1. The Nature of Power

1.1 DEFINITIONAL APPROACH

Power is multifarious. We encounter it generally and in political practice in many different forms. Power manifests itself in the martial pomp of a military parade, in the decision of a head of state on war and peace, in a parliamentary resolution or in the police checkpoint on the roadside. The structures of power penetrate social relationships – consciously perceived or unconscious. From the cradle to the grave, people are surrounded by these structures. Power is subtle and brutal, taciturn and eloquent. The striking heterogeneity of these social phenomena led Max Weber (1864 - 1920), in his posthumously published standard work *Economy and Society*, to classify the notion of power as "sociologically amorphous", i.e., shimmering and elusive[1]. There seems to be considerable doubt as to whether there is any singular definition of power. Indeed, it is questionable as to whether one specific generic concept, an umbrella term under which all power phenomena are convincingly subsumed, can be identified at all.[2] Although conscious of this challenge, it remains necessary to risk a definitional approach, although not in the sense of an incontrovertible designation. Instead, we are concerned with reaching a pragmatic working definition that is appropriate to our specific interest in this subject, both as an agent in political processes and as an observer of these processes.

We are not starting from zero here. For thousands of years, state theorists, philosophers, sociologists and historians have examined the concept of power and

1 Weber, Max ([1921] 1978). *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology,* translated by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press.; p. 53.

2 For example, the cultural scientist Lisa Zunshine draws the radical conclusion that power is absolutely indefinable, cf. Zunshine, Lisa (2008): *Strange Concepts and the Stories They Make Possible*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.; p. 50.

presented various, often contradictory, definitions and descriptions. The field can best be briefly outlined by means of two controversies, which at the same time provide orientation for our own definitional approach[3]. The first issue concerns the question of whether power is to be primarily understood as the capacity for goal-directed action, that is, as *power to*. Or is it instead to be regarded as the ability to control other persons, that is, as *power over*? The second issue is whether power is a resource that can be possessed by individual and collective actors, or whether it constitutes a social structure that directs or even completely determines the behavior of actors. Crucial for us is that both controversies are independent in terms of content. Resolving one of the disputes does not allow conclusions to be drawn as to the other. In order to approach a working definition, we outline both controversies below and discuss our positions in this context.

The notion of power as *power to* was anchored early in history. Already in *Metaphysics*, Aristotle develops his core concept of *dynamis*, which can be translated as a possibility, ability or agency, depending on the context.[4] Aristotle understands dynamis quite fundamentally as the ability of an organism – be it a human or an animal – to change itself or other things purposefully. Dynamic living beings are therefore those who have the potential to actively, and to a certain extent deliberately, influence their environment. We find this definition consistently through ancient times, as exemplified by the scholastics who translate the Greek dynamis into the Latin *potentia*. Excitingly, the 'potentia' concept prevails with almost no change of meaning throughout the Middle Ages.[5] Thomas Hobbes draws on this powerful definition of power in the early modern period, but narrows the power concept decisively. In his *Leviathan*, he puts forward the following new definition: "The power of a man [...] is his present means to obtain some future apparent good."[6]

3 Cf. Allen, Amy (2016): Feminist Perspectives on Power, in: Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. [online] https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall 2016/entries/feminist-power/, retrieved on 21.12.2017.

4 Cf. Aristotle (2002): *Metaphysics*, translated by Joe Sachs (ed.), 2nd edition, Santa Fe: Green Lion.; For an in-depth analysis of the power principles see Saar, Martin (2010): Power and Critique. *Journal of Power*, 3 (1), pp. 7-20.

5 Cf. Geary, Patrick J. (2013): *Language and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, authored in the course of the Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures. Waltham: Brandeis University Press.

6 Such a pessimistic view is maintained by Hobbes, Thomas ([1651] 1997): *Leviathan. Or the Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill,* Michael Oakeshott (ed.), New York: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster.; p. 72.

Power, Hobbes says, is a specifically human category, and one which he now couples to the condition for realizing subjective interests.

To be sure, Hobbes remains faithful to the Aristotelian conception of origin inasmuch as he places the power of action at the center of his conception of power. The scope of power of a person or group of persons thus depends on the scope of their options for action to achieve their various goals. Hobbes's definition proves subsequently to be so influential for power theorists and practitioners in power politics that it finds its way into the present. An example of the aftereffect of this concept is the position of the philosopher Amy Allen, who sees power as the "ability to attain an end or a series of ends."[7] This ability, so notes Allen while concretizing the Hobbesian paradigm, does not have to be successful or force the realization of the desired purpose. An actor already has power if the execution of an action makes the intended effect likely to occur. Thus, Allen extends Hobbes concept with an explicitly probabilistic component. The power of an actor is determined not only by the extent of his or her options for action, but also by the likelihood that the corresponding acts will be successful in their implementation.

The genesis of the second competing notion of power as *power over*, according to which power is essentially a relationship of dominance between persons, is less easy to trace. For many social theorists Niccolò Machiavelli describes this conception for the first time explicitly in his power classic, *The Prince*[8]. However, it is indisputable that the most well-known of the definitions of this concept in modern times was put forth by Max Weber: "Power is 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 upon which this probability rests."[9] It is worthwhile to dissect this compact definition into its components. First, as Weber points

7 Allen, Amy (1999): *The Power of Feminist Theory: Domination, Resistance, Solidarity,* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.; p. 126. See also Pitkin, Hanna F. (1972): *Wittgenstein and Justice.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.; Dowding, Keith M. (1996): *Power.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

8 Cf. Machiavelli, Niccolo ([1513] 2000): *The Prince,* translated by Quentin Skinner and Russel Price (eds.), 12th edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. For an in-depth discussion of Macchiavelli's significance with respect to the dominance model, see e.g. Karlberg, Michael (2005): Power of Discourse and the Discourse of Power: Pursuing Peace Through Discourse Intervention, *International Journal of Peace Studies,* 10 (1), pp. 1-23.; pp. 2-3. Critically, Holler, Manfred J. (2009): Niccolò Machiavelli on Power, *Rationality, Markets, and Morals,* 0 (1), pp. 335-354.

9 Weber ([1921]) 1978): p. 53. The number of Weberians among the power theoreticians of the present day is immense, among the more important ones, however, are: Barry,

out, the *power-over* concept implies a mutually dependent relationship between a ruler and a power-subject.[10] Whereas the Aristotelian definition of power, based on the mere capacity for successful and purposeful action, could be applied in a world in which only one human being were still alive, in such a scenario it would no longer be possible to speak of Weber's understanding of power. Power in the Weberian sense is irreducibly social, and it requires at least two persons.[11] Secondly, this power concept implies a potential resistance that is potentially overcome. In other words, power concretely presupposes a will that, if it opposes the will of those with power, can be overcome, should those with power so wish.[12] This, as Byung-Chul Han aptly states, does not necessarily imply that power must express itself in compulsion.[13] On the one hand, anyone who is subject to power can freely follow the wishes of the ruler without being compelled by coercive means. On the other hand, rulers can renounce the use of means of coercion and tolerate the power-subject's insubordination, without forfeiting their status as rulers. What is decisive, however, is that the amount of power an actor possesses is constitutively dependent on the extent to which he or she is capable of resisting others in the realization of his or her own interests. It does not matter if the resistance of others ever manifests itself or if the actor ever makes use of his or her ability. Finally, the third crucial component is that power is always associated with an opportunity to enforce interests. This aspect, which we have already encountered in discussion of the concept of *power to*, says nothing more than that the *power-over* concept has a probabilistic component. Having power over others is no guarantee that rulers can enforce their will. It simply means that if a ruler uses coercive means, there is a significant likelihood that these means will be successful in overcoming the resistance.

Brian (1989): *Democracy and Power,* Oxford: Clarendon Press and Mann, Michael (1986): *The Sources of Social Power: Volume I: The History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

10 The Korean-born German author Byung-Chul Han succinctly characterizes this aspect by noting that power constantly exists in a tense, charged relationship between ego and alter. Cf. Han, Byung-Chul (2005): *Was ist Macht?,* Ditzingen: Reclam.

11 The obvious question, whether the converse is true, i.e. whether the social is irreducibly linked to the phenomenon of power, will be discussed in Chapter 2.2

12 Cf. Dahl, Robert (1957): The Concept of Power, *Behavioral Science,* 2, pp. 201-215.; pp. 202f.; and Dahl, Robert ([1968] 2002): Power, in: Mark Haugaard (ed.), *Power. A Reader,* Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 5-25.

13 Cf. Han (2005): p. 11.

This dualism of two power concepts is by no means a Western feature. It may also be found in other great cultural traditions. This is impressively demonstrated by the formative currents of classical Chinese ethics – Taoism and Confucianism.[14] Both schools of thought are concerned explicitly not with conceptual theoretical reflections, such as the Platonic dialogues, but offer practice-oriented guidelines for emperors and high civil servants.[15] Accordingly, we search in vain among them for an abstract definition of the concept of power. Nonetheless, we can find a very clear analysis of the ideal ruler personality. Both Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism, and Confucius vehemently reject the quest for power – both power over and power to.[16] For example, Lao Tzu warns in his canonical collection of sayings, the Tao-Te-Ching (Dao de Jing in the Pinyin romanization) in Chapter 19: "Forget about knowledge and wisdom / and people will be a hundred times better off. […] Throw away profit and greed / and there wont be any thieves. […] Embrace simplicity / put others first."[17] The virtuous ruler should not, therefore, increase his capacity for action and strive for chances of success; he should rather withdraw from the active world. The keyword of Chinese philosophy here is wu wei, which translates to "doing nothing" or "abstaining from action."[18] Only by avoiding the fatal cycle of ever wishing, as it were, can the ruler set an example to his subjects and inspire them to loyalty and lawfulness. For similar reasons, the founders of Chinese ethics also reject the quest for control over other people. Thus, Confucius advises against ruling by decrees and punishments, arguing that the people affected inevitably become disaffected or even lose their conscience. Conversely, he notes that if one directs by essential power and observes morality in doing so, the people have a sense of right and wrong and achieve goodness.[19] Behind this is a simple consideration. Every attempt by political decision-makers to

14 Both currents have their origins in the fifth century BC. Their key texts are: Lao Tzu (2009): *Tao-Te-Ching,* translated by John H. McDonald (ed.), New York: Chartwell Books.; and Confucius (2005): *Lun Yu*, translated by Chichung Huang (ed.) as 'The Analects of Confucius (Lun yu)', New York: Oxford University Press.

15 An informative and humorous comparison of the theory-burdened Attic thinkers of antiquity and their Chinese counterparts is provided by Wong, David (2013): Chinese Ethics, in: Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* [online] https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/ethics-chinese/, retr. on 21.12.2017.

16 Cf. Roetz, Heiner and Schleichert, Hubert (2009): *Klassische chinesische Philosophie. Eine Einführung*, Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann.; p. 24.

17 Lao Tzu (2009): p. 47.

18 Ibid.: p. 20.

19 Cf. Confucius (2005): p. 69.

exercise power over others, and to force them against their will into doing something, provokes the development of countervailing power. This leads, so the thesis, towards violence and chaos. The alternative is a reserved and measured, but above all morally sound, style of government, a style that serves as a model for the population. In this context, Lao Tzus advice for the right state reads not just as a complement to the Confucian notion, but also as a prelude to the liberal political idea of a quiet and unobtrusive government whose people are honest, instead of a loud and obtrusive government whose people are deceitful and unreliable.[20]

Lao Tzu and Confucius are also well aware of the two concepts of power discussed, even if they forego a conceptual explication. We should not, however, in view of their critical attitude, jump to the conclusion that they intend to eliminate the phenomenon of power from the social world. That would be wrong. Power, is rather their provocative conclusion, can successfully and legitimately be exercised only when one does not try to seize and expand it, focusing instead on the cultivation of one's virtues, modesty and integrity. An insightful as well as poetic Confucian analogy insists that the good intentions of the ruling powers will be rewarded by the good behavior of the people being ruled. Confucius likens the virtues of rulers to the wind and that of ordinary people to the grass, noting: "When grass is visited by the wind, it must surely bend."[21] This statement may seem barely plausible, and has been repeatedly criticized as utopian by Confucius' successors. [22] Nonetheless, the notion addresses a central form of power, which we shall explore in more detail in Chapter 2.1. This is authoritative power, a form based on the human need for recognition and moral orientation.

This is not to say that, in addition to the Western tradition, only Chinese philosophy has made a significant contribution to the dichotomy of power to and power over.[23] The political thinkers of medieval Islam were as profoundly concerned with the nature of power, albeit some one thousand years later.[24] These

20 Lao Tzu (2009): p. 98.

21 Confucius (2005): p. 15.

22 Cf. Roetz & Schleichert (2009): pp. 38f.

23 However, Confucianism and Taoism have proven to be so influential within Asian cultural space that they have, for example, significantly shaped Japanese thinking about power since ancient times. For an overview, see Richey, Jeffrey L. (2015): *Daoism in Japan. Chinese traditions and their influence on Japanese religious culture,* Routledge Studies in Taoism*,* Oxon: Routledge.

24 A good overview is provided by Bowering, Gerhard (2015): Introduction, in: Gerhard Bowering (ed.), *Islamic Political Thought. An Introduction,* Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, pp. 1-23.

thinkers include the historian Ibn Khaldun and the jurist Al-Mawardi, whose Al-Ahkam as-Sultaniyya (The Principles of Power) from the eleventh century remains one of the most important foundational texts of political Islam.[25] Representatives of this tradition, however, in contrast to those of the Chinese school of thought, do not offer their services to the ruling elite, but instead serve religious individual ethicists and state theorists. Two things are remarkable in this context. First, they incorporate almost without modification the Aristotelian concept of agency –dynamis – and translate it into a religious world picture in which man is accountable to God as an autonomous and independent being. The strong leaning towards Aristotelian thinking and the corresponding model of power is ultimately not surprising, considering that the Greek classics had been preserved and considered by Arab scholars since the eighth century – long before they (once again) found their way into the Western canon.[26] For the German Catholic theologist Bernhard Uhde, a keen examiner of this phenomenon, for example, the significance of said influence can be explained by the application of the Aristotelian principle of non-contradiction.[27] At any rate, Aristotelian logic and metaphysics are inextricably inscribed and taught in Islamic theology, and they thereby comprise a systematic framework. Moreover, the Islamic theorists take up the second conceptual understanding of power, the concept of domination, in a positive way and link it to a draft of the theocratic state. The most drastic position is found in Al Ahkam as-Sultaniyya: the rationality and the prudence of the people alone, according to Al-Mawardi, are not strong enough to unify them into a just and pious community; in addition, there are serious differences in terms of customs and mor-

25 Cf. Al-Mawardi, Abu al-Hasan (1996): *Al-Ahkam as-Sultaniyya. The Ordinances of Government,* translated by Wafaa H. Wahba (ed.), Reading: Garnet.; The English translation of 'sultaniyya' as 'of government' is actually relatively mild, almost euphemistic. The Arabic word 'sultan' means more than anything else 'power' as well as 'force' and 'strength'. See also Al-Baghdadi, Ahmad M. (1981): The political thought of Abu Al-Hassan Al-Mawardi*,* Thesis Presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Edinburgh, [online] https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/7414, retrieved on 21.12.2017.; In addition thereto see Ringgren, Helmer (1972): On the Islamic Theory of the State, *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis,* 6, pp. 103-108.

26 Cf. D'Ancona, Cristina (2013): Greek Sources in Arabic and Islamic Philosophy, in: Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* [online] https://plato. stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/arabic-islamic-greek/, retrieved on 21.12.2017.

27 Cf. Uhde, Bernhard (2009): Religionen als Denkmöglichkeiten. Skizzen zur Logik der Weltreligionen, *Zeitschrift für Didiaktik der Philosophie und Ethik,* 1, pp. 7-16.; p. 8.

als. An absolutist theocrat, an imam, is therefore required, who can force the population to unity and virtue thanks to an unlimited plentitude of power.[28] The Imam receives his ministry through divine providence, and accordingly his authority is inviolable. Nevertheless, Al-Mawardi leaves a back door open. If the ruler is openly guilty of violating the commandments of God, the people have a right to resistance, that is, to the formation of counter-power.

This highly interesting and in the West surprisingly little explored topic could easily be pursued further. However, at this point, we wish to end our intercultural digression on the topic of power and return to the actual question at hand: the development of a useful working definition. Let us return, more specifically, to the fundamental dualism of the two power definitions. For our own definition, it is paramount to analyze the relationship between these two influential concepts of power and to ensure that they are practically manageable and applicable. Numerous power theorists have chosen the viewpoint that power to and power over are not competing definitional approaches. The interpersonal dominance model of power is only a special case of the more general action model of power.[29] Both approaches, it is argued, assume that actors have power only when and if they are capable of realizing their interests through purposeful action. The power-over concept therefore focuses only on the realization of interests against the potential resistance of other actors. Other theoreticians, such as Hannah Arendt, advocate clearly separating both definitions as power over others always involves overt or covert oppression and, unlike the power-to concept, is not normatively neutral, but morally evil.[30] This discussion does not need to be settled here. Only one of the power concepts discussed is suitable for a practical handbook on (political) power: the power-over concept.

The power-to concept, upon closer inspection, covers a far too expansive range of phenomena to make sense for our purpose. If power already exists, if an actor is able to realize a self-imposed goal through action, almost every single action is

28 Cf. Al-Baghdadi (1981).

29 Cf. Dowding (1996) and Pansardi, Pamela (2012): Power to and power over: two distinct concepts of power?, *Journal of Political Power,* 5 (1), pp. 73-89.

30 Arendt, Hannah (1969): *On Violence,* New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.; p.43. She strictly distinguishes among the concepts of power, strength, force, violence and authority, warning that confusing them with one another could result in a certain 'linguistic deafness' and 'blindness' as to reality. Lukes, Steven (1974): *Power. A Radical View,* London: MacMillan Press. The extent to which power over persons must always be a form of oppression, and whether it is correspondingly morally evil, will be discussed in Chapter 2.2.

an expression of that power. Reading a book to the last page, for example, would already be a case of this power-to concept. Such theoretical-philosophical reflections on the concept of power are less pertinent to our political discussion and, in terms of our colloquial conception of power, such conclusions are of no utility.[31] In addition, one quality criterion for definitions is their usefulness as classifications. Concepts, above all power concepts, serve to systematize and make manageable our world of experience through the demarcation and limitation of phenomena. And it is exactly this function that is not fulfilled by the power-to concept. It extends the term power to apply universally. Paraphrasing Hinrich Fink-Eitel, it leads to power ultimately meaning everything and therefore nothing.[32]

The power-over concept is much more precise, easier to describe and to implement. It also approximates a pre-theoretical understanding of terms for power practitioners. For example, if we say that the institutions of the European Union have lost power over their member states in the past few years, then we are simply describing the lessened likelihood that the Commission will pursue an independent policy against the resistance of national governments. What matters is that the power-over concept systematizes and unifies a large number of cases in which we speak of power (or lack of power) without at the same time – as with the rival model – subsuming cases that are intuitively understood as not having anything to do with power.

A second controversy regarding the systematization of different models of power is significant for the theory of power. This is a discussion between representatives of the commodity model and the structural model of power. The commodity model is based on Karl Marx's economic theory. The many adherents of this model – of whom few are convinced Marxists – come primarily from the economic and social sciences.[33] For them, power exists as a numerical resource to

31 For the assessment that the ability to connect to our pre-theoretical understanding of terms is also an important feature of definitions, see Sumner, Leonard W. (1996): *Welfare, Happiness and Ethics,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.; p. 10.

32 Fink-Eitel, Hinrich (1992): Dialektik der Macht, in: Emil Angehrn, Hinrich Fink-Eitel, Christian Iber, and Georg Lohmann (eds.), *Dialektischer Negativismus. Michael Theunissen zum 60. Geburtstag.* Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, pp. 35-56.; p. 36.

33 See also Korpi, Walter (1983): *The Democratic Class Struggle,* Boston: Routledge & Kegan.; Bourdieu, Pierre (1987): *Die feinen Unterschiede. Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Urteilskraft*, translated by Bernd Schwibs and Achim Russer, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.; Conolly, William E. (1993): *The Terms of Political Discourse,* Princeton: Princeton University Press.; Ostheim, Tobias and Schmidt, Manfred G. (2007): Die Machtressourcentheorie, in: Manfred G. Schmidt (ed.), *Der Wohlfahrtsstaat: Eine*

realize interests and can be possessed, accumulated, distributed and again withdrawn by concrete actors.[34] So it is a good – 'a social good', as Amy Allen writes; a good which people or groups of people can possess in varying quantities and which they can autonomously command.[35] The power goods of actors can have many different natural, social, cultural or economic foundations. In a nutshell, the sociologist Walter Müller-Jentsch sums up power as a resource for organizations: "The entrepreneur has jobs, the worker has manpower – both have resources that the other needs to assert their non-trivial interests; both therefore have [...] power over the other actor."[36]In short, for these power interpreters, individual or collective actors have power insofar as they control means of production, insofar as they mobilize the members of a trade union, insofar as they have a substantial share of votes in a parliament, and so on. In all these cases, however, it is important that the decisive social good is power. Even if the power goods are constituted differently by actors, they can still be quantified and compared. These models are based on the momentous assumption that, given precise measurement and adequate information, power relations can be represented on a one-dimensional scale.[37] It seems likely that the unbroken popularity of the commodity model in the theory of power is linked strongly to this phenomenon of 'objective' measurability. In addition, it is characterized by its relevance to the everyday language of power discourse. We speak naturally of an 'unequal distribution' of power in societies or of a 'balance' of power between geopolitical actors. These statements are only descriptive if power, first, represents a type of distributable goods and, second, if the quantities of goods can at least ideally be scaled and judged to be equal.

Einführung in den historischen und internationalen Vergleich. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, pp. 40-50.; and Müller-Jentsch, Walter (2014): Macht als Ressource von Organisationen, in: Monica Budowski and Michael Nollert (eds.), *Private Macht im Wohlfahrtsstaat: Akteure und Institutionen,* Zürich: Seismo, pp. 14-29.

34 Numerous formulations of this core thesis are found in the literature, but ironically, that of Iris M. Young, one of the most vehement critics of this model, is most succinctly phrased: "Conceptualizing power in distributive terms means […] conceiving power as a kind of stuff possessed by individual agents in greater or lesser amounts." Young, Iris M. (1990): *Justice and the Politics of Difference,* Princeton: Princeton University Press.; p. 31.

35 Cf. Allen (2011): p. 4.

36 Müller-Jentsch (2014): pp. 14-29.

37 For an example of such a quantitative power index, see Stetter, Stephen (2004): Cross-Pillar Politics: Functional Unity and Institutional Fragmentation of EU Foreign Policies, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11 (4), pp. 720-739.

It was the postmodern thinkers who challenged this model in recent decades.[38] For example, Michel Foucault clearly states in his monograph The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge, "Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away."[39] Likewise, Stuart Clegg suggests, "It [power] is not a thing [...] that people have in a proprietary sense. They 'possess' power only in so far as they are relationally constituted as doing so."[40] The radical change in the argument concerning the nature of power lies in the assumption that power is not a substance that individual or collective actors are able to possess. Rather, it is a social structure that can only be determined in many ways and that is formed by innumerable interpersonal relationships of mutual normalization, control and sanctioning, and which regulates, directs and in places even determines the behavior of individuals.[41] Foucault expresses this important counter-proposal with his usual rhetorical finesse, touching upon the pillars that connect these force relationships by linking themselves into systems, and recommending: "we should postulate rather that this multiplicity of force relations can be coded – in part but never totally – either in the form of 'war', or in the form of 'politics'; this would imply two different strategies (but the one always liable to switch into the other) for integrating these unbalanced, heterogeneous, unstable, and tense force relations."[42]

From this perspective, power suddenly appears as a social entity constituted by human behavior, yet independent and beyond the control of individuals – thus, an almost "superhuman reality."[43] For many practitioners of power, this picture at

38 Foucault, Michel ([1984] 1990): *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge, An Introduction,* Vol. I, translated by Robert Hurley (ed.), New York: Random House.; Clegg, Stuart (1989): *Frameworks of Power,* London: Sage Publications.; Young (1990); and Haugaard, Mark (2010): Power: A 'Family Resemblance' Concept, *European Journal of Cultural Studies,* 13 (4), pp. 419-438.

39 Foucault (1990): p. 94.

40 Clegg (1989): p. 207.

41 However, this conception of power actually goes back much further than postmodernism. As an early representative, the medieval state theorist Ibn Khaldun can be considered. Cf. Khaldun, Ibn (2011): *Die Muqaddima: Betrachtungen zur Weltgeschichte*, translated by Alma Giese, München: C.H. Beck. See also Gierer, Alfred (2001): Ibn Khaldun on Solidarity ("Asabiyah") – Modern Science on Cooperativeness and Empathy: a Comparison, *Philosophia Naturalis* 38 (1), pp. 91-104.

42 Foucault (1990): p. 93.

43 According to Han (2005): p. 96. Martin Saar (2010) sees it similarly and speaks in this context of a "transindividual relational entity". Cf. Saar (2010): p. 11.

first glance seems complex and far divorced from our political commonsense. The fact that it nevertheless has a high degree of effectiveness for political work can best be demonstrated by considering everyday actions. When we yawn, we put our hands to our mouths; if we see a woman with a stroller getting on the subway, we offer our help or at least make room; when we discuss with somebody, we usually let the other person speak. In all these cases, there is no powerful person or group of people forcing us to act or feel that way, nonetheless, our behavior is the object of direction and control. Here, in Foucault's words, "power relations permeate all levels of social existence and are therefore to be found operating at every site of social life – in the private spheres of the family and sexuality as much as in the public spheres of politics, the economy and the law."[44] These power networks, which form a complete social system of comprehensive control, unfold their effect through internalized norms. These encompass expected penalties for misconduct and positive incentives for compliance. People, as Foucault and other theorists concede, can selectively try to influence this system and make changes. All in all, nevertheless, it remains out of their control. These are, of course, extreme – barely manageable – challenges for policymakers: on the one hand, because the relevant actors with their wishes, goals and intentions for action have always been shaped and constituted by the super-personal system; on the other hand, because the system results from a vast plethora of innumerable cooperative and conflictive social relationships with no central direction, and is thus reconfigured daily. So, a definitive political entity does not exist. There are only "politics", that is, ensembles of political practices and discourses that constitute the space of the political, new and differently constituted in each case.

In this controversy, too, the question arises as to how both power concepts relate to each other and what significance this discussion has for our own definitional approach to the concept of power. With this discussion, we have arrived at the core of the power-theoretical discussion of modernity. Do we stick to the notion of autonomous subjects equipped with their own power? Or do we describe a system that places people and organizations in complex power grids?[45]

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44 Foucault, Michel. (1980): *Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972 – 1977,* translated by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham and Kate Soper. Brighton: Harvester, p.119.

45 Exemplary for a critical assessment of the structural model is the statement of the political scientist Keith Dowding: "It is a mistake to think that because we are mapping the structure *of* power, that structures *have* power", Dowding (1996): p. 28, our accentuation.

Actually, there is no reason to take a side in this argument. Both approaches are valuable. A commodity model takes the strong pre-theoretical intuition that power can be deliberately used and accumulated by people and develops it into a well-crafted theory, allowing power asymmetries between actors to be analyzed and quantified. In turn, a structural model recognizes that social systems can develop a complex life of their own and direct their actions towards those who participate in them. At the same time, both approaches naturally also polarize. The commodity model puts an undue emphasis on the intentional exercise of power by concrete persons, ignoring the fact that these individuals, with their convictions and goals, are shaped by given social patterns. Translated into the language of the theory of power, this would mean not relying solely on a one-sided bottom-up perspective, which is fixed only on the concrete human as the object of analysis. In contrast, for the theory of power the structural model suffers by, to put it bluntly, degrading people as puppets of a ubiquitous social apparatus. This narrow top-down perspective, which looks only at structures but not at people, does not adequately reflect our day-to-day interpersonal reality. We are always finding ourselves in situations in which we – and not some anonymous power network – exercise power over others; be it a one-sided game of chess in which we dictate our opponents all the moves, or in a hierarchical employment relationship in which we specify an employee's activities.

The obvious conclusion for the current power theory discussion is to combine these two model approaches to integrate their analytical strengths and avoid their weaknesses. Power, we wish to state, occurs as a good or a means that people can use, and as a trans-individual social structure that controls human action. It is precisely this conflict between power as the attribute of concrete persons and power as the attribute of impersonal social systems that is a defining characteristic of modernity and an irreducible component of our discourses on power. This consideration, however, is by no means revolutionary or novel. Foucault rediscovered the human subject as the bearer of power and autonomous responsibility, and he addressed the above-mentioned antagonism of person and social structure.[46] Similar considerations can be found in the work of the political scientist Martin Saar, who advances towards an integrative design of both approaches from an opposite perspective.[47]

46 Foucault, Michel (1988): *The Care of the Self,* The History of Sexuality, Vol. 3, translated by Roberet Hurley (ed.), New York: Random House. See also Foucault, Michel ([1984] 1988): The History of Sexuality, Vol. 3: The Care of the Self, translated by Robert Hurley, New York: Vintage Books.

47 Cf. Saar (2010). See also Allen (2011).

Let's briefly summarize what has been said so far. In discussing the first controversy over the definition of power (power to versus power over), we have sided with those power theorists who understand power as a social phenomenon of domination, potentially overcoming potential resistance, for reasons of argumentative strategy. Power, as we have stated with Weber, is what you have when and only if you have the chance to assert your will against the possible reluctance of others. In discussing the second controversy (commodity model versus structural model), we choose neither of the models, but argue for a combination of both approaches. Power, we have stated, occurs as an attribute of concrete persons and also as an impersonal social structure. How do these two findings fit together for a modern theory of power? In our estimation, the commodity model and the structural model of power decisively complement the Weberian concept of dominance. According to this, power is to be understood as the means available to concrete persons for the potential control of other persons AND as the potential of a social structure to control the behavior of the persons participating in it. From our perspective, it is crucial that Weber's power-over conception leaves a gap in relation to the position of the 'power-bearer'. It simply leaves unresolved whether this position is filled by a concrete person or group of people or by an impersonal or super-personal social structure. And the discussion of the controversy between representatives of the commodity model and the structural model has clearly shown that it can be filled by both.

1.2 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF POWER

After having discussed pivotal questions in our definitional approach, notably which phenomena fall under the concept of power and which do not, we now wish to clarify which logic patterns these phenomena are subject to and which basic principles apply to them. There is already an implicit assumption associated with this question, namely that there actually are fundamental principles of power at all. However, we also go one step further. We believe that is possible to develop a list of power principles that are universal and globally consistent, that is, independent of time and place. In other words, the basic principles of power are the same everywhere and at all times. Before listing them in detail, let us first make our assumption of the universality and global consistency of the principles of power plausible.

Our argument is summarized as follows: (a) The nature of power depends on the nature of humankind; (b) the essence of humankind is universal and globally uniform; (c) therefore, the essence of power – and thus its principles – is universal and globally consistent. The first premise of this conclusion can easily be made