

## **Crystallization of Power over Time in International Organizations**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The concept of power will be scrutinised by taking into consideration its relationship with culture, leadership, and motivation concepts through utilizing critical ethnography and conducting twenty-two semi-structured interviews, four focus group sessions and three-day non-participant observations in four International Organizations (IOs). McClelland's power need and the GLOBE study's power distance shall be at the focus of attention. In order to clarify these terms, the specific definition and understanding of power by each organization, is explored, assessed and then the theoretical dimensions of power is examined through the comments made by each participant vis-à-vis a selected Machiavellian phrase. It was realized that soft and hard powers form the dynamics of authority in the working environment of IOs. What is more, even though IOs were established with the Kantian notion of deontological ethics as their base, surprisingly and per contra, except for the ITC staff and one UNCTAD staff, Machiavellian teleological approach is more dominant among the power notions of the staff.*

**Keywords:** *Power, international management, organizational culture.*

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There are not any unique methods that can be applied to all studies of IOs, which concern power aspects in the existing literature. The main trend is using mix studies of qualitative and quantitative research with variant methods of interviews and surveys. Nevertheless, ethnographic methodological studies regarding IOs mostly prefer qualitative inquiry. Furthermore, this research has used critical ethnography as a methodology. As regards methods, it is believed that semi-structured interviews for supervisors, focus groups for staff, and non-participant observation for the physical settings of subject areas, would provide more in-depth and diverse perspectives for the research process.

On the other hand, during the research process, rigour and ethical considerations were more or less imperceptible, but served as its main dynamics. Rigour and ethics are not something that one could understand just by viewing a part of a research. It is rather about the whole process. With the absence of rigour and ethics, it would be very difficult to consider a study as scientific. Therefore, in order to develop rigour and ethics, it is essential to consider all research designs and their interactions with each other. As a consequence of putting on the lenses of phenomenological philosophical perspective, and in lieu of reliability, generalization, validity and objectivity, the researcher ensured the rigour of research through utilizing the concepts of trustworthiness and reflexivity. An analytical approach, termed “ethnographic content analysis” (ECA), will be used in this research by following a reflexive approach. Gathered data through utilizing interviews, focus groups and observations, will be broken down into meaningful terms, referred to as codes, typologies, and themes.

### **Machiavelli, Foucault and Lukes**

The Machiavellian leadership view is not based on moral values, as power is placed in the centre of this concept (Galie and Bopst, 2006). In order

to acquire and maintain power over others, Machiavelli does not make any objections to manipulating the truth (Grams and Rogers, 1990; Wilson et al., 1996; Brown and Trevino, 2006; Kessler et al., 2010; Hartog and Belschak, 2012) or becoming ruthless (Harris, 2001; Swain, 2002; Zettler and Solga, 2013; and, Berlin, 2013). Even though Machiavellian understanding may not be applicable in today’s business world, he does provide a realistic picture of what makes a leader. In reality, instead of developing a comprehensive leadership theory, he provides various strategies to the leader of his era, *The Prince*, on how to become more powerful under the complex political conditions in his contemporary context. Not only does he advocate for leaders to use hard power, such as ruling with an iron fist, but he recommends benefiting from soft power as well, such as the use of manipulation, which is reminiscent of Lukes’ (2005) third dimension of power. The Machiavellian leadership understanding is based on the assumption of superiority of those in power and requires a strict hierarchical distance between the leader and followers. Furthermore, there is no concern about cultural diversity or individual differences of the followers as he views them all to be the same and governable by one leader.

Foucault (1980) criticized ascribing power as a feature of leadership. He viewed power as a form of domination and took on an inter-subjective understanding of it through evaluating perspectives of both institutions and individuals. While institutions effect power over individuals (Howell, 2013), individuals also yield power through the impact of their social networks. Therefore, linkage of power with knowledge gains importance in this understanding. Existence of power is dependent on the production of knowledge:

“Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make it-self true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true.' Knowledge, once

used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. Thus, there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations (Foucault, 1977:27).”

Foucault (1980) infers that power evolves from a hard form, such as physical violence or material constraints, into a soft form, such as exercising subtle coercion through a surveillance system. Hereby, observation with the factor of consistently obtaining and maintaining knowledge, especially over followers, makes power more effective. On the other hand, even though Lukes (2005) agrees with Foucault’s criticism of the Machiavellian power archetype, and reflects this by presenting power as domination, he also criticizes Foucault’s power perception as being too general and abstract. Therefore, he narrows Foucault’s power definition and develops his own three dimensions of power. The first dimension lies in the decision-making process, especially when there is an obvious conflict of subjective interest. The second dimension appears as controlling the agenda in both decision and non-decision making processes. The reflections of Foucauldian power and knowledge-linkage are the third dimension. In order to exercise power over others, knowledge can be changed or shaped and a false consciousness created through socialization by institutions. This dimension is also part of the Machiavellian understanding. To be able to convince followers, a leader can manipulate interests and change the nature of truth.

### **Methodology and Methods**

Methods are the specific techniques and procedures which are utilized for collecting and analysing data. All philosophical positions or

paradigms of inquiry can use a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Even still, researchers holding different philosophical positions can utilize the different research approaches available regarding the same phenomenon. It is very common to see quantitative methods using surveys and structured interviews in positivist and post-positivist paradigms. Then again, qualitative data is mostly used through interviews, focus groups, and observation in phenomenological studies, like critical theory, constructivism, and participatory paradigms.

Critical ethnography is utilized to investigate both the experiences of group members and the social factors that contribute to those experiences (Cook, 2005). Furthermore, in this study, group member perspectives were explored through the utilization of interviews and focus groups. Alternatively, in order to understand the social factors at work in IOs, in addition to the interviews and focus groups, and as a third method, observation was also included in the empirical portion of the research.

According to the size of organizations and consent of participants from the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the World Health Organization (WHO), five or six supervisors and staff for interviews and focus groups were selected; well-balanced from ten different cultural clusters of the GLOBE study. Furthermore, according to the *North American Industry Classification System*<sup>1</sup>, the researcher divided organizations into two groups whereby the employment band is more or less around five hundred staff members. The general population of the WHO, and the WTO, number more than five hundred, but on the other hand, the

Its employment bands are accepted by many private sector companies, public organizations, and research institutions.

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<sup>1</sup>The North American Industry Classification System presents highly reliable and valuable assistance to companies to classify their business establishments.

UNCTAD and ITC have less employed members than that. Thereby, six supervisors, and the same number of staff, participated as a sampling population in the research for each of the former (WHO/WTO), and five supervisors, and the same number of staff, from each of the latter (UNCTAD/ITC) mentioned organizations.

In addition, supervisors were categorized as junior, middle and senior level supervisors. However, managerial level categorization of IOs is rather different than classic private sector understanding. In IOs, it is possible that even someone who holds a P5 level might manage not even one staff member. This study explores power concept, and so, managers are referred to as supervisors, and in lieu of their cadre level, they are categorized according to how many staff members they manage. If the ratio of supervisor to staff is less than 0.3, then: If a supervisor manages between one to nine staff members, they are categorized as a *junior* supervisor; if between ten to fourteen, as *mid-level*; and, if more than fifteen, they fall under *high-level* supervisor categorization. Regarding this ratio, the UNCTAD ( $100/339 = 0.29$ ) and WHO ( $400/1600 = 0.25$ ) were evaluated under this grouping. Two executive, two middle, and two junior level supervisors (one junior level from the UNCTAD) were accepted into the sample groupings from these organizations. On the other hand, if the ratio of supervisor to staff is more than 0.3: Supervisors who managed between one to three staff members were categorized as junior supervisors; between four to nine staff, as mid-level; and if ten or more staff, they fell under high-level supervisor categorization. Regarding this ratio, the ITC ( $100/200 = 0.5$ ) and the WTO ( $200/440 = 0.45$ ) were evaluated under this grouping, and two executive, two middle and two junior level supervisors (one junior level from the ITC) were accepted in the samplings from these organizations. Similarly, in order to convey

variant perspectives, supervisors were selected from different departments as well.

Furthermore, except for these three classifications (national cultural backgrounds, managerial levels and different departments), no other prerequisites, like age or sex, for example, were considered during the selection process of sampling for interviews. Conversely, for focus groups, in addition to selecting samples from different national/cultural backgrounds and different departments, in order to gain diverse perspectives, six or five staff (non-managerial positions) from various ages and experiences were included.

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness demonstrates the quality of a research's findings. It also exhibits to the reader that the research is worth paying attention to. Conventional researchers use internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity to understand trustworthiness by looking into four characteristic inquiries: a. Truth value, b. Applicability, c. Consistency, and, d. Neutrality (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Lincoln and Guba (1985) found these conventional criteria inappropriate to phenomenological research and instead developed four alternative criteria: a. Credibility, b. Transferability, c. Dependability, and, d. Confirmability. Four years after publishing their study, Guba and Lincoln revised their findings and added a fifth criterion, namely authenticity (Schwandt, 2001).

### **Transferability**

Transferability is similar to positivist generalization or external validity criterion. It is utilized in phenomenological studies through checking the applicability of findings to similar contexts. Guba and Lincoln (1989) offer to use "thick description" as a major technique while providing transferability in a research. Thick description benefits from combining various methods, such as, interviews, observations, and focus groups. The researcher fulfilled requirements of thick description through

effectively utilizing these three methods in this research. Furthermore, during participant selection processes, members from different cultural clusters, and a number of departments, were included for participation in the inquiry. As a result, the researcher brought a thick interpretation understanding which ensured a database that demonstrated the possibility of the findings' transferability.

This investigation's empirical component was conducted at the ITC, UNCTAD, the WTO, and the WHO. These organizations are generally classified as IOs, yet specifically; represent the organizational characteristics of intergovernmental organizations. Hence, the findings of this research can be transferable for other intergovernmental organizations as well. Likewise, the ITC, the UNCTAD, and the WTO are sister organizations which work in the arena of trade and development. The UNCTAD completely conforms to the UN system, the WTO has its own regulations and dynamics, and the ITC falls somewhere in the middle. In addition, the three organizations work rather closely and complement each other in the trade and development arena; the UNCTAD falls mostly under research and theory. The WTO focuses on regulatory rules and principles. Finally, the ITC is mostly concerned with the practice of equitation through working with SMEs in the field. Therefore, the findings of this study can be easily transferred to trade and development based intergovernmental organizations. The UNCTAD is a UN body organization, the WHO is a specialized agency of the UN, and the ITC gets half of its budget from the UN, while utilizing her human resource management system. Therefore, the participation of three different UN bodies in the research can benefit the transferability of the findings to other UN-linked institutions as well.

### **Credibility**

Credibility is similar to internal validity. However, in lieu of focusing on generally accepted reality, credibility focuses on how the

researcher portrays realities that were constructed by participants (Guba and Lincoln, 1986). In order to provide credibility in any qualitative research, seven main techniques can be utilized: a. Using prolonged engagement ; b. Persistent observation ; c. Triangulation ; d. Providing an external check during the inquiry process (peer debriefing); e. Refining working hypotheses when information becomes available (negative case analysis); f. Reevaluating preliminary findings against archived raw data (progressive subjectivity); and, g. Providing member checks from where the data was originally collected (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

In this research, prolonged engagement and triangulation techniques were utilized to provide credibility. Very frequently, an ethnographic research benefits from prolonged engagement techniques. Therefore, this technique has been employed actively during this research. Firstly, before commencing interviews, to enable building trust with the participants, the researcher made family visits to some of them during their religious celebration days. In addition, participants were met in work and out of work, some sociality took place. These activities became pretty useful to break the ice, take the tension off of work, and establish trust between the researcher and participants before conducting the inquiries. Secondly, the researcher spent more time at these organizations than was required to conduct interviews and form focus groups (at least one week at each IO). During this time, the researcher carried out a number of off-record discussions with staff regarding their organizational work structures, principles, and day to day realities that were not found in any available documents. In this manner, he gained more insight and practical information vis-à-vis the dynamics of IOs. Finally, to be able to appreciate organizational culture of IOs, non-participant observation was conducted in the physical settings of IOs, during three working days for each organization. Observing various

aspects of IOs helped shape the researcher's understanding of investigated phenomena. Furthermore, data source, and theory and method triangulations, were utilized as other purveyors of credibility for the research. First of all, to be able to reach more credible findings and a holistic understanding of IOs, and to acquire different perspectives, two types of participants were employed in the research: supervisors and staff. This approach shaped the background for data source triangulation. What is more, two variant research methods were developed regarding these different data sources. First, due to the hierarchical order in the organizations, it was assumed that supervisors felt more comfortable in an environment of one-on-one meetings in order to express themselves more freely. For this reason, semi-structured interviews were conducted with them. Second, concerning staff, there were not any hierarchical concerns as they all fell under the same grouping. Although some were more experienced, this attribute did not reflect on their rank. Also, they did socialize with each other by spending time during coffee and lunch breaks. Focus group research provided a more productive, effective, and comfortable environment for these participants. What is more, because of group interaction, different perspectives were included into the research process as well.

Secondly, theory triangulation was developed in the axis of three grand theories: motivation, culture and leadership. These theories refer to different disciplines: motivation-psychology, culture-anthropology, and leadership-political science. Theory triangulation was also reflected in the process of preparing questions for research methods: every question was linked with the theoretical framework of the research. Hence, while interpreting gathered data, the interaction of these theories helped to overcome domination of one discipline over the analysis process, brought academic richness and depth, and moreover, demonstrated the reflection and interaction of motivation concept to other

disciplines. As a consequence of this approach, the credibility of gathered data was strengthened.

Finally, three main methods were utilized for the progression of the research: interviews, focus groups, and observations, which established the understanding of method triangulation. Even though interviews and focus groups are two various methods whose findings have been gathered into two different sources of data (thus providing individual and group contributions to the research process), they have rather similar characteristics based on verbal communication. Thus, in order to provide consistency and triangulation of the findings, observation, as a completely different method, was included in the research process as well.

### **Dependability**

Dependability is very similar to reliability. It demonstrates the inquiry's consistency among main research components, such as the research topic, questions, aims, paradigms, methodologies and methods (Bailey, 2007). In this research, in order to provide dependability, a research design at a strategic level was created by the researcher. Moreover, data collection and analysis processes were described in more detail.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is parallel to objectivity. It examines if the inquiry is influenced by the researcher's biases. Due to their epistemological characteristics that are based on subjectivity, the clarification of these criteria are rather arduous when it comes to phenomenological studies. In order to reduce the researcher's biases, the researcher took into consideration the data that was provided by participants and followed a transparent approach. Moreover, the researcher demonstrated how his biases, values, beliefs and assumptions, have been metamorphosed during the self-reflection segment of the research process as well.

### **Authenticity**

Authenticity aims at providing a fair, honest and balanced account of social life from the perspective of someone who is personally involved with the issues at hand (Neuman, 2011). In this research, authenticity was provided through fairness. During interviews, some hierarchical categorization was applied for supervisors. However, this classification was only for the purpose of providing alternative perspectives for various types of managers. All participants have been treated impartially and their comments have been evaluated in an equal manner as well. On the other hand, for focus groups, all the participants were selected from equivalent positions of power, and during exercises, the moderator afforded all voices equal rights and developed a discussion environment that was based on equitable talking and listening. In addition, he prohibited domination of one or two participants over the discussions by providing equal opportunity to talk for all involved and encouraged less verbose individuals to participate more in the deliberations.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Even ethical considerations are not announced officially at every level of the research but are rather embedded carefully at every stage of the whole process and each step taken has been considered for such contemplations. The main explicit declarations about ethical sensitivities have been observed in four categories:

*Interviews:* Firstly, before trying to reach participants, all official permission to conduct research at IOs were received from responsible officials of the organizations. Secondly, while preparing interview questions, the researcher showed sensitivity about not asking any personal questions of participants. Thirdly, before interviews, the participants were informed with an interview protocol and a consent form via an email. The interview protocol gave brief information about the

research subject, object, method, language, questions and expected time of interview. The consent form clarified the following issues for the participants: why they were invited to participate in this research; what was the research objective and method of the study; and, what was the possible risks of the research. Fourthly, they were informed that upon request, a summary of the research findings would be provided to them. Fifthly, they were reminded that the decision to participate would be wholly theirs and if they decide to take part, they would be given an information sheet and be asked to sign a consent form as well, likewise, they would be free to withdraw at any time, at will, during the session, without having to provide any reasons whatsoever. Sixthly, it was specially emphasized that their privacy would be protected under any and all circumstances: all personal information and answers would be kept strictly confidential and their names would not be used in any published materials. Seventhly, the intention of using audio recordings was mentioned in the consent form as well. If they agreed, the discussion would be recorded with a digital voice recorder. If not, then they could request that the voice recorder be turned off at any time and the interview would be conducted by other means. Finally, after acquiring approval of participants and their signatures on the consent forms, the interviews were launched.

*Focus Group:* Firstly, all official permissions to conduct focus group research were received from officials of the organizations. Secondly, while preparing focus group questions and pictures, the researcher showed sensitivity about not using any grey area concepts that may be misunderstood by members of any cultures. Thirdly, similar to the interview consent forms, the questions and consent forms were sent to the participants in advance via email. This clarified why they were invited, what was the research objective and method, the right to withdraw at any time during the session without providing a

reason, and risk assessment demonstrating any apparent risks which could not be identified by the researcher. Fourthly, all personal information and answers were kept strictly confidential and no names were used in any published documents. Fifthly, for each focus group, in addition to the use of note-taking and audio recordings, utilizing visual record permission was also requested. However, some of the participants declared that they did not wish to be visually recorded; therefore, visual record was not utilized during focus group research. Sixthly, a summary of the research findings would be provided by demand of the participants. Finally, after getting their approval and signatures on the consent forms, the focus group were launched.

*Observation:* While conducting an ethnographic enquiry, it is advised to live in the subject area at question and identify the main cultural characteristics of the organization in its environment. In order to understand the cultural dynamics of IOs, the researcher spent more time than was necessary for performing interviews and conducting focus groups and also performed non-participant observations. An observation plan with information concerning research type, aim, place, persons, material, approaches, and areas, was sent to officials of each organization for obtaining their research approval. In addition, if requested, the researcher signed a confidentiality agreement to return all the observation notes to the organization. After receiving official permission, the staff in the observation area were verbally informed about the research objective and aim, as well as the researcher's understanding regarding preservation of their anonymity. Thereafter, their consent to take part in the research was probed and all were reminded that they were free to withdraw at any time during the observation. After maintaining their verbal consent, the researcher began to take field notes. While pursuing the research aim, instead of taking clandestine notes, using

hidden cameras, or concealing real objectives during observations, the researcher declared all his intentions openly to officials and participants and procured the necessary permissions from them for this limited process. Even though this approach may cause a Hawthorne effect, whereby the participants of an observation may behave differently than they would have if unobserved, between this dilemma and following an ethical research approach in relation to the observation method, the researcher chose to be ethical and pursue an overt approach.

*Analysis:* During the transcription process of the data gathered, no change was implemented in the original form of the data. Participants' comments were reported accurately. The researcher avoided using only positive results and analysed both negative and positive views. While analysing any gathered data, the assurance of ensuring all personal information and answers being kept strictly confidential was adhered to very strictly: no names or hint of research participants' identities were identified in any phase of the analysis, or afterwards. Depending on the demands of the participants, the results of the study shall be shared with them after the end of the project.

Consequently, at every stage of the research, the researcher followed ethical principles, and all quotations, adaptations and inspirations were instated according to the rules of the university's writing and ethical guidelines.

### **Coding**

The coding process helps make sense of the raw data and brings concrete conclusions to the findings. Codes are labels that denote significance and meaning to data. Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA) was utilized in the coding process. ECA was first defined by Altheide (1987), who focused on comprehending communications and verifying theoretical relationships through identifying

reflexive interactions between concept development and the complete analytical process. Finding common points, discovering patterning, and classifying findings, are the main components of this qualitative analysis approach. First of all, all the interviews, focus group discussions, and observation notes, were transcribed into Microsoft Word documents, then all the resulting data was transferred to large Excel matrixes; one each for interviews, focus groups, and observations, separately for four IOs. The questions of research methods were listed horizontally, and participant pseudonyms were inscribed vertically, on each matrix. All responses by the participants were duly noted in the squares of the matrix while several preliminary typologies and themes were inscribed into charts before commencing the coding. Typologies stand for general meanings or mini-frames of a text. Themes are very broad and there are topical emphases for the text. A total of twelve matrixes were established, and to this effect, an overall comprehension of the data was reached. At this juncture, the researcher began to read the data, focus on meanings and emphases, and noted preliminary coding. Thereupon, the data was read repeatedly and in accordance with common points and patterns which were simplified and reduced in the final coding process. Following this, the researcher compared and contrasted “extremes” and “key differences” within each coding through taking into consideration interrelations among codes and research components, such as: research aim and questions, data sampling, and meso theories. Thereafter, draft typologies and themes were hierarchically reorganized.

In order to develop a reflexive approach, the coding was initially divided into two parts (preliminary and final). Then, during the analysis and interpretation the researcher repeated the interaction of all coding processes with the research aim and questions, data sampling and meso-theories. As Altheide (1987) infers, situations, settings, styles, images, meanings and nuances are the key

topics in such reflexive processes. What is more, an additional part, called reflexive comments, was also used to assess the coding of the observation method.

## **Findings and Interpretation**

### **The WTO:**

There are two main approaches among the supervisors regarding the power concept. Firstly, four out of six saw power as a rank in the hierarchy and defined it as hard power. According to the level of rank in the hierarchy, the extent of power increased or decreased. The remarks of supervisors were also consistent with observational findings, because the main prerequisites are distributed according to the level of staff and their status. For instance: some P4, and all P5 level supervisors have separate rooms, P5 and above supervisors have carpets and special furniture in their rooms, and directors have reserved parking places, slightly bigger bureaux, and their own printers and secretaries. It seems that at the least, holding a P4 level is necessary for receiving some prerequisites. In addition, the main power need of the participants is perceived by status. Holding a high rank or position is also inferred as a recognition of success. As well, the encouragement of vertical hierarchy supports a more unequal distribution of power, and as a consequence, it can be inferred that a high level of power distance is dominant amongst the participants.

Secondly, two out of six supervisors identified power as a collective element. According to them, even though a supervisor holds a high position in the hierarchy, if his team fails to produce, he would be hard-pressed to enjoy any real power in the organization. Thereby, his level of power depends directly on the production level of his team members, and accordingly, his power strengthens with their sharper performance. This collective power understanding, with its characteristic of equal

power distribution, leads to soft power understanding and a low-level distance.

Moreover, in the second question for the focus group, staff made comments on the following Machiavelli (2008: 65) phrase:

“A prince who wants to stay in power must necessarily learn to be other than virtuous and must make use of his knowledge or not according to circumstances.”

Five out of six participants were in agreement with this phrase and one wanted to make no comments on the subject. A participant did draw a line between his personal and private lives and agreed with this phrase in his professional life. Yet, he would never follow such principles in his private life with his family. Another participant explained his opinions through the following comments:

“The resources, who gets them is the one that manages to convince. It is one manifestation, but sentence is about power as you have seen. Basically says that if you want to stay in power you have to be, you know, should not be virtuous, you cannot be a nice person to everyone, and you have to work in the shadows in some ways.”

From the comments of staff vis-à-vis the Machiavelli phrase put to them, we can infer that a majority of the participants support the Machiavellian teleological approach which does not make any objections to the manipulation of truth for the sake of gaining power.

### **The UNCTAD**

During observations, some instruments of hard power were noticed. For example, P5 and above level executives have their own rooms and printers, in addition, directors and higher level administrators have bigger rooms with special furniture and assigned secretaries. However, as one supervisor stated, the UNCTAD has a fairly flat hierarchy and is a research oriented organization. Hence, according to the research participants, the need of power mostly develops in line with elements of soft power, such as,

being able to utilize resources, setting and shaping an agenda, defining rules, being able to use information, developing a vision of final goals, subtle showing of respect, being older, and being able to reach goals.

Power distance is very high in the organization because staff members in professional and higher categories have different and better benefits than other types of personnel, such as, a superior salary system, educational grants, dependency benefits, special leave, and other similar remunerations. For such reasons, at the least, having a professional post has become an important prerogative in the UN system. Furthermore, three out five staff members find the Machiavellian teleological approach justified for the purposes of gaining and maintaining power by a leader. Their main arguments, in lieu of virtue, are that different skills and tactics are all legitimate tools to be used in leadership, and a leader must think pragmatically to make power more functional. On the other hand, one participant did make an objection to the awareness levels of virtue:

“So Machiavelli and economics is really straightforward and I think it is difficult to understand now what 19th Century virtue mean and how we transfer that to today. Virtues is the definition of changes and it's different in every culture. So it's very difficult to build a general statement on that because transforming that today, what does virtuous means? Could mean that a leader or prince needs to, I do not know, sexually harass another woman to stay in power? Is that necessary or is it just smaller things. So, I think that is difficult to answer in that case cuz of course it depends on the level of virtuousness and what we think it applies”. And another came out against the Machiavellian approach in support of Kantian deontological ethics:

“E: I do not think so that Machiavelli... What my understanding is...I agree with you that when he wrote the book, *The Prince*, the historical context was very different, and for what I know, he, when he talks about being

virtuous, I do not think that is has moral connotation into it, that you have to be morally good. I think what he means is that you can be virtuous in the public sphere and not in your private life that is if you are a good person or if you have good ethics. I think you have to be ethically virtuous within the public sphere as a leader...

### **The ITC**

According to the supervisors, the characteristics of power were developed under two different types of power relations: hard and soft. First, hierarchy was seen as the representative of the hard power understanding. Second, having network and capacity to get things delivered, being knowledgeable, and having the capacity to reach goals, were evaluated as components of soft power in an organization. However, the staff mostly defined power concept from hard power perspectives, such as making decisions, having authority and controlling workers, being able to spend money, and the facility to sign documents. The staff's exclusive focus on hard power was reminiscent of high power distance. They equated power with a position in the hierarchy, and except for the supervisors who hold these positions and privileges, no one else was deemed able to get power in the organization. The staff had some valid reasons to define power from a hard concept, because, in order to have certain privileges, such as separate, and special furnished rooms, printers, and secretaries, it was necessary to be at least at a P5 level or higher in the organization. However, apart from these advantages, there was an exception regarding reservation of parking spaces. Any staff with over five years in the organization can obtain a parking space for 73 Swiss Francs per month. This exception can be seen as an encouragement by the organization to shorten the power distance between staff and high level executives.

Alternatively, the power need was high among the supervisors as they viewed power

from two perspectives of hard and soft. In order to drive others, they did not feel that holding a position on its own measures up to the task. They also found the need to have more supplementary aids, such as a viable network, sufficient necessary knowledge of the issues, and the ability to be more result-oriented. Regarding the Machiavelli phrase, the staff objected to ignoring virtues in order to gain and maintain power and endorsed the Kantian deontological ethics. According to them, many considerations must be included in the power acquisition process:

"A: I have the feeling this is a little bit like many politicians act at present and people who have power acts, I would say, lots of them act according to this phrase, but for my personal feeling I think this is wrong and it is not a good idea, but I see it in reality that is very often applied.

B: I am totally agree with her. Given the situations of many countries, I have the feeling that leaders they do not take into considerations all the factors in the countries and they just try to get that knowledge, but if they do not take into consideration circumstances, it will never work, so I totally agree with her."

### **The WHO**

The supervisors' description of power characteristics can be divided into two typologies, as hard and soft. Hard power characteristics are, holding a high position in the hierarchy, producing a processed output, having opportunities to manage money and staff, and having the ability to decide. Furthermore, during observations, it was realized that the main status perquisites are, special parking places, separate and special furnished rooms, printers, and having secretaries. Coordinators and directors have parking spaces outside of the building, separate and special furniture rooms, printers, and secretaries. To these effects, the main hard power holders in the organization are coordinators and directors. The power need

develops in the axis of being recognized through holding status. In contrast, characteristics of soft power are, having the ability to conduct negotiations and consensus, being knowledgeable, and acting as a group. In these ways, while hard power encourages high power distance, contrariwise, soft power stimulates low power distance.

Regarding the power concept, even though the staff did not state so explicitly, we can infer that their collective opinion leans heavily on the “virtu” concept. It is posited that public opinion or virtue can be ignored for a while in order to achieve a greater goal. Herein, an elitist expression emerges which sees itself beyond the “public” and justifies its actions, even when not grasping the reasons or being virtuous: “we do this for the greater good”. This argument supports the Machiavellian teleological approach as well. What is more, in line with the ability to influence the attainment of the mission, well-connected networks are defined as power components in the context of IOs.

### Comparison of IOs

While describing power characteristics in the context of IOs, two main types of power, as hard and soft, have emerged in the organizations. Lukes’ (2005) three dimensions well explains the reflection of hard and soft power in these four organizations, especially with the linkage of Foucault and Machiavelli power understandings. The first dimension of Lukes’ represents hard power as holding a high position in the hierarchy in which supervisors desire to be effective in the decision-making process. The power need of the WTO and WHO participants has developed on the axis of individual recognition by the organization, by such acts as, providing special status perquisites to higher positions in the hierarchy, and displaying awareness of individual achievements. In addition, Lukes’ second dimension is a version of soft power in IOs as setting and shaping the agenda. The findings

supported that even staff who are in subordinate positions have a desire to know what is going on and be part of setting the agenda. The power need of the UNCTAD and ITC participants was seen mostly in the centre of organizational and individual acquisition, such as, being able to utilize resources and information, and setting and shaping an agenda and a vision. Furthermore, the other soft power type is Lukes’ third dimension which is related to the Foucauldian linkage of power and knowledge and Machiavellian manipulation approach. The findings at the UNCTAD and ITC indicate that Foucauldian knowledge and power relation is supported by the participants. They agree that knowledge produces power through social networks and having knowledge is important whilst acquiring and maintaining influence at the organization. On the other hand, while defining power, except for the ITC staff and one member of the UNCTAD who encouraged Kantian deontological ethics, all the others supported the Machiavellian teleological approach. These findings indicate that the main tendency of the staff is to gain results by whatever means at hand, even open to manipulation of truths.

Likewise, national cultural characteristic of Power Distance was evaluated from two different perspectives. The first one involved investigating how supervisors improve the performance of their team members at work. As regards this issue, UNCTAD supervisors have a low Power Distance. WTO supervisors show characteristics of a mix of low and high Power Distance. Finally, supervisors of the ITC and the WHO demonstrate high Power Distance. The second perspective is related to how supervisors and staff achieve their objectives at work. Here again, both supervisors and staff of the UNCTAD have low Power Distance. It can be assumed that there are some problems regarding organizational encouragement and rewarding strategies for performance improvement and excellence of their personnel. For the other organizations, a

mix of low and high Power Distance is seen for both supervisors and staff.

### Conclusion

Staff of WTO define characteristics of power as the ability to use resources, be precise, have a clear mind, follow good strategies with determination and without much clamour, be able to motivate people, stimulate staff's resolve, loose control, take responsibility for decisions, achieve an output, and follow through no matter what. These definitions correlate with their comments on the Machiavelli expression. Remarks by research participants illustrate characteristics of teleological ethics. They do not focus on moral relevance of an action in the context of power as their primary concern is having a consequence in any case whatsoever. Reflections of Lukes (2005)'s first and second power dimensions are observed in the power definition of the UNCTAD participants. They mainly perceive power as being part of decisions making process and shaping agenda. In addition, power distance is quite high and Machiavellian ethics is more common among participants.

The ITC provides professional support to SMEs in developing or undeveloped countries. This relation has a reflexive aspect. Even though the ITC constructs SME organizational structure and values, it also affects them by in terms of flexible, collaborative, knowledge, trust, and result-based organization; this is also reflected in participants understanding of power. A Foucauldian understanding of power emerges in the context of seen knowledge as a primary source of power. In addition, while staff define ways of power gaining and maintaining, they also put an emphasis on staying on a virtuous path. This preference identifies Kantian deontological ethics. Moreover, Charismatic, value based, transformational, team oriented, human oriented and participative leadership are preferred by the participants and their motivation level is seen as high. Participants are

satisfied with what they are dealing in the organization.

The WHO staff's sense of belonging was invigorated with souvenirs with the WHO logo, which consolidated the image of how important it is to be a part of the organization. The WHO holds an important mission to helping to solve health problems all over the world. This mission also reflects the organization's health-centric implementations identified in the physical layout of the organizations. These implementations, are referred to as Lukes' (2005) third dimension of power, as they are utilized highly effectively by the organization to convince staff to accept and adopt organizational missions and social objectives. In order to provide this public good, the staff did not show any concern regarding virtuous procedures and their consequentialist approach indicated the main characteristics of Machiavellian teleological ethics.

In addition to becoming key actors in international relations, IOs are influencing the power relations of nations, especially as regards decision-making mechanisms. This influence is also reflected in their internal power definitions of hard and soft power. According to findings, it was realized that soft power is thereby more practical than hard power in the context of IOs. Furthermore, another surprising result is related to power understanding of participants. Although the establishment of IOs was influenced by key points related to Kantian deontological ethics, except for the ITC staff and one UNCTAD staff, all other staff supported the Machiavellian teleological approach. They posit that, in order to gain power for the sake a greater good, virtue can be ignored for a while. This understanding is consistent with Machiavellian virtù concept as well.

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