

Clarification and Visual Representation of the Concept of Power⁽¹⁾

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1. Purpose of this Paper

Power-related phenomena are one of the most difficult things to understand in social sciences and the field of conflict resolution as well. The concept of power and how it works are never obvious for many people as well as social scientists. So far, scholars and researchers tried to define power in many ways and there is a considerable accumulation of research on power. However, during the last several decades, discussions about power concept became unnecessarily complicated and confusing. According to Kazuo Seiyama, one of the leading sociologists in Japan, the current power study situation is “absurdly chaos” (おそろしく混沌としていて) and that “variously different concepts of power stand together in a disorderly way.” (さまざまに異なった「権力」概念の乱立).⁽²⁾ Some arguments on power, such as the one of Michel Foucault, are “philosophical-sociological” theory rather than empirical-sociological theory.⁽³⁾ This state of affairs resulted in confusion about the concept of power among social scientists. In addition to this, there is not much effort to visually represent the concept of power so that ordinary people and college students may conceptually and easily understand it. Therefore, there is a need to clarify and diagram the concept of power.

The purposes of this paper are twofold: firstly, to provide a clearer concept of power by clarifying some aspects of power concept; and secondly, to visually demonstrate concepts and processes regarding power. So far, some well-known

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scholars contributed to a comprehensive review of power theories. Some of them are Kazuo Seiyama's *Kenryoku* (2000), Satoshi Hoshino's *Gendai Kenryoku-ron no Kozu* (2000) and Steven Lukes' "Introduction" essay in *Power: Readings in Social and Political Theory* (1986). Lukes' edited book includes 13 major essays on power from Bertrand Russell and Max Weber to Raymond Aron.

Some of the authors' arguments in Lukes' book are quite elaborated and informative. But in my view, their arguments focus on certain aspects of the power phenomenon and are sometimes unnecessarily complicated and difficult to understand for ordinary people. Particularly, my dissatisfaction with these essays stems from the lack of diagrams, with the only exception being the use a few graphs and figures. All authors discussed what power is according to their theoretical point of view, but nobody tried to develop even a single diagram. In any scientific research field, there are three parts of a study; namely, 1) theory building and developing notation systems, 2) diagramming concepts and models, and 3) data collection and data analysis. Regardless of the research fields, diagramming concepts is one of the important scientific endeavors.⁽⁴⁾ However, that effort is often undervalued among scholars discussing power concept in social sciences.

My concern is how ordinary people and college students can effectively learn and understand the concept of power based on a sound theoretical framework. For this purpose, I will first refer to some definitions on power made by major scholars; second, examine several aspects of power based on my own understanding about power phenomenon; and third, develop diagrams and conceptual formula on power.

2. Hitherto Definitions of Power and their Insufficiency

Before proceeding, I will highlight some well-known definitions of power. I will first cite these conceptualizations and later make some comments from my own theoretical perspective.

- (1) Bertrand Russell defines power as “the production of intended effects. An individual may be influenced a) by direct physical power over his body, b) by rewards and punishments as inducements, and c) by influence on opinion.”⁽⁵⁾

Without an integrated theoretical framework, Russel only juxtaposed three different kinds of power and described each of them in order.⁽⁶⁾ From my perspective, “direct physical power” (violence) needs to be conceptually distinguished from other types of power, namely, political, economic, relational, and knowledge-based power. According to Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson, the essence of political power is the psychological relationship between two minds, and in the exercise of physical violence, the psychological element of the political relationship is lost. Therefore, “Political power must be distinguished from force in the sense of the actual exercise of physical violence.”⁽⁷⁾

With regards to “rewards and punishments as inducements,” they can be classified as economic power because if somebody does not have such resources, s/he cannot promise or provide such rewards. However, if somebody holds a certain position in the organization, it means s/he has some jurisdictional power (or authority) to promise or provide rewards and exercise punishment. Thus, from the viewpoint of subjects who resort to power and can influence other persons’ actions, this type of power means ‘positional or directive power.’ Finally, “influence on opinion” can also be understood in terms of ‘information and knowledge power’ from the perspective of subjects who resort to power and can influence other persons’ perceptions and actions in an organization or society.

- (2) Max Weber defines power as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests.”⁽⁸⁾

Here, Weber talks about the probability that certain actors would carry out their own will despite resistance from others, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests. However, the probability is not actuality. Therefore, one needs to examine and discuss both probability and actuality with regard to the effect of power. In my understanding, power defined in terms of *potential ability* and power defined in terms of *probable cause over outcomes* need to be distinguished. (I will later discuss this in detail).

(3) Robert Dahl defines power as “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.”⁽⁹⁾

The problem of Dahl’s definition of power is its ‘individualistic and simple behaviorist’ definition. He does not mention about institutions in which certain jurisdictional power is bestowed. In his definition, one cannot point actual reasons from which Person B acted. Why do people act in such a manner? Is it because other people have certain positions (=authority), money and goods, connections, or information and knowledge? Or is it because they feel and think that obedience is necessary and appropriate? Dahl’s definition of power is so simple that one feels like asking more questions rather than being persuaded.

(4) Talcott Parsons defines power as “a circulating medium, analogous to money, within the political system, but notably over its boundaries into all three of the other neighboring functional subsystems of a society; the economic, integrative, and pattern-maintenance systems.”⁽¹⁰⁾

To completely understand Parsons’s concept of power, one needs to understand his entire social systems theory, which I have not yet finished doing so. Here, I will only mention his contribution to discussions about power. Parsons is one of the few scholars who pointed out a distinction between the zero-sum and plus-sum notions of power, which are defined as the ‘distributive aspect of power use’ and the ‘integrative aspect of power use,’ respectively, in

my theoretical model.

- (5) Michael Foucault defines power as disciplinary effects which emerge from many aspects of human life under certain intellectual and institutional structures and frames of the times.⁽¹¹⁾

Among a considerable number of sociologists, Foucault's power concept is popular. Certainly, Foucault's definition opens our eyes to some aspects of power that scholars had previously missed. However, it seems that Foucault confuses institutional base and their constraints on peoples' mindset (and behavior) with actual power effects. In my understanding, an actor's perceptions, behavior, communication, knowledge, and institutions are different factors that generate different effects. Thus, they need to be analyzed separately. If I am not mistaken, Foucault seemed to carry out an unnecessarily complicated argument about power.

The above comments are not intended as a major theoretical review of their definitions, which is beyond my capacity and scope of this paper. However, I will express my overall view about the hitherto discussions about power under the following guideline: 1) As the first step to understand the power phenomenon, I will make a conceptual clarification between power and influence, although they empirically overlap. Afterward, as the second step, these two concepts will be posited within the integrated theoretical framework focusing on power resources; 2) I will highlight two different ways of inference when one thinks about the power phenomenon; 3) I will mention distributive and integrative aspects of interactions with power; 4) Different levels and kinds of factors which consist of theoretical and practical premises in defining power will be clearly stated. Those factors are ① individual (or group) actor-level factors, ② social-institutional factors, ③ physical structural-level factors, and ④ communicational-interaction factors between and among actors; 5) More attention will be paid to kinds of power resources in the integrated theoretical framework; and 6) Distinction between power and violence is useful as

Morgenthau and Thompson, Arendt, and Luhmann suggested, although they use ‘distinction’ in a somewhat different manner.

3. Power defined as ‘Influencing Power’ (影響力)

In this section, I will introduce some power phenomenon features based on my own understanding of power. As an empirical phenomenon, influence, power, and violence are overlapped and related to each other.⁽¹²⁾ However, as a first step to understand power phenomena, there is a need conceptually distinguish these terminologies. Figure 1 and Figure 2 below show their relations.

Figure1. Relations between Concept of Influence, Power, and Violence in the Inclusive Diagram

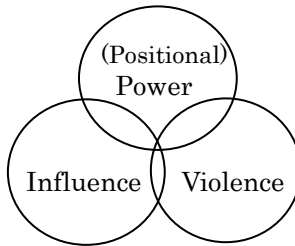
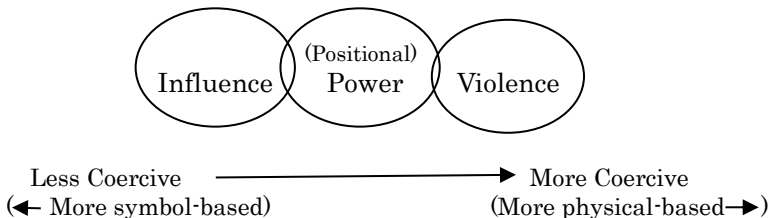
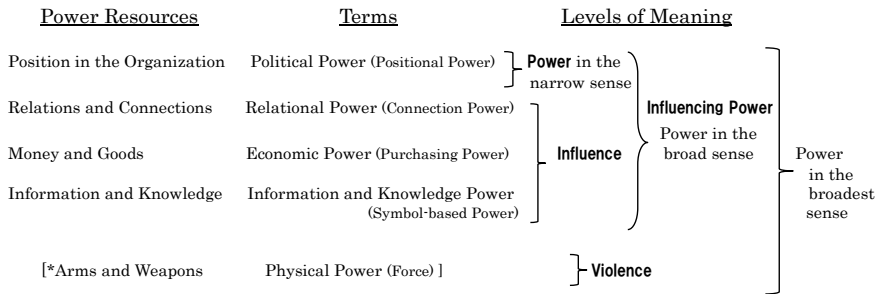


Figure2. Relations between Concept of Influence, Power, and Violence in the Coercion Continuum



One way to conceptually distinguish influence, power, and violence is to identify their resource-base and indicate their levels of meaning accordingly.

The description below shows this distinction. Power can be defined in (1) a narrow sense (the Japanese word *kenryoku* — 権力 — is usually used for this meaning), (2) in a broad sense, which includes power in the narrow sense and influence based on resources such as relational, economic, and information and knowledge, and, finally, (3) power in the broadest sense, which includes power in the narrow sense, influence, and violence.



Morgenthau and Thompson distinguish power from influence. They say that:

The Secretary of State who advises the President of the United States on the conduct of American foreign policy has influence if the President follows his advice. But he has no power over the President; for he has none of the means at his disposal with which to impose his will upon that of the President. He can persuade but he cannot compel. The President, on the other hand, has power over the Secretary of State; for he can impose his will upon the latter by virtue of the authority of his office, the promise of benefit, and the threat of disadvantages.⁽¹³⁾

At first glance, what they say seems common sense. But I could call “power” in their terms ‘positional power’ because it is based on positions with formal jurisdictional authority in the organization. On the other hand, I call their term “influence” as ‘symbol-based power’ because it is based on the information and knowledge that the Secretary of State is assumed to have.

‘Power’ and ‘influence’ are somewhat different from each other in our ordinary sense. However, I will treat them as simply different degrees of effects in the integrated theoretical framework focusing on power resources. The US President’s ‘power’ is based on his formal position in the US government, while

the Secretary of State's 'power' (the ability to influence) is based on his information and knowledge, some of which comes from his own experiences.

One can have several different power resources that mix with each other but result in the same effect: i.e., that Actor A has power over Actor B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.⁽¹⁴⁾ Indeed, Graham T. Allison describes power in this manner and does not distinguish 'power' from 'influence'. According to Allison, "[Player's] Power, i.e., effective influence on policy outcomes, is an elusive blend of at least three elements: bargaining advantages (drawn from formal authority and obligations, institutional backing, constituents, expertise, and status), skill and will in using bargaining advantages, and other players' perceptions of the first two ingredients."⁽¹⁵⁾

For the reasons mentioned above, I perceive 'power' and 'influence' as simply different degrees of social phenomena in the resource-based continuum. 'Power' and 'influence' can be treated as a subcategory of overall terms of "influencing power" because their effects on the people are the same, in the sense that Actor A has power over Actor B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.

4. Two Ways of Defining Power and Two Ways of Inference to think about Power

Power as *Potential Ability* and Power as *Probable Cause over Outcomes*

Allison's definition of power does not seem to distinguish 'expected influence' by using power deriving from resource holding from 'actual effective influence on policy outcomes.' This point needs to be clarified. I define power in two ways: one, in terms of *potential ability*, and the other, in terms of *probable cause over outcomes*. Firstly, power can be defined as a potential ability that a certain actor (or actors) will be expected to get another actor to do (or not to do) something under certain social and physical structures and conditions. Secondly, power can be defined as a probable cause (or one of the causes) over outcomes,

which is the result of interactions among actors.⁽¹⁶⁾

When one thinks of power, one uses two different ways of inference. If one has more power resources (such as position=authority, relations, money, information and knowledge, arms) than the other in certain interactions, then the former is inferred to be more powerful than the latter. Here, we are using a sort of a *prospective way* of inference. In this inference mode, based on the fact that one has more power resources than the other, we infer that the former has more power than the latter. Therefore, we can predict that the former will prevail over the latter.

On the other hand, when certain decisional and/or actual action-results take place in people's interactions, one might use a *retrospective way* of inference. One may question that if the results (or outcomes) of interactions are such and such, then who contributed most to those results? In this inference mode, one infers that somebody was more powerful than others, based on the fact of certain outcomes. Here, the question about who was more powerful than others will only be answered by actual investigation of the entire decision-making and/or action processes. Without addressing these aspects, one cannot tell who contributed most to the outcomes.

When a person interacts with somebody, observers will also infer interaction outcomes from the fact that either one has more power resources than the other. Here, one is using a *prospective way* of inference. For example, when David of ancient Israel was about to fight Goliath, many people inferred that Goliath would win over David because Goliath was bigger and more muscular than young David. While Goliath had a sharp iron sword, David only had a small leather sling. David and Goliath fought with each other. The result was David's victory. Now that the outcome of interaction came to fruition, one needs to infer who was more powerful than the other in that fighting situation. In this case, it can be said that David was more powerful than Goliath because he won. Here, one is using a *retrospective way* of inference. That is, based on the result, one infers that David was more powerful than Goliath because he had more information and knowledge about fighting and carried a small but effective

leather sling.

Goliath, with a big muscular body and the sharp iron sword, had the *potential ability* to prevail over young David. But the actual outcome suggests *probable causes over the outcome*. In this case, information and knowledge about fighting and the use of a small leather sling were factors among others for David's victory. (If there had been clear rules prohibiting weapons such as slings, Goliath might have won over David. Furthermore, if the fight had happened inside a building, i.e., a narrow physically-structured place, then Goliath might also have won over David because the advantage of a sling would have been lost.) Who has more power and how much power is given to who depend on social rules and physical structure (and conditions) in which power operates in real life.

So far, it has become evident that many arguments about power do not distinguish between 'power as potential ability' from 'probable cause over outcomes.' Of course, the real social life is much more complicated than the above story of David and Goliath. Nonetheless, it will be helpful to keep this distinction in mind.

5. The Distributive and Integrative Aspects of Power Use

Influencing power over others and Influencing power for goals

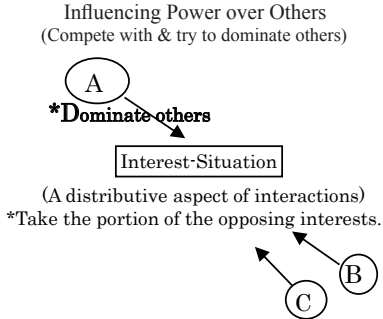
Figure 3 shows the distributive and integrative aspects of human interactions within which 'influencing power' operates. Here, there are two kinds of 'influencing power': the *influencing power over others* and the *influencing power for goals*. In the case of the distributive-aspect of power, Person A and other two persons (B and C) are in a situation whereby they compete over some kind of interest (利害状況). Because A has more power-resources than the other two, A can dominate the others and gain more interest in this situation.

In the case of the integrative aspect of power, A is more powerful than the two other persons because A has the ability to motivate the others and build cooperation among the three of them to realize their common interests. A has power resources and uses them to attain a common goal and indeed brings about

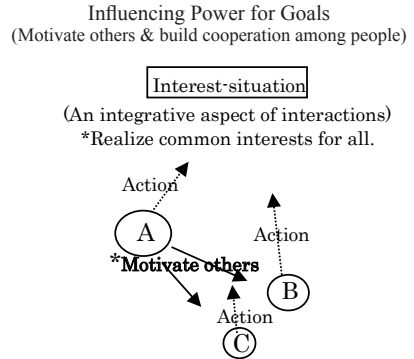
such results.

Figure 3. Distributive and Integrative Aspects of Power Use

* A is more powerful than the others
→ because A can compete against the others well
and dominate them.



* A is more powerful than the others,
→ because A can motivate the others well
and build cooperation among three.



6. Diagram to represent the Interactions of Two Actors having ‘Influencing Power’

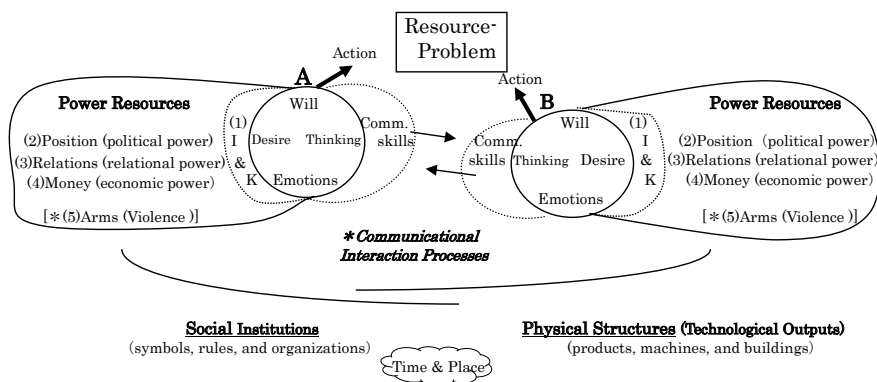
Figure 4 is a representation of interactions between two actors in which they try to resort to ‘influencing power’ over the other. (Actors can be either persons or groups). There are generally four different kinds of power resources, namely ① information and knowledge (symbol-based power), ② positions with authority in organizations (directive power or political power), ③ various relations and connections (connection power or relational power), and ④ money and goods (purchasing power or economic power).

When people with certain thoughts, emotions, desires and willpower interact with each other, they start communicating with some information and knowledge. Both try to persuade the other side through verbal and nonverbal communication. However, if one party (or both) is unable to persuade the one person, then power resources in the narrow sense (such as a position of authority, number of people belonging to a group connected with the parties, and money and goods) might be utilized. Finally, there is a special resource to influence; i.e.,

arms (violence).

People interact with each other using those power resources under certain social structures (institutions) and physical structures (outputs of technology). For instance, the use of armed violence is a product of technology not allowed in a well-institutionalized domestic society, while such use in war is permitted in the international arena where authoritative institutions do not sufficiently develop. Take the case of a governmental actor. For example, the United States government has tremendous military and economic power, which can be used for governmental actions along with the veto right in the Security Council of the United Nations. However, the United States has only an one/194 voting power in the institutional framework of the General Assembly of the UN. Looking at these examples, it is possible to understand how institutional rules and physical structural conditions define or affect the nature and amount of power.

Figure 4. Diagram to represent the Interactions of Two Actors with ‘Influencing Power’



- I & K Information and Knowledge
- Comm. skills Verbal (and nonverbal) Communication skills
- Power Resources Kinds of resources that generate some effects.

7. Conceptual Formula to consider ‘Influencing Power’

With the above-mentioned diagram, one can have an overall image of people’s interactions with a certain power. However, one needs a more detailed

understanding of ‘the working of influencing power.’ Understanding power phenomena in terms of power resources is useful. Nevertheless, power phenomena are much more complicated than what many people usually think. I assume that ‘influencing power’ operates at three different levels with different natures. Along with the Figure 4 diagram, I suggested a conceptual formula below to consider the influencing power. ‘Conceptual formula’ suggested here is not a mathematical formula. It is just a concise way of showing relations among relevant concepts. The formula is based on the ideal-type theoretical model. In this formulation, “I & K” means information and knowledge. “Power resources” means other kinds of resources which exclude information and knowledge for the sake of argument.

◆ **Conceptual Formula to consider ‘Influencing Power’**

- **Communication Power : (Information & Knowledge)×Communication Skills**
- **Practical Power = (I & K+Power resources)×Communication Skills**
- **Actual Interaction Power=[(K&I+Power resources)×Communication Skills] * Other’s Perception**
{about substantiality & legitimacy of use of power}

Firstly, ‘influencing power’ works at the communication process level. Some people have much more information and knowledge (I & K) than others. However, with even the same amount of information and knowledge, some people are better at communicating with elaborate verbal and nonverbal skills. Therefore, I call this kind of power working at this level as ‘communication power’.

Having the amount of information and knowledge only means a *potential ability*. Some people may have information and knowledge about certain issues. However, they do not always have enough communication skills. If this is the case, they might encounter difficulties in persuading others. On the other hand, there are cases that persons have excellent verbal and nonverbal communication skills with little information and knowledge about the relevant issues. In these cases, they might have a good chance of persuading others because of their good communication skills.

Secondly, a person's 'influencing power' works at the level of communication with information and knowledge combined with other kinds of power resources. In our ordinary life, persons interact with each other by exchanging words while using other types of power resources. With respect to persuasion, some people are not always persuaded by facts and logic, especially if they have rigid frameworks of thinking or strong biases toward a specific person or subject matter. When this happens, those seeking to persuade others may resort to power resources such as ① positions/authority in the organization, ② relations and connections, and ③ money and goods (or the use of ④ arms in some extreme cases). I call the kind of power as 'practical power.' At this level, people try to verbally and nonverbally persuade others while resorting to political pressures, using connections, offering interests (e.g., money or goods), or utilizing all of them simultaneously.

Looking at the Futenma U.S. military base replacement issue in Okinawa, the Japanese government has used all types of power to influence the Okinawan people. They first offered financial compensation for the Okinawan Prefectural Government and local municipal governments. After, they sent government officials to use local people connections to persuade Okinawans to accept the base replacement. Then, they used official coercive legal and political power. And finally, they resorted to direct physical police power at the protest site.

In actual interactions among people in a real-life situation, 'actual interaction power' will be at work, which depends on the other person's perceptions at a particular time and place. Suppose that Actor A has some information and knowledge about the issue under discussion coupled with some power resources along with a certain level of communication skills. And yet, if Actor B has some doubt about the substantiality and legitimacy of Actor A's resort of influence, then Actor B might not obey A's direction or order. As a result, A's efforts to persuade B might be nullified because B believes that A's words and resources are not 'substantial' and 'legitimate.' This is the case for the Okinawan people's defiance against the Japanese government because they perceive the use of power by the Japanese government is illegitimate.

The asterisk sign “*” in the formula means a multiplication sign. However, the nature of multiplication in the former part of the formula (i.e., [(K & I + Power resources)×Communication Skills]) and that in the latter part (i.e., * Other’s Perception {about substantiality & legitimacy of the use of power}) can be considered to be somewhat different. Thus, to distinguish the latter from the former, there is a multiplication sign of “*” instead of a “×”. This conceptual formula will help our understanding of the relationship of factors regarding power and how power works.

8. Relations between Actors, Communication Processes, Institutional Frameworks and Physical Conditions, and Outcomes of Decisional Interactions

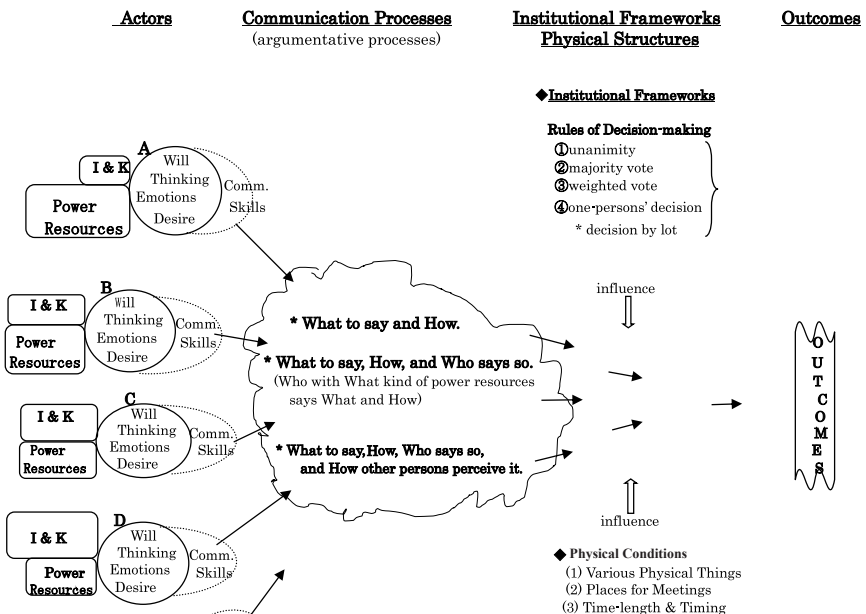
Figure 5 visualizes the decision-making processes in the organizational settings regarding information flows and the stages in which power factors operate. The arrows indicate the flows of information in the form of people’s opinions. There are three factors to be considered in the decision-making processes. First, there are the actor-level factors, which are ① the actor’s cognition (thinking, emotions, desire and will), ② the information and knowledge that the actor might obtain from the outside world, ③ power resources in the narrow sense, and ④ communication skills. The second factor is the communication process (argumentative processes). Finally, the third factor comprises the institutional framework (decision-making rules), physical structures (materials, machines, and buildings), and place and time.

When people make decisions, in the first stage, each has thinking, emotions, desires, and willpower in addition to some communication skills, information and knowledge obtained from the external world. In the second stage, people start discussions on actions or policies that the organization may take to cope with a specific situation. In the discussion processes, ‘what to say and how to say’ things should be said matters. However, not only ‘what to say and how to say’, but also ‘who says what and how’ matters. Here, elements of ‘influencing power’ work upon people discussing the agenda. However, in the end, ‘how

other people perceive who says what and how' becomes the most important.

In a meeting of any organizations, regardless of their types, the contents of discussions cannot automatically bring about decisional outcomes. Such institutional frameworks as decision-making rules and such physical structures as various things, together with the characteristic of the place where the meeting takes place, and the time constraint, all affect the decision-making processes. Finally, certain decisional outcomes will be made among the people in the organization. With Figure 5 diagram, one could have an overall image of the organizational decision-making processes in which the 'influencing power' factors operate.

Figure 5. Diagram on Actors, Communication Processes, Institutional Frameworks and Physical Conditions, and Outcomes of Decisional Interactions



9. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I attempted to visually represent concepts and processes regarding power. That is, to develop diagrams and a formula as a teaching tool so that college students and ordinary people can easily understand the concept of power. For this purpose, I first referred to some definitions made by major scholars; second, I clarified several aspects of the power concept based on my own understanding of the power phenomenon; and third, I developed diagrams and a conceptual formula to consider ‘influencing power.’

I understand that what is proposed here is rather suggestive instead of conclusive. I would like to say that many of my students who attended the conflict resolution class told me that those diagrams and the conceptual formula on power were able to show what they experienced in their daily lives with respect to the influence phenomenon. For them, these visual diagrams were quite helpful in understanding what is going on in their social interactions and the role of power in conflict situations elsewhere.

In following the principle of Occam’s Razor (i.e., ‘in explaining a thing, no more assumptions should be made than are necessary’), the resource-based power approach, which is described in this paper, seems one of the parsimonious ways to understand the power phenomena. However, further field-testing of the model and diagrams needs to be done to improve those diagrams and the conceptual formula.

Notes

- (1) This paper is a revised paper. The original paper was a presentation paper for XVIII International Sociological Association World Congress, Yokohama (July 16th, 2014).
- (2) Kazuo Seiyama (2000), p.207, p.2.
- (3) See Michel Foucault (1986a), (1986b), (2006).
- (4) In the natural sciences, for example, competing “diagraming efforts” regarding an atomic model are well known. In the early twentieth century, scientists such as Niels Bohr, Hantaro Nagaoka, Ernest Rutherford, Joseph John Thomson, and Arnold Sommerfeld suggested different diagrams for an atom.
- (5) Bertrand Russell (1986), p.19.
- (6) Also Refer to B. Russell (1959) for the detailed description on power.
- (7) Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson (1948, p.33). Hannah Arendt (1986, p.64) also distinguishes between power and violence. For her, violence is a physical phenomenon, while power is about “the human ability not just to act but to act in concert,”. Refer also to Niklas Luhmann (1986, pp.91-105) who distinguishes power from violence in the elaborate argument.
- (8) Max Weber (1968), p.53.
- (9) Robert Dahl (1957), pp.201-203.
- (10) Talcott Parsons (1986), p.101.
- (11) Michel Foucault (2006), pp.420-421.
- (12) When scholars talk about power, they often mention differences between “power” and “authority.” In this paper, “authority” is treated as an aspect of certain formal or informal positional power, which is perceived as “legitimate” from the viewpoint of the followers or subordinates.
- (13) H. Morgenthau and K. Thompson (1948), p.33.
- (14) Robert Dahl (1957), pp.201-203.
- (15) Graham T. Allison (1989), p.361.
- (16) Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye (1989, p.11) also define power in two ways: power as a potential ability (power measured by any type of resource) and power as control over outcomes (power measured by effects on outcomes). Their definition of power is similar to mine. However, their wording about power somewhat fluctuates and is ambiguous. There is also a subtle difference between theirs and mine. My theory focuses on “probable cause over outcomes”, while they address “control over outcomes.”

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Clarification and Visual Representation of the Concept of Power

<Summary>

Norio Naka

Power-related phenomena are one of the most difficult things to understand in social sciences and the field of conflict resolution as well. What is power and how power works are never obvious for many people as well as social scientists. So far, scholars and researchers tried to define power in many ways and there is considerable accumulation of research on power. However, during the last several decades, discussions about the concept of power became unnecessarily complicated and confusing. According to Kazuo Seiyama, the current situation of power study is “absurdly chaos” (おそろしく混沌としていて) and that “variously different concepts of power stand together in a disorderly way.” (さまざまに異なった「権力」概念の乱立).

The purposes of this paper are twofold: firstly, to provide clearer concept of power by clarifying some aspects of power concept; and secondly, to visually demonstrate concepts and processes regarding power. The author’s concern is that how ordinary people and college students can effectively learn and understand the concept of power, which is based on sound theoretical framework. For this purpose, first, some definitions on power made by major scholars were referred to; second, several aspects of power were examined according to author’s own understanding about power phenomenon; and third, diagrams and conceptual formula on power were developed.

In following the principle of Occam’s Razor (i.e., ‘in explaining a thing, no more assumptions should be made than are necessary’), the resource-based power approach which is described in this paper seems one of the parsimonious ways to understand the power phenomena. However, further field testing of the model and diagrams need to be done to improve those diagrams and conceptual formula.

