theory of International Politics*, writes Waltz "international politics is the realm of power, of struggle and of accommodation" (1979: 113). In the similar vein, Mearsheimer claims that "what money is to economics, power is to international politics" (2001: 12). However, structural realists do not subscribe to human nature or biological drives for explaining the centrality of power in international politics. Structural realists underline the importance of the anarchic structure of international politics to argue the indispensability of power in the practice of international politics.

Following Hobbes, structural realist argue that it is not the lustfulness for power innate in human beings which makes power such an important element in realist understanding of international politics. Rather, it is condition of anarchy which explains why power is so crucial in a world where there exists an overarching authority to regulate and control the behaviour of states. According to Hobbes, what made the state of nature a war of all against all was the absence of an overarching authority that can control internecine conflict in a situation where all man were equally powerful. In international politics, power therefore is pursued not because states like humans are evil in character but precisely because there is no body to restrain them if they intend to hurt others. Tragedy not evil makes state hungry for power.

Hobbesian tragedy was first theorised by Kenneth Waltz. According to Waltz, in an anarchic system states have to depend upon themselves for their own survival making self-help the most important facet of international politics. The principal of

self-help motivates states to acquire power in sufficient quantities so as to preserve their existence from extinction. John Mearsheimer also alludes to the linkage between power and the anarchic nature of international political system. In the *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, he writes

"No state can be sure that another state will not use its offensive military capabilities to attack the first state. This is not to say that states necessarily have hostile intentions. Indeed, all of the states in the system may be reliably benign, but it is impossible to be sure of that judgement because intentions are impossible to divine with 100 per cent certainty. There are many possible reasons of aggression, and no state can be sure that another state is not motivated by one of them" (2001: 23).

Clearly, structural realists do not subscribe to the "biological drives to power" kind of argument provided by the classical realists for explaining the seemingly power driven nature of international relations. Irrespective of the nature of the state or its intentions, the condition of anarchy and the problem of reading other actors mind with full proof certainty make states pursue power. For structural realists, international politics is a gladiatorial battle for power precisely because of the systemic forces of anarchy and self-help. If survival is the ultimate goal of all states, then power is the means to that goal. Structural realists "see power as an instrumental value sought not because of a natural desire to dominate but for the goods and opportunities (resources for survival) it makes available" (Donnelly 2004: 61).

However, there is a clear division of opinion on how survival and power are interlinked. Though structural realists agree that survival is the most important goal for a state, they are differences on how much power a state should pursue in order to achieve survivability in anarchical political system (Schmidt 2007). The question is not whether states are power-chasers or not. Rather the real question is that to what extent do they chase power? Battle lines are drawn between two kinds of structural realists: the offensive realists and the defensive realists. Offensive realists' claim that states in international politics act as power-maximizers: they seek to augment their power to the extent possible and indeed aim to become the

most powerful state in the entire system (Mearsheimer 2001). Such a claim on the part of offensive realists is based upon an extreme understanding of the deleterious effects of anarchy and acute problem which states confront in determining the intentions of rival states. "Apprehensive about the ultimate intentions of other states, and aware that they operate in a self-help system, states quickly understand that the best way to ensure their survival is to be most powerful state in the system", claims Mearsheimer (2005: 33). The reason for accumulating more and more power (military power) is simple: "the greater the advantage in military power one state has over another, the more secure it is" (Mearsheimer 1994: 11-12). For states, the "uncertainty of international life" can only be eliminated by "increasing their control over international environment" through expansion of political interests abroad (Zakaria 1998: 20). In short, states, to ensure their survival, should strive for maximum power. Therefore, for offensive realists like Mearsheimer, hegemony is the state of maximum security and states strive for hegemonic leadership.

Surprisingly, for offensive realists the competition for power never ends, a position which places them in the league of classical realists. In purporting power-maximizing nature of state, both Morgenthau and Mearsheimer appear on the same turf. However, it is important to note that they argue power-maximisation on completely different grounds: whereas for Morgenthau the never-ending struggle for power emanates from human characteristics, Mearsheimer finds the source of such struggle in the tragedy of international politics - in the condition of anarchy and the problem of reading other's minds.

Defensive realists differ from offensive realists and argue that states are security maximisers not power maximisers (Snyder 1991). Two factors weigh heavily in their exposition on the issue. First, bringing in the relativity of power argument; defensive realists suggest that states are mindful of relative gaps of power between them and their rivals. They painstakingly try to avoid creation of huge gaps in power capabilities which would leave them exposed to the whims and fancies of larger powers. Mastanduno claims that "realists expect nation-states to avoid gaps that favour their partners, but not necessarily maximize gaps in their own favour. Nation states are not 'gap maximisers'." (Mastanduno 1991: 79). States try to

balance power of others rather than to maximize their own (Waltz 1979: 127) Second, according to them, the effects of anarchy are not always so appalling that states remain constantly paranoid about their security and hence, continuously strive for more and more power. In international politics, the worst effects of anarchy are often attenuated by technological, organizational and informational changes (Glaser and Kaufmann: 1998) The offense-defence balance in military technology is a case in point. Take the case of nuclear weapons. The presence of a technology which guarantees complete destruction makes aggressive behaviour on the part of states a disincentive and therefore, their fear of each other. Similarly, the problem of reading others minds in a state of anarchy is diluted development in information technology. States can acquire necessary information regarding other motives by observing and analysing others military policies, a task made relatively easy by the on-going information revolution. States may not necessarily assume the worst about motives and intentions of other states and hence, remain engaged in perpetual search of power. Therefore, for defensive realists, rather than craving with an insatiable thirst for power, states strive for an "appropriate amount" of it (Waltz 1989: 40): "power which is needed to attain and to maintain their security and survival" (Grieco 1997: 167).

Modified realists or the neoclassical realist locate themselves somewhere in between the structural and the classical realists. They do accept the implication of the anarchical nature of international politics on the power seeking nature of states. However, they do not wholly submit to anarchy as singularly responsible for why states are motivated to aggrandize power. The chief reason for them to doubt the explanatory capacity of structural logic is the fact that not all states behave in the same way. There are states which defy the logic of a never ending competition for power. Not all states are always on tenterhooks regarding their security and hence always machinating to either maintain or constantly increase their power capabilities. Also, the tendency to accumulate power is different among different kind of states. This is most reflected in the writings of Randall Schweller who has challenged the status quo bias in Kenneth Waltz exposition on neorealism (1994). This is because in Waltzian scheme of things, argues Schweller, it is hard to locate the exact reason for states to engage in power-seeking behaviour since after all what states want is just bare survival (1996). Such minimalistic aspirations on the

part of states cannot possibly explain the logic that anarchy alone can force states in a never ending pursuit of power. For Schweller, all states do not want mere survival; states have different intentions. He classifies states as lions, jackals and foxes and argues that there must be revisionist states in a particular international system, for states to engage in competitive power-seeking behaviour. In the similar fashion, Wohlforth has argued that perceptions of elites do matter when it comes to explaining the motivations behind an endless pursuit of power on the part of states (Wohlforth 1993). Therefore, neoclassical realist brings into focus a number of other variables which explain why states pursue do or do not pursue power.

As we can observe from the above discussion, the three schools of thought find different reasons reasons behind the pursuance of power in international politics. Whereas for Classical realist human characteristics are important, neorealists find the anarchical structure of international as mainly responsible. The modified realists, on the other hand, locate themselves somewhere in the middle of these two approaches. We now turn our attention to the sources of power in international politics, as identified by the realists of different hues and colours.

Locating Power in the Realist World

This section will focus on the meanings which realists ascribe to the concept of power and where they do they locate the various sources of power in international politics.

In his magnum opus, *Politics among Nations: The struggle for Power and Peace*, Hans Morgenthau writes " by power we mean the power of man over the minds and actions of other man, a phenomena to be found whenever human beings live in social contact with one another" (1956: 117). He further defined power as ' a psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised. It gives the former control over certain actions of the latter through the influence which the former exert over the latter's mind" (1954: 26-7). Such a rendition on the concept of power clearly brackets Morgenthau in the camp of those power theorists who follow the relational model for defining the concept of

power. First enumerated by Max Weber and latter propagated by the likes of Robert Dahl relational model locate power in the outcomes of a power relationship rather than the power resources available to the agents. In other words, the relational concept of power seeks to identify power in the 'control of behaviour' of the subject of power rather than in the resources available to the agent to seeking exercise power.

Also explicit in Morgenthau's take on power is a resource based approach towards conceptualising power. Morgenthau identifies a number of quantitative and qualitative components of national power. Quantitative or tangible sources of national power are geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, military preparedness and population. In addition, Morgenthau identifies four qualitative features of national power: national character, national morale, the quality of diplomacy and quality of government. He equates national character to a "cultural pattern" of the state which signifies those "qualities of intellect and character ..... which are very highly valued in one nation than in another". National Morale on the other hand is the "degree of determination with which a national supports the foreign policies of its government in peace and war" (1956: 153). For him, national morale is the soul of national power. Stressing upon their importance yet their intangibleness, Morgenthau writes

"... National character and national morale stands out both for their elusiveness from the point of view of rational prognosis and for their permanent and often decisive influence upon their weight a nation is able to put into scales of international politics" (1956: 147).

However, for Morgenthau, "of all the factors that make for the power of a nation, the most important, however unstable, is the quality of diplomacy" (1956: 158). Though military strength is crucial to national power during the times of war, Morgenthau calls diplomatic efforts of a state as key to power during the time of peace (1956: 159). If the soul of national power is in national morale, diplomacy is the "brains of national power" (1956: 159). Lastly, Morgenthau includes the quality of government as an important index of national power. Good government is indispensable to the growth of national power. Good governance means three

things: first, there must exist a balance between a states' material and human resources; second, a balance must exist between foreign policies which a state pursues and the resources available to it for this purpose and lastly, it also signifies the popular support the state enjoys among the populace for its foreign policies (1956: 162).

Clearly, Morgenthau's approach to power resources cannot be bracketed into naive materialism. His stress on the intangibles or the qualitative elements of national power not only underscores the point that power is defined by the scope and domain of a power relationship but it also underlines the very impossibility of a proper evaluation of power capabilities before application of power has led to the realisation of desired results.

For Carr, power in the international sphere can be divided into three categories: Military Power. Economic power and power over opinion (1956: 108). However, Carr in quick to add a disclaimer stating that power as a concept is "an divisible whole". All three categories of power are highly interdependent and it is just for analytical convenience that such differentiation of power should be accepted: for it is difficult in practice to imagine a country for any length of time possessing only one kind of power in isolation from others" (1956: 108).

According to Carr, military strength plays significant role in international politics because "ultima ratio of power in international relations remains war" (1956: 109). He equates the threat of war in international politics with the constant probability of revolutions in domestic politics. Since, chances of war in an anarchical international system always high, states continuously built their military machines. States prepare themselves continuously because in the modern world, claims Carr, they are graded according to their military capabilities. Since war is the ultimate and only true test of power capabilities in international politics, great powers are those who win great wars. Military strength therefore remains crucial for determining power in global politics.

Second factor is economic power. Carr observes that economic power is always an important element of overall power of a state. However, economic power channels

into power considerations mainly because of its relationship with war-fighting capabilities of the state. Criticizing the doctrine of *Lasissez Faire* for its purported attempts to divorce political exigencies from economic considerations, Carr claims that economics can never be separated from politics and by extension to politics of power and therefore should must "properly be considered as an aspect of politics" (1956: 120). According to Carr, economic power is used in the service of national policy by two different methods. First is the notion of Autarky. Carr considers Autarky or national self-sufficiency as instrument of power politics. Being self-sufficient automatically means being less dependent on others and hence in relative sense being more powerful. However, for Carr, the real import of an autarkic economy is its advantage in the preparation and sustenance of war efforts. If Autarky is a measure of power because it helps a state to fight wars, economic aid helps a state to extend its influence over other nations and hence allowing the state to acquire more power. Economic aid is therefore the second category of economic power. The last element in Carr's conceptualisation of power resources is "power over opinion" which he also calls the "art of persuasion" or the propaganda power.

In *Theory of International Politics*, Waltz claims that international politics is a function of the structure of international political system. The structure in turn depends upon the distribution of material capabilities among states constituting the system. Material capabilities therefore occupy a sacred place in Waltzian scheme of things and also, therefore, in his conceptualizations of power. As a result, Waltz' definition of power is largely resource based. Neorealism locates power in the material capabilities of individual states. By material capabilities Waltz primarily means military power. This is because, as David Baldwin contends, implicit in Waltzian idea of distribution of capabilities and their impact on international politics, is the assumption that ability to win wars is often the standard measure of greatness in international politics (2002: 183). By corollary, great powers are those who have most impressive military capabilities. However, Waltz does not reduce capabilities to a mere possession of impressive military might. His take on overall power capabilities of a state is similar to that of Carr and he also believes in the indivisibility and interdependence of power resources. To this effect, Waltz writes

"The economic, military and other capabilities of nations cannot be sectored and

separately weighed. States are not placed in the top rank because they excel in one way or another. Their rank depends upon 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" (1979:131).

In *Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* Mearsheimer discusses the issue of power at length. Mearsheimer's conceptualisation is also based on "power as resources" approach. Mearsheimer, following Morgenthau's idea of national power approach, reduces power to "nothing to more than specific assets or material resources available to a state" (2001: 57). These resources have been divided into two categories: military power and latent power. For Wisenheimer, military power constitutes the core of a state's strength. This is because if force is the *ultima ratio* of international politics, as offensive realism assumes, then power can only be defined in terms of military power. Latent power, on the other hand, is the ability to build a huge military strength. It constitutes of the social and economic assets of a state like population and economic well-being, which can come handy in force multiplication whenever the need so arise.

Neoclassical realists accept the primacy of material resources on the overall dynamics of national power of the processes. In brilliant analyses of resource based approach to power, Randall Schweller enumerates on various elements of national power. He argues that military which he calls "forces in being", industrial capability to which he alludes as " war potential" and demographic strength in terms of staying potential in case of war are three best measures of power to compare major states in terms of their relative fighting capacities (2004). Clearly, the context of war as the principal backdrop against which power is conceptualised remains a constant all along the realist narrative. However, unlike the structural realists who consider "distribution of capabilities or Power" as an exclusively systemic variable, neoclassical realists claim that such a distribution is partly a result of processes which lie with in the domestic politics of the state (Zakaria 1998). Neoclassical realism does not reduce power to mere availability of resources for war fighting. In identifying the sources of power in international politics, they bring into consideration two important elements.

First, neoclassical realists argue that resource-extraction capability of states is an important parameter which determines the comprehensive national power of a state. Even when states are well endowed in natural and demographic resources, they may not end up in the higher end of the power scale. This is so because domestic state structures often determine the efficiency with which latent power resources can be converted to military capabilities. Locating power therefore is not an exercise of cumulative auditing of overall resources available within a state, but it also must take into account "strength and structures of states relative to their societies because these affect the proportion of national resources that can be allocated to foreign policy" (Rose 1998: 147). In the similar vein, Zakaria argues that national power is different from state strength. Whereas the former alludes to the availability of power resources within the state, latter is the efficiency with which national governments can convert these resources into those instruments of power which they deem important for attaining its foreign policy goals (Zakaria 1998: 38-9).

Second, many neoclassical realists have stressed the role of perceptions in power relationships. In the absence of a mechanism by which power could be measured objectively in the realm of international politics, power and its effects are communicated by the perceptions of the decision makers especially the national elites. In a classic study of Soviet foreign policy during the Cold War and the role of elites, William Wohlforth finds that most often objective assessments of power in international politics are hard to find (Wohlforth 1993). Wohlforth claims, "If power influences the course of international politics, it must do so largely through the perceptions of people who make decisions on behalf of the states" (1993: 23). Foreign policy elites devise their own conventions through which they make power assessments but such identification of power is at most a subjective phenomenon. In other words, power lies, to a certain degree, in the eyes of the observer.

Realism and the Consequences of Power in International Politics

The consequence of power on international politics and by extension on state behaviour has intrigued political theorists and historians alike. It is in the concrete

events of international relations that true effects of power relations between states get manifested. In fact, Robert Gilpin claims that Thucydides considered the Peloponnesian war "worthy of special attention because of the massive accumulation of power in Hellas and its implications for the structure of the system" (1988: 593). One could say the same about scholarly interest which the start and end of Cold War generated in the field of international relations. Power and its consequences make the study international politics what it is. This section deals with two important questions regarding the effect of power on international political relations. First, how does power alter or shape behaviour of state in international politics? Three behavioural impulses of states will be under scrutiny: balance of power; strategy of bandwagoning and drive for hegemony. In the second part of this section, I will discuss the impact of power on the stability of international political system. This discussion will focus on the systemic stability under the conditions of multipolarity, bipolarity and unipolarity.

Part One - Power Induced Behaviour: Balance of Power versus Hegemony

How do states react to extreme concentrations or deconcentrations of power in international system? This inquiry motivates the subject line of the ensuing discussion. Contingent upon the concentration of power in the system, Sullivan predicts two models of global politics behaviour (Sullivan 1990). First is the "preponderance-stability model". Such a model posits that international politics becomes more stable and chances of war decrease as the system approaches a very high concentration of power in the form of a world hegemon. In other words, hegemony is good for the system. Second is the "Parity-Fluidity model" which claims that stability increases and chances of war decrease as the system moves away from a concentration of power to a more "ambiguous state of approximate parity". In other words, a system where power of states hangs in a rough balance is more propitious for stability. Clearly the consequences of concentration of power produce two completely different narratives. Hegemonic realism and Balance of Power realism constitute two standard schools of thought when it comes to debating the issue of power concentration and its consequences for state behaviour

in international politics .

Balance of power realists include such names as Morgenthau (1948), Gullick (1955), Bull (1977), Claude (1962), Waltz (1979) and Aron (1983) to name a few. The balance of power theorists argue that states in the system consider extreme concentration of power within a single state as highly threatening and therefore readily check such concentration of power by means of aligning with other powers, by increasing their own capabilities, by formation of concerts of power as in Congress of Vienna and sometimes even by war. Whereas the method of alliance formation is generally referred to as external balancing, internal balancing means augmenting one's existing sources of power to counteract other states from achieving an overwhelming concentration of power. A series of motivations on the part of states underlie the act of balancing extreme concentrations of power in international system (Levy 2003). First, states by balancing try to avoid formations of hegemonic order. Since a hegemon would be one who has the resources to at least militarily defeat all other major powers, independence of all states especially other great powers depends upon a balance of power which precludes such a possibility. Second, states would like to balance in order to maintain a comparative equality in distribution of capabilities or power and hence, a modicum of certainty and stability in the system. Lastly, and fundamentally the most important reason for states to engage themselves in balancing other powers emanates from the very need of surviving the anarchic realm of international politics. States opt for balancing strategies "not for the primary purpose of maintaining a balance but because limiting the power of others is necessary to maintain their own security" (Levy 2003).

Three important observations regarding balance of power need to be put up front. First, it is important to note that for balance of power theorists, power essentially means military prowess. Jack Levy is quick to point out that "balance of power theorists conceive of power in terms of military power and potential, and their identification of the leading threats to hegemony over the last five centuries make it clear that military power is land based power" (Levy 2003). Mearsheimer also squarely reduces the balance of power to the actual distribution of military capabilities among great powers of the system (2001: 403). Mearsheimer's

insistence on primacy of land power in his discussion on the sources of power also validates Levy observation regarding the assumptions implicit in the work of balance of power theorists. Second, the distribution of capabilities exists as an objective category. It exists apart from what statesman think about it. All states irrespective of their internal constitution try to balance and avoid formation of hegemony (Wohlforth 1993). In true sense then 'balance of power' behaviour depicts the real socialization of states under the constrains of anarchy and the need to maintain even distributions of power in global politics (Waltz 1979) Third, for balance of power theorists, the condition of hegemony can never become a reality in international politics. Any state aspiring for a hegemonic status gets rebuffed by other states since such an attempt automatically lead other states to gang up against a prospective hegemon.

However, an agent-structure problem seriously infects the rank and file of balance of power theorists. The bone of contention exists between scholars like Kenneth Waltz who posit that balance of power is a structurally induced phenomenon, an unintended consequence of actions of states in an anarchical political system. Inis Claude calls this the "automatic conception of the operation of balance of power" (Claude 1962). In Quincy Wright's classification, such conceptualisation is termed as a 'static' balance of power: a general condition of international politics which allows the coexistence of various states (Wright 1945: 445). Under this conceptualisation security seeking behaviour of states in a self-help system produces balances of power automatically much alike in economic theory "competitive profit seeking gives rise to an equilibrium of supply and demand at the lowest possible price" (Snyder 1997: 17) Hence, for structuralists like Waltz, balance of power is a law, a repeated and general pattern of state behaviour. For Waltz, states may not even have to think about it (Sheehan 1996). On the other hand, there exist balance of power theorists who believe that balances of power are formed not because an abstract structure pushes states into an automatic balance. Rather balances are formed because states actively seek to counter each other's power by maintaining or increasing one's own power in the face of increasing power capabilities of other states. For such realist scholars, seldom in the history of international politics, there exists a perfect equilibrium of power and therefore one can only speak of balancing of power not a balance automatically formed .

Therefore, Morgenthau calls balance of power not a law but a mechanism, a deliberate policy on the part of states to maintain stability in the system (Morgenthau 1956). This Inis Claude calls a "manual balance of power" (Claude 1962). Wright termed it as a 'dynamic' balance of power which is characterized by purposive policies adopted by governments to maintain the condition of relative independence of states in global politics (1942: 445).

On the other hand of the spectrum lies hegemonic realism which, unlike balance of power theories, claims that extreme concentrations of power are salutary for global politics (Gilpin 1981; Keohane 1984; Thompson 1988). Though hegemonic realists share the core realist assumptions, there is a marked divergence over the desirability and effects of the presence of extreme concentrations of power read hegemony in the international system (Levy 2005; Wohlforth 1993) The principle insight of hegemonic realism is that unlike the claims of balance of power as the most ideal state behaviour in international politics and impossibility of hegemony, most often international politics is characterized by hegemonic world orders. In other words, hegemonic realists claim that hegemony is both natural to international politics as well as the most appropriate phenomena as far as general stability and peace is concerned. A number of observations make the differences between balance of power theorists and hegemonic realists quite evident (Wohlforth 1993). First, unlike balance of power theorists who find balances as the most observable behavioural pattern in international politics, hegemonic realists see concentration of power as a norm in international politics. Hegemony not balance of power becomes the true law of international politics. Second, rather than balancing preponderance of power, hegemonic realism posits that states defer to the superior power: states bandwagon rather than balance. A third, extreme concentration of power leads to stability and peace in the system, and is a prerequisite for maintenance of order. Fourth, major wars are fought not for establishing a balance of power among states but instead are struggles to impose hegemony. The probability of such wars peaks during periods of power transitions where dominant powers are challenged by rising powers for hegemonic status (Gilpin 1981). Fifth, and by extension of the previous argument, wars rather than resulting into a corrected system of balance of power, often lead to the establishment of hegemony of the victorious.

Though hegemonic realists start with same assumptions as balance of power theorists, they arrive at completely different results regarding the behaviour of consequences of power in international politics. The main reason behind such divergence is that hegemonic realists define and locate power quite differently as compared to balance of power theorists. First, hegemonic realists locate power not in military capacity of states but their economic and financial might. Hegemony is defined in terms of primacy in global trade and finance. Even the stability which hegemonic powers induce in the systems, as claimed by hegemonic realists, is mainly in the realm of international political stability and not war and peace. Second, hegemonic realists locate power not in land based powers but often hegemonic states are those who have who have large and extensive navies but small land powers. 19th century Britain and US in 20th century fits neatly into such a classification.

Part Two – Power and System Stability: Bipolarity , Multipolarity and Unipolarity

In the realist understanding of international politics, power is not only consequent for the behaviour it engenders among states but very constitution of international political structure. The number of great powers occupying the international political structure at any point of time defines the nature of international politics. If two great powers exist, than the system is identifies with bipolarity. If there are three or more great powers in the system, there exists a multipolar international political order. It is important to take note of the fact that great powers in themselves are nothing but the way capabilities are distributed among state in the system. The discussion on polarity is consequential for general stability of the international system which is defined by the occurrence or the non-occurrence of a general war like that of the First and Second Great wars in the previous century. Though almost all realists agree to the causal connection between polarity and great power war, the mechanism through which this causal relationship is realised remains heavily contested. The attempt in this part of the third section is to i rigorously analyse this facet of power distribution in global politics.

Realist scholars who advance the thesis that bipolar orders are more stable provide three basic arguments in their favour (Waltz 1979; Christenson and Snyder 1990; Mearsheimer 2001).First, in a bipolar setup, it is often clear who the real enemy is. Waltz, call this "the simplicity of relations (of enmity) in a bipolar world" (1979: 174). The simplicity emanates from the fact that in bipolar systems constituting two great powers only, "who is a danger to whom is never in doubt" (1979: 170). Great powers balance each other promptly. In the multipolar world, on the other hand, " who is a danger to whom, and who can be expected to deal with threats and problems, are matter of uncertainty" because often "dangers are diffused, responsibilities unclear, and definitions of vital interests easily obscured" (1979: 170-71). This makes miscalculations endemic in multipolar systems and miscalculations often lead to war. Also, it leads to "buck-passing" where each great power waits for others to balance the state which it considers threat to global stability (Christenson and Snyder 1990). Incentives to promptly balance the threat come at a premium in multipolar world. Second, in bipolarity, great power balance internally: by augmenting their own power resources rather than seeking alliances. In bipolar orders, allies are of peripheral importance. This makes bipolar systems immune to alliance politics and unnecessary commitments or what Christenson and Snyder call chain-ganging. According to Christenson and Snyder, in multipolarity states may be chain-ganged into war by their alliance partners (Christenson and Snyder 1990). Argued simply, it suggests that since balances in multipolar orders are incumbent upon prior commitments, states are often supposed to fight wars which are not of their own making. Fear of being ganged up against makes multipolar structures particularly unstable. Third, in bipolar systems, the two great powers share a lot of common interests. Since, any great war can leave the two great powers completely enervated and hence, allow other powers to take over the reins of the system, bipolar great powers try to avoid internecine conflicts which may lead to general wars (Waltz 1979).

On the other hand, realists who extol the virtues of an even handed distribution of power between a numbers of states does for two principle reasons (Mearsheimer 2007). First, they consider balances of power to be effective when there exists a number of great powers since multipolarity generates a lot of flexibility for states

when it comes to balancing the most threatening power. In bipolarity, such flexibility is often missing. In other words, realists who favour multipolar orders assume that balances are more effectively communicated in a multipolar world order. Second argument in support of multipolarity emanates from the observation that great powers in bipolar set up who have to maintain continuous alacrity over the power of other rival, the balance of power in multipolar system is much more relaxed in nature. If there are a number of great powers, the scope of balance increases manifold since it is never too late to balance the adversary and therefore, the intensity of security competition decreases proportionally. Opposite to it, in a bipolar set up, the intensity for security competition among adversaries reaches its zenith and so is the probability to take unwarranted action.

A very different position on the matter is taken by none other than William Wohlforth. Wohlforth claims that unipolar systems are most peaceful and durable (Wohlforth 1999). In a near perfect unipolar world, where the material preponderance of one single superpower is clearly established, the conditions for peace are most conducive. This is because of a number of reasons. First, in a unipolar world, hegemonic rivalries are next to none since the pecking order is so clearly defined. Arguing the case of US prepondernace after the Cold War, Wohlforth says "no other major power is in a position to follow any policy that depends for its success on prevailing against the US in a war or on an extended rivalry" (1999:7). Secondly, since the material force or predominance of military force is well established, there is far less scope for uncertainties of anarchic international relations to invoke conflicts. Lastly, since the balance of power politics is hard to materialise, there are strutural incentives for other states to accept the predominance of the superpower. Wohlforth, here, is arguing that bandwagoning becomes the norm in case of a unipolar world order. In total, "unipolarity favours the absence of war among great powers and comparatively low levels of competition for prestige or security" (1999: 23).

Clearly, there is no end to the contentions regarding the most optimal scenario of power distribution in international politics. However, what the above discussion makes clear is the fact that within realism itself there is a lot of difference in accounting for the consequences of power on international political landscape.

Conclusion

The above discussion makes amply evident the importance of the concept of power in realism. The idea of power is the connecting thread among realist scholars who have ruminated over international politics for over two thousand years. A number of observations from the above discussion merit our attention. First, it is important to understand that the pursuit of power is a not an open ended assumption for realists as some detractors of realism have claimed . The logic of power politics emanates from interaction of the most fundamental assumptions: groupism, self-interest and anarchy. However it is important to acknowledge that how these assumptions get operationalised differs among the three schools of realism. For example, the real thrust of classical realism engenders out of the importance for the evil in human nature though they also gave some credence to the 'problem of reading other's mind' in a state of anarchy. On the other hand, structural realists depend upon the structural pressures of anarchy to explain the vigorous pursuit of power among states which remains the driving principal for all other explanations, be it the process of war or the concept of system stability. Neoclassical realists as is evident in Schweller's exposition do not entirely subscribe to the structural reductionism of neorealists. For them, the logic of anarchy or the evil inherent in states cannot explain the competition for power resources among states. The idea of different kind of states – lions, jackals and foxes- and the difference in motivations among states in a state of anarchy explains the centrality of power in international politics. Third, it is also important to acknowledge form the above discussion that there are both similarities as well as differences among the various realist schools on the conceptualisation of power. The similarities are that all the three schools necessarily employ a resource based definition of power where material capabilities define the strength of actors in global politics. In other words, for realists, power lies in the capabilities of actors rather than the outcome of power relationships. Moreover, the most important source of power configuration in realist understanding engenders out of the military capabilities of states. The resources to fight wars are the benchmark of the powerful insofar that all even economic capabilities are subsumed under it. The differences on other hand are

also quite palpable. First, as has been already said, the three schools locate the motivation for pursuit of power in different impulses: actor-oriented as well as structural. Second, the extent to which states pursue power is another bone of contention among realists. Whereas for realists like Morgenthau and Carr, power in international politics becomes an end in itself with states trying hard to become more and more powerful, structural realists argue that survival is what states strive for and therefore, power is not an end but a means for states to feel secure. However, within structural realism, though there is a consensus that survival is the ultimate aim of states, the best possible method of attaining such security remains a contentious issue. Lastly, and by the implication of second point, realists of different denomination differ over the consequences of power on the behaviour of states. For example, whereas both classical realists such as Morgenthau and defensive realists like Waltz find balancing as the most appropriate as well as the natural behaviour among states against concentrations of power in international politics, neoclassical realists like Schweller find bandwagoning as the norm among states. On the other hand, some structural realists like Mearsheimer argue that states strive for hegemony especially regional hegemony.

Given these observations which follow the discussion of the concept of power in realist thought, it is also important to underline the criticisms which realist conception of power has received from various other quarters in international relations scholarship. Most of these criticisms are a result of the scrutiny which has visited the concept of power in international politics in the wake of the power debate in other social science disciplines especially political science and sociology. Many scholars argue that a resource based or the elements of national power approach suffers from a number of conceptual lapses (Baldwin: 2002; Cerny: 2010; Schmidt: 2005; Nye: 2011). First, the resource based approach inadvertently bestows on resources a label of power itself: resources rather than being means to power become power itself. This is what David Baldwin calls potential power problem since one can never determine the outcome of a power relationship by allocation of resources on both the sides. There is always an element of uncertainty in the conversion mechanism between power resources and actual outcomes leading to failed power relationships even when concentrations of power suggest otherwise. Baldwin calls such a phenomena "a paradox of power" and for

Gallarotti, these instances define the "power curse" (Baldwin 2002; Gallarotti 2009). In the terminology of Sprout and Sprout, a resource based definition does not define the "policy-contingency framework" in which resources are being used to influence outcomes. In other words, for a successful conceptualisation of the proper workings of power one has to define its scope and domain: the what, where and why of a power relationship. Second problem, which is somehow related to the first, with the resource based definition is the issue of fungibility of power resources. The idea of fungibility of power resources implies the ease with which power resources useful in one issue-area can be availed in another issue-area. For realists, the fungibility of power increases with the overall amount of power and therefore, great powers can have influence over a range of issue-areas as compared to smaller powers that have very specific advantages in terms of power resources (Waltz 2000; Mearsheimer 2001). Another important facet of the concept of power in realism is that, power especially military power is considered to be fully fungible; realists often compare military power with money in economics. However, there are obvious problems with this formulation. First, as many liberal scholars argue, interdependence and globalisation has fundamentally altered the fungibility of power resources and particularly military power (Keohane and Nye: 1989; Cerny: 2009; Nye: 2011) second, is the issue of power conversion. The effectiveness of power resources varies with the context and the conversion process from resource to influence is not a constant across all scope and domains.

The third problem with resource based approach to power emanates from the fact that power often produces unintended effects. Without specifying the domain and scope of a power relationship, one can never differentiate between intentional and unintentional use of power. The dichotomy between intentional or unintentional consequences of power is most evident in the debate among balance of power theorists. Whereas automatic balance of power suggests that states balance without actually intending to do so, the manual conception of balance of power stresses the role of active state policy in maintenance of balances in international politics. Without identifying intentions, it is very hard to locate the causal direction between resources and the effects they produce. Lastly, the most important factor which undercuts the resource based definition of power is the problem of measurement (Wohlforth 2003). Even Morgenthau alludes to this fact in his exposition on the

concept of balance of power. The distribution of capabilities, which for Kenneth Waltz is the most fundamental variable in international politics, is indeed very hard to determine. In his exposition of Waltz thesis on polarity, Joseph Grieco considers the problem of measurement of capabilities as the most intractable one and which according to him, seriously undermines the Waltz's conclusions on the stability of bipolar structures (Grieco 2007).The importance of scope and domain of power relationship, the fungibility problem and the issue of intentions collectively makes it impossible to formulate a lump-sum definition of power which could provide a universal benchmark for comparison of capabilities among states.

Most of these conceptual problems, as has been discussed emanates from the fact that unlike the dominant relational approach to power where power is defined in the outcomes of a power relationship, realists have restricted themselves to a resource based definition of power. However realist scholars have their own reasons for following a lump-sum approach to power. First, outcomes are often influenced by the capabilities state possesses: more the material resources better are the chances of the states to attain their objectives (Mearsheimer 2001). Secondly, and what is important for our discussion is a more theoretically nuanced argument which realists make in their defence. According to them, the problem with relational model of power lies in the fact that locating power in outcomes tells us nothing about how power influences outcomes. Defining and determining a 'balance of power' only after the balance has been lost or won by one or the party completely defeats the whole purpose of studying balances of power. Moreover, the whole argument of defining power by observing the outcomes is a tautological exercise: power automatically shifts to those who have favourable outcomes.

Chapter 3

Liberalism and Power in International Politics

Having observed the treatment of power under the lenses of the realist school of international politics in the previous chapter, this chapter would deal with the concept of power under the liberal scheme of things. Liberalism can boast to be one of the foundational approaches to study international politics. The importance of liberal discourse in international politics is self-evident from the very fact that realism in itself developed as alternative to liberalism which held sway over most of the international political thought during the interwar period. The birth of modern day liberalism can be located in the 16^{th} and 17^{th} century Europe, the period in which the European continent saw reformation, renaissance and finally the advent of the discourse on enlightenment and reason. .

The idea of Enlightenment underscored the power of human mind: the capacity to reason and hence, the ability to ameliorate the conditions of human life. Both the "capacity to reason" and the "potential for betterment of human life" found their ultimate rendition in the progress made by science during this period. The natural conclusion was that if reason can provide the basis for increased material security of human individual, the same idea of reason can be the edifice of social security of human beings. Liberalism, as observed in political science and international relations, in some sense, is the denouement of this extrapolation of the potential of reason to fufill man's material as well as social needs.

This chapter will try to explore the concept of power in international politics with the help of liberal thought. If realism has acquired its dominant position in international politics by essentialising power politics as a unique facet of international politics, liberalism has tried to provide an alternative understanding of international politics precisely by reading the concept of power in a way which undercuts the realist notions of power. The organisation of the chapter follows this pattern. First, I will discuss the fundamental assumptions which underlie the liberal school of international politics. Second, I will briefly discuss three major streams of thought within liberalism which pertains to the field of international relations.

Thirdly, I will discuss the changing conceptions of power in the modern world and the processes which have initiated such a change. This discussion is extremely important for any understanding of liberal position on power since liberalism depends heavily on the rapid churning of the modern world in order to engender an alternative narrative on power. This alternative discourse primarily targets the realist notion of power which liberals claim does not take into account the revolutionary changes which processes such as globalization have brought in the modern understanding of power. Thereupon I will discuss two important contributions of liberal scholars on the power debate in international politics. First pertains to paradigmatic study done by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye Junior on the interrelationship between power and independence in late 70's and early 80's of the previous century. Their work *Power and Interdependence* forms the bedrock of this section but also takes into account the wider debate which this book initiated in international politics. Second contribution takes into account a concept which has become highly fashionable theme in corridors of power around the world: Joseph Nye's work on soft power. From Whitehouse to Beijing, soft power has caught the attention of academics and policy makers alike. The idea of soft power has definitely created a lot of debate among the theorists of power in international politics and any discussion of liberal conception of power cannot escape a thorough discussion on the subject. Lastly, I will locate the liberal idea of power within the larger debate on power in social sciences especially the three faces of power debate.

Liberalism: The Basic Assumptions

According to Andrew Moravcsik, Liberal theory rests on three core assumption (1997: 516-521; 2008: 236).

5) Globalization and other accompanying processes generate differentiated demands from societal individuals and groups with regard to international politics. In short, there are no permanent interests: interests vary with actor's environment.

The process of globalization creates the background situation in which interests of

individuals and other societal actors including states takes shape (Moravcsik 2008). Liberals consider interests of social groups infinitely malleable and defined by the rapidly changing dynamics of global existence whether it pertains to the field of economics, technology or culture. If changing dynamics of global forces define individual as well as social interests, it is particularly relevant to the realm of world politics since globalization than becomes the primary force behind changing matrix of the incentives and opportunities for societal actors especially states in a highly interconnected world. If globalization directly impinges on the choices made by societal actors, the primary task of liberal international relations theory " is to define the impact of the shifting terms of economic, social and cultural globalization on social actors and competing demands they will place upon states" (236). Cooperation and conflict between states therefore become a function of the process of globalization itself. If globalization incentivises cooperation, one would find a more harmonious world in the making. If it does otherwise, conflict is inevitable. Management of globalization therefore becomes extremely pertinent.

6) States represent the demands of a subset of domestic individuals and social groups, on the basis of whose interests they define "state preferences" and act instrumentally to manage globalization. In simple terms, states are unitary actors and interests of the states are interests of the social groups of which state is constituted.

State choices are defined by the pressures and pulls of domestic societal coalitions which through the medium of the state pursue their own sectional interests. According to Risse, for liberal pluralists, "societal interest groups and organizations substantially constrained actors and the political process was largely conceptualized by conflict and bargaining among these societal groups" (Risse 2002: 258). Liberals consider states as "transmission belts" through which "preferences and social power" of individuals and other social groups gets manifested in foreign policy. How states manage the forces of globalization is dependent upon the conflicting social demands which a state has to satisfy within its domestic political space. For liberals, social preferences – preferred choices of social groups within the ambit of state – translate into state preferences. Moravcsik claims that for liberal theory understanding this transmission of preferences is a

"central theoretical task" (2008: 237). However, to comprehend this process of transmission, it is important to take into account that state is at its core a "representative institute" - a platform where social actors place their respective demands- and therefore, who gets represented and who does not becomes a key variable in liberal scheme of things. Moravcsik argues that "representation is a key determinant (along the basic nature of social demands themselves) of what states want, and therefore what they do" (2008: 238). It is in this battle for representation – who is heard and who is not - that effects of societal power are most manifested.

7) The pattern of interdependence among state preferences shapes state behaviour.

For liberal theorists, what explains international politics is the how unilateral state policies impact the policies of other states. This they call as policy interdependence. If state preferences converge in a particular issue there are high chances of cooperation; if not, conflict is the most probable outcome. The central point over here is that unlike realists, who define the dynamics of global politics through the standpoint of an independent and unceasing quest for power resources among states, liberal explanations of international political behaviour engenders out of an interaction among state preferences. In this view, the behaviour of the state is not a function of its capabilities rather it is contingent upon its preferences and how such preferences resonate with the preferences of other states. According to Moravcsik, this fundamental liberal insight also highlights a "distinctive conception of interstate power": that "willingness of states to expend resources and make concessions in bargaining is a function of state preferences" (2008: 239) In other words, state pursue power not because of the evil in human nature or because of the pressures of the anarchical international system. If states pursue power, they pursue it because they constitute it as a preference and state preferences in turn are a function of sectional interests. Moreover, these sectional interests interact with in domestic political space and inform the choices of the state. Moravcsik further asserts that " this liberal view of power politics, properly understood, generates plausible explanations not just of international cooperation and coexistence, but of the full range of systemic phenomena central to the study of world politics, including war" (2008: 240).

These core principles inform liberal research program which consist of a number of theoretical approaches in order to comprehend international politics. In the next section, I focus on three principal variants of liberalism.

Liberalism: Three Theoretical Traditions

Most liberal scholars identify three theoretical cultures as the most important representatives of liberal thought in international relations (Moravcsik 1997, 2008; Keohane 2002; Panke and Risse 2007). These are republican liberalism, commercial liberalism and regulatory liberalism.

Social and political institutions within states are the defining element for the first set of liberal theories. Moravcsik calls it Republican Liberalism: liberalism concerned with "institutional structure of domestic political representation" (2008: 244). The key question for republican liberals is that which political group captures the state and whose interests are reflected in national policies? Representation of interests in state policy here becomes a key variable since preferences of the state will be defined by the costs and risks they engender for individuals and groups who the state claims to represent. If the domestic political structure is based upon widespread representation and concerns of all relevant social groups are transmitted into state policy, republican liberals claim that national policies would avoid conflict because such policy instruments impose unnecessary costs on the whole society: all social groups feel equally constrained. On the other hand, if certain social classes capture the political institutions, they can pass on the costs and risks of overtly conflict-prone state policy onto other social groups thereby shielding themselves from any deleterious consequences. Therefore, the constitution of domestic political structures which republican realism projects as its principle variable can explain a number of phenomena in international politics such as peace among democracies, the policy of imperialism etc.

Economic interests constitute the second theme in liberal pantheon. Also called commercial liberalism, the fundamental premise of liberal theories built around the theme of commerce and economics is that " changes in the structure of the

domestic and global economy alter the costs and benefits of transnational economic activity, creating pressure on domestic governments to facilitate or block it" (Moravcsik 2008: 243). Commercial liberalism basically locates the sources of cooperation and conflict among states in the domestic forces of production. It clearly states that free trade and liberal economic policies foster cooperation among states and relegate the use of force to the background because sectional interests with in the domestic politics dread the negative consequences which war brings for the economic pursuits of domestic actors (Schumpeter 1953). If the factors of production among state submit to instruments of coercive extraction rather than free competition, primarily driven by state controlled or private monopolies, there is high probability that international economic relations will be marred by frequent conflict.

If social and political institutions are the principal variable for republican liberalism, and economics and trade for commercial liberalism, the third set of liberal theories bank upon formal rules and regulations to explain state behaviour in international politics. These set of liberal theories comes under the purview of regulatory liberalism (Keohane 2002). For states to engage in collective and absolute gains based upon national interest, formal rules, norms and practices provide a stable backdrop against which states could do so without fearing for the distributional aspect of absolute gains. In other words, rules and norms allow states to free themselves from the self-regarding nature which the environment of anarchy imposes on state behaviour. Regulatory liberalism is most evident in the growing demand for international organisation, institutions and regimes responsible for establishing a set of rules, norms and guidelines for state behaviour and hence, decreasing the uncertainties of a Hobbesian world. It is important to realise that regulatory liberalism acknowledges that cooperation among states cannot be imposed from above and at most the regulations and norms states promise to abide by are voluntary arrangements in which states enter by their own will. Hence, the conception of cooperation which is evident in regulatory liberalism is not based upon the pursuance of some higher good but in the fact that for states to realise their interests, cooperation is as helpful as is conflict. However, in the longer run, these rules and norms acquire a life of their own and ultimately start shaping the interests of the state itself.

Liberalism and Changing Character of Power in International Politics

If realism became the most dominant paradigm in international relations riding on the back of liberalism after the second world war, the emergence of liberal discourse in last half a century can be located at latter's critique of primarily the realist view of power in international politics. From Mitrany's functionalism to Keohane's complex interdependence to Joseph Nye's now much celebrated idea of soft power, liberalism has made the critique of realist view of power its primary target. Liberals of hues and colours argue that traditional (read realist) conceptions of power have now become antiquated. Not only does the process of globalization and its consequent effects have altered the scope and domain of power relationships in global politics but have fundamentally altered the very meaning of power. The critique of traditional conceptions of power also emanates from liberalism's philosophical underpinnings: if human conditions are subject to continuous evolution, so should be our conceptions of the world we inhabit and that includes the concept of power as well.

The traditional conception of power rests on four broad assumptions about international politics (Cerny 2010: 66). First, unlike domestic politics where authority of the state remains unquestioned, the international political space remains a site of anarchy insofar as there exists a vacuum as far as authorial relationship among states in concerned. Such vacuum of authority creates an imperative for states to indulge themselves in self-regarding behaviour making survival of the state highest goal. Force, therefore, becomes a legitimate tool for states in managing inter-state relations. Second, is the inside/outside distinction. The goal of survival at the international level detaches states from any kind of ethical or moral standards of conduct in their relationship with other states. Non-interference in each other's domestic matters and mutual recognition of differences in social and ethical values are accepted as the norm. States take Aristotle's advice too seriously: justice and friendship at the social level exists only with in a *politeia* or political community, state being the highest possible political organization. By

necessary extension, when such political communities – states - interact, asocial forces of relations determine behaviour. Third, given this inside-outside distinction, power within the state and outside it serves two very different purposes. Within the realm of the state, power is often put to use for achievement of higher interests-public interests or common good. Within, State use their monopoly of power in bringing good life to their citizenry and power is often institutionalised insofar institutionalisation helps in eradicating the widespread abuse of power. On the other hand, in the realm of international politics, power is considered as an end in itself. The main motive behind power is not to bring collective goods to human society as a whole but to advance the interests of particular states. Power as means to good life to the citizens stops at water's edge. Beyond, power is only a means to the vile objectives of highly self-interested states. Lastly, the traditional notion of power locates the sources of power in brute force, in the capability of states to physically hurt others as in military conflicts and war. Instruments of war-making, in such context, are considered the only currency of power; one which is highly fungible and effective.

Liberals argue that all these four assumptions of power are under serious strain given the complexity of the modern world engendered out of the process of globalization. The world is witnessing the rapid evolution of a number of cross-cutting modes of power which erode the viability of traditional notions of power right form its very roots. These cross-cutting modes are evident in the growth of international institutions, economic interdependence and proliferation of universal values and norms such as human rights and human security and cultural globalization. States are no more the only purveyors of power in international politics, they are in fact "being cut across, run around, manipulated and reshaped by complex transactions and "glocal" linkages that are transforming state behaviour itself" (Cerny 2010: 65). Cerny further says, " the world is seen being constituted more and more through revived, emerging, and even hegemonic crosscutting linkages and loyalties of friendship, justice, class, economic self-interest, identity and or/belonging - the traditional stuff of domestic political philosophy and politicking, now crystallizing and consolidating across borders" (2010: 65). These transnational linkages are constituting a parallel structure of international interaction which turns the statist model of global politics on its head

(Keohane and Nye 2000). This is most reflective in the constant change which modern political institutions are undergoing (Zurn 2002). The calls for 'retreat of the state' (Strange 1996), the idea 'emergence of a denationalized global governance structure' (Joerges 1996), the claim of 'a residual state' (Cerny 1996) or for that the very questioning of 'methodological nationalism' as a sound academic strategy for international relations are indicative of this trend. Clearly, the distinction between inside-outside is gradually disintegrating. Modern power structure , in other words, is becoming increasingly "multi-layered, multilevel and multinodal" (Cerny 2010: 73).

So if the traditional notions of power appear antediluvian, what exactly the new constitution of power in international politics looks like. Cerny argues that power in the modern world spreads around different yet complementary directions (2010: 73). First signs of change in the traditional understanding of power engender out of the evolving instruments of global governance which undercut the very assumption that power in international politics remains embedded within the ambit of the state. Zurn claims that " globalization is not only said to be curbing the autonomy of nation-states and enforcing a convergence of national policies, but also disabling democracy and with it the legitimacy of national political systems, altering the nature of sovereignty and thus ultimately transforming the fundamental structure of international system" (2002: 244). Clearly, with the phenomena of globalization around and the debate on global governance raging on, the assumption that States remain the chief and only purveyors of power in international politics is under serious strains. Moreover the instruments of global governance- the varied number of institutions and regimes- which cater to possibly all issues of relevance to human existence have ensured that states do not engage themselves in continuous battle for relative gains: under global governance states are able to pursue absolute gains (Keohane 1984). Though global governance itself is an outcome of voluntary actions of states and most of the times states have the authority to disengage with the instruments of global governance, it has been widely observed that beyond a certain threshold institutions and regimes attain a life of their own, independent of how states conceive of such international bodies. (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998) The rise of global governance in international politics is resultant of the complex management issues engendering out of rapid unfolding of globalisation and its

consequent effects on human existence. Modern life consists of a number of policy issues and challenges which require pooling of resources and power of the international community. These issues range from economic interdependence to environmental regulation to civil wars many other issues where collective action is the most optimum strategy. Power of the state alone, as conceived in traditional notions of power, is insufficient in dealing with such complex problems.

Second change in the dimension of power emanates from the fact that the proposition which makes the state as the only legitimate form of political organisation is under serious scrutiny. New forms of transnational legitimacy are surfacing which includes multinational corporations, transnational advocacy networks, religious groups and epistemic communities leading to "transnationalisation of world politics" (Rosenau 1990). Collectively, this new organisation of political interests which undercuts the traditional monopoly of states is increasingly known as "global civil society". The mandate of the global civil society includes issue-areas such as economic and environmental justice, labour rights, women emancipation, disarmament, human rights and human security. These transnational coalitions are making dents in the outside-inside distinctions on which Westphalian state system primarily rests. By advocating social values, ideas of fairness and justice on a global scale, these groups are challenging the idea that good life can only materialise within the container called state. Moreover international institutions themselves have accredited a lot of global legitimacy. In a highly globalised world where societal denationalization is commonplace phenomenon, international institutions provide a modicum of political representation (Joerges 1996). Risse even claims that it is hard to theorise the contemporary world without taking into account the effect of the transnational actors on international politics (Risse 2002: 255). Clearly, even state have to submit to the new norms of global behaviour and observe the pursuance of societal goals at a transnational level. Power is definitely shifting away from the state.

Third, power in the globalised world is being reorganized in transitional circuits which comprise of multinational corporations, international NGO's, advocacy networks and other international coalitions. According to Cerny, the most important characteristic of this reorganisation is that the "transnational circuits of

power are increasingly organised around sectors and issue-areas than around holistic national interests" (2010: 78). Joseph Nye calls such 'circuits of power' as the bottom chessboard of international power structures (2011:2). In other words, if for Morgenthau use and abuse of power was restricted to state and how they conceived their national interests, the new organisation of power not only leads to a much diversified array of power-actors but also variegated reasons behind the use of power itself. These sectors and issue-areas where use of power can be most observed is defined by the interests of the transnational groups who identify their core interests with in the specific sector or issue-area. For example, multinational corporations are most vocal about financial and economic rule making whereas transnational civil society groups create enormous pressure on states when it comes to human rights and human security. In all power is not only getting diffused among multiple actors but is also getting "horizontally stratified according to issue-areas" (Cerny 2010: 79)

Fourth, the categories of force and violence are themselves undergoing transformation changing the very meaning of power as conceived in the traditional narratives. First, of all increasing transnational economic linkages have produced a change in what it means to be powerful in international politics. Richard Rosecrance argues that increasingly power in global politics is associated with economic prosperity rather than the realist benchmark of military superiority (Rosecrance 1986). On the other hand, the emergence of Europe as a "civilian superpower" suggests that international law and multilateralism in themselves can be rich resources for increasing the profile and influence of actors in the contemporary times (Galtung 1973) . In other words, for being powerful and influential in global politics, it is important to be perceived as a legitimate international citizen. Arguing against hard power as the most suitable denomination of power in a world where complex globalization rules, Nye claims that soft power has become the new synonym of power (Nye 2011). It is important to note that such change in the meaning of power emerges from the new realities of a world where globalisation and complex interdependence rules. In fact, the simple equations of violence among territorially demarcated states in international politics has been replaced by multiple levels of violence where non-state actors have taken over the reins of organised violence which earlier was thought to be an exclusive

domain of states. This is most evident in transnational terror groups, drug cartels as well as the linkages between these actors and domestic dissidents. All these factors have punctured the myth that a superior military force is the only potent currency of power in global politics. In a highly globalised world, power means different things to different people.

Complex Interdependence and Soft Power

Two stellar contributions by liberal scholarship on the power debate in international politics are the concepts of complex interdependence and soft power. This section will discuss the idea of power as purported by these two liberal approaches to international politics. What we shall see in the ensuing discussion is that power in the case of complex interdependence and institutionalisation is basically manifested through the capabilities of agenda-setting of transnational actors and networks as well as international regimes. On the other hand idea of soft power is more close to the third face of power; soft power targets the very formations of an actor's identity and interests in the power relationship.

Power, Interdependence and Institutions

Where ever there are reciprocal costly effects of transactions, there is interdependence (Keohane and Nye 1989: 8). Interdependence is defined by a situation of mutual dependence. According to Zurn, there are two kinds of interdependence – state interdependence and societal interdependence; distinction being contingent upon the kind of actors involved (2002). National or state interdependence is not a novel phenomenon whereas societal interdependence is. This is because as far as states are concerned, they have always been dependent on each other with respect their foreign policies. However societal interdependence suggests the interrelationship between state action and societal developments which are taking place outside the jurisdiction of the state. Modern idea of interdependence is generally societal in nature. "Societal interdependence is not constitutive for the Westphalian state system, it is rather a (mostly unintended) side effect of the growing interconnectedness between societies", claims Zurn (2002:

236).

Depending upon the degree of dependence, interdependence also produces power resources. Therefore for Keohane and Nye, even though many scholars hail interdependence as a virtue embedding in it a normative goal of liberal peace, interdependence is not a virtue in itself. Even in an interdependent world, distributional aspects of mutual cooperation linger. Any asymmetry in an interdependent relationship may lead to the formation of a power relationship in which the less dependent actor may control a significant political resource which can be used as a power resource (Keohane and Nye 1989: 11). In other words, any asymmetry in an interdependent relationship would lead to dependence. The best example of this asymmetric interdependence was the oil crisis of 1970's. USA, even being the super power, could not escape the use of resource based power by the Arab countries in an asymmetrically interdependent relationship. However, the costs US suffered in the long run were comparatively less than that of the European countries and Japan. This was because US could shift its domestic policies in such a direction that the long term impact of the oil embargo cancelled out. In other words, U.S. was sensitive to the oil embargo but was not vulnerable to it.

This reflects the crucial difference between sensitive interdependence and vulnerability interdependence (Keohane and Nye 1989: 12). Whereas sensitive interdependence only means contingent nature of an interdependent relationship, vulnerability interdependence entails huge opportunity costs on the part of the dependent (Duvall 1978). In a different analytical schema, Keohane and Nye argue that the former refers to the cost incurred in an asymmetrical interdependent relationship until and unless the receiving party changes its policies in order to alter the situation. On the other hand, vulnerability dependence is the actor's liability to suffer costs even when policies have been altered in order to change the situation. Clearly any actor which is able to make the other party vulnerable in an interdependent relationship enjoys much more leverage than if the relationship is just based on sensitive dependence. Charles Kindleberger suggests the same when he situates power in the adaptability strength or responsiveness of national economies (Kindleberger 1970).Vulnerability dependence is a great power resource (Baldwin 1980). For Keohane and Nye, one can calculate vulnerability

dependence by the cost incurred by the aggrieved party to change its policy in order to come out of the power relationship. Vulnerability dependence is also important for another reason. In a specific context, vulnerability dependence can suggest that who will decide the rules of the game (Keohane and Nye 1989). Russia's blackmail of the European countries on fuel and gas supplies, especially when the prices of the oil were sky-rocketing, is an indicator of the leverage which vulnerability dependence provides to the resource rich party. It is of crucial importance because of the economic repercussions can be easily explained by the demand and supply curve. Since, resource rich nations can artificially create both demand and supply of a particular product; they can virtually control the market.

The liberal project on interdependence consists of using it as a force for peace and as a scheme of organising the world polity in a way that brute materialistic conception of power, generally adhered to by the realists, are relegated to the back-burner of world politics (Burton 1972). Even for Kant, the "spirit of commerce" was antithetical to the idea of war (Quoted in Keohane 2002: 47). However, the starry-eyed argument of liberals that economic exchanges leads to comity among nations and therefore, reduction of the importance of use of force has always been an easy target of realism right from the time of E.H Carr. The feebleness of the simple correspondence between economics and reduction of power politics, argues Robert Keohane is "untenable relying as it does on an understanding theory of progress and on a crude reductionist argument in which politics is determined by economics" (Keohane 2002: 48).

The most sophisticated theorization of economic interdependence and the transformational changes it has brought in the field of international politics and consequently for the concept of power in the field is present in the idea of complex interdependence (Keohane and Nye 1989). According to Keohane and Nye, complex interdependence had three main features (1989). First, In a state of complex interdependence, societies are connected through multiple channels: the notion of the singularity of nation-state as the only viable conduit of interaction between the inside and the outside lied punctured. These channels can be the relationships between levels of state elites with in the governmental structures of two states; or can be the interconnections among non-governmental elites; or they

can even be among transnational actors such as multinational corporations or advocacy groups etc. These groups often have vested interest in economic prosperity and growth. Second, unlike in the realist world view, where survival is the most prominent of state objectives, in a state of complex interdependence, multiple issues take centre-stage, security being one but not the paramount concern of states. This "absence of hierarchy among issues" translates into states being less paranoid about their security and hence, less focused on amassing huge military power capabilities. Also, multiplicity of issues engenders a mosaic of actors who are interested in the policies of the states and these groups lobby hard for the state to resonate with their interests. This basically means that unitary character of the state and the idea that state works as one coherent unit lies severely challenged in a state of complex interdependence. Lastly, when complex interdependence prevails, the use of military force becomes redundant.

Clearly, such an idea challenges many prominent assumptions of traditional conceptualisation of power in international politics. First, it allows power to be shared among multiple actors rather than being restricted to the *bodypolitik* of the state. When seen in conjunction with the idea that in a state of complex interdependence, several issues dominate the agenda of the state, it becomes quite evident that different actors exercise power over different issue areas. Hence, a much diffused model of power allocation is produced with the domestic politics of the state as well as in the international relations. Thirdly, it is important to note that military power as the ultimate currency of power in international politics loses its argumentative strength. In a world which lives in complex interdependence, military forces are relegated to the background. The existence of multiple interests and multiple actors does not allow the one-size-fits-all approach evident in military solutions to international problems to be effective anymore. States come to have collective stakes in each other's survival and prosperity.

Another dimension which is useful for the debate on the concept of power through the idea of complex interdependence is its implications for the management of global politics. Clearly, as Nye and Keohane explicated, complex interdependence creates a new environment in which traditional ideas of exercise of power in international politics appear anachronistic. However, it does not solve us the

problems that states will still pursue their sectional interest and therefore, application of power and its management remains critical even in a highly interdependent world. The answer of managing interests and gains therefore is an important element of the power debate in complex interdependence. Has led to a creation of international agreements For Robert Keohane, institutionalisation of international politics increasingly became the answer for the above problematique. He writes "confronted with complex interdependence and the efforts of state to manage it, political scientists began to redefine the study of international institutions" (2002: 29). In turn, the rise of international institutes have provided a healthy breeding ground for transnational and transgovernmental interactions and thereby, strengthening complex interdependence (Slaughter 1997). International institutions and regimes function as key intervening variables through which interdependence is channelled and its effects are managed.

For liberals and especially neoliberal institutionalism, international institutions are key for understanding cooperation and compliance among states in an environment of complex interdependence (Oye: 1981). Institutions are often projected as solutions to the dilemmas of self-interest in an anarchical world which realists have long argued leads to the primacy of power politics. First, international institutions help in reducing the transaction costs of maintaining agreements among states (Keohane 2002). They induce reciprocity as well allow states to organize themselves in collective governance. By collective commitments and governance, states overcome the difficulty in unilateral monitoring of compliance. Second, institutions help states to overcome 'coordination problems'- these are situations which contrasting interests of states generate multiple equilibrium (Stein 1982; Martin 1992). Institutions help states to achieve convergence of opinion in selection of the most optimal equilibrium. In the terminology of game theory, these situations are called games of chicken most illustrative in the idea of nuclear deterrence. In a nuclear game of chicken, both parties have a shared interest in avoiding mutual destruction. However, beyond this point of convergence, both states have very divergent interests since none of them would like to blink first in the event of a confrontation. In such situations, institutions help states to avoid coordination failures which portends catastrophe for both parties. Third, institutions also help in solving collaboration problems. In such situations, self-

regarding nature of states leads to outcomes which are often sub-optimal than those which would have been achieved under cooperation. In game theory, such situations are referred to as 'prisoner's dilemma'. In international politics, collaboration problems cover a spectrum of issue areas including arms races to environmental problems to trade related conflicts. In all, international institutions help to ameliorate the situation engendered by both tragedy (anarchy) and evil (self-interest) in international politics and thereby reducing the role which naked use of power accomplishes in the world. To this effect, Arthur Stein argues "The international hierarchy of power and wealth has changed over the last half-century, and those shifts have occurred in part because of, and certainly in the context of, the workings of international institutions" (2008: 210).

However, there are a number of detractors of the institutional logic. Two set of criticisms are extremely pertinent. First round of criticism comes from those scholars who emphasize the importance of relative distributions not absolute ones as the main concern of states (Grieco 1988; Snidal 1991). Even in situations where absolute gains are possible, the distributional aspects may still linger: states care more about who gets what and not that everyone gets something or the other. States often relinquish cooperation in anticipation of more gains being made by their opponents rather than the net accruing of gains by both. Second range of criticism emanate from the fact that power plays both a crucial role in creation of international institutions and their functioning. Most often hegemons are the principal actors behind the creation and management of international institutions (Ikenberry 2001). Therefore, when it comes to institutional frameworks, great powers enjoy a lot of influence in the system. According to Krasner, which he calls "Meta power', coordination problems which pose the problem of multiple equilibrium are often decided by great powers in their favour since they have maximum power to bargain: those decisions are made which most suit the powerful (Krasner 1991). Moreover, as Gruber notes, great powers may gang-up and create institutions which are most suited for realising their national interest leaving others to decide whether to join or not (Gruber 2000). In such scenarios, institutions become exclusive 'great power clubs' with very little to offer in terms of common interests to other actors. However, it is important to note that even though in these instances exercise of power takes place, it is not synonymous with

direct coercion one finds in the narratives of realism (Rosecrance 2001). Here the second phase of power is more evident: institutions act as proxies for the influence of the powerful. The focus shifts from distribution of capabilities of individual states to the ability of the states to define the agenda of the institutions, their ability to communicate and their management of information and finally that who controls the rules and norms of membership and other procedural issues with in a particular institution (Berenskoetter 2007).

Soft Power

The idea of soft power in its present manifestation has been a brain child of one of most known liberal faces of the current international relations scholarship – Joseph S Nye, Jr. Over the last two decades Nye has meticulously pursued the idea and has been the main force behind the proliferation of the concept both in academic as well as policy circles. Today, it will not be an exaggeration to say, that soft power is one of the most visible component of foreign policy of many states around the world. Six major works of Nye define the historiography of the idea of soft power. These are: *Bound to Lead* (1990), *The Paradox of American Power* (2002), *Soft Power* (2004), *Power in Global Information Age* (2004) and recently *The Future of Power* (2010).

The intellectual stimulus for the project of soft power was provided by the declinist theories of international politics which ruled the academic space during 1980's. The thesis of rise and fall of great powers over long cycles of consolidation and eventual overstretch predicted that Cold War has left America completely enervated of its power resources and the superpower is now is mode of decline (Kennedy 1987). For Nye, the hypothesis of relative decline in US power was flawed due to two main reasons. First, Nye challenged the declinist theories insofar they considered the post Second World War US power as the standard against which the relative power of US needs to be measured. According to Nye, such a scheme of things provide a distorted view of USA's power capabilities since after the second Great War, only America was left with preponderance of power resources. All other states lay literally vanquished. Therefore, such one-sided distribution of power resources cannot be taken as a standard metric to ascertain

the distribution of material capabilities 40 years later. However, it was Nye's second contention which really sowed the seeds of the soft power and its eventual development. According to Nye, the declinist theorist's idea of relative power was imbued with only one conception of power: power in terms of material resources. They are in fact negligent of the structural changes in global politics which America's rise as a superpower in global system has conjured. These structural changes represent a web of institutions, norms, rules and values, all of whom had a distinct American touch, which dictate the behaviour of states in contemporary international politics. Unlike material capabilities which Nye called Hard power, these elements do not push states to confirm to American dictates. Rather, their main power lies in the force of attraction for other states to do what is in the interest of USA. In some respects, the argument of America's soft power was in conjunction with the context in which the Cold War was nearing its end: the ultimate triumph of liberalism as the most successful political ideology in the history of human existence (Fukuyama 1989).

However, it is interesting to note that, in his second major work *The Paradox of American Power,* Nye is precisely targeting the triumphalism which the favourable outcome of Cold War had ushered in America's foreign policy. This neo-conservative turn in US foreign policy, best illustrated in the workings of President Bush Jr., was the primary target of Nye. Nye criticized the heavy-handed and "mould the history with force" kind of approach followed by Bush administration in its war against global terror. According to Nye, overt and extensive use of hard power resources, basically military assets, in realising foreign policy goals may lead to disastrous results. Such a strategy, said Nye, ignores the fundamental transformation of global politics aided and abetted by the complex processes of globalization and information revolution. Thanks to the mind-blowing velocity of globalisation, the international system is no more a space decided by distribution of military prowess. Power in international politics, for Nye, was divided among a three spheres: military, economic and transnational (2002: 39). In a recent rendition of the same concept, Nye calls these spheres as "resembling a three dimensional chess board" (2011: 2). Distribution of military power defines the first sphere or the top chessboard. In this sphere, USA is the dominant state and distribution of power is largely unipolar. Economic power rules the second sphere and here,

contends Nye, power is distributed among a number of states like US, EU, China and Japan. Multipolarity, therefore, defines international political economy. However, the third sphere or the bottom chessboard is the "realm of transnational relations" that cut across territorial boundaries are often outside the scope and regulation of states diverse non-state actors occupy this space ranging from multinational corporations, to international NGO's to terrorists. It even includes "impersonal processes such as pandemics and climate change" (2011: 2). Nye argues that in such a diversified setting, there is no use of talking about power in terms of distribution among a given number of actors: traditional notions of power are anachronistic. Power, in the transnational space, is heavily diffused and "it makes no sense to talk about unipolarity, multipolarity or hegemony" (2011: 2). In such a setting, for designing adequate strategies to meet their national goals, states have to take into cognizance the division of power in all these spheres.

Both these intellectual challenges - the arguments against declinist theories and the caution against unrestricted triumphalism – allowed Nye to develop fully the concept of soft power. In his most recent book on soft power called *The Future of Power* (2011), Nye has most effectively dealt with the conceptual apparatus which underlies the idea of soft power. But before that let's have a look at how Nye conceives the idea of power itself.

Nye idea of power is definitely relational: he sees power in the outcomes and not in power resources. According to him, power lies not in sheer capabilities but our "ability to get what we want" (2011:6). Attaining one's professed preferences, therefore, is the benchmark for power not the amount of power resources one possesses. According to him a resource based definition of power suffers from a number of conceptual difficulties. First, power in terms of resources ignores the value of context in deciding the outcomes of power relationships. Power is always dependent on who exactly is involved in power relationship (the scope of power) as well as what is the application of power all about (the domain of power). According to him " power depends upon human relationship that vary in different contexts" (2011: 5) In fact, the appreciation for context as an important variable in power relationship, makes Nye particularly sensitive to the role which agents subjected to power play in power's successful application for he writes " most

power relationships depend very much on what the victim thinks". Second, a resource based definition of power falls prey to what David Baldwin calls the "paradox of power" and Gallaroti in his recent work terms as "the power curse" (Baldwin 2002; Gallarotti; 2009). Quantum of resources could never determine the exact results of a power relationship and this represents a paradox for even those "best endowed with power do not always get the outcomes they want" (2011: 8) Power conversion – getting results out of power resources- for Nye is an extremely tricky manoeuvre and given the uncertainty inherent in "power as resources" approach, he rather chooses a relational model of power analysis.

Though he makes the attainment of desired outcomes as the sole criteria on which power of an agent needs to be evaluated, he makes some fine observation on the relational approach to power analysis as well. According to him, there are three principal variants of relational power: commanding change, controlling agendas and establishing preferences. This characterisation of relational power fits nicely with "the three faces of power debate" where "commanding power" resonates with Robert Dahl' definition of direct power, "controlling agendas" is akin to Barack and Baratz idea of framing and agenda-setting and " establishing preferences" similar to Lukes formulation of third face of power which focuses on implanted interests. For Nye, "command power" corresponds with ability of an agent to achieve desired results by the means of coercion and payment. It is also the most visible and direct form of relational power. Nye also calls it hard power which in international politics would translate to successful application of military and economic resources for achieving national interests.

It is in the framework of the second and third face of power – controlling agendas and establishing preferences – that Nye locates the conceptual space for soft power which he defines as the "ability to get preferred outcomes through the co-optive means of agenda-setting, persuasion and attraction" (2011: 16). The successful application of soft power depends in an agents "ability to attract, create credibility and trust". A variety of different actors – corporations, institutions, NGO's and transnational actors even individuals - possess the ability to exercise soft power and the concept is not restricted to states. However, Nye consciously chooses to makes states as his primary object of analyses. Exploring the idea of attraction,

Nye calls this facet of soft power as "allurement" which springs from three attributes of the agent: benignity which means how an agent behaves with others especially in terms of generating credibility and trust; competence corresponds to how far an agent can be an example for others and hence become a focus of admiration; and finally, beauty responds to the attractiveness an agent's ideas (2011: 92). All these three factors make agents attractive and therefore render him with soft power capabilities. Persuasion on the other hand refers is the power of argumentation: more cogent and incisive one's arguments are, more is the probability of persuading the other to comply with one's demands (2011: 93). Clearly, Nye assumes a minimum level of rationality among the agents sitting at the two extreme ends of a power relationship. to this effect, he says "In persuasion, rational arguments appealing to facts, beliefs about casualty, and normative premises are mixed with the framings of issues in attractive ways and the use of emotional appeal" (2011: 93).

In the context of states, Nye finds three important sources of soft power: culture; political values; and foreign policies (2011: 84). However, the working principal of soft power sources rests on context, consistency and legitimacy. Culture attracts but often such attraction depends upon the context: who is getting attracted and by what? Giving the example of the palpable disconnectedness between American popular culture and radical Islam, Nye drives the point home (2011:84). Similarly, political values are a soft power resource to the extent that a state "lives up to them at home and abroad" (2011:84) Inconsistencies in dealing with two similar kinds of situation would often lead to disgust rather than attraction for a state's political agenda. The dilemma of US foreign policy in strife torn Middle East is a good example of such phenomena. The recent drive for democracy in the Middle East has further made evident the contradictions in what America professes and what it does. Such divergence in political ideologies and foreign policy of the state does create legitimacy problems for a state in its external relations.

This brings us to the question of how soft works? According to Nye, sometimes soft power in inherent in the way in the history, culture and political organisation of a state, in such a situation, attraction is inherent to the existence of the state. Bye calls such attraction as the "passive approach" to soft power. On the other hand, in

an active consolidation of soft power, states consciously try to make themselves attractive and persuasive by availing a number of instruments such as public diplomacy, economic assistance, cultural exchanges and media broadcasting. On the other hand, the conversion process of soft power resources getting transformed into state policies takes place directly as well as indirectly. The direct effects of soft powers can be observed when a state's soft power creates overwhelming influence on the leaders and elites of other states there by leading to a favourable structure of response from the government of other states. In an another route of direct influence, states with high soft power resources may influence the public opinion of other states which in turn gets translated into foreign policies. If public opinion is receptive to a foreign government's agenda, it creates enabling environment for respective national governments to acquiesce as well. If not, confirmation with other states foreign policy objectives is doomed to failure. In Nye's words, " public opinion often affects elites by creating an enabling or disabling environment for specific policy initiatives" (2011: 96) Soft power, therefore, is affects not only the probability of achieving possession goals – specific and tangible objectives - but also milieu goals which correspond to realisation of favourable structural environment for foreign policy agenda (Wolfers 1962: 73-77: Nye 2011: 16).

Conclusion

One can clearly discern from the above discussion that liberal conception of power differs significantly from that of realism's. In liberal thought, power transcends the realm of brute force to sophisticated networks of interstate and transnational relations. The discussion on complex interdependence and soft power attests to these tendencies. In some way, it can be said that power recedes to the background of international politics insofar that liberalism, unlike realism, does not find much traction with the brute militaristic underpinnings of power. Military power, for liberals, is becoming more and more antediluvian at least among those states that have started living by the liberal principals. In fact, in the contemporary world, states, rather than engaging themselves in continuous conflicts, have embraced the sanctity and security provided by pluralistic security communities (Adler and

Barnett 1998). Security communities are defined by relationships which are built upon common interests and mutual trust. It is important to note that the idea evolved within a particular context: the coming together of liberal democracies across the Atlantic after the Second World War. Moreover, one can also observe that in the liberal discourse, the meaning of exercising power changes from the traditional notions of 'war-winning ability' to the idea that 'powerful' are those who can best manage the complexities engendered by the process of globalization. Liberalism's biggest contribution to the power debate in international politics is to take the focus away from states as the only legitimate purveyors of power. Rather than supporting a one-entity-all-powerful approach, liberalism has succeeded in underlining the fact that in a globalized world, power is shared by a number of actors: multinational corporations, International NGO's, advocacy groups and even terrorist organisations. Locating power, for liberals, is not an act of fiat; it depends upon the context with in which power relationships operates. States are hardly capable of exercising power in the way terrorist organisation can. The fact that liberalism accepts that multiple actor's exercise power in multiple settings conveys two important things: first, scope and domain of a power relationship is fundamental to liberalism and second, that liberals do not consider power to be entirely fungible across issue-areas. Clearly, then, unlike realism, liberalism supports a relational definition of power which locates influence in the outcomes of power relationships rather than the resources or capabilities of the actors.

This brings us to the issue that where can one locate liberalism in the 'faces of power' debate? Clearly, the discussion on complex interdependence and institutionalism suggests that agenda-setting – the power to define what is to be deliberated and how it is to be deliberated upon – is most reflected in liberal understanding of how power operates in international politics. Power, in other words, is exercised when actors in an interdependent relationship are able to define the terms of engagement through which transactions would take place. Clearly, given the basic insights of complex interdependence where multiple channels of communication coexist with multiplicity of issue areas, the lump-sum concept of power becomes defunct. Moreover, the discussion on institutionalism further suggest that the power to define agendas of international organisation or regimes is the most common way of exercising influence in world which is getting highly

institutionalised. The debate over the expansion of United Nations Security Council is a case in point.

However, the discussion on soft power suggests that liberalism is not impervious to the third face of power- the power to shape the basic interests or preferences of others in a power relationship. Clearly, Nye's emphasis is upon the ability of USA to redefine the interests of other states in manner that it synchronizes with its own interests. However, what is important to note is that unlike Lukes, who considered the third face of power as the most insidious one, Nye seems to eulogies the concept insofar it evades the use of hard power resources. The whole idea of soft power is a battle in the realm of ideas which is to be won by persuasion and attraction. The problematique for Nye is to make American values being loved and venerated by the rest of the world. In simple terms, it is an effort to establish the hegemony of USA using its ideational resources. However, what Nye completely misses in his narrative is the problem that such ideological domination may also lead to naked exploitation. Nye, therefore, is not very sensitive to the issue of end-results of soft power but only with its aggrandizement.

Clearly, liberalism takes us a step further in the debate over the idea of power in international politics. It identifies new power resources, locates power in different actors and also underscores novel ways in which power is exercised in international politics. However, it falls short of completely exploring the third face of power. Moreover, there is also an implicit assumption that use of power to further the liberal discourse is essentially in the interest of all human race. To further explore the meanings of power in international politics and how one can arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the concept, we now turn to the theoretical apparatus of constructivism.

Chapter 4

Constructivism and Power in International Politics

Having observed the concept of power through realist and liberal lenses, this chapter explores what the third theoretical pillar of international relations – constructivism - has to say about the power debate in international politics. Constructivism as a proper school of thought in international relations has been fairly new to the discipline. However, primarily because constructivism promises to provide an alternative vision of the world over and above what the realist and liberal versions of international relations seem to suggest, constructivist scholarship has been able to establish itself quite well in the international relations community.

The discipline of International Relations is often characterized by the great debates which took place between dominant theoretical positions in the course of its history (Schmidt 2005). Most scholars in International Relations define the historiography of the discipline in terms of the great debates. The debates have been so important that according to Ole Waever, "there is no other means of telling the history of International Relations" (1998: 715). This is so because they represent moments of immense intellectual churning in International Relations. The very first of these debates took place between the idealists and realists which resulted in the triumphant arrival of realism as the most potent explanation of international politics. With E.H Carr and Hans Morgenthau leading the charge, realism got firmly embedded in the theoretical contours of International Relation studies. The second in line was the tussle between the behavioralists and the traditionalists with the point of contestation being the possibility or impossibility of scientifically studying global politics. For the behavioralists, inspired by the scientific (behavioural revolution) in America, International Relations had to be studies in the way similar to natural sciences. For, traditionalist global phenomena, being a social phenomenon, could hardly be observed by the instruments employed in natural sciences.

However, of late, the most salient development in the study of International

relations has been the advent of what Yosef Lapid calls the "third debate" (1989). The third debate led to a number of theoretical approaches landing on the shores of the academic discourse of International Relations, opening up the otherwise narrow confines of mainstream international relations. The most important contribution of the debate is the infusion of multiple ontologies and epistemologies on the canvass of International Relations making the enterprise much more variegated and rich in its fundamental concerns and explanations. According to Yousef Lapid, there are three main characteristics which inform the third debate. First concerns with pluralistic science (Lapid 1989: 239-40). In his conceptualisation, science has multiple meanings and must be considered in pluralistic terms. It was important because if the label of science in appropriated by one method of social enquiry, all other methods would be automatically considered illegitimate. This basically meant that approaches which were languishing at the periphery of the discipline now must take the centerstage.

Second common concern of the participants in the third debate is on the premises and assumptions which are used in the theoretical formulations and this Yousef Lapid calls Perspectivism (Lapid 1989: 41). What this means is that the Third Debate has opened the black box of epistemological and ontological questions hitherto unproblematised by the mainstream International Relations theories. Giving an example of Marxism and its negligence of nationalism, Lapid illustrates that unquestioning acceptance of assumptions, even in the face of experimental failure, is no theory but pure dogma. Assumptions often become the source of scientific bankruptcy though he did not explicitly reject the usefulness of assumptions in the act of theorization. However, what Perspectives does is to render the discipline of International Relations a little more self-conscious and self-reflective by problematising the assumptions of dominant theories.

The last of these concerns is regarding method. According to Lapid, the works of Kuhn, Polanyi, and Feyerabend have created a kind of 'relativism' in philosophical thinking. The ramifications of this development has seriously jolted the idea of *methodological monism* which otherwise seek to establish standards of conducting research and regulate scientific domains. What third debate entails is that epistemology cannot remain fixed irrespective of time and is 'socially mutable and

historically contingent' (Lapid 1989: 243). Also, according to Lapid, the proliferation of research strategies has solidified a polymorphic conception of science.

It is important to note that conceptualisation of international relations inspired by what Lapid has called pluralism; perspectivism and relativism - the three hallmarks of the third debate – were present in international relations from before (Adler 2005). However, it was the end of Cold war which provided the most appropriate occasion for these narratives to take centerstage (Petrova 2003). The transition which the end of Cold War infused in global politics and the inability of the traditional narratives to explain such massive change in the structure of global politics raised the profile of the motivated scholars to search other avenues for possible answers. The mainstreams variable of material power and interests could not explain the fall of Soviet Union. Moreover, the emerging structures of global governance were transforming the anarchical realm of international relations into a space of authorial relations, in a way similar to that of domestic politics. In fact, the emergence of the third debate during the end of Cold War was in itself a validation of its most fundamental assumptions: that discourses are shaped by historically and culturally specific circumstances (Fierke 2007).

It was at the same time that two most important scholarly contributions of the third debate were published. First, was the book by Richard Onuf (1989), the title of whom became the most famous one liner of the Post-Cold war era – *World of Our Making* – and second was the Kratochwil's take on norms and rules (1989). These two works clearly set the stage for more reflectivist accounts take roots in the discipline of International relations. Approximately at the same time, Hollis and Smith published a very timely book on the issue of epistemology which delineated the differences between the traditional and the more recent reflectivist accounts (1990). The main contribution of the books was to normalise reflectivism in the domain of International Relations by arguing that there are two ways, both equally legitimate, of studying social phenomena. One was that of cause and effect relationship as evident in the logic of science and in the case of International Relations, in the mainstream theories which seek to provide a scientific explanation to social phenomena. This they termed as Explanation. The other mode

of enquiry, which was an approach which scholars such as Peter Winch, Max Weber and Wittgenstein took, was labelled under the rubric of Understanding. This tradition according to Hollis and Smith follows hermeneutic accounts to understand social events. There is no cause and effect relationship which understanding seeks to establish, rather, according to the authors, it seeks to unravel the constitutive character of social facts. All these developments led to the mainstreaming of reflectivism in international relations.

This was the theoretical churning within which constructivism emerged as a major school of thought in International Relations. In simple terms, constructivism refers to a mode of thinking which foregrounds the importance of thoughts and ideas over material existence as the primary constituent of the social world. Onuf's *World of Our Making* is the simplest yet powerful rendition of the core of constructivist logic. It portrays that world outside does not constitute a separate ontological entity with an objective reality, distinct yet simultaneously co-existing with human subjects. Rather, it is a result of what humans think about it and their own actions vis-a-vis the outside world. In other words, for constructivists "the material world does not come classified, and the objects of our knowledge are not independent of our interpretations and our language" (Adler 2005: 96). In fact, constructivism cannot be called a theory of international relations in its most elemental forms. Adler describes constructivism using a threefold typology (2005). According to him, constructivism involves "a three layered understanding" (2005: 96). The first layer is composed of constructivism's metaphysical commitment to plurality, perspectivism and relativism in scientific thought. Second layer designates constructivism as social theory where the "role of knowledge and knowledgeable agents' in the construction of social reality becomes fundamental to scholarly inquiry (2005: 96). It is at this level that basic assumptions of constructivism such as mutual constitution of agent and structures, role of intersubjective knowledge and rule-governed social interaction operates. Lastly, constructivism can be considered as specifically concerned with international relations where its metaphysical commitments and concepts developed under social theory are used to address issues pertaining to global politics.

This chapter shall focus on this last layer of constructivism with an interest in how

constructivist scholars conceptualise the idea of power, its role and its multiple manifestations in the realm of international politics. It is important basically because of two reasons. First, , power is not a concept restricted to mainstream (realism and liberalism) international relations theory and constructivism is not all about norms, rules and identities. Power constitutes an extremely important element of constructivist schema (Hopf 1998; Guzzini; Hurd: 2008; Adler: 2005). Second and most important is the fact that constructivism's take on the concept of power brings in very innovative and fresh ideas such as legitimacy, reputation, performance, reflexivity and knowledge into the forefront of power debate in international relations making the discussion variegated in flavour and rich in intensity. The first section of the chapter discusses the basic assumptions of constructivism in more detail and also delineate upon the classification of various schools with constructivist paradigm. Thereupon a constructivist critique of the existing models of conceptualising power in the mainstream international relations will follow. The third section will delineate upon some original contributions of constructivist scholarship in the domain of power debate. Here concepts such as performative power, power-knowledge nexus, reputation and legitimacy will be dealt with. Lastly, the conclusion will try to locate constructivist idea of power in the larger debate with the faces of power debate.

Constructivism: Assumptions and Theories

In its essence, constructivism is a philosophical commitment rather than a substantive theory of international politics. It concerns much more with questions of ontology (what to study) and epistemology (how to study) rather than substantive issues underlining the study of international politics. However, there are some solid contributions made by constructivist scholars in the basic assumptions which undergird most of the contemporary thinking on international relations (Hopf 1998; Adler 2005; Fierke 2007; Hurd 2008). Firstly constructivist scholars emphasize upon the constitutive nature of social reality. Rather than accepting a world out there which needs to be objectively observed and analysed upon, constructivist argue that that the process of seeing and thinking itself constitutes the very reality under observation. This constitution of the world or

"the world of our making" is a result of a number of factors such as intersubjective character of knowledge, the norms and rules which helps us in deciphering what we see and observe and the codes of language and social communication through which we interrelate our experiences and come to conclusions over social phenomena (Adler 2005). Without these variables in operation, it is even hard to conceptualise the existence of human society. All these factors also have another thing in common: all of these are based upon interaction and mutual sharing of ideas among individuals in a society. Intersubjective knowledge emerges out of shared understandings of self and the other; it is in fact not a "mere congregation of individual beliefs but have some independent status as a collective knowledge" (Fierke 2007: 172). On the other hand, norms and rules are common expectations of individual behaviour with in a social setup. Social communication similarly is a collective enterprise.

Second, constructivists argue that structures and agents are mutually constituted (Hurd 2008). Unlike mainstream scholars who either foreground agency or structure in their narratives, constructivists have consistently taken a more interactionist approach in their theoretical world view towards agent-structure problem in international relations. Structures for them are not restricted to material distribution of capabilities. Rather are defined by the rules, norms, institutions and intersubjective knowledge which constitute the context with in which individual actors resort to any meaningful action. Structuralists like Kenneth Waltz reduce individual action to structural pressures thereby undermining the capabilities of action on the part of agents. Liberals on the other hand have focussed excessively of agential intent and action and have even proclaimed, as is evident in democratic peace theory, that such individual action can change the nature of international structure itself. For constructivists both these positions are untenable since agential action and structural imperatives do not work in isolation; the effects produced in a social set up are a result of a complex interaction between them. It also entails another advantage for constructivists: they escape the problem of starting their social enquiry either form the level of the structure or agential action and hence, do not ascribe primordial importance to any of these two locations of social action.

The third basic insight of constructivism comes from an understanding that

material reality does not meet the eye of an observer without ideational filters. In simple terms, material reality is itself constituted by the values and ideas which individuals possess and which a particular society has developed over time. Material realities are read through the lenses of intersubjective beliefs and the norms and rules of social engagement. As these factors change over time, the influence and concrete effects which material realities engender are also subject to change. In fact, for constructivists, material reality is contingent upon social reality. As Hurd puts it, " for constructivists, beliefs, expectations and interpretations are inescapable when thinking about international affairs, and their importance shows that the materialist position in untenable" (2008: 301); the materialist position being that material objects impinge on social realities directly without being mediated by social cognition. The question therefore, for constructivist scholars, shifts from whether material factors affect global politics but how does the material world makes sense to us and what is the role of social and human cognition in such an enterprise?

Lastly, it is important to discuss a little bit about the ontology and epistemology question in constructivist pantheon since at the very heart of the mainstream-constructivist divide is the question of what to study in world politics and how to study it. As has been discussed earlier, ontologically and epistemologically, constructivists follow a pluralistic discourse. They tend not to assume the existence or non-existence of actors in world politics neither do they confirm to the notion that social reality has to be studied in any one particular manner for it to be accepted as genuine knowledge. Ontologically two things need to be mentioned. First, there exists a plurality of actors in a social setup and second, individuals cannot be the starting point of social enquiry because individual do not exist in a social vacuum. In other words, if social enquiry is to be pursued, context of individual's existence must be the necessary starting point. Constructivists one can say therefore choose holist ontology over an individualist ontology (Fierke 2007). Epistemologically, constructivists straddle across the explaining-understanding tradition depending upon the kind social enquiry at hand. What is however extremely important for constructivist scholarship is the fact that construction of social world is not separated from knowledge construction. For the constructivist scheme to materialise, it is important to first see the idea of knowledge itself to be

a social construction which emerges out of overt or covert practices of knowledge seekers. This, as we will see, is fundamental element in the constructivist scheme of things when it comes to the critique of mainstream conceptualisation of power.

All these insights when applied to international politics portray a very different kind of international system hitherto acknowledged in the mainstream international relations theory. First, constructivists argue that state interests are not exogenous to social inquiry and are not entirely determined by material realities. Interests of the state are in fact constituted by the norms and rules of international society. In simple words, constructivist do not take state interest to be given and endlessly static; they argue that interests are malleable and determined by history, culture, values, identities and changing social environment (Finnemore 1996; Wendt 1992; 1999). Second, flowing from the pluralist ontology, constructivist have shunned the idea of state-centrism in international relations. The constructivist approach does not subscribe to any one fundamental unit of analysis in global politics. According to Hurd, "The co-constitution of actors and structures means that there is no impetus in constructivism for a zero-sum debate over "which" level provides the most leverage over puzzles" (2008: 306). Third, is the debate between logic of appropriateness and logic of consequence (March and Olsen; 1998). The constructivist approaches invoke normative concerns of appropriateness behind the explanation of actor behaviour. Rationalist explanations, on the other hand, invoke a *homo econimicus* model arguing that actor's do things which they find in their own interests. For constructivist, logic of appropriateness follows a norm following identity construction which is internalized by states in due course of time. Constructivists bank their explanation of norm driven behaviour on the actor's perception of norm-following as rightful behaviour under social settings. These explanations draw on constitutive character of norms which not only regulate behaviour but also constitute agential interests in the first place. Norm driven behaviour is not a function of actor's utility function but springs from the actors' conception of self; its identity. Identities and norms therefore constitute actors interests in such a way that actors do what they consider as rightful under particular circumstances (Fearon and Wendt 2005). Fourth and in fact one of the most important contributions of constructivism to international relations is what Wendt famously said "anarchy is what we make of it" (Wendt 1992). The

construction of social reality posits the fact that anarchy is not a given condition of international existence. It is rather a way of thinking – a construction at the most – about international politics. In fact, the consequences of anarchy does not depend so much upon the lack of an overarching authority at the international level as it is contingent upon how states think about anarchy in the first place. Depending upon how states think about themselves – as friends or enemies – the meanings of anarchy changes. This is an argument similar to Karl Deustch security communities where the common values and identities among countries in the north Atlantic had mitigated the deleterious effects of anarchy and states were not found in a continuous struggle for gaining petty advantages over one another (Deutsch 1957). In fact, for Wendt, there exist multiple logics of anarchy depending upon the kinds of social relationships extent among participating states (1999).

If this is how constructivism works in international politics, we now turn our attention to the consequences for the power debate which emanate out of such a theoretical disposition towards the study of international relations. The next section will not only focus upon the critique of mainstream narratives on power from a constructivist standpoint but what would also follow is a discussion on how constructivist scholarship has brought new elements in the power debate in international relations making the concept much more variegated in its reading and rich in texture.

Constructivism's Construction of Power: Developing an Alternative Model of Power Analyses

Power is as central to constructivism as it is to any other theory in international relations (Hurd 2008; Hopf 1998). However, constructivists have proposed quite a different understanding of power vis-a-vis the mainstream theories in international relations have done. Adler claims that the heavy focus on material power has made the power analysis in mainstream theories to be very shallow in their content (Adler 2005: 103). For Hopf, though constructivism has no aversion to material power, discursive power – power over knowledge, ideas, culture, ideology and language- is the chief concern of constructivist scholars (Hopf 1998: 177). Indeed,

the constructivist debate on power starts at limits of the mainstream's conceptualisation of power. Guzzini's work in this regard is very well acknowledged. In a series of papers on the idea of power in international relations, he has delineated upon a number of very important limitations in the power analyses of both realist and liberal scholars as well has summarised a constructivist conceptualisation (Guzzini 1993; 2000; 2004; 2007; 2009). The concepts developed here are more an accumulation of different voices with in the larger framework of constructivism which have found existing literature on power in international relations to be extremely narrow in its orientation. In this section, first I will delineate upon these shortcomings which the constructivist scholars have been complaining about. This includes a discussion on the idea of measurement of power (Guzzini 2009), the multidimensional character of power (Guzzini 2009), the agent-structure problem in resource based and relational models of power (Guzzini 1993), the side-lining of discursive power over that of material power (Hopf 1998; Adler 2005). Second is the issue of constructivists look upon power. Here some of the constructivist markers of power – responsibility, justification, performance, legitimacy, reputation, and knowledge – will receive scrutiny.

First as far the measure of power is concerned; constructivists argue that any measurement of power is doomed to failure given the contextual character of power relationships in international politics. Taking further the critique of Baldwin on resource based conception of power which according to Baldwin failed the fungibility test because of differing utility functions of power resources in differing contexts, constructivists claim that contexts, are themselves socially constructed. This in turn makes power resources dependent upon the values attributed to them in a particular international context because the " nature of international society affects the respective value of abilities, their resources and the relevant issue areas" (Guzzini 2009: 8). Moreover, even when some kind of distribution of capabilities is thought over, it is the perceptions of decision makers rather than an objective assessment of power capabilities. Which particular resources are endowed with more capability to effectuate power therefore becomes a function of values and identities of decision makers. Power resources become a part of social construction itself. Second but related issue is the multidimensional character of power which basically stretches the fungibility critique noted in earlier chapters. No single

international power structure exists – military power in case of realism and economic might in liberalism – because such a conception assumes single dominant issue area as well as high fungibility of power and since, in the contemporary world neither of them hold true "the notion of single overall international power structure unrelated to any particular issue is based upon a concept of power that is virtually meaningless" (Guzzini 2009: 8).

The mainstream models of power analyses also suffer from an agent-structure problem, argues Guzzini (1993). Guzzini argues that though realism's focus on distribution of capabilities is overtly based on an individualist ontology where intentions of the actors are an imperative for application of power, the alternative models based upon the critique of realism's obvious lack of focus on policy-contingency framework are also similarly flawed (Guzzini 1993). For Guzzini, both David Baldwin emphasis on relational power and Keohane's interdependence model cannot do without the attribution of intentions on the part of agents. The problem of attributing intentionality in a power relationship leads to the problem of unintentional effects which then cannot be accounted by these models. If the individualist ontology is the problem with Baldwin and Keohane, then there something amiss with structural approaches to the study of power such as Krasner's idea of meta power where he ascribes power to regimes and those actors who can alter these regimes and Strange's structural power which emanates out of the diffused centres of transnational power and has an indirect effect of actors. Though according to him, these factors can locate the unintentional effects of power, they are still actor driven and more importantly does not acknowledge the effect of the social structuration of norms guiding the behaviour of agents (1993: 468). Taking the argument a little further, Guzzini even argues that the idea of intersubjective power or impersonal power found in the work of Gill on the issue of capitalist hegemony and Ashley on Knowledge/power nexus is flawed is so far it collapses power completely in the structure of social order (1993: 469). For Guzzini, this extraneous foundation of power outside of the domain of agent either reduces the concept of power to structural constrain or provides it an overarching framework of absolute social control neither of which captures the real picture of power engendering out of social structures, for social structures are themselves contingent upon agential action (1993: 469). For him therefore all these conceptualisation of

power "illustrate the impossibility of limiting power phenomena to a single concept at either the agent or the structural level" (1993: 468). The need however is to have a concept of power motivated by the co-constitution of agent and structures, an interactionist conceptualisation of agent-structure debate as proposed by Giddens and used by Wendt in constructivist research programme in international relations. For him, "power lies both in the relational interaction of agents and in the systematic rule that results from the consequences of their actions" (2009: 474).

Lastly, constructivists complain that discursive power has been side-lined by the materialist bias of the mainstream narratives (Hopf: 1998). Adler has argued that such negligence on the part of mainstream international relations has led to a number of important power factors such as speech acts, identities, moral authority being marginalised in academic discourse of international relations (Adler: 2005). Discursive power which is concerned with the production of meaning and association of such meaning with material reality thereby making material world recognisable and conducive to observation is completely missing in dominant international relations approaches such as realism and liberalism. Constructivism by revealing the " power of social practices in their capacity to reproduce the intersubjective meanings that constitute social structures and actors alike" focus on a much deeper understanding of power than can be found in mainstream theories (Hopf 1998: 178). Adler further notes " the imposition of meanings on the material world is one of the ultimate forms of power, and thus is where constructivism's added value with regard to power lies" (2005: 103). Clearly, material power is interpellated by the social meanings which actors in a particular setup ascribe to them and are not independent of social thought. Material power, in other words, is itself socially constructed.

The crucial question which succeeds the constructivist problematisation of other approaches to power debate is that how constructivists themselves address the issues concerning power in international politics. Constructivists have followed a number of trajectories in this regard. However, the most important contribution has been to redefine the relation between politics and power. For constructivist scholarship, power and politics are highly interlinked. The very meaning of

'political is "intertwined with question of where and how we see power relation" (Berenskotter 2007). To restrict power to certain manifestations is to constrain the political space where responsibility and justification can be properly attributed. Seeing and defining power therefore becomes in itself a political act. Guzzini explains this dynamics extremely well. For him, power has an intricate relationship with the idea of responsibility. Any actor seeking to exercise power has to legitimize his or her own actions for "to acknowledge power over others is to implicate oneself in responsibility for certain events and to put oneself in a position where justification for the limits placed on others is expected" (Guzzini 2009: 11). The idea of responsibility is associated with power because power defines the space between possible and the impossible; it "defines the boundaries of what can be done" (Guzzini 2009: 11). The social world therefore is a construction under the influence of a particular kind of power and the change in power relations may lead to construction of a different social realm. Since the possibility of alternatives is always present, a particular social order produced by certain application of power needs to be justified and hence, the association of responsibility with the exercise of power. For example, in the realist scheme of things, international anarchy forces states to pursue their national interests. However, even in Morgenthau six principles, the primacy of national interests is justified on the grounds of responsibility of the state towards its own subjects. Good life within the state is given more weightage as compared to the possibility of a good life without. For constructivists, the allocation of primary responsibility towards fellow citizens rather than fellow humans' leads to particular construction of international politics which is by its very definition becomes anarchic in nature.

In constructivist scheme of things then the very definition of power is an exercise of power itself. What do the concepts of power do as we formulate them to be doing in our social worlds? This question forms the basis of what constructivists call the performative character of the concept of power. At the heart of this performative character of power lies the idea of reflexivity which suggests that concepts in the way they are understood produce concrete effects on the social world. Guzzini provides the example of US interventionism and connects the responsibility to intervene with the way US primacy is projected on the global stage (Guzzini 2009). According to him, once it has been decided that US is the

only state in international arena capable of doing something or for that matter anything, the responsibility to intervene on its part becomes a natural order of things in the present world. Preponderance of power is argued to be the legitimate basis for interventionism but the same preponderance allows US to remain unanswerable to the rest of the world. In Guzzini's words

"If it were true that the US enjoys very great power and superiority, then it is natural that it assumes a greater responsibility for international affairs. Insisting on the special power of the US triggers and justifies a disposition for action. US primacy means that it has different functions and duties (responsibilities) than other states. From there, the final step to a right or even duty to undertake unilateral and possibly pre-emptive interventions is not far removed. Its role as world's policeman is no longer a choice, but actually a requirement of the system. Being compelled to play the world leader means, inturn, that the rules which apply to everyone else cannot always apply to the US" (Guzzini 2009: 13).

Clearly the conceptualisation of power itself is a political act and has serious implications for the regulation of international politics. As Petr Drulak has argued elsewhere, reflexivity of knowledge has always been a constructivist hardcore (Drulak 2007). The argument of performative aspects of power derives their argumentative strength from this crucial constructivist insight. In the similar vein, Hopf argues the ability to create intersubjective meanings is the real face of power (Hopf 1998). This is what he calls the idea of discursive power: the power of social practices to reproduce intersubjective meanings that constitute social structure and actors alike. Taking the example which Guzzini reflected upon his rendition of performative power, the American exceptionalism to intervene worldwide engenders out of a particular discourse in which norms of human rights, US primacy and American commitment to uphold democracy and freedom interact and produce a social structure validating American intervention. However, if the idea of American primacy and exceptionalism leads to US intervention, such intervention itself produces a different set of intersubjective meanings constructing an imperialist image of USA. Therefore, "social practices not only reproduces actors through identity, but also reproduces an intersubjective social structure through social practices" (Hopf 1998: 178). Social practices authorize certain actions and

create certain identities thereby policing entire communities. Demarcation of international political space as anarchic in nature and domestic political space as hierarchical is a social practice with far reaching implications for how states behave in the two realms. For example, differences in responsibilities towards fellow citizens and mankind in general emanate out of this practice of classifying international politics as anarchical in nature (Linklater 2007). The power to construct and control the meaning of social reality is therefore very crucial to constructivist scholarship. Adler has shown that threats of nuclear terrorism cannot be contained either by deterrence or restraint on the part of states (2010). Terrorism by its very definition breeds upon overreaction of the targeted states. Also, terrorism cannot be deterred in the conventional sense since there exist no address to which threat can be returned. For him, nuclear terrorism and threats it engenders can only be diffused through the use of social power's performative capacity which means actors' capabilities to "project particular cultural meanings to public audiences in pursuit of instrumental goals or common understanding" and to engage in "contests about narratives, norms of appropriate behaviour, the legitimacy of goals and demands, the definition of cooperation versus defection and victory versus defeat" (Adler 2010: 204). Performance for Adler not only depends upon validity of knowledge but also control of symbolic meanings, successful projections of intersubjective meaning on others and creating skepticism over other's narratives. For Adler, terrorist groups often have an advantage in terms of social performative capacity and it is the performative power of their acts which make them highly effective. Therefore, to defuse the threat of terrorism, states need to bank upon performative power "not only to deconstruct adversary's performances but also to put "in scene," a highly dramatic, credible alternative before regional and global publics that rallies states around it and operates political pressure to defuse the crisis." (Adler 2010: 218)

If social performance and production of intersubjective meanings constitute an important element of constructivist power analyses, the nexus between knowledge and power is the second dimension of constructivist conceptualisation of power debate. Most of the constructivist scholarship in this regard has been focussed upon the issue of global governance. Peter Hass and Emanuel Adler first made the connection between power and knowledge tangible in their discussion on the role

of epistemic communities in construction of environmental policies in the Mediterranean region (Hass and Adler 1992). The expertise of these scientific communities helped in setting the agenda among states and frame issues in ways to promote international cooperation to fight persistent environmental degradation. However, construction of social knowledge has far reaching implications which even underlie the constitution of interests and identities of actors. Borrowing from Foucault, constructivists in international relations have explored the knowledge-power dimension much more deeply. In an article which attempts to decipher the epistemic constitution of global governance, Adler and Bernstein define "power as a disposition which depends on knowledge" (Adler and Bernstein 2007: 294). Here they define epistemes not in terms of scientific communities having bearing only upon agenda setting and validation of knowledge but as the "deepest layer of social knowledge, which, productive of what social reality is, helps constitute the order of global things" (Adler and Bernstein 2007: 295). Episteme then becomes the "background intersubjective knowledge" which is "collective understandings and practices" through which social classification takes place and therefore, becomes the fundamental dimension of all social reality (Adler and Bernstein 2007: 295). They metaphorically compare epistemes with bubbles, social envelops constituting all social life and therefore argue that epistemes provides the fundamental categories in which all thinking takes place (2007:297). If epistemes define social reality, than for Adler and Bernstein, one who can define the episteme can be said to be in possession of power. They define power as the "authority to validate knowledge on which an episteme is based and the authorities, of which epistemes are productive, to construct subjectivity and social facts" (Adler and Bernstein 2007: 298). American power, for example, argue the authors, depends upon the dominance of American social science rather than merely the material predominance which US enjoys in the contemporary world. For Adler and Bernstein, global governance is built upon four fundamental building blocks: authority, epistemic validity, a conception of good practices and institution of rationality. However, all these basic requirements are themselves shaped by "culturally and historically contingent, and evolving epistemes" (Adler and Bernstein 2007: 301). Authority depends much on norms and rules of international conduct which is itself shaped by a liberal scheme of things. Liberalism, democracy and rule of law define the epistemic background of authority in the

present world. Similarly epistemic validity is the precondition for legitimate knowledge: knowledge regarded as common by collectivities of subjects. Power therefore resides in agents who have the ability to validate knowledge and here is where 'experts' play the most important role. For Adler and Bernstein, international institutions require experts to make authoritarian interpretations of rules such as the role of lawyers in WTO's dispute settlement system; to develop standard in technical areas which may become latter become benchmarks of behaviour in a particular issue area; and lastly in creating new rules whenever the need so arises. Similarly the idea of good practices is a source of legitimacy as far as global governance is concerned and this is an episteme's normative component. The element of fairness in international institutions is a *sine quo none* for their effective functioning often resonated in the demands for accountability, responsibility, transparency and representation in global institutions. Lastly, practical reason as is manifested in the deliberative discourse on global governance permits the exchange of ideas and counter-arguments thereby making the whole process of governance a shared one.

Ian Johnstone, on the other hand, makes the connection between power and knowledge through his reflections over the role of interpretive communities in the workings of the Security Council (Johnstone 2007). Interpretive communities are the principal participants in the legal discourse which occurs within the Security Council which "emerge from discursive interaction in the international legal system, and they help to define the rules and norms that become embedded in institutions" (Johnstone 2007: 186). On the other hand, he argues that the legal discourse which carries on with in the Security Council not only allows individual actors to wield direct power by affecting the positions of states with in the but it also, by setting the agenda in a particular manner, steers action in a certain direction as well as shapes the very environment of interactions in the Security Council. The legal discourse within the Security Council is defined by these interpretive communities since they are one who decides on the rules and norms of engagement among actors in an institutional setting. In Johnstone's own words, " Interpretive communities set the parameters of acceptable argumentation- the terms in which positions are explained, defended and justified to others in what is fundamentally an intersubjective enterprise" (Johnstone 2007: 186).

In his rendition, Johnstone accepts that international law has no authority comparable to the authority which the state commands within domestic politics. However, for him, the lack of formal authority in the international realm has led to an alternative understanding among practitioners of international law: "that law operates through a particular form of discourse- a process of verbal interchange or "diplomatic conversations" in which the role of legal norms figures prominently" (Johnstone 2007: 187). The lack of authority and the acceptance of law as a discursive enterprise makes legal practice an essentially interpretivist exercise. Since interpretation lies at the heart of legal practice, this suggests that international law is basically depends upon constitution of intersubjective meanings. Within this framework of interpretative legal discourse which requires constitution of intersubjective meanings for its proper functioning, Johnstone argues that Security Council, unlike the common perception of being an institutional based upon hard material power, is a platform where states resort to justificatory discourse for claiming legitimacy for their foreign policies. This is because Security Council is a deliberative platform where states argue and counter-argue among themselves within an institutionalised – formally delineated space of rules and norms – setting and deliberations among states are not inconsequential as many hardcore realists would otherwise suggest. Here Johnstone brings in an element of reputation. According to him, states do involve themselves in such a deliberative interaction over the legality or illegality of their acts because the logic of appropriateness- of doing what is considered to be right- has grave consequences for how a state is viewed by others in the long run. The reputation of the state is heavily affected by its adherence to the rules and norms of Security Council and also by the persuasiveness of its arguments. States like to maintain their reputation since it has consequences for legitimacy of their actions.

This brings us to the question of the linkage between legitimacy and power. This linkage is most illustrative in the Gramsci's delineation of hegemony in *Prison Notebooks.* Hegemony for Gramsci, unlike those who propound only 'coercive power,' is an exercise of manufacturing consent – winning the consent of others through ideological domination, persuasion and is more effective than naked coercion. For Gramsci, there appears to be a clear difference between rule by force

and rule by consent. His notion of legitimate power or hegemony emanates from a Machiavellian understanding of power. For Machiavelli, power was to be conceptualized in terms of a centaur- a combination of qualities of humans as well animals. In other words, power is constituted by both legitimacy and force; for coercion alone cannot lead to a stable political order. This was most reflective in the anomaly manifested in the survival of capitalist systems in Western countries, where according to orthodox Marxists, socialist revolutions would have been most prosperous. Gramsci concluded that the continuation of capitalist societies in the West is the product of the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie over the working class which makes the latter believes in the magnanimity of the former. Rather than banking on crude material forces of exploitation, capitalism in the West survived with the consent of the ruled. For hegemony, legitimacy is therefore crucial. The hegemon tries to create consent with the help of articulated network of cultural and social institutions. In international politics, these networks can be readily identified in various international institutions and regimes which provide a rule based system of global governance. However, it is important to note that Gramsci does not reduce the importance of force in creation of hegemony. For Gramsci, force and consent are not opposites; rather they reinforce each other. Force is the background condition, a latent feature of consent which can always be invoked in case the element of consent breaks down. However, in Gramscian hegemony, force always comes second. A true hegemon would be one who would never invoke the use of force and works on absolute consent of its followers. Destradi is right in pointing out that in case of Gramscian hegemony, "ideational and material power resources are always operating together and influencing each other." (Destradi 2010: 913). Similarly, according to Bajpai and Sahni, "Hegemony in the Gramscian sense suggests that a dominant power deploys not just military but also, and most importantly, ideological resources to structure the choices / behaviour of competing and lesser powers in ways that favour the interests of the most powerful state, in particular its desire to remain the pre – eminent actor." (Bajpai and Sahni 2008: 94). In other words, power in Gramscian hegemony can be equated to the idea of soft power. In their treatment of soft power through the lenses of Gramscian hegemony, Zahran and Ramos argue that the idea of soft power of which Joseph Nye is the chief proponent is basically founded on the idea of consent evident in Gramsci's treatment of hegemony (Zahran and Ramos 2010). Indeed soft power

resources help in developing consent among the ruled for the perpetuation of the hegemon's leadership. These soft power resources include values, norms and institutions on which the powerful seek to build their hegemony. For Gramsci, therefore 'hegemony' is the "capacity of a group to promote a social order not only through its material bases, but most importantly through a discourse reflected in the sphere of ideas and social institutions" (Zahran and Ramos 2010: 24).

Constructivist scholarship on power has been particularly influenced by the interlinkages between legitimacy and power (Hopf 1998; Hurd 1999; Risse 2000; Guzzini 2009; 2006). Taking cue from Weber's distinction between *Macht* which he describes as pure physical coercion and *Herrshaft* – the condition in which power is married to legitimacy- constructivist scholarship has been particularly concerned with the issues of legitimate power in terms of rules, norms and regimes in international politics. For Guzzini, the problem with traditional narratives on power is not only restricted to the problem of measurement and the neglect of context but also their ignorance of the legitimacy dimension in the exercise of power (2009). Authority argues Guzzini is not a function of resources alone but is intricately linked to the legitimacy of actors wielding power. Guzzini has also made use of the legitimacy argument to debunk Wohlforth's thesis on American unipolarity (2006). According to him, Wohlforth bases his consideration of USA's unipolar moment only upon an overtly materialistic conception of power and negligence of the relational conception of power but he completely misses most on the element of legitimacy of US primacy. For him, resources may generate influence but influence cannot be inflated with authority which is based upon legitimacy of one's actions. Wohlforth does not engage with social and intersubjective component of legitimacy and therefore cannot account for the decreasing influence of US on global politics. For Guzzini, US unilateralism post 9/11 was a result of the decreasing legitimacy of American actions globally rather than the American preponderance in material resources.

Ian Hurd on the other hand made a very significant contribution on the issue of legitimacy and authority in international politics. According to Hurd, legitimacy "refers to the normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed" (1999: 381). According to Hurd, there exist three important arguments

which underline the importance of the element of legitimacy for the successful exercise of political power. First and very rationalistic argument is that legitimacy increases the efficiency of power since it reduces the enforcement costs which would otherwise be required in purely coercive application of power. Second and as Guzzini has also argued elsewhere, since power always necessitates justification, legitimacy allows agents to easily justify their exercise of power. Third, legitimacy helps to solve collective action problems since the element of legitimacy constitutes the very interest of agents thereby reducing the gap between individual choices and societal necessities. In the context of international politics, for Hurd, leads to two crucial insights: first, it provides an alternative description of how states formulate their 'national' interests; and second, it also calls into question the assumptions regarding international anarchy and effects produced thereof. For Hurd, international relations as a discipline has been negligent of legitimacy as a source of social control. On the other hand, social control in international politics is mostly attributed to the element of coercive power or rationally formulated self-interest.

However, taking the norm of sovereignty as a test case, Hurd argues that legitimacy as an instrument of social control in international politics is as plausible as are the elements of coercion and self-interests. He argues that the institution of sovereignty exhibits "the stability that it does because it is widely accepted among the states as a legitimate institution" (1999: 397). The rule of non-intervention, argues Hurd, has been internalised by actors as a 'national' interest thereby placing the institution of sovereignty beyond doubt and question. Further he argues that only under the legitimacy-internalization model of understanding the institution of sovereignty can there exists any status-quo states who can accept the current territorial demarcation as the natural order of things. The internalization of the norm of non-intervention, for him, "helps to explain the facts that many borders do not appear to represent frontiers between balanced armies and that despite this absence of deterrent forces, we generally do not see states calculating at every turn self-interested payoff to invading their neighbours. Most borders are taken for granted (and most states are status quo power in this respect) so that such an adventure is simply not considered, and when it does happen the reaction of other states usually amply demonstrates the depth of the internalization of this norm" (

Hurd 1999: 398). Clearly for Hurd, legitimacy is not missing from the conduct of international politics and states do behave with the limits of propriety set by certain rules and norms which they accept to be legitimate. Such a reading of international politics has serious consequences for the anarchy problematique in international relations since the presence of legitimacy forebodes the presence of authority in international politics.

As we have seen so far, constructivist not only underline the major flaws in the mainstream conceptualisation of power but also bring a number of different elements hitherto noticed yet extremely important into the discussion of the concept of power. Highlighting the link between politics and power, bringing in the notion of responsibility, explaining the role of social performative power, delineating upon the element of reputation, the focus on power-knowledge nexus and the issue of legitimacy are constructivism's main contribution to the power debate in international relations.

Conclusion

In the constructivist rendition on power debate one can easily find two distinct yet interrelated phenomena working in tandem. First, is the relational model of power where context is given due prominence and other is that constructivist scholarship works well within Stephen Lukes third face of power. Through the importance of context makes the constructivist notions of power much more self-reflective of the changing character of international political scene and thereby accommodating concepts such as reputation, legitimacy, responsibility as factors critical for any meaningful study of the concept of power, it is the focus on the third face of power which has most often been considered as the most crucial contribution of constructivism to international relations power debate. Though Lukes considers the constitution of the actors and their interests as a the most insidious use of power, constructivist scholarship in international relations has refrained from branding the third face of power in such pejorative terminology. Rather, they have approached the concept from both a critical as well as a more practical standpoint. Critical theorists such as Stephen Gill, Andrew Linklater, and Robert Cox have in their

works focussed on how the subjectivities of actors in international politics are constituted by existing paradigms of thought such as liberalism, capitalism and realism and how such subjectivities work against the interest of mankind in general. However, constructivists have also emphasised on the fact that since subjectivities can be altered with the help of knowledge, there exists a possibility that world can always be changed for the better. This strand of thought in the constructivist literature focuses mainly on the logic of appropriateness – how the knowledge regarding rules and norms gets converted into the identities of states, thereby making norm following a function of states interest matrix.

However, the most important tension which underlies the constructivist scholarship is the interrelationship between the material and the ideational. It is easy to understand the fact that material resources does not lead automatically to acknowledgement of power by the subjects in a power relationship. On the other hand, it is not very convincing also to consider power as purely an ideational phenomenon without an existential link with material reality. Pure ideational power is hard to conjure and even Gramsci had considered such a notion of power as purely hypothetical. Physical force always constitutes the backbone of any power relationship thought in the long run it may become highly invisible.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The conceptualisation of power in international politics, as this study endeavored to achieve, is an attempt in understanding the idea of power as used by various theoretical models. This study restricted its reach to three important theories of international relations – Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism. The choice, as has been delineated before, is not exhaustive of the theoretical richness of contemporary international relations but is an exercise of academic pragmatism and truthfully to a certain degree of academic convenience.

What is conceptualisation? This question is fundamental to the success of this study. Without defining the logic of conceptualisation, to say something about conceptualising power would remain at best an anachronistic exercise. Theories use concepts in deriving explanations for natural or social phenomena. For example, before embarking on formulating a theory of gravitation, Newton must have defined the concept of gravitation itself. Without clarifying what gravitation meant, Newton could not have ever provided a theory of gravitation and by extension explained the movement of celestial bodies. Classical mechanics similarly needs to define the concepts of speed, velocity and mass to arrive at formulas or theories governing the science of motion. Concepts are therefore instruments which theories use in explaining puzzles but in themselves concepts are devoid of any explanatory power. As such the concept of gravitation cannot explain why earth revolves around the sun and not vice versa. It is the job of the theory of gravitation to figure out exact explanations of the movement of celestial bodies using the concept. Gravitation as a concept is only concerned with the laws of attraction between two bodies of certain mass 'm' separated by a certain distance 'r'. How this attraction actually materialises is the domain of the theory not the concept. In some sense therefore, concepts pertain to the metaphysical rather than the concrete: they are a function of theoretical rather than the empirical. In other words concepts cannot be applied to empirical reality directly; theories invoke concepts in explaining the quotidian. However, it is important to understand that

since concepts are instruments of theoretical explanations they are themselves coloured by theoretical assumptions.

Conceptualisation addresses the process of clarifying and systematizing "concepts" in order for them to be theoretically consistent and useful. Conceptualisation mandates laying bare the fundamental epistemological and ontological assumptions behind how a particular theoretical tradition understands a particular concept, how it explains the working of the concept in social phenomena and how it encapsulates the effects produced by the concept in the concrete world. The exercise of conceptualisation is important because any one particular concept used by different theories may provide different set of explanations for the same social reality. For example, whereas the concept of power as invoked by realists would picture United Nations Security Council as a symbol of naked hard power, the constructivist conceptualisation may end up portraying UNSC as a realm of argumentation and normative behaviour. Moreover, what is extremely crucial for an untrained eye is to understand the fact that the theoretical dependence of concepts suggests that there is no Archimedean stand point through which a concept is applicable to all kinds of explanations. This implies that a thorough conceptual analysis may engender multiple meanings of a concept which may not only be different and incompatible but also may be equally reasonable and legitimate. This observation is validated by the multiple meanings which the concept of power finds attributed to it in the theoretical canvass of international relations. Clearly, as Guzzini has argued, "the theory dependence of the concept of power entails that there is no single concept of power applicable to each type of explanations" (Guzzini 1993: 446). These conceptual understandings not only appear logically exclusive but also produce myriad meanings for social reality under contemplation. Going by the realist conceptualisation, mired in an environment of anarchy and uncertainty, states engage in gladiatorial rivalries which provide military power – the capacity for physical violence - its pride of place in international politics. The primacy of physical violence on the other hand conveys correctly the anarchic nature of global order and produces intense rivalries among states. In liberal understanding, the logic of self-interested actors in a highly interdependent world makes economic interdependence and institutions a site of effective power in global politics. The power of institutions and global governance

on the other hand reinforces the logic of interdependence. Conceptualisation therefore is not an innocent academic exercise; by laying bare the foundational logic of its use and misuse, conceptualisation provides a peek into how concepts in the way they are understood produce concrete effects.

There exist three basic reasons for the concept of power, with respect to international relations, to be, in Gallie's terminology, an "essentially contested concept". First, at very general level, incommensurable metatheoretical commitments, so far as the Realism-Constructivism and Liberalism-Constructivism divide is concerned, are definitely at play. Realism and Liberalism work within, as Hollis and Smith have cogently demonstrated, the explaining traditions which pertains a causal analysis of social enquiry. Constructivism, on the other hand, feeds epistemologically on hermeneutics rather than straightforward positivism. As we have seen in the chapters on Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism, fundamental metaphysical commitments shade the conceptual lenses of these theories in different colours. Whereas materialist underpinnings of realism beckons a power analysis which gives undue importance to hard power resources, the ideational inclinations of constructivism render power mainly to the realm of intersubjective meanings and discourses. The other two reasons for this essential contestability of power appear to be inherent in the concept itself. First, the attestation of a power relationship always entails a counterfactual reasoning (Guzzini 1993). Since successful application of power implies potential change, failure of a power relationship automatically and counterfactually means a state of potential continuity. For Guzzini, since counterfactual reasoning is beyond empirical validation, the phenomena of power remain open to all kind of explanations. Second, the concept of power is essentially a normative concept. To claim power or to decline it is a normative act *par excellence.* If this be the case, the division of the normative dimensions of power among theoretical paradigms and invocation of Kuhn's logic of incommensurability among different theoretical paradigms shields different theories and their conceptualization of power from rival claims and challenges. The entry of inter-paradigm debate in international relations has justified the multiple meanings of power as held among differing theoretical paradigms.

We can see both these reasons working simultaneously in producing myriad narratives of power in international politics. As far as the issue of counterfactual reasoning is concerned, the face of power debate is a quintessential example. In all three faces, the invigorations of counterfactual reasons vary considerably. In the first face it is direct coercion; in second, the process of agenda setting; and in third, the manipulation of actor's interest. However, in normal scheme of things one can see all these reasons – direct coercion, agenda setting and manipulation of interests- working in concert rather than the discrete application of one mechanism in any one particular case. Similarly, one can also observe the incommensurability argument over the concept of power in international politics at work. Invocation of multiple paradigms have resulted in insular reproduction of concept of power in differing theoretical traditions which given the rationalisation of the futility of inter-paradigm debate, thanks to Kuhnian value addition to international relations, consider inter-theoretical debate a futile exercise. In other words, all the three theories blow their own trumpets over the concept of power without acknowledging the importance of knowledge exchange and inter-theoretical contestation.

Having provided reasons for the "essential contestability" of the concept of power between theoretical schools in international politics, it is also important to acknowledge the fact that even within particular theoretical traditions, power has no one unified essence. Take for example the realist conceptualisation of power. Not only realists as in classical realism, neorealism and neoclassical realism, differ on the reasons for why power remains the most valuable realist explanatory variable but they also disagree considerably on where power is located and what effects does the exercise of power produces in international political landscape. Within liberalism also one can find a jostling among various strands of thought each focussed on a singular issue area such as economics, institutions or power of democratic values and culture i.e. soft power. Constructivism again relays a multifaceted encounter with power where a number of focus areas among constructivist scholars fill the space. Power as performance, reputation, responsibility, legitimacy and knowledge stretches the concept of power in different directions which may be interrelated but are not definitely entirely congruent.

As far as the faces of power debate and the conceptualisation of power in international politics is concerned, *prima facie* one can make a judgement of situating realism within the first face of power, liberalism in the second face of power and constructivism in the third face of power. The rationale for such simplistic classification is somewhat justified since realist notions of power with their focus on military power appear to be operating in the realm of direct coercion, power in liberal terminology operates through institutions and soft power bringing in focus the process of agenda setting as a form of power and finally constructivist focus on intersubjective meanings and discourse resonates directly with Lukes radical conceptualisation of power as manipulation of interests. However, such simplistic portrayal does not render justice to the intricacies with which these schools deal with the concept of power in international politics. All the three theoretical schools are hard to be boxed within one face of power since there can be found elements of all the three faces of power in realism, liberalism as well as constructivism. For example, Carr's take on the power of propaganda cannot be divorced from Lukes assessment of manipulation of interest. Similarly, Morgenthau's makes a similar point when he claims that power relationships cease with the use of force. Though soft power is saturated with liberal values, it remains an exercise of manipulation of interests through cultural enticement, a fact which Lukes would not consider inimical to his take on power. Moreover, the most recent versions of soft power i.e. Soft power 2.0 or smart power also appreciate the usefulness of hard power in meeting policy objectives of states. Hard power therefore is not inimical to the workings of soft power. Institutions similarly not only set agenda but also redefine actor's interests and therefore operate both in the second and the third face of power. Many constructivists like Wendt who have tried to narrow the distance between materialist and more radically ideational approaches may still look for a combination of material power and ideational power in order to define the most intricate workings of power (Wendt 1999). Hopf similarly is concerned with how discursive power interacts with material power in producing concrete effects on global political scenario (Hopf 1998). Clearly, simplistic and symmetrical as it may appear, to box realism, liberalism and constructivism in first, second and third faces of power respectively is a naive exercise, completely unappreciative of the complexity of thought present in these approaches.

So far as the classical question of the "paradox of power" is concerned, various conceptualisations of power as has been dealt with in this study may provide a workable answer to this puzzle. If the essential question remains that power resources alone cannot lead to effective exercise of power, the contextual remedy may not prove to be as effective as many adherents to relational model of power analysis have argued. Scope, domain and weight of power relationships aside, the question of legitimacy of a power relationship is an extremely important variable which must not be side-lined. As can be seen at times, legitimacy or questions of justice make an important difference in effective exercise of power relationship. For example, in the contemporary nuclear proliferation crisis in the form of Iran's non-compliance with its NPT obligations, as Mohammed ElBaradei in his recent autobiographical account *The Age of Deception* has shown, the collective power of the West has been futile in coercing Iran mainly because of the legitimacy deficit in Western approach owing to their debacle in Iraq and their own duplicitous dealings on nuclear disarmament (ElBaradei 2011). Most often, effectiveness of power resources rests on the acquiescence of the actors on whose power is being applied and therefore, power does not remain a function of power resources alone rather the fulcrum shifts to the assent or dissent of the powerless. Legitimacy of the powerful ascertains that the agents on whom power is being exercised accept the logic of the power relationship in their own interests. Legitimacy therefore becomes a key variable.

Clearly, the study has been able to answer the questions put forward in the beginning of this study to a satisfactory level. Not only it has been ascertained that conceptualisation of power in international politics will essentially produce polymorphous meanings depending upon the theoretical lenses through which the concept of power is being analysed, what can also be observed is that even within theoretical paradigms there is no unified understanding of power. Lastly, one can also notice that simplistic bracketing of international relations theories in the "faces of power debate" is analytically incorrect. All major theories prevalent in the academic discourse of international relations boast to have a very complex understanding of power phenomena which cannot be reduced to one single dimension. In hindsight, it appears that the "faces of power" debate therefore is not a very useful tool in thinking about power in international politics.

Future Directions for Research

The centrality of the concept of power and the contestation which surrounds its conceptual landscape bodes well for the potential of further research in the field. The future of power research can follow a number of different trajectories. First, most often theories in international relations use power as an independent variable explaining complex international phenomena by the use of power analysis. However, it is equally important to identify what constitutes or causes power relations; power in this sense becomes a dependent rather than an independent variable. Who has power and how power is obtained are questions of extreme import. Secondly, it is important to further refine many concepts which are often used in power analysis especially when it comes to conceptual clarity on the issue of different forms of power. Soft power, for example, means many things at the same time. Such profusion of meanings in turn renders the concept meaningless. Similarly, more work needs to be done on the issues of sanction especially positive sanctions. Most of the power analysis in international relations has been restricted to the study of negative sanctions: actual or threatened punishments. Positive sanctions on the other hand are inducements which help in effecting desired outcomes. If relational definitions of power define power in terms of successful effecting of others, then positive sanctions is a form of power. The modalities of positive sanctions are therefore a rich agenda for research. Lastly, the changing global context warrants a renewed effort to locate the effectiveness and efficiency of military power. In contemporary global scenario, often an assumption is made that in an interdependent world the relevance of military power is in decline. However, the recent episodes in Iraq, Afghanistan, Georgia and the Korean Peninsula indicate otherwise. Clearly, the assumption is not holding out at least empirically. It is therefore important to further study this assertion in order to understand the dynamics of the usefulness or otherwise of military power in current global system. Moreover, an important area of research lies at the intersection of institutions and power analysis. Often institutions are considered to be as dependent variables which are primarily defined by the distribution of power in the global system. However, institutions themselves help in maintenance of power asymmetries and are therefore in the business of exercising power. The question of institutions as bases of power merits special focus.

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