

## **Power And Conflict Management: Is There A Relationship?**

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper has theoretically presented that there is a relationship between power and conflict management. Power and its dynamics in international politics determine how states interact and even the outcome of their interaction. The paper argues that states that are endowed with power fight to retain their domination through conflict management and sometimes perpetrating conflicts with other states. First, the paper has unfolded the concept of power, creating more understanding on its typologies, forms, faces, measurement and balance. Secondly, the paper demystified the concept of conflict management. The paper also in its findings established that there is a relationship between power and international conflict management. Powerful states like US have had a lot of conflict interventions; regionally, South Africa and Nigeria have had remarkable participation in their respective jurisdictions; in the IGAD region, the work of Kenya and Ethiopia in conflict management cannot be underestimated.

**Keywords:** *Conflict, Conflict Management, Power, Peacemaking*

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Date of Submission: 14-07-2017

Date of acceptance: 08-08-2017

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### **Abbreviations:**

IR -international relation; EAC – East African Community; NATO – North Atlantic Trade Organization; EU – European Union; CEO – Chief Executive Officer; GNP – Gross National Product; SA – South Africa; DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo; USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republic; USA – United States of America

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Power is a central ingredient in international politics. Realists have argued that whatever states pursue in the international arena, power is always a consideration in mind (Morgenthau 1954). This fact was supported by Mearsheimer (2001:1-6) who elaborated that while states compete for relative power to achieve hegemony, they also thwart other nations from effectively competing with them.

Power is a highly contested and elusive concept that has always been difficult for scholars to describe in a single formulation. Conceived differently, power has significantly varied meanings. Guzzini (1993:443-478), conceded that there are at least three reasons why power is essentially contested. When looked from structuralist, dispositional and interactionist approaches, power is significantly different (Guzzini, 1993:447)

Power being an important concept in contemporary international relations (IR); it has been able to influence how management of conflict and peacemaking is conducted in international arenas. To get a clear understanding, this paper has unfolded the concept of power; analyzed various definitions; examined the different form that power is expressed; and has given several views as put by scholars of IR. Finally, the relationship between power and peacemaking has been looked into.

## **II. CONCEPT OF POWER**

Power as has been noted, is a central ingredient in international relations; whatever money is to the economy, is what power is to international politics. Yet, this crucial concept cannot be easily defined – there is no agreement by scholars on how to have a single meaning of the concept of power. Though some of these definitions are closely related, the concept of power has been defined differently by several writers subscribing to different ideologies. While the mainstream scholars understand power as domination, their counterparts understand it as a capacity. Even as Dahl, Bachrach and Baratz and Lukes tried, each to make their own definitions of the concept of power, they all could not avoid recognizing it as domination (Karbberg, 2005). This proposition has been seriously criticized by the feminist who see power as an act of concert (Follett, 1942:101).

In his writing in 2001, Scott (2002) defines power as “the production in and through social relations, of effects that shapes the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances and fate”. Scott’s sentiment was augmented by Barnett and Duval (2005:39-75) who wrote that it is not enough to just consider the production of effects but how they work against or in favor of actors.

Weber (1947:52) defines power as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which the probability exists”. Weber’s sentiment

clearly indicates that one actor does not care about the means that he will use to have his own will done. Even if it means that there would be any kind of resistance from his subject, then the actor is ready to use force to make his will happen.

Dahl (1957:202) defines power as “the ability of *A* to get *B* alter his action in a particular direction he would not have otherwise done” More elaborately, Dahl went on to establish that unless there is a relationship between parties (people, organizations or states), power can never be realized. In fact he termed power as a relation.

Guzzini (2002), defines power as “the ability of *A* through *x* to make *B* to do action *y*”. In his elaborations, he used an example of *A* having a gun and the skills to use it as well; this is the capacity to make *B* comply. According to him, if *A* has the gun and the skills to operate it, and has not taken any action towards causing *B* to do something, then power has not been exercised.

Miller’s (1982:1-2) writing defines power as “the capacity to produce changes which include activities such as nurturing and empowering others. This definition marks a great shift from the mainstream definitions and understanding of power, where power is taken as a general capacity to manipulate others, even against their will. Barnett and Duval (2005:49) reveal that out of all the definitions offered by the scholars of international relations, about the concept of power, Dahl’s formulation is the most elaborate. The three features of Dahlian definition are; first, there must be intention in the part of *A*; if *B* mistakenly changes his action with the impression that *A* wants it to change; that is not power. Secondly, for power to be realized, there must at least a conflict of desires between *A* and *B*; *B* must desire a different outcome from that of *A*. Thirdly, *A* must have the resources at his disposal to compel *B* to alter his actions.

Dahl’s formulation was augmented by Bachrach and Baratz (1962:952) who presented that power will still be considered to exist even when *A* is not aware of how his actions are affecting *B*. For example, if a state, say Kenya, changes its policies regarding the quality of goods to be imported with the intention to protect its environment, the source market and the manufactures will automatically be affected, even though, without the consciousness of Kenya. All the definitions put together, it is clear that for power to be exercised there must be more than one actor in a relationship, whether direct or diffuse. There also must be some form of means to influence. For example, for *A* to be able to make *B* change his will and adopt his own, *A* must really poses the capacity to influence *B*. These manipulations come, mainly, in two ways, corrective or persuasive influence (Scot, 2007:25-39) Corrective and persuasive influences are the sources of the elementary forms of power, hard and soft respectively. Subsequently, the “power over” and the “power to” are anchored on the very principles of power as domination and as capacity respectively.

The corrective and persuasive influences have notably been a source of diversion in understanding between the mainstream and second stream research. While realists, who identify themselves as mainstream, have been connected to the corrective influence, the liberals, feminists and others have been linked to the persuasive style of influence.

### **Taxonomy of Power**

Just as the concept of power is still under a lot of contestation, the typology of power is yet to be agreed upon by scholars of international relations. Well, this work is not about to offer any solution or settlement on the disagreements with regards to the typologies of power. Scholars have listed types of power that range from compulsory power, normative power, institutional power, concerted power, coercive power, productive power, network power and many more.

Though some of these types of power are closely related, as defined by various scholars, they are essentially different from the dimensions in which they are viewed. Barnett and Duval (2005: 44-45) made a distinction of power in two analytical dimensions; that it can be “expressed as interaction or constitution as well as specificity of social relation – direct or diffuse”.

Barnett and Duval first dimension is concerned with “whether power works in interaction or social constitution” and his second dimension that is “concerned with specific – direct and immediate – are the social relations through which power works” have generated four types of power. These four types are compulsory power, institutional power, structural power and productive power.

On the other hand, Lewis and College (2012:3-15) expressed their four fold typologies in two dimensions. While the first dimension looks at power as control, coordination and commitment, the second identifies power to be involved in institutionalization. Under the first dimension, Lewis and College place three types of power; these included coercive power, bargaining power and concerted power; and under the second dimension, they placed institutionalized power. The dimensions that have been employed by Barnett and Duval, and Lewis and College depict different paradigms in which the concept of power can be understood. This work will give a few types of power, which have been commonly used to increase the understanding of the concept.

### **Compulsory Power**

This kind of power as is called by Barnett and Duval (2005:49) is very closely related, if not the same as coercive power. Compulsory power entails a relationship between actors where one of them shapes, directly, the circumstances or actions of the other(s). This fact is echoed by Weber (1947:52) who describes the typology that in a relationship, power a probability that an actor has his ways over other actors regardless of resistance.

Blau (1964) in his writing indicates that for compulsory power to be realized, influence of others must be achieved through negative sanctions. Compulsory or coercive power is zero-sum, whatever strength gained by one actor in a competitive relationship is equal to what the other actor has lost (Lewis and College, 2012: 4).

### **Bargaining Power**

Bargaining power occurs in relationship where none of the actors have the capacity to impose his will unilaterally on the other(s). In this case the only viable option is for the actors is to create a platform for negotiation (Lewis and College, 2012: 9). Bargaining power has some similarities with compulsory power in that both typologies are competitive, depends on resources and zero-sum in nature.

After negotiation and agreements are made by parties, the distribution of power can range from even or extremely unequal. This distribution depends on the importance of the issue negotiated to the actors and the resources that every party willing to part with.

### **Structural Power**

Actors are placed in some relationship by structures where the social positions they occupy directly shape their interests. In structural power the conditions and fates of existing actors are shaped in two ways; one, structures do not necessarily allocate actors equal privileges, it assigns different capacities, positions and advantages; two, the social structure apart from shaping self understanding and subjective interest of actors, it also constitute them and their capacities (Barnett and Duval, 2005:53). Master-slave relationship is a good example of structural relation where positions where structures have allocated unequal privileges, advantages and positions to the actors.

### **Institutionalized Power**

Institutionalized power as described by Lewis and College (2012: 15) is “the generalized and institutionalized capacity to govern within an existing political community, to provide essential collective goods like order, security, and to pursue collective goals”. As the name suggests this type of power is institutionalized and delegated; power does not belong to those who are exercising, it belongs to a group, but just exercised by individual(s) who are empowered by the power owners.

Calling it institutional power Barnett and Duval (2005:51-52) added that the exercise of influence is diffuse or in indirect ways and acts through rules, regulations and procedures that define that institution. Actor *A* is not in possession of any resources to alter *B*'s actions but rather it occupy a certain positions, in the institutional arrangement, where his action influences the actions of *B*.

### **Concerted Power**

Concerted power is “the capacity of a group to establish and or shape political order or to change the contours of an existing political order (Lewis and College, 2012: 12)”. This type of power depends on numbers and conviction of the member and not on resources and strengths of actors. In a nut shell concerted power is the ability of actors to act in concert.(Arendt, 1972:141) However, concerted power can be used to pursue other types of influences. For example the concerted power by a regional organization can be used to bargaining with other entities or be used to increase coercive power. Concerted power is not a property of one entity or actor but belongs to the entire group; it also lacks hierarchical order within a group from which it is created. East African Community (EAC) is a good example of concerted power. EAC has come together as a strong business block whose bargaining power has increased because of its economies of scale. First, the idea of the East African Visa has been able to tremendously impact on tourism within the region. Secondly, EAC has been engaging European Union (EU) and other regional and international markets while negotiating for business deals. This is a clear manifestation of how concerted power can be used to increase bargaining power.

North Atlantic Trade Organization (NATO), an organization made of states pursuing security matters, is one of the worlds' powerful institutions just because of concerted power. However, NATO is known for using its concerted power to increase coercive influence all over the world. A classical example is the air strikes that were perpetrated by NATO in Libya.

### **Productive Power**

Productive power is about diffuse and social processes that are not directly controlled by specific actors. This typology of influence relates to the Foucaultian theory of ‘knowledge and power’ where he believed power is diffuse rather than concentrated. In the words of Barnett and Duval (2005:55), “productive power is the constitution of all the social subjects with various social powers through systems and knowledge and discursive practices of broad and general social scope”.

### **Forms of Power**

Instruments of power can be deployed in different forms; it can be expressed in varied ways. It is this ways of deployment and expression of power that, in this work will be called forms of power. The various forms of power have been sources of great debates among the groups, calling themselves mainstream and the second stream researchers. Niccolo Machiavelli advised the Italian prince that it was better for him to be feared than to be loved by his followers; Nye (2004:1) thinks it is better to be both – feared and loved. What Machiavelli called “feared” is what others have referred as ‘hard power’, and what he meant by “loved” is conventionally called ‘soft power’; and whatever Joseph Nye expressed as “both feared and loved”, has been branded by scholars as ‘smart power’. The main forms of power, as shall be seen in this work are the soft and hard power. Soft and hard forms of power are essentially differentiated by the nature of resources deployed in each. However, a rather new form of power, smart power, has just been coined by Joseph Nye, who is fighting for its recognition in the academia.

### **Hard Power**

Hard power is the oldest form of influence that is easily experienced and noticed than any other form. Hard power is also called coercive power. Coercive power, manifest itself in concrete and practical ways and its effects are easier to measure. Hard power is the capacity of an actor to get things done through the use of economic and military resources. Essentially, hard power heavily relies on resources, whether military or economic. Military power will give actors the capacity to threaten or actually to use force while the economic resources will enable players to use their superiority to positively or negatively change the wills of others through bribes or sanctions. Hard power also is properly manifested where asymmetrical relationship exists between players. When such a status is present between the parties, the subject has no

option but to comply, a situation that Hirschman (1970) calls neither “voice” nor “exit”. But finally, hard power will depend on the actor’s capacity to carry out his threat, economic or military.

As just hinted above, economic power can be used either positively or negatively. For a positive economic influence to occur, rewards must be dangled to the subject in exchange for compliance. Others have named such a system as “carrot”. Here power is derived from one’s capacity to buy his way. Interestingly, the exercise of positive power superiority, is a symbiotic engagement where both *A* and *B* are happy; *A* is happy to follow *B*’s will as long as he receives his reward; and *B* also is happy with *A* because he is able to manipulate him to do whatever he wants. A good example of how positive economic power manifests is a relationship between a chief executive officer (CEO) and his assistant. It is possible for the two to be both happy. The personal assistant can be promised a better pay pack if he works overdrive to deliver a report in time. If the assistant delivers the report in time, he will be paid his allowance. The CEO will be happy for having his report in time and his assistant will be happy as well because of the allowance he is paid. Consequently, economic superiority can be deployed negatively. This is where *A* threatens to withdraws economic benefits that are enjoyed by *B*, in a current situation. Negative economic power occurs when *A* has the capacity to discontinue the economic survival of *B* and hence gaining obedience of the subject. Using the CEO and his assistant example, negative economic power is realized when the CEO threatens to fire his assistant for failing to provide him with a report before a stipulated time. Given that the personal assistant to the CEO has a family to provide for, rent to pay and to meet his other needs, he would not afford to lose his job. Therefore, he has to work overnight to ensure that he provides the report, in time, to his CEO. Moving away from sociology to international relations, the concept of hard power, which is the foundation of realism, is used by states in their day to day engagement. The United States and other developed countries have been using their economic inducements and sanctions to influence developing nations to adopt their democratic ideologies. On the flip side of the coin, military power is a key aspect of hard power. It is a situation where *A* uses physical violence to force *B* into doing whatever he would not have done. Coercive power involves issuing of threats and in the end, if the subject fails to comply, then such threats is going to be effected.

A proper example is the use of force, by the US, in Iraq to try and stop it from manufacturing weapons of mass destruction. Sometimes, threats do work in influencing the subject; but in other situations, the implementation of the threats is effected, this is where real violence is manifested.

#### **Soft Power**

The concept of soft power has generated a heated debate from both the realists and the liberals. While the realists do not recognize soft power as a form of power, the liberals are struggling to bring it on board, academically, as new form of power. The debate gets more complicated and even confusing when a scholar, from mainstream research, like Carr (1964) acknowledges that “international power has three categories – military, economic and the power over opinion”.

By making such acknowledgements, Carr accepts the existence of soft power when he mentioned the power over opinion. However, most realists do not see soft power as a form of power. Kagan (2003) argued that there is nothing like soft power. Soft power according to Kagan is just relinquishment of power.

Defined, soft power is if you can “restrict my preferences by setting the agenda in such a way that my more extravagant wishes seem too unrealistic to pursue; or you can appeal to a sense of attraction, love or duty in our relationship and appeal to our shared values about the justness of contributing to those shared values and purposes” (Mansbridge, 1990).

Nye (2004) challenges the hard power advocates by demonstrating that it is sometimes possible for actors to attain desired outcomes from subjects without deploying threats or payment. Looking from an IR perspective, a state is able to obtain outcome in international system just because other countries admire their values, culture and would want to follow it. At a social level, soft power can be the power of attraction and seduction. At times as human beings, we are pulled by people who act attractively, have good manners and we sometimes wish we could be like them. Looked from another paradigm, legitimacy can be used to attract influence. If a country does things that are legitimate, it likely to attract a following without using threats or bribes.

#### **Is Soft Power Dependent of Hard Power?**

It is true that hard power resources can be a source of soft influence. Soft power as previously defined is the ability of one state to attract another country to do its way. For example when a country has big economies and well organized large and a sophisticated military, it is termed as a successful nation. Well, everybody wants to be associated with success. The economic and military might of a state is likely to be a source of attraction to other countries. Consequently, when a state loses its economic and military resources, it is likely to lose its attractiveness. This is true because nobody would like to be associated with a state that is failing. However, the relationship between soft and hard forms of power is imperfect because there are instances where the two are tending towards different directions of the scale.

The dependency notion has been seriously criticized by Joseph Nye, who has argued that soft power is not, in any way dependent on hard power. Giving the example of the Soviet Union, Nye (2004) demonstrated how soft power can decline while hard power is rising. The Soviet Union had a good soft power before its invasion of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. After invasion of the two states, Soviet Union’s soft power declined drastically while its hard power (economic and military resources) was increasing tremendously.

Nye’s argument that soft power is not dependent on hard power is clearly demonstrated in states like Vatican that is very small in size and economy. It is also possible for a state to be more attractive, than other states that are endowed with resources, because of their international and national policies.

Norway, a “small” state, in terms of economics and military compared to other powerful nations, has built its soft power capacity through peacemaking all over the world. Through its Lutheran foundation, the Norwegian government has extended its peaceful arm to Colombia, Philippines, Guatemala, the Middle East, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Cyprus, Somalia and the

Balkans. These peaceful ventures have earned Norway a considerable amount of soft power (Bruni, 2002). Other states that enjoy significant amounts of soft power, but do not have a military, include Costa Rica and Switzerland

### **Smart Power**

Smart power is defined as “the capacity of an actor to combine the elements of both hard and soft power – in a way that they are mutually reinforced such that actors’ purposes are advanced effectively and efficiently” (Wilson, 2008:110-124). Matteo (2011) sums up the definition of smart power as “basically striking a balance between the three Ds, development, defense and diplomacy. A lot of debate has been put across to try and create an understanding whether smart power is another form of power – separate from soft and hard. Joseph Nye tried to create an understanding by saying that Smart power is just an approach of applying the two forms of power, soft and hard, and not a new form of power.

The presidency of Barack Obama has fully embraced the approach of smart power. This came in the recognition that hard or military power would not always provide all solutions to the problems of the United States of America.

### **Faces of Power**

The concept of power has been indicated to be having several faces, at least three as has been defined by scholars of IR. The first face is that one of Dahl in his book of governance, New Haven. Dahl anticipated that power is the ability of one state to influence the decision making of another state. This first face of power is what has been described by Lukes (2004:16) as the ‘pluralist’ view or the ‘one-dimensional view’.

Bachrach and Baratz accused Dahl for neglecting the second face of power, that of one state suppressing the agenda of another state from reaching the decision table (Baldwin 2013:276) Therefore, they came up with the second face as and described it as follows;

“But power is also exercised when *A* devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to *A*. To the extent that *A* succeeds in doing this, *B* is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to *A*’s set of preferences” (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962:948)

This second face of power is what has been named as two-dimensional view by Steven Lukes.

Lukes (2004:25) acknowledges that the “one-dimensional” and the “two-dimensional” views of power have depicted some progressive maturity in terms of fully defining the concept; he however, feels that they are still inadequate.

While criticizing the two views for being too committed to behaviourism and too individualistic, Lukes (2004:28) offered a three-dimensional view, which provides an avenue for many ways in which issues are not politicized. This saw Lukes develop a third face of power which upholds the ability of one state to shape another country’s preference and opt for a new view.

### **Measurement of Power**

Before it can be said that *A* has “power over”, “power with” or “power to” in reference to *B*, there has to be a way of measuring power. A lot of cases have been made while expressing power in relative conditions. Power is measured by comparing two actors or states, for the matter of IR. But this relative measurement becomes a problem when parties are closely rated in terms of power, when asymmetry is minimal.

It would be more difficult to say which state is powerful when comparing countries like France and Germany than when matching up countries like US and Kenya. When differences in terms of rating are huge, it is easy to compare and pick stronger and weaker states than when the asymmetry is comparatively small.

It has been of great difficulty to find an agreeable way of measuring power. Scholars of IR have been wishing they could establish a formula where they can rank state from the highest to the lowest in terms of power. However, most of the indices suggested try to use country’s resources like military, gross national product (GNP) and population as a measure of power. (Merritt and Zinnes 1988:141-151)

Nye and Armitage (2006:6) augment that in the past power has been getting measured with the use of criteria like population size, economic strength, social stability, territory and military resources.

Despite a lot of work on the concept of power, many scholars including Waltz failed to indicate how state power can be measured. Morgenthau avers that war winning capabilities, though unstated, are the main measure of country’s power. This paradigm only takes care of the realist point of view and completely ignores the power of attraction (soft power).

Equating resources to power may sometimes be a real disappointment. To translate resources into power, states need a lot of skills and strategies. As Dahl (1991:27) explains “it is difficult enough to estimate relative influence within a particular scope and domain; it is by no means clear how we can ‘add up’ influence over many scopes and domains in order to arrive at total, or aggregate, influence”.

### **Balance of Power**

Just as the concept of power itself, balance of power (Balance of power) has provoked a lot of discussion and disagreements in terms of its meaning. Giving a simple example, take an English dictionary and look at the different meanings of the word “power” and then try to see how many times the word “balance” has been defined as well. It is evident that each of the two words has at least more than one meaning.

This disagreement or rather many definitions is what Sheehan (2004:1) agrees that the problem with the concept of Balance of power is not that there is no meaning but because there are too many meanings. Ernest Haas unveiled eight definitions while Wight prescribed the concept of power in nine different meanings.

Nevertheless, even as the concept of Balance of power is laden with lot contradictions, it is important that it is studied because it is a fundamental issue in international politics. "The study of Balance of power is now important than ever because the world is evolving into an international system in which balance and multipolarity will have more importance than have had in the past years"(Healy and Stein, 1973:33-61). Healy and Stein presented that the aspect of Balance of power will always prevail as long as there is a system of multiple states interaction.

In an international interaction, the elements (states) are meant to be maintained and preserved in the system. Morgenthau (1998:237-257) concedes that the elements to be balanced are entitled to existence; otherwise there would be no balance of power after all. Balance of power ensures that preponderance is not achieved at the expense of the survival, rights and interests of others.

This concept of creating stability and preserving all the elements in a system, making sure that no single element gains ascendancy over the others is what is defined by Morgenthau as Balance of power. This position – of stability where no element suffers because of the other, is called equilibrium.

Equilibrium is a term that some scholars of international relations have equated it to Balance of power. As Morgenthau (1998:237-257) puts "the means to employ equilibrium consist of allowing the different elements to pursue their opposing tendencies up to the point where the tendency of one is not so strong to overcome the tendencies of others, but strong enough to prevent others from overcoming its own"

Recognizing Balance of power as the oldest and a fundamental concept in contemporary IR, Naseer et al. (2012) gave a general definition as "one or more states power being used to balance that of one or groups of states" To get a better understanding, this work will give the several meanings of Balance of power, using the model of Ernest Haas. In his work, Haas tried to summarize the meaning of Balance of power by saying that "it is a system in which each participating state has a role to play in an international arena" (Haas 1953:442-477)

First, Ernst described Balance of power to mean distribution of power. In this description, Balance of power is used to mean a political power distribution at any given time. Balance of power is different from the balancing of weights, which equality has to be there. Statesmen agree that power can be balanced even with other elements having more strength than others.

Secondly Haas defined Balance of power to mean equilibrium. Equilibrium is a state by which elements of a system are able to co-exist in a balanced situation without pressurizing one another. Equilibrium is a dynamic situation that is very difficult to attain. While countries in an international system are striving, each to attain more power or to balance off, the state of equilibrium is upset and readjustment is done.

This difficulty in sustaining equilibrium drove Laswell (1935) to advocate for the use of the word "Balancing" instead of "Balance". This is because, he argues, a balance can never be reached because any attempt towards equilibrium is frustrated by other factors which interfere with the balance.

Third, Haas defined balance to mean hegemony. In his illustrations, he argues that every element (state) in an international arena is fighting for a balance that is in their favour. This kind of definition derives itself from the realist point of argument where states believe that they need to be a little stronger than their enemy if they are to be secure.

Fourth, Haas also defined balance of power as "stability" and "peace". His sentiment does not connote that balance of power is equivalent to peace or brings peace and stability but rather, it means that whenever there is equilibrium, peace and stability is realized.

Fifth, Haas also described balance of power as "instability" and "war". Here, Haas understands that as long as equilibrium is not attained and sustained, as long as there are still some power related issues to be sorted out, there will always be instability or war. On his sixth definition, Haas defined Balance of power to mean "power politics". Haas argues that "the struggle for balance of power is just the struggle for power and the word balance means exertion of power" The seventh definition that was put across, Haas depicted balance of power to mean "universal law of history". By this, he buys the paradigm that states' continuous natural struggle for preponderance is countered by natural resistance for such attempts. When states in an international system continue to struggle for preponderance and others resist from being dominated, there is bound to be a balance between the two opposing forces. Last but not least, Haas defines balance as a "system" and "guide" to policy making. This, he cites as the deliberate behavior of decision making.

### ***Methods of Balance of Power***

Hans Morgenthau unveiled a variety of methods that power may be balanced by elements in international interaction. These included divide and rule, compensation, armaments and alliances. Divide and rule is a situation where one or group of states divide their enemies so that their power can be broken and hence easily manipulated. France wanted Germany to remain divided so that its power could not be accumulated; the Soviet Union did not support the unification of Europe that formed western bloc because a united region would have more power than when it is divided Compensation is where an entity or a state acquires other states territories the same way the European nations scrambled for Africa. Then, a state that could scramble to acquire more territories was considered to be more powerful.

The race for armaments is one, in fact a critical method, of balancing power. One state tries to keep up or out do another by developing arms that are more sophisticated. This trend generates unending race of arms acquisition. Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and USA offer a classical example of arm race that took the better part of the cold war period, which occurred after the Second World War.

Lastly Morgenthau submits that formation of alliances is a crucial method of balancing of power. Here, states balance the power of their enemies through the formation of alliances. Alliances is increasing state's or group of states' power by withholding the powers from being added to the enemy or by adding own power to the power of others.

### **III. CONCEPT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

Before understanding conflict management, it is, first, important that the word conflict is well understood. Conflict refers to the underlying issue in dispute between parties (Okoth, 2000:1-15) Conflict is also defined as disagreement or contention that arises between interested parties because of an issue or activity. It actually occurs when one party takes a position that is incompatible with the position that the other party takes (Wanyama, 2000:31) For conflict to occur parties do not have to be necessarily engaged in behavior which is mutually incompatible, conflict is present as long as there is a situation where parties perceive goal incompatibility (Bercovitch, et al , 2009)

Zartman and Ramussen (1997) defined conflict as an escalated competition that arise between parties whose concerns are to gain advantage in the area of resources, needs or power, whereby at least one of these parties understands that their relationship is based on mutual goals that are incompatible.

Conflict management therefore, is best understood as attempts put in place to contain an ongoing conflict between politically motivated actors (Butler, 2009:13-14). In a general understanding, conflict management seeks to make an ongoing conflict less damaging to the parties involved. Conversely some authors like Azem (2005) criticize this conventional understanding of conflict management terming it as narrow.

For this work, a more elaborate definition of the conflict management has been made to include various dimensions of conflict and peace processes. These dimensions include conflict resolution, prevention, and transformation.

### **IV. THE LINK BETWEEN POWER AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

“Power is at the very core of interaction among nations” (Gallaroti, 2011:3). “Distribution of power explains states’ behavior and the outcome of their interaction” (Guzini, 2009:4). These two statements are weighty and need to be unfolded. The statements generally mean that whenever a collection of states are pursuing anything; be it security, business, peacemaking and conflict management, the concept of power must come into play and influence the direction in which the ‘international game’ is played.

The direction in which the concept of power leads the peacemaking and conflict management processes is dynamic. Distribution of power and the instruments of influence deployed by a state really impact on the conflict processes. It is evident from the case of South Africa in the southern subcontinent; the case of Nigeria in the western Africa; the USA globally; and Kenya and Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa that states with relatively more power have been able to take initiatives to make or destroy peace.

However, what is interesting is the fact that the success or the failure of the conflict management process is highly dependent on the form of power deployed; it seems that in the contemporary IR, unilateralism is ineffective. Kagwanja (2006) demonstrated that the Mandela’s unilateral attempts to peacemaking failed to be fruitful.

Southall (2006:4-5) continues to elaborate that even though SA had acquired a lot of soft power because of President Mandela’s figure – that of a reconciliatory and a forgiver, Nelson Mandela regime opted for a unilateral system which did not succeed in brokering peace in Zaire Congo. It was until the time of President Mbeki that the approach of multilateralism was put into use.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) conflict between President Mobutu Sese Seko and his rival Laurent Kabila, exuded full dynamics of balance of power in action. While South African Development Community (SADC) headed by SA tried to experiment its unilateral skills in managing the war, the other members of the southern Africa sub-continental body, balanced off the power of their hegemony, SA.

Balance of power, it seems, is the most important concept in as far as the influence of conflict and peacemaking processes is concerned. As Haas puts it, state of equilibrium, which is a status quo, is what states protect the most (Haas, 1953:442-477). Whenever there is war or struggle between elements of an international system, the result – win or loss, is likely to increase the political power of the winner and lowers that of the loser. This shift of status upsets the equilibrium and hence calls for readjustment by all the elements to acquire a new position.

The most powerful states in an international system, say US in a global perspective and SA or Nigeria from the African sub-regional point of view, will try and guard the equilibrium that favors them; this forces them to intervene to any conflict within their scope so that they can maintain their status quo.

The suspicion between US and Iraq that existed because of the arms which were being developed by President Saddam made George W. Bush to quickly support Iran during its conflict with Iraq. The US intervention quelled the conflict that could have lasted longer. In real sense the US entered into the first gulf war, not because they loved Iran, but because they got an excuse to hit Iraq and weaken it, and tilting the equilibrium of power towards itself (Amin T.K.Z, 2013:305).

### **V. CONCLUSION**

It is evident that the concept of power is very elusive and has elicited a lot of disagreement, as far as its definition is concerned, among several scholars of IR. Different scholars have tried to define and describe the concept of power in different taxonomies, dimensions, faces and forms. This article has not made any settlement of these differences and disputes from the various streams of researchers but has just tried and analyzed all the views for ease of understanding.

While power is difficult to define, Balance of power is more difficult and confusing to understand. This confusion is because the concept of Balance of power has been presented in too many meanings. As evident, Haas presented Balance of power in eight different meanings while Wight made them nine. However the concept of Balance of power is very important in IR because it determines states interactions and any of their outcomes in the international arena.

Balance of power can be achieved in international arena through internal or external means. Internal means include states developing their own capacities to counter that of their enemy while external strategies include forming alliances to increase the power of the bloc to beat that of their adversaries.

Indeed, it cannot be an overstatement to concede that the concept of power relates to peacemaking and conflict management in international politics. In fact all international politics, which include conflicts, is all about power – balance of power. This relationship has been backed up by the sentiment that power influences all states interaction and the outcome of their interactions. While giving examples of the US and SA, this work has demonstrated how the aspect of power has accelerated or decelerated the peacemaking and conflict management processes.

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Saul Kipchirchir Marigat. "Power And Conflict Management: Is There A Relationship?" *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* 22.8 (2017): 08-15.