

*Power: Making sense of an elusive concept**

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Introduction

The concept of power is a core term in political science, and an important one for other social sciences as well. According to Elster it is “the most important single idea in political theory, comparable perhaps to utility in economics” (Elster 1976, 249). Indeed political science can be conceived mainly as the study of power phenomena (Mokken and Stokman 1976, 47). Yet the discipline seems to be far from getting even near a unanimously agreed concept of power. The conceptual disagreements and problems concern a variety of aspects of the study of power. To name but a few it seems to be widely unclear whether power should be conceived as an attribute or a relation, as a capacity or a commodity.¹ Other issues concern the relations between power on the one hand, and such concepts as autonomy, responsibility and freedom on the other. Furthermore, the definitional delimitations of power, capacity, influence, force, coercion, authority and domination are far from clear.

¹ For an introduction to the broad range of issues see Lukes 1986 and Connolly 1993.

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The subject matter of the present paper is restricted to the relational aspect of political power. Power thus understood is a *relational* phenomenon both in the sense that persons exert power over others and in that the power (or capacity) of one person to do something constitutes a social relationship *vis-à-vis* the comparable power or capacity of another person. Thus, “the very notion of having power implicitly refers to other people” (Elster 1976, 252). By *political* power I mean power whose exercise is aimed at the outcome of collectively binding decisions, regardless of whether the source of power is located within the official domain of state and government or not. Within these limits I will discuss how far power should be seen as being bound to observable behavior, for both theoretical and conceptual reason. This problem underlay the controversy of community power, which stretched from the early 1950s until the middle of the 1970s, but whose reverberations and unsolved questions continue to trouble the discipline to this day. This debate brought to the fore most of the relevant difficulties and will hence be employed here to illustrate the manifold problems of elaborating a concept of power that is both theoretically coherent and can be operationalized for the purposes of empirical political research.

After the community power debate: how many dimensions of power are there?

The first dimension of power: polyarchal pluralism and the decision method

Acknowledging the factual and fundamental tensions between democracy as a political ideal, and the realities of existing political systems of representative government, Dahl (1956) suggests we speak of “polyarchies” rather than democracies when referring to the latter. He defines polyarchy as a political system that, “to a relatively high degree”,

shows certain conditions that can be summarized as (1) equal chances of all members of the community to determine the agenda for, as well as the outcome of the processes of political decision-making and (2) the effective accountability of the elected officials during the time between elections (Dahl 1956, 84). In awareness of the fact that these conditions will hardly ever be perfectly met, Dahl interprets each of these conditions as, respectively, an end of a continuum or scale along which political communities can be measured (ibid., 73). For the same cautiousness Dahl shuns the unconditional use of the term democracy. He instead considers as relatively democratic those communities or organizations that can be placed within the “upper chunk” of the scale and calls them polyarchies (Dahl 1956, 73-4).

The pluralist properties of polyarchies consist in two basic features. Firstly, pluralist communities or organizations are characterized by a pluralistic structure of interests. According to this notion, there are an infinite variety of different interests that divide people into different groups, membership in which can, and often does, overlap. Secondly, the power resources that can be used for the effective pursuit of these interests in the political arena are distributed in a way that is, though unequal, nevertheless essentially non-cumulative (Dahl 1961, 85).

Presuming the applicability of these assumptions to the city of New Haven, in *Who Governs?* Dahl set out to answer the question who precisely rules in a pluralist polyarchy (Dahl 1961, 86). Methodologically, he identified three political key issue areas in New Haven in the second half of the 1950s (urban redevelopment, public education and nomination for local office), with regard to which he then tried to establish whose preferences prevailed against what opposition in the respective decision-making process. Based on evidence obtained through an impressive amount of empirical re-

search² Dahl reached the conclusion that no single interest group in New Haven wields any disproportionately high degree of power over more than one issue area, while at the same time no group of individuals is entirely lacking in some influence resource (Dahl 1961, 228). Accordingly, in New Haven and, since this city is considered to be sufficiently representative of other communal polyarchies in the United States (Dahl 1961, v), elsewhere, power over public policy appears to be widely dispersed and non-centralized.

Because of its focus on observable decision-making behavior, this method is generally referred to as the *decision method* (Mokken and Stokman 1976, 52) or *decision-making approach* (Debnam 1984, 1). The basic claim of this approach is its insistence in political action or behavior in the decision-making arena as the only valid evidence about power (Debnam 1984, 1). This method corresponds to an explicitly action-based definition of the underlying concept of power made elsewhere by Dahl according to which “*A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that he would not otherwise do.”³ The action in question can be either the positive action of bringing about a preferred outcome, or negative action in the sense of active opposition or resistance against a potential outcome that is considered harmful to one’s preferences. In any case, it is observable behavior that is at matter.

² During 1957 and '58 Dahl and others held lengthy interviews with nearly 50 persons who had actively participated in one or more of the decisions on these issues, conducted three sample surveys on several “subleaders”, as well as two on voters, and perused the minutes of the meetings of the political bodies involved (see Dahl 1961, vi-vii).

³ Dahl, Robert A. (1957), The Concept of Power, *Behavioral Science* 2, 201-15; quoted in Hyland 1995, 198.

This concept of power clearly has the invaluable advantage of methodological clarity and the fact that it can be relatively straightforwardly operationalized. Indeed, resistance may, as Lukes puts it, be “relevant in the sense that, *if* it is actualized, it provides the test by which one can measure relative power, where parties conflict over an issue” (Lukes 1986, 2, emphasis in original). This touches on a second characteristic of the decision-making approach, *viz.* the fact that the power it is concerned with is power related to an issue (Lukes 1986, 8). Dahl’s identification of the “key issue areas” is prior to his analysis of the power related to these issues—another aspect of the decision-making approach that makes it attractive in terms of lucidity and applicability to empirical research.

The same aspects that render this approach to the study of power so attractive have given rise to severe and, I argue, partially justified criticism. Bachrach and Baratz point at two major weaknesses of the decision-making method. Firstly, it does not allow for the fact that power may be exercised by confining the scope of political decision-making to issues that are of little or no relevance to the holder(s) of power (Bachrach and Baratz 1970, 6).⁴ Secondly, and closely related, Bachrach and Baratz claim that the decision-making method provides no objective criteria for determining important, i.e. ‘key’ issues (Bachrach and Baratz 1970, 7). And indeed, in their own empirical community power study, Bachrach and Baratz present some striking examples of the working of a second dimension of power (see Bachrach and Baratz 1970, chs. 5 and 6).

⁴ It should be noted that Bachrach and Baratz do not, to be precise, criticize the methodological focus on decision-making. Their critique is not so much directed against the decision-making method as such but against the “pluralist model” and its built-in bias against relatively powerless interests (Bachrach and Baratz 1970, 6; see also Connolly 1969, 18-9). In fact, since Bachrach and Baratz insist in their category of *non-decisionmaking* being a sub-incident of decision-making, their own approach should be seen as one that shares the ontological foundations of decision-making analysis (*cf.* Debnam 1984, 1).

Thus, to the extent that the decision-making method systematically overlooks more covert dimensions of the exercise of power, it can properly be referred to as the “one-dimensional view” of power (Lukes 1974, 11).

The second dimension of power: non-decisionmaking and the mobilization of bias

As a remedy to these conceptual shortcomings of the decision-making method Bachrach and Baratz offer the concept of *non-decisionmaking* as the “second face of power” (Bachrach and Baratz 1970, 8). According to this notion “to the extent that a person or group—consciously or unconsciously—creates or reinforces barriers to the public airing of political conflicts, that person or group has power” (ibid.). With respect to problems of the one-dimensional version of the decision-making method in identifying important or key issues, Bachrach and Baratz stress the importance of an analysis of the “mobilization of bias” (ibid., 11). By this they mean “the dominant values and the political myths, rituals, and institutional practices which tend to favor the vested interests of one or more groups, relative to others” (ibid.).

The conceptual distinction between non-decisionmaking on the one hand and the working of the “mobilization of bias” on the other does not appear very clear-cut. Bachrach and Baratz seem to treat the mobilization of bias as a more general problem, of which non-decisionmaking is but one aspect, when they describe non-decisionmaking as the “primary method for sustaining a given mobilization of bias” (ibid., 43-4).

However, the theoretical and methodological implications of the concept of non-decisionmaking cannot be overestimated. This “two-dimensional view” of power underscores the crucial importance of identifying “*potential issues* which nondecision-making prevents from being actual” (Lukes 1974, 16, 19, emphasis in original). It is thus con-

cerned with the determination and composition of the political agenda (Mokken and Stokman 1976, 45). In his *Preface to Democratic Theory* Dahl himself describes the agenda setting dimension as a definitional characteristic of polyarchy: “Any member who perceives a set of alternatives, at least one of which he regards as preferable to any of the alternatives presently scheduled, can insert his preferred alternative(s) among those scheduled for voting” (Dahl 1956, 84). Obviously this precondition of polyarchal rule is violated by the existence of mechanisms for excluding certain issues. Moreover, the concept, far from being an instance of a paranoid conspiracy theory, is commonly known and widely accepted in the literature, though often described in different terms. To give but one example, Holmes acknowledges that, like individuals, “organizations and collectivities can leave selected topics undiscussed for what they consider their own advantage” (Holmes 1988, 22).

One can indeed think of numerous issues that are indeed very actual for the persons directly concerned, but still have not occupied any *significant* amount of ‘space’ in the arena of official political decision-making. This is mainly due to a lack of financial, organizational and other political resources on the part of the persons concerned, and to that extent these issues remain *potential*, rather than actual, political issues. Contemporary examples are domestic violence, housing problems of the low-income classes and the criminalization of drug addicts, to name but a few. Moreover, an equivalent to non-decisionmaking may occur, and often does, at the post-decisionmaking stage of policy implementation (“non-implementation”, Mokken and Stokman 1976, 45, 49). The early days of the German Weimar republic, where newly introduced legislation was often severely impeded or obstructed by a predominantly anti-republican administrative bureaucracy that was hostile towards the new social democratic government, serve as a drastic example for the politics of “non-implementation”. Thus Dahl’s early definition

of a political issue, according to which “a political issue can hardly be said to exist unless and until it commands the attention of a significant segment of the political stratum” (Dahl 1961, 92) clearly is too narrow and contradicts his own requirements for polyarchy as set out in the *Preface*.

The two-dimensional view of power involves a number of conceptual and methodological complications.⁵ Firstly, Bachrach and Baratz define a non-decision as “a decision that results in suppression or thwarting of a latent or manifest challenge to the values or interests of the decision-maker” (Bachrach and Baratz 1970, 44). This definition itself does not pose a problem, because it is merely a valid extension of Dahl’s view that a decision is “a set of actions related to and including the choice of one alternative rather than another (Dahl 1961, 26). Yet I contend that, in order to retain the operational value of this concept, the aforementioned notion of “unconsciousness” has to be dropped. A decision, and hence a non-decision as defined above, is necessarily a conscious undertaking. It is bound to an actor who makes the decision, as well as to intentionality (*cf.* Debnam 1984, 59). Therefore, Bachrach and Baratz’s proposed method of identifying non-decisions leaves unspecified a crucial step in the explanation of the exercise of second-dimensional power.

Bachrach and Baratz’s (1970, 49) technique for empirical application of the concept consists firstly in the study of the actual decision-making process within the political arena and the resultant outcomes. After that, they suggest to determine the remaining overt and covert grievances on the part of the apparently disfavored group. And, finally, they would then try and determine “why and by what means some or all of the potential

⁵ The taxonomic difficulties that arise from Bachrach and Baratz’s definitions of power, authority, influence and force (*cf.* Bachrach and Baratz 1970, 21-35), although generally problematic, do not themselves affect the problem of agency and are hence of no concern here.

demands for change have been denied an airing” (ibid.). It is precisely the aspect of “why and by what means” which forbids the maintaining of any unconsciousness on the part of the prevailing actor(s), since unintended, i.e. unconsciously generated effects, cannot be *means* that are employed by an actor.

The means by which second-dimensional power can be exercised are related to a lack of access to politically relevant (i.e. power) resources on part of some persons or groups that enable others to exercise power in the way of preventing a range of issues from being raised (Bachrach and Baratz 1970, 55-6, 105; Hyland 1995, 199). To be sure, there can be a wide range of potential issues that are excluded from the political agenda without any conscious decision involved. Holmes cites the different historical importance of the question of private property in Europe and the United States: “In the United States, unlike European nations with Communist parties, the legitimacy of private property is never debated in formal legislative settings. But the issue was never deliberately suppressed because, for a variety of reasons, it was never raised” (Holmes 1988, 26). It is important, however, to distinguish the deliberately engineered suppression of an issue from its unintended *de facto* exclusion. Because Bachrach and Baratz do not clearly separate between non-decisions arrived at by purposive action on the one hand and those evolving from unintentional processes on the other, their approach does not allow for an analytical distinction between power as attached to purposive action, and other forms of domination and subordination.

This leads us to a second point of critique that is put forward by Lukes, who sends Bachrach and Baratz’s approach back off into the realm of behavioral analysis of conflict and thereby resolves the aforementioned confusion concerning intentionality. Lukes claims that Bachrach and Baratz failed to sufficiently deal with the non-intentional aspects of the exercise of power. Accordingly, they would not have acknowl-

edged that the phenomenon of collective action is “not attributable to particular individual decisions or behaviour, nor that the mobilisation of bias results from the form of *organisation*, due to ‘systemic’ or organisational effects” (Lukes 1974, 22, emphasis in original). Furthermore, Lukes argues that Bachrach and Baratz’s methodological device for identifying the covert use of power, the observation of grievances, may result in their overlooking another crucial dimension of the exercise of power, *viz.* the power of shaping other people’s preferences: “To assume that the absence of grievances equals genuine consensus is simply to rule out the possibility of false or manipulated consensus by definitional fiat” (Lukes 1974, 24). In an attempt to further develop both the non-intentional and the intentional, preference-shaping aspects of power, Lukes introduces the “three-dimensional view” of power, which I will turn to now.

The third dimension of power: ‘real’ interests and latent conflict

The “three-dimensional view” of power incorporates the two previously outlined aspects of the exercise of power, i.e. Dahl’s observable power in decision-making settings and Bachrach and Baratz’s power through non-decisionmaking, but adds to these the third dimension of institutional bias and the manipulation of preferences. The three-dimensional view of power thereby “allows for consideration of the many ways in which *potential issues* are kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practises or through individuals’ decisions” (Lukes 1974, 24, emphasis in original). Hence, like Bachrach and Baratz’s view, Lukes’ concept of third-dimensional power is concerned with the determination and composition of the political agenda. Since here Lukes seemingly employs both intentional and non-intentional explanation it is appropriate to briefly deal with each separately.

(a) Lukes' use of *non-intentional explanation* comprises mainly of a few functionalist allusions with respect to "the bias of the system" that is mainly sustained by "the socially structured and culturally patterned behaviour of groups, and practices of institutions" (Lukes 1974, 21-2) and the aforementioned "systemic" or "organisational effects" (ibid., 22). Lukes touches on these notions before he sets out to construct the ways in which actors exert third-dimensional power intentionally. However, in the context of the book they appear to be mere rhetoric. It may suffice then to note that I conceive of the exercise of power, as before of the making of decisions, as the intentional product of human agency. This understanding rules out any concept of 'non-intentional' or 'structural power'. Structurally founded restrictions of human agency that result from the actions and decisions of other agents should, for the sake of conceptual clarity, be referred to as dominance or domination (Hyland 1995, 208-9). It appears that Lukes, overall, also prefers an intentional concept of power. Only when he encounters difficulties in explaining the workings of an "imposed consensus" and of "collectively exercised power" is it that he, once more, resorts to structural-functional explanation, as with his hint at Poulantzas' theory of structural determination (Lukes 1974, 51-5).

(b) The kind of (intentional) *individual decisions* that are seen as capable of preventing not only the airing of potential issues (which is covered by Bachrach and Baratz's approach) but their very generation in the first place are based on the power of some agents to intentionally manipulate other people's beliefs and preferences. "A may exercise power over B ... by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants" (Lukes 1974, 23). These forms of the exercise of third-dimensional power are clearly instances of the active construction of ideological beliefs through indoctrination and "thought control", and accordingly are considered by Lukes as "the most effective and insidious use of power" (Lukes 1974, 23). The immediate results of power thus exer-

cised are beliefs, preferences and wants on the part of the person or group subject to third-dimensional power that are not in accordance with that person's or group's "real interests" (Lukes 1974, 24-5) and that can best be described with the Marxist term of "false consciousness" (Hyland 1995, 201). The resulting conflict of interests is then, according to Lukes, a "*latent conflict*, which consists in a contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the *real interests* of those they exclude [from even becoming aware of their interests, P.B.] (Lukes 1974, 24-5, emphasis in original). Eventually this leads Lukes to arrive at a revised and significantly broadened definition of power based on objective interests: "*A* exercises power over *B* when *A* [significantly, i.e. in a non-trivial way, P.B.] affects *B* in a manner contrary to *B*'s interests" (Lukes 1974, 27).

The methodological and operational difficulties implied by this concept of power are obvious, and Lukes is by no means unaware of them: "how can one study, let alone explain, what does not happen?" (Lukes 1974, 38). Moreover, if a ruling elite were at work to manipulate people's minds, it would be naïve to assume that this elite would be active in some observable manner (Mokken and Stokman 1976, 45). More so than in the second dimension, in the third dimension power operates invisibly. The non-decisions and latent conflicts are the only evidence for the existence of these dimensions, which may be persuasive but not conclusive (Barnes 1993, 200).⁶ Prior to these difficulties there are, as Hyland (1995, 201-7) points out, certain theoretical problems to deal with, which may render obsolete a discussion of the more technical problems.

⁶ In fact, as Barnes points out, all power is invisible as such, including first-dimensional power. The difference is that in the first dimension there is ready-made positive evidence in the form of the explicit preferences and outcomes of the decision-making process (Barnes 1993, 200, 205).

The first problem concerns the problem of objective or real interests regardless of the origins of the deviating subjective preferences. Any overt conflict of preferences between two parties *A* and *B* that results in the prevailing of one party, let us say *A*, over *B* can be interpreted as evidence for *A*'s greater power. According to Lukes' concept of power based on a conflict of 'real' interests, however, the precise opposite can just as well be true, since *A*'s preferences could be contrary to his real interests, with the same being true for *B* (Hyland 1995, 202). The defaulting claim that it is by definition against *B*'s interest to be subjected to the power of *A* renders the entire argument circular, since the very existence of a power relationship depends, in turn, on inflicting harm on someone's interests (*ibid.*).

Secondly, the necessity of giving a coherent account of a person's objective interests entirely independent from subjective preferences ineluctably involves the employing of a normative theory of human nature which, as Hyland puts it, "will not be open to straightforward proof and disproof" (Hyland 1995, 203). Lukes, to be sure, is fully aware of this problem when he admits that different conceptions of interests are based on different moral and political positions (Lukes 1974, 34), and that his entire view of power is "ineradicably evaluative and 'essentially contested'" (Lukes 1974, 9). Far from solving the problem of objective interests, however, this confession merely illustrates the "epistemological relativism" of the concept of third-dimensional power (Hyland 1995, 203). While it is probably true that in the social sciences universal agreement is unlikely to be reached on any basic theoretical concept, this does not exempt theorists from attempting to increase the area of intersubjective comparability and comprehensibility (*cf.* Polsby 1980, 231).

Furthermore, Hyland argues that a defensible theory of human nature will inevitably have to be based on human experience (Hyland 1995, 203). According to the con-

cept of third-dimensional power, however, human experience is itself utterly distorted, since it is exposed to the working of this power, which takes the form of “the control of information, through the mass media and through the process of socialisation” (Lukes 1974, 23). This leads to another circularity of the argument: “If we base our theory of human nature on distorted experience we will be unable to detect third-dimensional power; but we will only be able to determine which experiences and forms of consciousness are the products of distortion after we have formulated a defensible theory of human nature” (Hyland 1995, 203).

Though allowing for the possibility of the misconstrual of interest and a misunderstanding of one’s situation, as well as for instances of intentional disinformation and the manufacturing of consent, Hyland rejects the plausibility that the bulk of these cases can be brought about by intentional manipulation (Hyland 1995, 207). Indeed, the problem is not so much the notion that individuals or groups hold beliefs that are contrary to their interests and prevent them from appropriately interpreting their situation of subordination and eventually taking steps to transform their grievances into political issues. Furthermore, such misguided beliefs may even be shown to serve the interests of the rulers or privileged.

The problem rather consists in the notion of an intentional manufacturing of these beliefs by the wielders of third-dimensional power. As Elster explains, preferences can be co-determined by the feasible set of options. Elster defines such *adaptive preference formation* as “the adjustment of wants to possibilities, ... a causal process taking place ‘behind the back’ of the individual concerned. The driving force between such adaptation is the often intolerable tension and frustration (‘cognitive dissonance’) of having wants that one cannot possibly satisfy” (Elster 1982, 126-7). Rather than being the product of some external manufacturing, however, adjusted preferences are developed

endogenously. The fact that adjusted preferences on part of the subjects are regularly beneficial to the interests of more powerful agents does not by itself allow for the conclusion that the latter play an active role in the formation of these beliefs:

“There are good reasons for thinking that the oppressed classes often will be victims of a kind of myopia that prevent them from seeing the injustice of their situation – and it is clear that this is good for the ruling class; but even a systematic correlation would not by itself warrant an explanatory statement” (ibid., 137).

The explanatory key to resignational beliefs does not consist in the benefits they bring about for some ruling elite but in their benefits for the subjects, *viz.* the reduction of cognitive dissonance (Elster 1983, 110, 116). This is not to say, to be sure, that the rulers are entirely inactive with respect to beliefs and desires created in the subjects. Indeed, ideological indoctrination has always been part of what can be perceived as political culture in a broader sense, and most likely always will be. Elster, quoting the importance of Methodism for the acceptance of the capitalist division of labor and wealth during the Industrial Revolution in England, makes clear that such instances of indoctrination are as much the ideology of the rulers as they shape the beliefs of the ruled (Elster 1983, 116). To the extent that this indoctrination happens, it can be successful only because the rulers (and, of course, the actual preachers) themselves believe in it (Elster 1983, 117). The reason for this is that attempts of purposively producing mental states in other persons are bound to fail, unless there is no doubt on part of the recipient that the propagated beliefs are genuinely shared by the emitter (ibid., 66-71). Thus, the beneficial effects of certain ideologies and beliefs for the rulers are mere by-products of the ruler’s own convictions. As such side effects, however, they have no explanatory power, because we cannot conclusively explain the existence of a phenomenon by its

effects (ibid., 117). Hence, unless clear evidence can be presented for demonstrating the conscious and successful utilization of ideology on part of a powerful elite, to conceive of the existence of adaptive preferences as products of third-dimensional power comes down to a “wildly implausible conspiracy theory” (Hyland 1995, 207).

Instances of adjusted preference formation other than these by-products of ideological beliefs shared by the rulers and the ruled are those based on the repeated experience of limited capacities. Having already referred to these as strategies of dissonance reduction, an additional way of locating the origins of adaptive preferences on a map of power and domination is put forward by Hyland. Systematic disadvantages that result from market transactions and are hence not directly intended by those who benefit from them are best understood as “second-dimensional dominance” (Hyland 1995, 209-10). The second-dimensional property (in the meaning that Bachrach and Baratz assigned to this dimension with respect to power) of these forms of dominance lies in the fact that the covertness and unintendedness of such dominance crucially contributes to its perpetuation, “their hidden ubiquity being their protective camouflage” (ibid., 210).

Systematic disadvantages that are brought about by the unintended, though welcome, side effects of both commonly shared beliefs and the rational pursuit of utility maximization can hence not count as resulting from the exercise of power. Instead, what we are dealing with here are instances of structural domination that, though being reducible in principle to individual action within certain institutional settings by processes of structuration (*cf.* Giddens 1979), are beyond the scope of any focus on intentionally exerted power. Structural domination can, compared to the exercise of power, well exceed the latter’s constraining effects on individual agency, freedom and autonomy (Hyland 1995, 208-20). But this is a different story whose analysis, however intimately related to the problem of power, would far exceed the limitations of this essay. The gen-

eral notion of third-dimensional power as intentionally manufactured belief-formation and promulgated by Lukes, has to be rejected except for rare instances of intentional disinformation.

Conclusion: Prerequisites for an empirically applicable concept of power

A concept of political power based on human agency has to comprise both the dimension of political power in the restricted sense of the decision-making approach and the dimension of purposive non-decision strategies. Restrictions on human agency induced by a bias of the political system, the range of political decision-making or the formation of beliefs and biases on the other hand should be categorized under the heading of structural dominance. This leaves us in effect with two dimensions of power.

Any coherent concept of power that is to be able to cover the two dimensions and still be open to falsification would have to be based on the elements of action (both individual and collective), intention and outcome, where outcome includes both the actual decisions made as well as their results (Debnam 1984). At the same time, however, the analysis of power cannot be separated from an analysis of structural dominance. The very resources on which individual or collective power is based, are subject to a variety of structural constraints and opportunities. Yet in order to arrive at empirically applicable models, the analytical distinction has to be well defined and upheld.

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