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Social Organization and Power: A Sociological Perspective

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Abstract: Since, power is a pervasive yet contentious feature in social organization and therefore a central concept in sociology, it necessitates an adequate sociological review. As an interactive process with no monolithic character, social power has both intended and unintended effects for either promotive or a preventive purpose. Methods of exerting social power include force, dominance, authority, attraction, ideology and discipline, though any specific situation may include more than one form and sometimes in an overlapping manner. This study discerns four conspicuous perspectives of social power in modern Sociology: Marxist, Elitist, Pluralist and Foucaultian. None of these are formal theories nevertheless these broad perspectives tend to shape the overall manner in which sociologists view the role in social organization.

Key words: Power, social organization, parsonian theory, pluralist, elitist, control

INTRODUCTION

Power is the most fundamental process of social life and hence one of most central concepts in concepts in sociology. However, it was perhaps one of the least studied and least understood concepts/subjects for long time. In the 1860s, the notion of power was quite evident in the sociological writings of Karl Marx (1818-1883). In early 1900s, power was a critical factor in Max Weber's (1864-1920) writings. After that most sociologists, especially in North America, overlooked power for several decades. As Olsen and Marger (1993) show that American sociology was for long dominated by two foci that did not involve power: Social psychological concerns with the behavior of individual in society and Parsonian Theory; with its emphasis on value concensus and normative expectations.

At last, sociology re-discovered social power. The rediscovery began in 1950s with the publication of two pivotal books: Floyd Hunter's Community Power Structure in 1953 which demonstates the exercise of power in communities and C. Wright Mill's Power Elite in 1956 that sparks a lively debate about the role of elite in modern societies (Mills, 1962). In 1960s, many American sociologists began to pay attention to Marx's writings and tried to interpret and re-interpret his theoretical ideas. In 1960s, over race relations, poverty and other critical problems, conflict erupted in the US which consequently laid radicalizing effort on the cohort of American sociologists to enter in the field of power and made them aware of the role of power in social organizations (Olsen and Marger, 1993; Lukes, 1986). The understanding of power, albeit in a new form was brought to light in Western academia by the writings of Michel Foucault in 1970s and post-Foucaultian authors in 1990s. Today, the exercise and structuring of social power is a major concern not only within political sociology but also in other areas of environment and development. This study will make a comprehensive survey and analysis, albeit concisely on the nature of social power and its role in social organization and different perspectives on social power.

NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL POWER

Power is not a monolithic concept and hence has no universally accepted single definition. There are however, some conspicuous problems in defining social power. Nevertheless, researchers can deduce the essential idea stressed by most writers while attempting to define social power that power is the ability to affect social activities. It is as Olsen and Marger (1993) claim a dynamic process not a static possession that pervades all areas of social life. Sociologists are usually concerned with broad and relatively stable patterns of power mainly for analytic convenience rather than with every isolated and minute instance of power exertion. The idea of affecting social activities logically implies overcoming whatever resistance, opposition or limitation may be encountered. Nevertheless, reference to resistance adumbrates that the exercise of power is usually a reciprocal process among all participants and is rarely determined by a single actor no matter how unequal the situation may appear. Hence, two ideas are central to the notion of social power: Social power is a generalized rather than a narrowly limited capacity and the exercise of power necessitates overcoming resistance.

The notion of influence and control are used by some writers as synonymous to power while many distinguish power from these concepts usually on the ground that the effects of power on the recipient are to some extent involuntary while influence and control are seen as producing a motivational change within affected individuals so that they more or less willingly comply. In this view, influence refers to overt participation whereas control rests largely on unconscious norm internalization. The distinction may seem arbitrary since what begins as wholly involuntary compliance may over time shift to willing cooperation while what seems to be voluntary compliance may be simply a decision to abide by an inescapable directive. Therefore, a more meaningful use of these terms is to keep social power as the inclusive or genetic concept with influence and control used to describe the determinateness of possible outcomes as seen from the perspective of power wielder; the exercise of social power can vary from relatively indeterminate social influence to relatively determinate social control, depending on the type and amount of power being exerted and the relative power of the other actors involved (Olsen and Marger, 1993).

The actors who exercise power can be organizations (from small groups to total societies) as well as individuals. In the former case, the activity is sometimes called organizational or inter-organizational power; while in the later case, it is referred to as personal or interpersonal power. Unlike Social Psychology which studies interpersonal power relations, Sociology views power as entirely social and organizational. Someone might have personal power but that is not an isolated phenomenon, rather connected with and contingent upon his/her location in society or social organizations are carried out by individuals enacting organizational roles, it is nevertheless the organization as a whole not individual spokesmen for the organization which is wielding power.

Within the dynamics of power exertion process, if power relationship becomes an established feature of any pattern of social ordering, they can be regarded as structural characteristics of that organization. Weber (1978) and soon Giddens (1984) have both referred to such structured patterns of social power as domination and have emphasized their perpetuation, stability and relative predictability in social life.

From the analysis and the debate around the notion of social power by different sociologists, researchers can discern some conspicuous characteristics of social power as summarized from Olsen and Marger (1993).

As social power is an interactive process, it always resides within social interaction and relationships never in individual actors. A single actor may possess resources that provide a potential basis for exerting social power but power does not exist until it is expressed in the actions of two or more actors as a dynamic activity. Moreover, both the power attempt made by an exerter and the resistance offered by a recipient are crucial in determining the actual power exercised in any situation.

The ability of an actor to exercise social power can be either potential or active at any given time. An actor exercises potential power when he or she possesses resources is capable of employing them and indicates that possibility to others. Power becomes active when those resources are actually converted into actions toward others.

Power exertion is a purposeful activity that is intended to others in certain ways but it may also have unintended effects. Most sociologists restrict the concept of power to actions that are intended to affect the recipients because otherwise virtually every actor could be labeled as power exertion. The issue of intentionality is clouded in many situations, however, by three features of many power actions. First, for strategic reasons, actors often attempt to hide or disguise the purpose of their power wieding, attempting to influence others without others being aware of it. Second, power can be exerted indirectly through intermediaries a process that can mask the primary intentions. Third, in addition to its intended outcomes, an exercise of power can have numerous unintended (and sometimes unrecognized) consequences for others.

The exercise of social power can affect the actions and ideas in either of two directions. It can enable or cause actors to do things, they would not otherwise do or it can hinder or prevent them from doing things they, would otherwise do. In other words, power can be used in either promotive or a preventive manner. If the researchers can wish to emphasize the preventive use of power, they may speak of exercising power over others to control them. If researchers wish to emphasize its promotive use, they may speak of exercising power with others to attain common goals. The first expression often coveys the value that power exertion is undesirable because it restricts people's freedom of actions whereas the second expression conveys the value that power is desirable for collective endeavors.

The interactions and exchanges that occur between participants when power is exerted can vary from evenly balanced to grossly unbalanced. In relative balanced situations each actor exerts approximately the same amount of influence or control on the actor(s) so that everyone receives approximately equal benefits. In a highly unbalanced situation, one or a few actors exerts much greater influence or control than everyone else and

consequently receives most of the benefits. Relatively, balanced power is usually more stable and is viewed more desirable than highly unbalanced power conditions althoug, for various reasons the later often occur.

FORMS OF POWER

There are various ways in exerting social power. Six fairly distinct types or forms of social power are frequently discussed by sociologists: force, dominance, authority, attraction, ideology and discipline, though any specific situation may include more than one form and sometimes in an overlapping manner.

Force: According to Olsen (1993), force is a form of social power that involves the intentional exertion of social pressures on others to achieve desired outcomes. Olsen and Marger (1993) add that when exerting force, an actor brings pressures to bear on the intended recipient by giving or withholding specific resources to threatening to do so. The actor must, therefore, commit particular resources to that interaction and expend them to whatever extent is necessary to obtain the intended outcomes. Etzioni (1964, 1993) identified three different forces to exert social power:

- With coercive; with utilitarian force (also called inducement or compensation) the recipient is given desired benefits in return for compliance
- With coercive force (also called constrain or deprivation) punishments are meted out or benefits are suspended to obtain compliance
- With pervasive force (also called information or communication) messages are conveyed that alter the recipient's beliefs, values, attitudes, emotions or motivations in an attempt to produce compliance

Dominance: Dominance is a form of social power that results from the performance of established roles or functions (Olsen, 1993). While exerting dominance, an actor effectively carries out a set of established activities or social roles on a regular basis. To the extent that others depend on performances of those activities, they are vulnerable to being enforced or controlled by that actor. This form of power as Olsen and Marger (1993) explains does not require the commitment of any additional resources to the interaction but relies entirely on the successful performance of the dominant actor's usual activities or roles. The ability to exert dominance depends heavily on one's position in a social network or organization so that the closer an actor's position in a social structure, the greater the possibility of dominance.

Authority: When exerting authority, an actor draws on a grant of legitimacy made by the recipient as a basis for using authoritative directives. As the legitimacy has been voluntarily granted by those subject to the directives they are expected to comply with them. Olsen (1993) explains that legitimacy is sometimes granted to an actor through direct procedures such as formal votes or informal agreements but more commonly it is indirectly expressed as one joins an organization, remains a member of it and supports the action of its leaders who claim legitimacy.

Weber (1947, 1993) identified four bases on which legitimate authority often rests within societies: rational knowledge or expertise relevant to specific situations; legal rights based on formal arrangements; traditional beliefs and values sanctified by time and charismatic appeal of revered leaders to their followers. In addition to this, Olsen (1993) mentions another form of authority which rest on passive acceptance. It comes from established customs and conventions.

The recipients do not overly grant legitimacy to the authority wielder but simply follow his/her directives out of habit an act that constitutes an implicit grant of legitimacy. Authority is by far the most stable form of power exertion.

Attraction: Olsen (1993) defines attraction as a form of social power that lies in the ability of an actor to affect others because of who he or she is. When exercising attraction, an actor draws on diffuse appeal that he or she has for others in order to influence them. That appeal, unlike a grant of legitimacy, may have no connection with social power. A skillful actor may be able nevertheless to transform that appeal into power exertion with which others voluntarily comply. Olsen (1993) identifies three common sources of appeal/attraction which are cognitive identification with positive feelings toward and attribution of charismatic to an individual or an organization. Attractive power is often unstable and transitory but at times becomes extremely compelling.

Ideology: Karl Marx is credited for uncovering and theorizing the concept of ideology albeit different from what researchers conventionally understand what ideology is. Ideology to Marx is a reified cover-used by the bourgeoisie the dominant class in the society who control the means of production and hence different sources or resources of power that obscures the power relation between bourgeoisie and the proletariat and mask the exploitation of the latter class. Ideology is put forward as not only what is believed in as a form of doing a certain kind of thought or belief an active epistemological gesture

(Khor, 2001) whose method of production is uncovered by the three tricks that have been paraphrased by Smith (1996) from Marx:

Trick 1: Separate what people say they think from the actual circumstances in which it is said from the actual empirical conditions of their lives and from the actual individuals who said it.

Trick 2: Having detached the ideas, arrange them to demonstrate an order among them that accounts for what is observed (Marx and Engels describe this as making mystical connections).

Trick 3: Then change the ideas into a person that is set them up as distinct entities (for example; a value, pattern norm, belief system and so forth) to which agency (or possible causal efficacy) may be attributed. And redistribute them to reality by attributing them to actors who can now be treated as representing the ideas. A clear analysis of Marxist notion of power will be discussed in the this study.

Discipline, discourse and knowledge: There is a dialectical relation between knowledge and power; knowledge is power and power produces knowledge. The notion of governmentality as propounded by Foucault is particularly important here.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL POWER

Up to 1970s, three principal theoretical perspectives on social power pervade sociological thought: Marxian (or class) Theory, Elite Theory and Pluralist Theory. After 1970s with the writings of Michel Foucault, a novel understanding of power has been added to the sociological thought. None of these are formal theories nevertheless these broad perspectives tend to shape the overall manner in which sociologists view the role of power in social organization. A brief illustration of each theory has been given as follows.

The Marxian perspectives: Political philosophers from Plato onward have written extensively on the exercise of ower and most of them linked their discussion of power to the state, seeing governmen and related organizations like military as the main foci of power in society. Marx must be singled out as he broke sharply with this tradition. He argued instead that power originates prim arily in economic production that it permeates and influences all aspects of society that the principal units within power dynamics are social classes the main wielder of social power in society and the government is largely a servant of the dominant social class (Olsen, 1970). Marx thus expanded the concept of power from an especially political phenomenon to a ubiquitous social process and offered a theory of social development based on the exercise of power.

There are three major components of Marxian theoretical perspective as identified by Dahrendorf (1959) and Schumpeter (1962); a model based on the primacy of economically generated social power; a historical model describing the process of dialectical social change and a connecting thesis, that is, social classes in conflict.

The sociological model that underlies all Marxian Theory is often called materialistic conception of history (Heilbroner, 1980) or base-superstructure model (Wacquant, 1985). When researchers relate them to social power both of them carry inappropriate connotations. Olsen and Marger (1993) use a more precise term economic-base power model of society. This model contains two principal arguments.

Firstly, all societies rest on an economic foundation or base. Mankind's need for food, shelter, housing and energy are central in understanding the socio-cultural system. The first historical act is Marx writes, the production of material life itself. Unless men and women successfully fulfill this act there would be no other. All social life is dependent upon fulfilling this quest for a sufficiency of eating and drinking for habitation and for clothing. The quest to meet basic needs was humans primary goal.

As people must produce goods and services in order to survive and attain any goals, the economic production processes which Marx calls modes of production that prevail in a society constitute the foundation on which other aspects of social life rest. Societies may contain several modes of production nevertheless one of them at any given time tends to dominate the economy and hence is the societys dominant mode of production. Thus, feudal society is dominated by a feudal mode of production (agriculture) in which the class of landlords extracts a surplus from a rural population bound to the land in modern capitalist society the mode of production is manufacturing. The economic base and its dominant mode of economic production shapes and influences other features of society known as superstructure that includes all other social institutions such as government, education, culture, ideas, beliefs and values. It does not mean that the society is determined by economic base however, other parts of the society may contain some functional autonomy and may to some extent influence the economic base (Botomore and Rubel, 1956; Schumpeter, 1962; Olsen and Marger, 1993).

Second, a mode of production contains two components; forces of production and means of production. Forces of production includes all those factors that determine how that kind of economic production is preferred: it's necessary resources, relevant technology, production techniques, labor force, organizational structures, division of labor and so on. All these forces are important within the economy nevertheless their effects are limited to their own realm of activity. Relations of production consists of the social, economic, political and legal arrangements that define who owns and/or controls that mode of economic production process. In addition to linking a mode of production with the rest of the society, the relations of production constitute the primary source of social power. Because of the functional primacy of the economic base in any society whoever owns or controls its dominant mode of economic production will have access to its major resources and hence will become the principal wielder of social power in that society. In other words, whoever controls the dominant mode of economic production in a society will be utilized and how the resulting resources will be distributed with the consequences that these persons will exercise power throughout the total society (Botomore and Rubel, 1956; Schumpeter, 1962; Olsen and Marger,1993).

This theoretical perspective gave Marx a key to understanding the power dynamics of all societies but it did not explain long-term trends in human history. For this he turned to the idea of dialectical social change that Olsen and Marger (1993) calls dialectical social evolution. From Hegel, Marx took the dialectical model and applied it to historical social change. This model consists of three stages:

- An initial thesis or existing set of social condition
- An alternative anti-thesis or radically different set of conditions that develop from the initial conditions but not necessarily the complete opposite of the first stage
- An integrating synthesis or wholly new set of conditions that emerges from both the thesis and antithesis conditions, contains portion of both of them and resolves the fundamental contradictions inherent in each of them

That synthesis then becomes the thesis for a succeeding dialectic so that theoretically the process can continue indefinitely (Marx and Lenin, 1975). The dialectic process was for Marx not an inherent tendency within human history at least in Western Europe. In other words, dialectic change is never inevitable but when major social changes do occur they tend to follow the dialectic process (Zeitlin, 1976).

Marx would have left two fundamental questions unanswered if he had ended his analysis at this point. First, what are the segments of society which compete for the control of the means of production and how do they relate to one another? Second, why would not socialism become the thesis for further dialectic change? He answered both questions by bridging the theoretical gap between his sociological perspective and his philosophy of history with the thesis of conflicting social classes. This thesis consists of a definition of classes an analysis of the nature of capitalism and an argument for class conflict and revolution. The opening line of the Communist Manifesto states: The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles (Marx *et al*., 1998). Marx believed that the struggles within any society were between the different classes with every class struggling for mastery. This is true even among the dominant class which must continually conquer for itself the political mastery of its country. The prevailing class must subjugate the working class while the middle class tries to maintain its precarious position above the lower class. All the while the lower class is trying to climb up to a higher level. He analyzed the capitalist economic system in great depth to discover why it produced the extreme exploitation of workers he observed in all industrialized societies. He concluded that the dialectic social change would end only if social classes were completely abolished (Olsen, 1970).

The Elitist perspective: As a response to Marx's economic-based power model, a new outlook of power, Elitist perspective emerged. Many of the ideas of this power model, however, can be found in the writing of Plato, Machiavelli and other philosophers. As a theoretical perspective on social power, elitism was formulated by Pareto (1935), Mosca (1939) and Michels (1962). The common thesis mong thesis among these scholars is that the concentration of social power in a small set of controlling elite is inevitable in all societies a thesis that negates the Marx's vision of evolutionary change toward a classless society with power equality. At the same time, they held that some social change can occur through gradual circulation of elites without overt class conflict or societal revolution. The basic principles of elitism, as summarized from Michels (1962)'s famous Iron Law of Oligarchy:

Within all societies and other larger organizations that function beyond the subsistence level, there have been and presumably always will be one or a few set of

powerful controlling elites. Regardless of the nature of the government or the economy, there is always oligarchy or rule of the few over many. The masses cannot and do not govern themselves.

Although, the elites are always a tiny minority of the population, they control a large proportion of the available resources are usually well-organized and are quite cohesive. Consequently, the elites are highly effective in wielding power throughout society.

Elites commonly employ all available means to protect and preserve their power and to enhance it whenever possible. They share power with others only it is their self-interest and they never voluntarily surrender power.

To rule their society, elites employ a wide variety of techniques. These include controlling the government dominating the economy using police and military force, manipulating the educational system and the mass media, sanctioning or eliminating those who oppose them and creating ideologies (beliefs, values, myths) that legitimize their power and rule.

Elites may permit or even encourage limited social change but only to the extent that they see it as contributing to the goals they seek and not threatening their power. Major social transformations are strongly resisted by the elites.

As societies are getting increasingly large and complex, the power of the elites tend to be less visible because it is embedded within numerous organizational social structures. As consequence, however, their rule becomes more pervasive and effective.

In short, the elites exercise most of the power in a society; the masses do not. Therefore, to understand any society, we must examine its powerful elites, the bases of their power, the manner in they exercise it and the purpose for which they exert power. Apparently, many tenets of the elitism may seem similar to what Marx said about the bourgeoisie class who are minority yet control the whole means of production in a given society. However, two clear differences can be drawn between these two theoretical perspectives. First, Marx views that the rule of the few the bourgeoisie power is not an essential feature of society, exploitation of the powerless, he calls proletariat is inherent in this rule and there is prospect for social change through revolution. To the proponents of elitism, oligarchy is a necessary condition for and a common feature of all societies and hence they do not see any prospect for revolutionary social change. Secondly, none of the proponents of elitism make explicit reference to the central Marxian concern with economic production and economically based power. Elitists generally focus primarily on the polity and give little or no attention to the economy as a source of social power.

The Pluralist perspective: Despite differences between Marxian and Elitist Model of social power both hold a common view that the few elite in a society or organization are the one who exercise the optimum power. The theory of social pluralism rejects that idea and holds that in modern industrialized democratic societies, power is at least moderately dispersed and could be extensively decentralized if the Pluralist Model were fully implemented. Pluralism is, thus, partially an empirical-descriptive model of what is and partially a theoretical-ideal model of what might be. The idea of a division of power in a political system as a means of presenting tyranny has been discussed by political philosophers since antiquity. Aristotle pointed out the benefits to be gained from differentiating various governmental activities and Montesquieu in the 18th century stressed the desirability of embodying legislative, executive and political power along geographical lines with the national state sharing sovereignty with one or more levels of local government.

The Pluralist Model goes far beyond political system, however, to encompass the entire society. Madison's the Federalist, sketched the main features of this model but it was Tocqueville (1961)'s Democracy in America, Vol. 2 written in 1930s that fully developed pluralism as a societal model of power structuring. Tocqueville saw mass equality, created by the breakdown or the absence of traditional hierarchies of feudal authority as providing fertile ground for the emergence of a tyranny of the majority in place of a tyranny of the kings or other elites. His conception of socio-political pluralism was intended to prevent from both forms of tyranny in modern societies. As Pluralism Model has evolved, it has taken three somewhat different forms: Elite pluralism, mediation pluralism and mobilization pluralism.

Elite pluralism, presented by Dahl and his colleagues, acknowledges the numerous sets of competing elites in modern communities and societies. It asserts, however, that in most settings no single set of elites is powerful enough to dominate critical decision making or exert control over the entire community or society (Olsen and Marger, 1993). The power remains moderately dispersed, though various sets of elites may compete with one another for dominance.

Mediation pluralism which was propounded by Toqueville and later by Kornhauser (1959) and Presthus (1964) also acknowledges the existence of numerous sets of elites but allows for the fact that in many settings one set of elites may largely dominate the others.

Empirically it is close to the Marxian and Elitist Model of social power, however, it differs sharply from them in its insistence that power can be structured to allow non-elites to exert some influence on both

competing and dominant elites. In practice, the extent of this non-elite involvement varies widely but in theory it could come quite influential. To disperse power and involve non-elites in power processes, the Pluralist Model calls for a proliferation of autonomous groups associations and other organizations located throughout a society.

These are sometimes called special interest associations or intermediate organizations. The intermediate organizations must possess several characteristics if pluralism is to operate effectively such as:

- The overall network they compose but not each association must extend from grassroots up to national government
- Each organization must also have sufficient resources to exert some amount of influence upward and those that operate at the national level must wield sufficient power that governmental and other elites pay attention to them and involve them in decision-making processes
- Each organization must be relatively specialized in its concerns and limited in its power exertion so that none of them becomes so large and powerful that it can dominate the others
- In other words, there must be a rough balance of power among all these organizations
- The organization must have cross-cutting or overlapping memberships that link them together and prevent individuals from becoming too strongly attached to any single organization
- The organization must be functionally independent and interrelated so that they need to cooperate as well as compete with one another
- Finally, there must be widespread acceptance of a set of rules specifying how the organizations will operate in their effects to wield power and influence the government (Olsen and Marger,1993)

Mobilization pluralism as outlined by Almond and Verba (1963) is essentially an extension of the mediation form of Pluralist Model. It addresses the question of how individual citizens can be mobilized to participate in political system through voting and other political activities. The thesis of mobilization pluralism argues that citizens can be mobilized for active political participation through involvement in all kind of non-political organizations and activities (Olsen and Marger, 1993). These include not only voluntary-special interest associations but also neighborhood and community affairs and decision-making processes within one's workplace. Two features of this mobilization process are especially noteworthy:

- Mobilization can occur even when the level of social involvement is not extensive; non-active membership in one or two local associations will often lead to greater political activity
- The mobilization process operates at all social class levels and hence can overcome
- The political apathy and feelings of powerlessness that are widespread among people with low socio-economic status

The Foucaultian perspective: Much of Foucault's works demonstrate the constructed nature of some of the most established assumptions. The notions such as power, selfhood, sexuality and reason are shown in his research to be historically contingent cultural products. His studies challenge the influence of German political philosopher Karl Marx and Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. Foucault offers new concepts that challenge people's assumptions about prisons the police, insurance, care of the mentally ill, gay rights and welfare. The main influences, found on Foucault's thought are German philosophers Frederick Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger. Foucault's thought explores the shifting patterns of power within a society and the ways in which power relates to the self. He investigated the changing rules governing the kind of claims that could be taken seriously as true or false at different times in history. He also studies how everyday practices enabled people to define their identities and systematize knowledge event may be understood as being produced by nature by human effort or by God. Foucault argues that each way of understanding things had its advantages and its dangers. In all the books of his last period, Foucault seeks to show that Western society has developed a new kind of power he calls bio-power, that is, a new system of control that traditional concepts of authority are unable to understand and criticize. Rather than being repressive, this new power enhances life.

Foucault's historical studies that reveal the power relations inherent in social practices may seem sometimes morally disturbing to many people. However, the intellectual sophistication in his writing the discovery of power in every facet of society and creation of a new stream between broad conflict and functional paradigms of sociology are really astounding.

His notion of government is important to understand the prevalence, continual extension and complexity of power in societies. The term governmentality is a neologism Foucault presented and explored at the end of the 1970s (Foucault, 1979, 1984, 1991) that implies the establishment of complex social techniques and

institutions to intensify and expand the mechanism of control and power over the population in the name of what became known as the reason of state. Governmentality for Foucault referred famously to the conduct of conduct a more or less calculated and rational set of ways of shaping conduct and securing rule through a multiplicity of authorities and agencies in and outside of the state and at a variety of special levels which he calls art of government albeit negatively.

There are two aspects to governmentality in the Foucault's writings. First it is a concept based on the European historical context. Secondly, it implies a novel definition which has profound implications for the understanding of contemporary political power and in particular public policy. For Foucault, the govrnmentality is the unique combination of three components: institutional ecentralization, intensification of the effects of power and power/knowledge (Foucault, 1979; Pignatelli, 1993) that denotes governmental rationality (Gordon, 1991). In speaking of governmentality, Foucault was referring not only to the domain of civil/political government as it is conventionally understood but to a broader domain of discourses and practices that create and administer subjects through the presence of a variety of knowledge-making apparatuses. Most significantly the focus of a Foucaultian study of policy is on the broader impact of state policy or more exactly on the power effects across the entire social spectrum (macro level) down to individual's daily life (micro level). Governmentality, for Foucault refers not to sociologies of rule but to the studies of stratums of knowing and acting.

For Foucault, governmentality is a fundamental feature of the modern state. Most significantly, Foucault sees state authorities and policies as mobilizing governmentality which tries to incorporate the economy and the population into the political practices of the state in order to be able to govern effectively in a rational and conscious manner. Governmentality, then applies techniques of instrumental rationality to the arts of everyday management exercised over the economy the society and the environment.

Recently, there have been attempts to extend the concept of governmentality into the realm of development (Watt, 2003) and environment (Lukes, 1999; Darier, 1999; Agrawal, 2003).

CONCLUSION

Power is one of the most pivotal as well as contentious concept in sociology. Despite having contested and ambiguous nature, power remains a useful analytic tool in sociology as well as other disciplines of social sciences. Discourse of development is for instance, comprised of among many other sub-schools, four conspicuous paradigms: Marxist/dependency, liberal/ modernization, Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM) and post-modern critique of development, drawn from the understanding of power from different perspectives discussed in this study. Dependency paradigm of development is based on the Marxist understanding of power; modernization paradigm embraces the Elitist vision of power. Post-modern critique of development is based on Foucaultian understanding of power. A comprehensive analysis of and debate around all perspectives of power has a good possibility to provide us with a better understanding of this important yet complex and contentious concept in social organization.

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