

# 3

## Power and Influence as Political Phenomena

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### 1 INTRODUCTION

For an analysis of the network of interrelations between the boards of major business concerns among themselves and with departments, institutions and committees of the central government in the Netherlands we shall need an appropriate theoretical perspective. We think that in particular the structure and distribution of social power and influence may provide an appropriate background for such an analysis. In order to achieve this, however, we shall need a conceptualization of 'power' and 'influence' of sufficient precision and coherence to serve at least two important conditions. In the first place, power and influence and associated concepts should be related as much as possible to observable phenomena in order to make problems of power and influence in principle amenable to empirical analysis and research. Moreover, theory will then point the way to methods and data necessary for such investigations. Secondly, the concepts of power and influence, in as far as they are not defined directly in terms of observables, should provide a theoretical framework in terms of which observable facts and research data can be explained and understood in a meaningful way. We did not find in the vast and richly varied literature a ready-made theory that we could use as such. This led us to an endeavour to provide a theoretical perspective more appropriate for our purposes.

In fact, 'power' and 'influence' seem to suffer from the same defects as the concept of 'illness': we all know what we mean when we use the word, and yet it seems to be impossible to define it in a satisfactory way (Rothschild, 1971, p.15). Numerous definitions and thorough theoretical analyses have been suggested in a discussion that has been going on to this day. Yet it cannot be said that the many, often paradoxical, aspects and 'faces' of power and influence have been caught in one encompassing theory. One can therefore feel some sympathy with the somewhat negative attitude of Riker. Having demonstrated that much thinking on power and influence seems to suffer from the same conceptual confusions that pervade discussions of the concept of causality, he wonders whether we should not abolish both concepts altogether (Riker, 1964, p.348).

We should not want (any more than Riker) to proceed that far. Power and influence are associated with such important phenomena in social life that we simply cannot afford to drop them from consideration in social analysis. The least we can do is to try

to glean from the many paradoxes, contrasts and restrictions those elements that might promote our insight and understanding. That is what we shall try to do in the following sections, yet without any ambition or pretence of producing a fully developed and closed theory.

## 2 POWER AND PURPOSE

In a number of definitions, power and influence are introduced as the capacity to determine the actions of others in accordance with the will or the purposes of the holder of power or influence. An example is the well-known definition of Max Weber: 'Macht bedeutet jede Chance, innerhalb einer sozialen Beziehung den eigenen Willen auch gegen widerstreben durchzusetzen, gleichviel worauf diese Chance beruht.' (Weber, 1964a, I, p.38.) Power is, therefore, according to Weber, the capacity to carry through one's will in a social relation against resistance, irrespective of the sources of that capacity. This definition contains already a number of possibilities and difficulties, which, as we shall see, arise also in later definitions. For our purposes here the important element is the restriction to will and purpose. This voluntarism implies a stress on purposefully held positions of power and the conscious exercise of power.

Van Doorn disputed this voluntaristic emphasis with the argument that through its psychological contents, such as 'will', 'motivation' or 'consciousness', were introduced as defining elements. Desiring a purely sociological definition, he therefore circumscribed power as the possibility to restrict, in accordance with the purposes of a person or group, the action alternatives of other persons or groups (van Doorn, 1957, p.82; 1966, p.10). The problem, however, amounts to more than just the elimination of psychological connotations. The main point is that such definitions of power are restricted to the *purposeful* exercise of power. And that is the case with van Doorn's definition too. This association of power with the capacity to manipulate in correspondence with the purposes and ends of persons or groups in positions of power tends to emphasize the possibilities of *rational* applications of power. For a suitable definition of power and influence, this rationality *motif* seems to be no more revealing than the elements of psychological volition that van Doorn tries to avoid.

Obviously, motivated and purposeful applications of power and influence are among the most important phenomena in any society. We would overstep our mark, however, if we were to restrict power and influence to this area just 'by definition', because then we would define away other important phenomena of power. Seemingly or evidently irrational applications of power are equally a part of the social reality to which we want to relate our concepts. Many of these applications relate to the impact of positions of power of which the wielders of that power are unaware, either because they do not sufficiently know the range of their power, or, perhaps, because they are not able to master it fully. That can be the case with respect to the *values* whose allocation they dominate: industrialization may lead to environmental pollution. It can also apply to the *subjects* to which their power in fact extends: closing down certain works may effect the level of employment and welfare of the population of a whole region. The 'side effects' of standard economic theory cover many such power phenomena. For these reasons we shall not need such voluntaristic or purposive elements for an appropriate definition of power or influence.

### 3 POWER AND FORCE

Power is often associated with force and sanctions. An overemphasis in this respect tends to ignore the fact that in a society many, if not most, phenomena of power occur in a way not involving a clear application of force or coercion or even a remote threat of those. Less extreme conceptualizations do not imply actual force, but proceed from the availability of compulsion (e.g. Weber) or, more specifically, of sanctions. This last approach characterizes the well-known definition of Lasswell and Kaplan, in which power is given as participation in decisions. Defining decisions so that 'a *decision* is a policy involving severe sanctions (deprivations)', they then introduce power as follows: 'Power is participation in the making of decisions: G has power over H with respect to the values K if G participates in the making of decisions affecting the K-policies of H.' (Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950, pp.74-5.)

Against these or similar approaches, in which power is more or less defined in terms of force or coercion, or the somewhat milder form of sanctions, we can raise two objections. Our first objection again concerns the restrictions imposed by these approaches. Compulsion based on the threat of force or sanctions is certainly characteristic of many positions of power. Indeed force, coercion and sanctions are *sufficient* characteristics of power. Our point is, however, that they are not *necessary* ones. Many phenomena of power occur where force or sanctions cannot be said (in a way that preserves the meaning of these terms) to be present. Van Doorn, whose definition we referred to before, for these reasons considers the capacity to *restrict* action alternatives as primarily characteristic of the concept of power. This line of argument has been followed by others in the Netherlands. Van Doorn and Lammers (1959, p.66) used it in their introduction to modern sociology and Droogleever Fortuijn (1968, p.7) applied it in the field of community power structures. Valkenburgh (1968, p.32) also seemed to take this position when he defined power as a relation creating the possibility of restricting action alternatives of others (persons or groups).

Our second objection concerns the biased meaning of these definitions: they tend not to be ethically neutral. Their focus on the forceful or coercive nature of power seems to imply a predominantly negative concept of power. An analytically efficient concept should, however, allow for all possibilities of power evaluation (positive as well as negative) in its application to social reality. This objection can also be levelled against the broader definition of van Doorn. Various authors (e.g. Droogleever Fortuijn, 1968, p.8; Hoogerwerf, 1972, p.85) have mentioned the bias implicit in concepts that envisage power as the capacity only to *restrict* alternatives. Situations where action alternatives are *expanded* for actors (persons or groups) would escape this perspective of power. Examples of such situations can be found in the emancipation of groups of people through policies of redistribution or by the liberation of areas under foreign domination. Such a negative power concept certainly reflects the negative connotations that seem to pervade popular discussions of power through an association of power with social struggle and conflict. Hoogerwerf (1972, p.85) rightly states that these definitions are based implicitly on a conflict model. He makes a plea for a concept that will also cover positive power relations in co-operative contexts, so that it can explain, for instance, the mechanics of coalition formation. Hoogerwerf's own definition goes far towards achieving this goal but it leads to other problems, as we shall see in later sections.

For these reasons we shall prefer to delineate power as the capacity to determine action alternatives. Power has a dynamic as well as a static aspect. The dynamic aspect consists in the possibility of change, the restriction or expansion of action alternatives. The static aspect consists in the possibility of fixing or conserving the existing sets of alternatives. These two strongly differing types of power, the conservative and changing forms, may be closely associated but they do not imply each other. An actor (person, group or institution) may possess the power to maintain an existing situation but not the capacity to change it. The expression 'balance of power' suggests such a situation for the parties concerned in such an equilibrium. Both sides, dynamic and static, can be included in the word 'determine' but are insufficiently expressed by that term. We prefer therefore to relate power to the possibility of fixing or to changing the action alternatives or choice alternatives of others.

#### 4 POWER AND INFLUENCE

Hoogerwerf defines *power* as the possibility to influence the behaviour of others in accordance with the actor's own purposes (Hoogerwerf, 1972, p.84). According to Hoogerwerf, *influence* occurs wherever behaviour leads to change in behaviour. In his view, power is therefore potential influence in accordance with the ends of an actor. Hoogerwerf states emphatically that power and influence are different concepts, which is not clear in many authors. Kuypers (1973, pp.85ff.) also follows this line of argument and introduces power as the capacity to exercise influence. We have reached here a thorny point in popular debate and academic discussion on power and influence, in which both concepts often are used indiscriminately or conceived in very different ways. If we rely on our intuition and common parlance, we seem to be confronted with two closely related yet distinct concepts. But what is that relation and how is the distinction to be conceived? Is power the general concept and influence a special case? Or should rather the reverse be considered to be true, and power be a special case of influence? Or is it not expedient to relate power and influence to each other in such a simple inclusive way?

An example of this confusion of ideas can be found in the work by Dahl. In a much cited article (Dahl, 1957) he introduces power as follows: 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.' A and B are designated as 'actors'. They can be persons, but also groups, roles, institutions, governments, etc. Power is elaborated by Dahl as a relationship between a pair of actors. His further contribution consists of a more or less formal, semi-mathematical analysis of that relation, which we shall not need to consider here. In a study that appeared later, however, Dahl defined 'influence' in nearly the same wording as we cited above for his earlier definition of power (Dahl, 1963, p.40). Power is defined here as influence based on the applicability of severe sanctions (Dahl, 1963, p.50). Thus, in this case Dahl considers influence as the general concept and power as a special case. In still another study, the well-known controversial study of the structure of power in New Haven (Dahl, 1961), the concepts of power and influence are used indiscriminately and more or less synonymously.

Lasswell and Kaplan also use a general concept of influence, which includes power as a special case distinguished by the involvement of severe sanctions. 'It is the threat of sanctions which differentiates power from influence in general.' (Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950, p.76.) Their conceptual approach was widely accepted among

American political scientists, including Dahl. In the Netherlands, van Doorn (1966, p.5) also considers power as a special form of influence. (See also Banfield, 1961, pp.312, 348.) Others, for instance Hunter (1953, p.164), tend to consider power as the more general phenomenon and influence as a sub-category. We saw that both Hoogerwerf and Kuypers distinguished power and influence in a different way. Power is potential influence and influence is behaviour that changes the behaviour of others. In the next section we shall raise a number of objections to this approach.

How can we gain some clarity in this conceptual confusion? We suggest that the characteristic feature of *power* is given by the possibility to restrict or expand freedom of action, or the capacity to preserve that freedom to a given degree. This can be achieved by the application of force, coercion and sanctions, but also in a positive sense through the allocation of necessary resources. (Freedom of action is determined by the set of action and choice alternatives which the actor has at his disposal.) On the other hand *influence* can be characterized as the possibility to determine the outcomes of the behaviour of others, without the restriction or expansion of their freedom of action. (Compare Bierstedt, 1950, p.731.) These outcomes are therefore determined within and take as given the set of alternatives that are available to others. The exercise of influence takes place mainly by means of persuasion, information and advice. The most important, if not the only, source of influence is in particular associated with strategic locations in the communication and information networks that other actors use for the determination of their behaviour.

Summarizing, we may therefore define power and influence as follows. *Power* is the capacity of actors (persons, groups or institutions) to fix or to change (completely or partly) a set of action alternatives or choice alternatives for other actors. *Influence* is the capacity of actors to determine (partly) the actions or choices of other actors within the set of action or choice alternatives available to those actors.

We have in this way introduced power and influence as essentially different phenomena—however intricately interwoven they may be in social reality. In principle, we can therefore conceive power to exist without influence. In this sense, man has power over wild animals, because he can restrict their territory, without having any influence on their freedom of movement within that territory. The power position of the white American settler in relation to the original Indian population showed elements of this.

Every form of social organization implies some restrictions and expansions of freedom for individuals, groups and institutions, as well as the possibility of exercising influence through the communication structures that give shape to that social organization. Any social organization, whether at the micro-level (the family, a peer-group, a workshop) or at the macro-level (a community, nation or political system), consists also of a structure of interconnected positions of power and influence. A close relation exists between power and such concepts as freedom, sovereignty and anarchy. The freedom of an actor can be defined as his capacity to determine his *own* sets of action or choice alternatives. In a social organization, the freedom of an actor can then imply power over others in so far as their alternatives are restricted by his freedom. Freedom for *Ego* implies lack of freedom for *Alter*. The struggle for freedom and the struggle for power are for that reason two sides of the same coin.

In our Western economic system, entrepreneurs have the power to fix or change the composition of the bundle of commodities and services available for consumption.

The consumer has the freedom to determine his choice of articles and brands given that composition. Advertising through the mass media is one of the channels through which the entrepreneur exercises influence on that choice. A government, and through that government and parliament the political parties, have the power to determine the number and identity of political parties in the parliament. The voter is free to express his preference for any of those given parties in elections. The mass media again serve those parties as a channel to exercise influence on the voter's choice. In some models of an organization in which line and staff structures may be distinguished, the staff organization formally reflects an influence structure whereas the more hierarchical composition of the line organization formally designates it more as a structure of power.

The analysis of power and influence structures in social reality is certainly not as simple as these examples may suggest. There are roughly two reasons why it is hard to distinguish power and influence in practical situations. First, power can be a source of influence and influence a source of power. And second, processes occur whereby positions of influence are transformed into positions of power or, conversely, positions of power into positions of influence.

*Power itself can be a source of influence.* This is so when actors, in their choice from the action alternatives open to them, let themselves be guided by information from other actors who have a position of power with respect to them. The well-known 'law of anticipated reactions' of Friedrich (1963, pp.199-215) seems to be based mainly on this mechanism. The same is true for the reputation of power, which, as we shall see in section 9, forms the basis of the reputational method of power observation.

*Influence can also be a source of power.* This is the case where an actor has a particular influence relation with an actor who holds a position of power with respect to other actors. An obvious example is the type of the *éminence grise*, the councillor behind the scenes on whose advice or expertise holders of power particularly rely. This position is one of influence with respect to the holder of power, but it is also a source of power over the subjects of that actor's power. More generally, such a situation is likely to prevail whenever, in relation to holders of power, certain actors have a relative advantage of information or advantage of access (see section 8).

The cases where *influence is transformed into power* are seemingly related to the former examples. Yet they should be distinguished. They occur whenever the influence of an actor with respect to others develops into power, because his influence has expanded so that it also determines the set of alternatives open to the other actors. In a city like Amsterdam the board of mayor and aldermen and the city council have the formal power to determine municipal policies in such basic areas as urban development, public transport and housing. In these policy areas the tasks of the local department of public works are, formally again, restricted to the planning and execution of decisions. This department provides the plans and blueprints for the highest decision-making centres of the city, who, in theory that is, can decide their choice from the multitude of policy alternatives. At a first glance one might assess their position with respect to mayor and aldermen and the city council as one of influence. In actual practice, however, developments have led to a situation in which the department of public works in fact apparently determines the set of policy alternatives from which a decisive choice is to be made. In many cases, only one alternative is at issue. The original position of influence



that this city department may have held in the past has been transformed into a position of power.

In a former example we saw that entrepreneurs have a position of influence through the availability of advertising through the mass media. If access to those media on a scale necessary for effective advertising can be acquired only with high costs such as can be afforded only by large enterprises, then this one-sided possibility to influence consumer behaviour results in a position of power for these enterprises as a group. From our perspective, basic statutory rights involving fundamental civic freedoms such as freedom of the press (or, more generally, freedom of opinion) serve the function of guaranteeing to all relevant actors the capacity for exerting influence and of forestalling a process of transformation whereby certain actors acquire positions of power.

The reverse process can also be observed. *A relation of power between actors can develop into a relation of influence.* The 'promotion' to a staff position of officials from the line organization in the reorganization of a business can for that reason sometimes be interpreted as such a transformation. The efforts of modern urban civic action groups in the Netherlands to make an effective contribution of their own in the planning and execution of local decisions in borough or township can thus be seen as an effort to convert the actual position of power of certain government services to one of influence.

Power and influence are the warp and woof in the dynamics of social organization. For these reasons it can often be observed that evident holders of power are not conscious of their power in certain areas and even tend to deny it on the basis of formal influence relations:

## 5. POTENTIAL OR BEHAVIOUR?

In the definitions referred to thus far, another aspect can be brought out clearly, which has been treated in very different ways. Is power (or influence) a *potential* or *capacity*, or is manifest *behaviour* (i.e. the actual application of power or exercise of influence) the more important element? In other words, should we conceptualize power and influence as *latent* or as *manifest* concepts? (van Doorn, 1957, p.80.)

The definitions of Weber, van Doorn and Hoogerwerf made power a capacity, whereas Lasswell and Kaplan (and in their trail many other American scholars, who emphasized participation in decisions) tended to define power in terms of behaviour. We saw that Hoogerwerf and Kuypers followed a different approach, defining power as a capacity, and influence as actual behaviour. (See also Riker, 1964, p.347.) Lasswell and Kaplan seem to proceed precisely the other way around. Influence is for them a potential and power a particular form of behaviour: influence exercised (Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950, pp.60, 71, 75).

We do not favour a line of reasoning in which power and influence are conceived of as latent and manifest concepts in different ways. This we have argued already in section 4. If power is a capacity, for what reasons should we preclude influence from being one also? Yet choice of definition cannot be made an arbitrary one. Simon has raised a number of objections against a latent power concept (Simon, 1953, pp.501-2). They are partly methodological in nature, involving the argument that power as an observable and verifiable phenomenon should be defined directly

in terms of observables. A strictly operationalistic requirement, this seems to us unnecessarily rigid and narrow. Another argument by Simon seems more to the point. He states that, when conceived as a potential, power will be equated by definition with the sources of power, the power base. Propositions such as 'the wealthy are powerful' will then be true by definition and no longer amenable to empirical verification. We should certainly guard against such a conceptual confusion. In the next section we shall see that that is possible.

Here we want to emphasize the dangers underlying an approach in which power and influence are identified with their observable applications: manifest power behaviour or influence behaviour. One then tends to lose sight of the fact that the *non-exercise* of power can often be considered also as the *exercise* of power: non-behaviour is behaviour, and 'non-decisions' can be 'decisions' too (see Bachrach and Baratz, 1962, p.949). We shall run the risks of strongly biased insights if we neglect this perspective. If a government systematically refrains from action in certain policy areas, or on behalf of certain segments of the population, one might well be led to the sometimes spurious conclusion that it lacks the necessary power in these fields. The army of a nation has the manifest function to defend it against aggression from abroad. Modern armed forces can also, however, be *within* that nation an internal power factor of importance. Countless *coups d'état* and juntas in contemporary history have made that evident. Whether such an internal power does exist is determined by the organization of the armed forces in relation to the political and social structure of the nation concerned. That can be different according to time and space. Such power is *not* determined by its *applications*. By those it is made manifest only afterwards (and sometimes too late).

Conversely, an exclusive concentration on evident power behaviour or influence behaviour can easily result in an overestimation of the actual power and influence of certain actors. This may, for instance, be the case where relatively powerless groups resort to intensive and extreme forms of application of power, such as the occupation of factories, wildcat strikes and the like. Where solidly established positions of power are concerned, it can more readily be said that clearly recognizable and manifest forms of the exercise of power are unnecessary and will therefore seldom be observed as such. Positions of power that are asserted in that way are threatened and therefore unstable. Force and action are usually more the resources of the powerless than direct indicators of power. Methods of observing power and influence that emphasize manifest behaviour and the success or otherwise of power initiatives are therefore particularly vulnerable to such a bias. This is, for instance, the case with the 'decision method' in the forms in which it is usually applied (see Section 9). We shall see that much of the criticism of the 'pluralist' studies of Dahl *et al.* can be traced to this point.

Concluding our argument, we propose that for these reasons power and influence should both be defined primarily in terms of potentials or capacities. The application and exercise of power and influence, the actual power behaviour or influence behaviour, important in its own right, should be distinguished. Power behaviour and influence behaviour may be important as indicators, but they can derive their significance only in connection with potentials or capacities. It will not be easy to measure these capacities, or rather to make them amenable to empirical investigation. In principle, this should be done in terms of observable elements, which should also however include items other than observable behaviour.



## 6 ATTRIBUTE OR RELATION?

Power and influence are often seen as more or less personal attributes or properties of a substantial nature. We talk about the *possession* and *accumulation* of power, about the *distribution* of power and the *equality* or *inequality* of power of persons, groups or institutions. Power and influence thus stand as attributes that can be measured and qualified (see for example Simon, 1953). On the other hand a different approach may be mentioned, in which the relational aspects of power and influence are central. Power and influence in this view find their origin in specific social relations between actors. For that reason they should be investigated primarily by examining the form of those social relations. This contrast between power as attribute and as relation reaches far back in the history of political ideas. Friedrich (1950, pp.17-19) states that originally the concept of power as an attribute prevailed in political thinking. It is found with Hobbes, the philosophers of natural right, the utilitarians and Hegelian thinkers up to modern thinkers of totalitarian inclination. The relational aspect of power was brought to the fore by Locke, and is predominant among social scientists.

Both aspects, the substantial as well as the relational, can be found in Parsons (1963b; 1969) and Deutsch (1966). Parsons, however, seems to lend such an emphasis to the former aspect that his theory of power seems to be predominantly a substantial one. It is based on the stream of processes of exchange and transactions between and within the major functional sub-systems of a society. He considers these processes as general forms of exchange, such as may be observed in a particular form in the economic sub-system. These general transaction processes are conducted and facilitated with the help of a social mechanism or medium, serving the role of a generally accepted 'currency'. In the economic sub-system money in its varying forms serves that purpose. Consequently, in that sub-system two complementary and reversed streams of transactions can be distinguished: a flow of commodities and services, and a flow of money. In the political sub-system of a society a similar process appears to hold, according to Parsons. There he considers power to be the major currency, the coin which enable such transactions to take place. Again two complementary streams can be distinguished: a stream of value allocations on the one hand and a stream of power transfers on the other. Power is therefore divisible to a refined degree. It can be transferred and deposited 'on term', in a similar way to money. (He presents a similar theory of influence as a 'generalized medium of persuasion'—see Parsons, 1963a.)

Deutsch refers in this respect of a number of other interesting analogies relating money and means of power such as sanctions (force). Prestige is for power what reliability and solvency are for money. Banks can invest and lend out money to an amount that is a multiple of what they receive in the form of deposits because a reliable bank can be sure that its clients will not claim their deposits all at the same time. A similar observation can be made with respect to a government with prestige and authority. 'In much the same way, governments can promise to back with sanctions many more of their binding decisions, rules and laws, and to do so against many more people, than any government could possibly do if all people started disobeying it at one and the same time.' (Deutsch, 1966, p.121). The economic and political sub-systems are interconnected closely in their transaction flows for Deutsch also. Economic transactions such as credit policies and investment policies

in business ought to be considered as (political) inputs in the economy for that reason, as demonstrated by the close co-ordination of government policies and those of the central banks in these areas. This can lead to *political* power located in the economic sub-system, the main theme of the project at the Institute for Political Science of the University of Amsterdam, of which this paper forms a part. (See also Mokken and Stokman, 1974.) Deutsch points this out with some emphasis: 'To the extent that such central banking functions are carried out by wholly private and unsupervised banks, or other financial organisations—or to the extent that such organizations share in these policies—it might be surmised that banks and their executives have acquired a substantial amount of political power.' (Deutsch, 1966, pp.119-20.)

The imaginative metaphors of Parsons, referred to above, are certainly appealing. However, they satisfy us only partly. The conception of power and influence as divisible and transferable substances, media of exchange, does tell something about the instrumental use that can be made of power and influence, but it does not provide us with an explanation of the emergence and occurrence of power in social systems. The separation of the medium of circulation (substantial aspect) from the nature of the social structure (relational aspect) in which it operates seems to us to rule this out. The two faces can be distinguished. Power and influence in a community or society emerge and develop, however, primarily in a relational framework—a specific complex of particular social relations between actors, by means of which certain actors, or groups of actors, acquire the capacity to fix or to change the action alternatives of other actors (power) or to determine the behaviour of those actors in relation to the alternatives available to them (influence). This complex of social relations forms a part of the institutional framework of that community, the network of channels of interaction, transaction and communication that shapes its social organization over time.

The power or influence of actors as a capacity is inherent in the particular position or configuration that they occupy in that relational complex. We shall designate that place or configuration as a *power position* or *influence position*. The position of power refers to the relational aspect of power. The instrumental or substantial aspects of power (or influence) bear a close connection to the resources by means of which power (or influence) as a capacity can be put into effect. That capacity is also determined by these resources, but even then only in a particular relational context. The mere possession of possible power resources alone does not necessarily produce power. Wealth, military skills and social background can be sources of power. Nevertheless well-to-do generals of upper-class descent are not likely to possess much power in a foreign country where they are residing in exile or retirement. They will have power, for instance, in a society in which the highest social positions, including those in the army, are occupied mainly by people representing a small upper class—a situation, for instance, that seems to be characteristic of the larger part of Latin America. The same can be said concerning influence. We have stated that expertise is one important source of it. The mere possession of expertise does not necessarily lead to influence. An eminent lawyer who regularly plays golf with a chief executive of a big concern need not have any relation of influence with him in which this expertise plays a role. The position is different where his office has a close connection with that concern.

The various means of power, as resources of power, are therefore tied to the

position of power in which they can be put into effect. The specific combination of resources of power that are available to and can be commanded by actors in a particular position of power we call the power base of those actors or that position. The position as well as the basis determines the capacity or potential that defines power or influence. The power position or influence position refers to the relational aspect, the power base or influence base to the substantial aspects of that capacity. The substantial aspect is determined by the relational one. This distinction also has its consequences for the instrumental aspects of power and influence: the manner in which that power or influence is wielded and applied, in short the actual power behaviour or influence behaviour, as exercised by actors. These also have a relational side, when we pay attention to the utilization of positions of power and the relations to other actors. These can be observed, for instance, when power is redistributed, transferred or delegated in the course of rearrangements or changes of an existing social organization that create new positions of power and/or abolish old ones. The substantial aspects stand out when we focus on the application of resources; the power base. It is this aspect in particular to which Harsanyi refers when he introduces as 'opportunity costs' the costs entailed in the application of power resources (Harsanyi, 1962b; Banfield, 1961, p.312). Simon (1953) also treats this aspect when he points out that power and influence can be 'invested' to enlarge the power base, as well as 'consumed' in such a way that the base is not increased and may even shrink.

Many concepts in frequent use such as the *structure and distribution of power* of a community can likewise be reduced to these aspects. The structure of power then relates particularly to the relational aspects, the pattern of social relations of that community and the positions of power that can be observed in it. We shall argue that the structure is associated with the form and construction of major processes of value allocation and decision-making in that community. The distribution of power refers mainly to the substantial aspects. For a given structure of power we are then concerned with the distribution over actors (persons, groups or institutions) of the capacities to determine the alternatives that enter those processes as well as their outcomes. It comprises also the distribution of actual resources of power and influence and the possibility of occupying positions of power or influence in their application.

## 7 MICRO-LEVEL AND MACRO-LEVEL

In many theories and studies of power and influence, it is often not clear whether the authors apply their observations to relations between individuals or to those between groups or institutions. Our insight may then be hampered because power and influence at the macro- and micro-level cannot simply be treated in the same way. Often theories are formulated and elaborated mainly at the micro-level and subsequently applied to the macro-level, leaving open the question what the units (actors) represent. Dahl's approach exemplifies this point, as does the work of March (1955, 1957), Shapley and Shubik (1954), Harsanyi (1962b, 1962c) and Karlsson (1962). It is essentially a micro-level theory that cannot be generalized directly to the macro-level. If it is so generalized, an *atomistic* bias may be introduced because individuals were the starting point, and a *relational* bias may result because limited relations are considered.

The *atomistic* error may threaten because right from the beginning power and influence are thought of in personalistic terms. Even though the term 'actor' is meant to cover individuals as well as collective entities such as groups or institutions, in actual discourse its personalistic meaning tends to prevail. Expressions such as 'A influences B' or '*Alter* has power over *Ego*' abound. Concepts as 'power holder' and 'power subject' (van Doorn, 1957, p.83) also induce this mode of thinking. Consequently, power and influence tend to be thought of as personal attributes assigned on the basis of relations between persons. This has manifested itself in most of the power studies in communities and other sites. It applies, for instance, to Hunter's (1953) study as well as that of Dahl (1961). These analyses are mainly in terms of individuals. The groups and institutions from which persons derive their power do not seem to enter the perspective. As far as groups are distinguished, they serve to characterize persons or they are represented as aggregates of personal characteristics. Specific institutional attributes, such as the degree of organization of a group, do not come into the picture. In Dahl's study of participation in local decisions, for instance, an economic élite is distinguished, but the mutual connections and interrelations of the institutions that they represent remain obscure.

The *relational* bias may be introduced when only relations of pairs of actors are considered instead of relational networks. 'A influences B', '*Alter* has power over *Ego*' and the concepts of power holder and power subject all suggest this mode of thinking. Moreover, power and influence are also often perceived as asymmetric relations: A has power over B, but not *vice versa*. The possibility of a balance of power suggests, however, that we should also take account of symmetric relations and mutual influence. We can also construct examples where the (binary) power relations between two actors A and B contain no account of their relations of power with 'third parties' C, D, . . . Z. These relations, however, can determine the relation between A and B strongly. A power relation of A over B can be cancelled by an influence relation of B with respect to C, when C has power over B. Moreover, the relation of a power holder A to each of the subjects of power B-Z is shaped by the nature of the relations that exist between those subjects of power. A coalition among them (i.e. an organizational and communication structure) can sometimes reduce A's position of power with respect to the set of actors B-Z considerably. Suppressing the formation of trade unions (as occurred in most European countries in the nineteenth century) reinforced the position of the employers in their dealings with individual workers, since these relations then became mainly bilateral (binary). Through the organization of trade unions as actors, the power position of employers was reduced. Again, the bargaining position of the employer's organizations is stronger whenever they have to meet the unions separately and weaker when they have to confront them in coalition.

From the macro-perspective we need therefore to supplement atomistic viewpoints with collectivistic, and personalistic viewpoints with institutionalistic. These considerations are of special importance for the macro-problems that arise in the study of the structure and distribution of power in a community. And it is just there that the focus of sociological and political science research studies on power and influence is to be found. Here, therefore, the origin of the great controversies and heated debates that have taken place in this field should especially be found. This long-winded series of polemics, focused around the studies by Hunter (1953) and Dahl

(1961), known as the élitist-pluralist debate, proved to be of considerable importance for the development of thinking on power and influence.<sup>1</sup> It will be sufficient for our purposes to characterize its outcome with the statement that Hunter's reputational approach had its built-in biases and that Dahl's focus on the study of actual decision processes, instead of reputational élites, led the way to more promising studies.

Yet Dahl's type of decision analysis, with its exclusive focus on actual participation in on-going decisions, does not take into account the possibility '... that an individual or group in a community participates more vigorously in supporting the *non-decision-making* process than in participating in actual decisions within the process' (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962, p.949). This is in fact the second face of power, designated by Bachrach and Baratz 'non-decision'. It is mainly concerned with the determination and composition of what Crenson (1971) has called the *political agenda* of a community: the set of issues and policies that are allowed to enter the established decision-making bodies and procedures of that community. It may apply, however, to later stages of decision-making also, as when the effective execution or implementation of decisions is impeded or obstructed. Both aspects of the structure of power in a community should therefore be taken into account: participation in decisions as well as in non-decisions.

Apart from the limitations owing to the *local* context of these studies, we should stress their essentially *personalistic* nature. Dahl shared this with Hunter. Power and leadership were from the start considered as personal attributes apart from any institutional framework. Dahl, for instance, did not venture beyond recording successful influence initiatives of individuals. He did not investigate the degree to which these influential persons were interconnected in terms of a community of interests through the organizations and institutions that they represented. This suggests the (in itself rather naive) proposition that representatives of a ruling élite should be active and hence observable in all conceivable issue areas. More plausible, ← however, would seem to be the assumption that a properly cohesive ruling élite would operate mainly on the basis of a reasonably efficient social organization and a division of labour derived from it. Dahl's study for these reasons gave no conclusive evidence concerning the existence of either a pluralist or an élitist system in New Haven. People realize and develop themselves in institutions and are moulded by institutions. Therefore, we should not ask, with Hunter, 'Who are the most important persons in this community?' but 'What are the most important institutions in this place?' Nor ← should we wonder, with Dahl, 'Which individuals participate in local decisions?' but 'What institutions play their part in local decisions?'

Finally, the whole debate is an example of how misleading and confusing such research can be when it is not guided by and interpreted in terms of a clear and adequate theoretical delimitation of the closely related concepts of power and influence. None of the participants in the debate provides such a perspective. If we use the concepts as introduced by us above, we can view the élitist-pluralist controversy in a different light. Dahl then did not so much investigate the structure of *power* in New Haven (the determination of the set of most important policy alternatives available to that community) as the degree of *influence* that certain members (or groups of members) of that community had in the choice to be made from given alternatives. The criticism of neo-élitist authors like Bachrach and Baratz or Crenson,

with its emphasis on non-decisions, was concerned mainly with the determination of the political agenda, that is the set of policy alternatives open to the community. That is power in our conception. Their critique can therefore straightforwardly be summarized with the statement that studies of influence are not necessarily studies of power. And the whole crux of the élitist-pluralist debate may well be summarized in the proposition that in a society pluralist influence structures can exist within élitist structures of power: gardens where under the regime of one gardener a hundred flowers blossom. About such questions these studies gave no satisfactory evidence at all.

## 8 POLITICAL POWER AND INFLUENCE

We may now collect and summarize the major points of our argument. Power and influence were introduced in section 4 as follows:

*Power* is the capacity of actors (persons, groups or institutions) to fix or to change (completely or partly) a set of action or choice alternatives for other actors.

*Influence* is the capacity of actors to determine partly the actions or choices of other actors within the set of action or choice alternatives available to those actors.

Our focus is therefore the sets of action or choice alternatives that actors have in a social system. *Power* in particular refers to the possibility of determining such sets to a certain extent in either a dynamic or a static sense. The dynamic aspect, 'progressive' or for that matter 'reactionary', is shown in the capacity to change sets of alternatives. The static (or 'conservative') aspect we find in the capacity to fix alternatives. *Influence* concerns the behaviour of actors within the given set of alternatives available to them. It is the capacity to determine that behaviour to a certain extent. Power and influence are thus introduced as closely related, yet essentially different, concepts. Power is associated with the restriction or expansion of freedom; influence on the other hand does not interfere with the degrees of freedom of actors. The availability of positive or negative sanctions is a characteristic, but not a necessary source, of power. The ability to persuade or to supply information and expertise are characteristic sources of influence. Power and influence we view as *capacities* to be distinguished from their *application*: the actual power or influence behaviour. They should also be distinguished from the *resources* of power and influence.

Power and influence in a community find their origin primarily in a relational context, a structure of social relations, whereby certain actors acquire these capacities to determine in certain respects the action alternatives of other actors. That structure is part of the institutional framework of that community, the network of interactions, transactions and communications between relevant actors which determines its social organization. The power or influence of an actor or group of actors with respect to other actors is determined by the location or configuration in that network from which they derive that capacity. It is called their *position of power or influence*. Obviously, such positions, as well as the actors occupying them, can themselves be subject to power relations or influence relations in a wider social setting.



The power position refers to the relational aspects of power. Power and influence also have substantial aspects, where we consider the means and resources of power. These also are determined by the relational context, the power position. The specific combination of resources of power that can be applied in a specific power position is called the *power base*. Position as well as base determine the capacities we call power or influence. The instrumental aspects of power and influence concern the behaviour of actors, the application of power or influence. These also have relational as well as substantial sides. Where the focus is relational, we mainly pay attention to the ways in which positions of power are employed in their relation to those of other actors. Where the focus is substantial, on application of resources, the power base assumes prominence.

Similar observations apply to such concepts as *power structure* and *distribution of power*. The power structure concerns the relational side of power in a community: the structures of actors and their social relations in which positions of power can be discerned. We shall look for that structure in the organization and construction of those processes of decision-making or value allocation that are important to that community. The distribution of power concerns especially the substantial aspects, the question being how, for a given structure of power, the capacity to determine the outcomes of those processes is dispersed over relevant actors in that community. It includes the distribution of means and resources of power. Power can be a source of influence ('law of anticipated reactions') and influence a source of power (*éminence grise*). Positions of influence can be transformed into positions of power and positions of power can be converted into positions of influence. The dynamics of social organization are pervaded by such processes.

With these definitions and related concepts we face power and influence as highly general sociological concepts, which can be applied to any social context and at any level. But how should we derive from these our definitions of *political power* and influence? Roughly, there are two ways in which political power is circumscribed in the literature. The first approach introduces political power as a special case of a more general definition of power. It is prevalent among sociological theorists, where political power usually is seen as a particular form of social power. That, for instance, is true of Weber, who considered the political context as linked to a well demarcated geographic territory and the availability of the means of physical force (Weber, 1964a, I, p.39). Nowadays, it is more usual to restrict political power to government and the state (see for example Neumann, 1950; and van Doorn, 1957, pp. 98-9; 1966, pp. 23-5).

The second approach is prevalent among those political scientists who have tended to conceive political science mainly as the study of power phenomena. The power concept thus becomes the more or less central and defining object of their discipline. This approach therefore leads to a very broad delimitation of the discipline and simultaneously to a too-narrow definition of power. Obviously, for them a concept like 'political power' did not stand out clearly, because power as such was a political phenomenon anyway. We refer to the well-known 'Chicago power school' of political science, which, since the thirties, inspired by the thoughts of Charles E. Merriam and Harold Lasswell, has had and still indeed has much influence on American political science.

For our definition of political power we prefer the first approach. Political power

and influence will be defined as particular forms of the general concepts we described before. A restriction to the domain of state and government, however important they may be in themselves, seems too narrow for our purpose. Many important social events of immediate political relevance occur outside the sphere of government and state. Wage negotiations, investment decisions, occupations of factories, business mergers and closures and so on have an impact that clearly designates them as political matters even before governments come into our view. We therefore prefer a perspective, such as that provided by Easton (1965b), according to which political phenomena can be said to occur in those social processes by means of which values are authoritatively allocated for a community.

→ The allocation of values (e.g. education, medical care, production of goods and services) takes place in a chain or network of interconnected institutions and organizations, and these networks form certain allocation structures (e.g. educational system, system of medical care, production system). In those systems, according to Easton, certain institutions play a decisive role: the authorities. Easton (1965b, p. 212) unnecessarily restricts his concept of authorities to agents and agencies in the governmental sphere. Our interpretation of this concept is a wider one. These authorities may be considered to effect the binding and final allocation of values in a specific area. If necessary, we can see these allocation processes also in another light, namely as processes of social decision-making or chains of such processes, through which these value allocations are effected. In those decision-making processes where the governmental authorities are involved, we can, for instance, distinguish on the input side the institutions of the bureaucracy, the political parties and the numerous pressure groups, lobbies and organizations that act in an on-going effort to determine the outcomes of those processes. On the output side we can discern among others (as authorities) the government, the parliament, and again the bureaucracy and judicial bodies, which are involved in the conversion, realization and effective execution of policies.

In allocation processes of economic values we can also regard such a communication and information network as a decision-making structure with input and output aspects. On the input side we have the mobilizing and channelling of savings through financial institutions in capital and money markets, of labour in the labour market, raw materials in commodity markets and consumer behaviour in consumer markets. These inputs are converted in enterprises by entrepreneurial institutions (as authorities) in investment and production decisions, which entail an allocation of economic values (commodities, services, primary income and so on).

We can distinguish in such social decision processes two aspects that are relevant for our definitions of power and influence. The first one concerns the composition of the set of admissible choice alternatives, the available value alternatives that are taken as the starting point for the choice of alternative policies or value allocations in a community or group. In every political system this spectrum of possible value allocations is in various ways restricted from the start. The ways in which this happens and the identities of actors who play a determining role at this level tell us something about politically relevant relations of power. The capacity to fix or to change sets of admissible alternative value allocations for a political community is political power. As such we may consider it to be a special case of power as defined before.

For example, the requirement of profitable production for given production

relations indicates a mechanism behind which important relations of power are concealed. Those actors who determine profitability possess economic as well as political power. This aspect can also be distinguished at the micro-level. For a business enterprise, the admissible value allocations are determined by its goals, opportunities and resources. These are determined partly by circumstances and actors outside that enterprise, i.e. external power factors. Within the enterprise, the basic alternatives are determined by those actors (persons or organizational parts) who exercise the entrepreneurial function: the top managerial level, in our study of the boards of chief executives and directors.

The second aspect concerns the choice that is ultimately made from the given set of alternatives. This is the conversion process proper, which results in a policy: the effectuation of a specific value allocation. The possibility that an actor has to determine these outcomes indicates his (political) influence. Here again we are facing a particular form of the more general concept of influence, defined before.

We therefore define political power and influence in a social system as follows:

*Political power* in a social system is the capacity to fix or to change (partly) a set of alternative value allocations for the members of that system or for parts of it.

*Political influence* is the capacity to determine (partly) within a given set of available alternative value allocations the outcomes of the allocation process.

The availability of sanctions (positive or negative value allocations) that determine the alternatives open to actors (members of the system) is often characteristic of political power. Political power, however, is especially associated with the concept of non-decision: the capacity to predetermine basic alternatives and to prevent changes in them. This non-decision aspect can be distinguished in all phases of processes of value allocation and decision-making (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970, pp. 52-63; Van der Eijk and Kok, 1974). On the input side the non-decision manifests itself in the form of *non-initiation*. Here the construction of a community's political agenda is at issue, the determination of basic alternatives for the allocation of values. On the output side, the non-decision takes the form of *non-implementation*. Here, for instance, we are concerned with the non-execution of formally completed decisions or with the perverted use that can be made of the outcomes of decision processes and the value allocations determined by them. Examples of such 'output perversion' can occasionally be found in development aid, when development funds are locally used for purposes other than the social and economic development of a community and its population.

Again, political influence is strongly associated with the effective aggregation and organization of information, intelligence and expertise and the availability of good opportunities for access to levels of decision-making. When the political influence of an actor or group achieves a one-sided character in comparison with that of other actors, that influence can be a source of power or it can be converted into power (see section 4). We have mentioned two ways in which this may occur. The first one arises by means of an *advantage of information*, based on superior, efficient or timely knowledge, arguments and know-how. The possession of such information is not in itself sufficient to constitute influence or power in the social decision processes. There has to be a thorough aggregation and organization of the intelligence, information and skills concerned. Only then can we speak of an

advantage of information and, occasionally, of an information monopoly. This is the case, for instance, when specialized agencies possess more or less uniquely the knowledge that is necessary for the determination of certain policies.

Second, the possession of superior means of access to decision-making levels or centres, authorities and policy-makers may be not only a source of influence but indeed a source of power. We may designate this situation as one of *advantage of access*. Well-aggregated and well-organized information can lead to influence only if the actors concerned have the capacity to introduce (or derive) their information in (or from) decision-making at the right times and in the right agencies. An advantage of access therefore has two aspects: that of timing and that of representation.

Effective information should be channelled at the right time through the openings for access, i.e. at those moments and in those phases of decision-making when such information will be operative in the selection of alternatives. Examples abound of decision procedures in which certain actors are allocated access in phases and at levels where their information will come too late to have appreciable effects.

Representation involves the question: which actors are to be allowed to have access to decision-making? One example is that of the 'recognized' organizations, which are accepted by the authorities as their exclusive discussion or 'influence' partners in their decision-making procedures. Any legislative or administrative process is teeming with these cases. Collective wage negotiations, land re-allotment procedures and urban redevelopment are just a few areas in which there are many positions that are apparently influence positions but that through an advantage of access are more like power positions.

In such cases, therefore, we can speak of an advantage or even a monopoly of access. Schattschneider's statement (1960, p.171) that 'organization is the mobilization of bias' is illustrated here with the organization of information and the organization of access.

In our discourse, we have repeatedly underlined the importance that information positions have as a source of influence and, where they exist in a one-sided form, of power. We have therefore emphasized that positions of power and especially of influence can be traced in the form of critical positions in interaction and communication networks. We needed this emphasis because a reference to these aspects is virtually lacking in the literature of power in political science. Lasswell and Kaplan (1950, pp. 83-97), for instance, give a more than elaborate enumeration of sources of power, as did Bachrach and Baratz (1970, pp. 52-63) twenty years later in their elaboration of a decision model. Yet information is hardly mentioned as a source. Only Deutsch develops his concepts of power and influence in the context of communication theory, referring explicitly to power positions as critical positions in communication networks. For example, he points to the strategic middle level between the top of a system and the mass. In military organizations, this level coincides with positions that are usually associated with the rank of colonel. Hence the important role colonels frequently are observed to play in juntas (Deutsch, 1966, pp.145-62).

A different situation can be observed in small group research in social psychology. In numerous studies it has been demonstrated convincingly that positions of power and influence (leadership) are to a large extent determined by the appropriate communication structure (e.g. Bavelas, 1960; Glazer and Glaser, 1959; 1961).

Collins and Raven (1969, pp.166-80) for that reason distinguish various forms of power based on information or expertise.

All the other concepts that we defined before, such as power position and power base, can be adapted without many problems to our definitions of political power and influence. We may however need an additional pair of concepts, *value scope* and *system range* in relation to power and influence. We shall develop these for power only, as the reader can well adapt them to influence. By *value scope* we shall understand that set of values the allocation of which is (partly) controlled from a given power position. In relation to the objects of our study, the big concerns, or 'big business', there are first the values that are directly associated with the firm's position in economic production: the commodities and services that are produced and distributed, the employment that is generated and the (primary) incomes that are created and distributed. But also less obvious values can be involved: environment and ecology as a result of industrial construction and forms of distribution and marketing, education in as far as it is inspired by or geared to industrial problems, the arts and sports in as far as they are sponsored by industry or whenever they are subjected to such norms as that of good (industrial) management and marketing. A modern central government has in principle a still larger value scope, encompassing virtually any conceivable value sector in social life.

As *system range* we shall denote the set of actors (or members of the social system) for which value alternatives can be determined. It is the collection of actors to which a power position extends. For the big concern it may include the workers and employees and their organizations in the labour market, suppliers, retailers and consumers and their organizations. But it can also include authorities such as local governments in the fields of housing and schools, for example, and the mass media as far as the latter depend on business through advertising. Scope and range can be larger than the occupants of power positions realize. The system range of a banking system can be larger than formally stated when, for instance, the withdrawal of credit for certain unprofitable firms proves to result in the dislocation of employment in a region or town. The value scope of energy works is unintentionally larger when the production of energy is accompanied by (negative) values in the area of living conditions and environment. (Again, the side effects that merit marginal attention in standard economic theory hide many of such transgressions of formal scopes or ranges.)

## 9. TRACING POWER AND INFLUENCE METHODS

Power and influence are elusive matters. They can not often be observed clearly because they are rarely manifested in the form of clearly recognizable 'power' or 'influence' behaviour. In the case of solidly established power positions, it can more readily be stated that clearly identifiable, manifest forms of exercised power are superfluous. Power positions that are asserted in that way are being threatened and are unsteady. Moreover, really important power and influence are usually characterized by an atmosphere of discretion and secrecy. The disguise of power is often an important means for the maintenance of power. For that reason solid positions of power are often presented in pluralist and fragmented forms, which constitute the appearances of that power.

In Western society, for instance, we often meet such appearances when the concealment of economic power is at issue. Minority holdings in concerns, joint ventures and a proliferation of subsidiaries and numerous other legally differentiated forms of undertaking can serve to lend a pluralist look to concentrated power. A similar pluralist camouflaging principle of organization can be observed in totalitarian groupings such as Communist parties. The formation of cells and undercover organizations may also disguise their character in a society that is proclaiming pluralist democracy rather than democratic centralism.

Finally, relations and positions of power are not often recognized as such, because they often develop without a conscious striving for power. We argued before that power and influence are the result of social organization developed to achieve certain goals. In the resulting social organizations, those goals are primarily being served and relations of power and influence form the sediment of the ways in which these are striven for.

For all these reasons it has proved to be a rather forbidding task to develop methods of tracing and analysing power and influence satisfying our requirement of observability in empirical situations. Currently four methodological approaches may be roughly distinguished. Two of them have been mentioned before: the *reputational method* and the *decision method*. The two others may be referred to as the *positional method* and the *method of policy analysis*. In the literature these methods are usually compared in a rather unsystematic way. Most frequently they are treated as competing alternatives and then certified (or stigmatized) in terms of some well-known particular application. In this way the reputational method has been associated with Hunter's study and the decision method with that of Dahl's group. In the longer run we do not see much sense in a classification of methods according to their similarity to specific applications. The result is often that methods that are fundamentally alike are not characterized as such but presented as different ones. In the Netherlands a case in point is the interesting study by Braam which according to its strategy should be counted under the decision approach, although Braam disputes the correspondence and claims to present a new method (Braam, 1973, pp.3,41-4,311). It seems better to classify methods in terms of the basic research strategy that they seek to implement. We have argued in our introduction that one of the functions of an efficient conceptualization of power and influence should be to point the way to the development of methods, as well as to provide a framework within which these methods can be interpreted. Our conceptualization gives us the opportunity to do so.

We have described power and influence as a capacity originating in a relational context. The power position emphasizes this relational aspect and indicates the location in the network where this capacity is situated. The power base is the combination of power resources that can be applied in that position. The base, which also determines the capacity, is more an indicator of the substantial aspects of power or influence. Power as a capacity should be distinguished from its application, power behaviour as exercised. These three basic aspects should all be studied for a more or less exhaustive analysis of power and influence relations in decision-making or allocation structures. Moreover, it will be necessary to decide whether alternatives can be fixed or changed (power) or whether mainly behaviour can be guided or determined with respect to available alternatives (influence).

None of the methods reflects all these aspects equally; each tends to emphasize certain aspects more than others. Two methods emphasize the capacity in particular: the reputational method and the positional approach. In the two other methods, the

chief aspect is  
 relational capacity  
 power base  
 the network



decision method and the policy analysis, the applications (observed behaviour) assume prominence.

The *reputational method* is essentially based on the perception and strength of the overtly established power position and, in connection with it, Friedrich's 'law of anticipated reactions'. It relies on the validity of the reputation for power and influence generally attributed by the knowledgeable members of a community. Therefore, it seems to be oriented more to the power base and its elements than to the position, so it may well accentuate the substantial rather than the relational aspects of power. The method seems to be useful in clearly laid-out situations, such as in small, local communities where face-to-face relations and communications may cover the whole area. The method has the tendency in particular to produce types of well-publicized general leadership and not to be sensitive to more specialized but no less important types of leadership (Wildavsky, 1964a, pp.303-19). In large, urbanized communities, where reputations, stereotyped by the mass-media, serve as a substitute for direct experience, the method is less useful.

The *positional method* is focused primarily on the relational aspects of the power or influence position. This approach is aimed at detecting critical or central points or key positions in structures of decision-making or allocation. Its basic principle is that an analysis of the relevant interaction and communication structures underlying those processes may reveal positions that can be considered as centres of power or influence. Although informal structures also can be analysed by this method, most of its applications in the literature involve models of formal organization.

The other two methods are aimed primarily at actual behaviour that can be interpreted as an exercise of power and influence. The capacities stay more or less in the background.

In the *decision method*, the basic assumption is that power holders and influentials will reveal themselves through their actions as participants in concrete decisions. The term 'decision method' refers to the study of concrete decisions and not to the study of the whole process and context of decision-making or value allocation. In the latter sense any study of political power is also decision-making (or value allocation) research. The decision method was designed to detect those actors who play an active role in the realization of certain decisions. In this method one should try to take account of relational aspects such as coalitions of actors (persons as well as institutions) that by coalition and division of labour can block undesirable value alternatives (non-decision) as well as regulating controversial but admissible allocations.

Finally, the *method of policy analysis* has recently been advocated with respect to another aspect of the actual exercise of power, the outcomes of allocation processes: policies as they are actually effected. The strategy has been proposed among others by Bachrach and Baratz, and is based on the assumption that an analysis of policy outputs can reveal which actors profit in particular from these policies and which ones suffer relative deprivation. This approach seems to be based in particular on the notion, not unrealistic in itself, that power is exercised mainly for one's own benefit. As a matter of theory, one might raise the objection that, when confronted with the case of an altruistic exercise of power on behalf of powerless actors, one might come to wrong conclusions about the actual power relations. An altruistic dictator may be no less powerful than his egocentric successor. The method of policy analysis no more leads to direct observations of power than do the other methods.

Each of the four methods that we sketched summarily above concerns different

aspects of power and influence. It will be clear from the perspectives of this paper that all methodological possibilities will not be exhausted by these four approaches. Moreover, it is to be expected that studies that are based exclusively on methods applying to one aspect in particular will lead to results that are characteristic for those methods. Walton (1966a, 1966b) demonstrated this rather convincingly in an analysis of over thirty studies of more than fifty local communities. He noted that the resulting power structures were closely related to the methods used to uncover them. The reputational method led to élitist, pyramidal power structures, whereas the decision method suggested more disconnected pluralist structures. (See also Ellemers, 1968, pp. 15-17.)

The point is, of course, that in the empirical analysis of power structures, different methods should be used so as to cover all the most important aspects of power relations. Indeed, in more recent studies of local power structures, combinations of methods have been used with some profit in a comparative analysis across communities. Researchers such as Agger *et al.* (1964) and Gamson (1966) used particular combinations of the reputational and decision methods. Crenson's study of the issue of air pollution also led to a certain redress of the reputational method (Crenson, 1971).

Our analysis of interlocking directorates between large concerns, some results of which are presented in another paper (Mokken and Stokman, 1974), can be considered as a version of the positional approach, focusing on one basic aspect of power: the relational structure. Such a study necessitates application of efficient and penetrating methods appropriate for the analysis of sometimes highly complicated networks. Of such analyses relatively few satisfactory applications are known thus far. Brams (1968; see also Russett, 1968) gave for formal organizations a first, though not very convincing illustration of the analytical and conceptual possibilities of the mathematical theory of graphs. As far as we know, we are the first to adapt and apply elements of this theory to the analysis of the networks of interlocking directorates between large corporations and of networks involving government institutions.