

Power and National Interest in International Relations

Ejitu N. Ota and Chinyere S. Ecoma

ABSTRACT

Every state in the global system has values and ideals that it so cherishes that it would rather go to war than compromise. In fact, realist scholars believe that in international relations, the ability of any given state to protect and advance its national interest is a function of its power position in the comity of nations. This paper seeks to examine the nexus between power and national interest in international relations. In doing so, it has adopted the qualitative analytical research methodology of content analysis. This is because, by its nature, the paper could not employ the quantitative analytical methodology. Therefore, content analysis of relevant literature is the preferred option. The research finding is that although power is a necessary component in analyzing relations between states in the international system, the concept is ambiguous and should not be relied upon as the major compass of a given nation's foreign policy orientation.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, International Relations, National Interest, Power.

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Ejitu N. Ota

Department of History and International Relations, Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria.

(e-mail: otaejitu@gmail.com)

Chinyere S. Ecoma*

Department of History and International Relations, Veritas University, Abuja, Nigeria.

(e-mail: ecomachinyere@yahoo.com)

**Corresponding Author*

I. INTRODUCTION

The perception of the world as anarchic and inherently evil by realist scholars of international relations has made the concepts of power and national interest recurrent in most discussions on inter-state relations. Similarly, their preoccupation with security tends to cast a dark shadow over the balance of power as a panacea for inter-state wars. Where any weight is given to the idea of balance of power, states, according to realists, are interested in it only if it is in their favor. In other words, they believe that it is not enough for a state to be just as strong as a potential enemy. Rather, security can best be assured when a given state is relatively stronger and free to use a margin of force to achieve its foreign policy objectives. Put differently, each state should seek safety by relying on its own power and viewing with alarm, those of its neighbors (Spykman, 1942, p. 18; Schuman, 1969). Therefore, the vigilant statesman must engage in a constant power calculus, and be ready to intervene or enter into an alliance almost immediately in order to preserve the balance, regardless of ideological affinity, economic interest, and domestic political attitudes (Haas, 1953).

II. POWER

What then is power and why is it important in the study of International Relations? While Hans Morgenthau sees it from the political perspective as the immediate aim of all states in their relationship with each other; that is, man's control over the minds and actions of other men or the tendency to dominate (Morgenthau, 2012, p. 31, 117), Frederick H. Hartmann sees it as the ability of states to use force (Hartmann, 1978, p. 13). On his part, Karl Deutsch defines power as "(...)the ability to prevail in conflict and to overcome obstacles" (Deutsch, 1978, p. 23). According to A. F. K. Organski, it is the capacity of an individual, group, or nation to influence the behaviour of others in accordance with one's own ends (Organski, 1968, p. 104). Other scholars have defined power as "(...)the ability to move men in some desired fashion through 'persuasion, purchase, barter, or coercion' (Spykman, 1942, p. 18), and as "The ability to move others or get them to do what one wants them to do and not to do what one does not want them to do" (Wolfers, 1962).

All these definitions have only added to the confusion regarding what power actually means in International Relations. The authors cited above all see power as a basic requirement that every state should possess, defend, and extend if it must sustain its sovereignty, achieve its national interest, and therefore, remain relevant in the comity of nations. However, it is important to admit that in as much as power is an important concept in the analysis of International Relations, the emphasis on its role in inter-state relations has created more problems than solutions. For instance, if power is the major determinant of a state's

international relations, how does one begin to explain the historical pro-people humanitarian policies of the Scandinavian countries to Third World countries? Are such policies intended to curry favor from the recipient states in order to ensure any advantages for the benefactors vis-à-vis other countries? Again, if power is to be used to move men in some desired fashion or to prevail in conflict, how does one begin to explain the failures of the then two superpowers [the U.S. and the former USSR] in their military adventures in the Third World countries of Vietnam and Afghanistan, respectively, in the 1960s and the 1980s? Politically, economically and militarily, the U.S. and the former Soviet Union were more powerful than their two Third World adversaries. Yet, their powers were neutralized by two otherwise weak states.

This does not mean that the superior weapons and power they possess in military confrontations are to be ignored. On the contrary, the possession of superior weapons, such as nuclear weapons, are very important indices of power. But their success in advancing a nation's policy depends on such circumstances as how appropriate the condition for their deployment is. Power in this context can only achieve national objectives if the conditions and circumstances are right. What sense, for instance, would it make to deploy nuclear weapons against terrorists, or how appropriate would it be for a nuclear state to use nuclear weapons in a war with a non-nuclear state?

The truth is that power is a relative concept because it defines relations between or among states (Papp, 1994, p. 398). Nigeria, for instance, is a powerful state in the West African sub-region because it has the 'power' to influence a less powerful state like the Niger Republic to change its policies or objectives if these are considered not to be in Nigeria's best interest. As a land-locked country that depends on Nigeria for access to the sea, Niger Republic is most likely to accede to Nigeria's request for a review of her policy. Power is also contextual, which means that it could be conceived from the context in which, as a concept, it is applied. As earlier pointed out, nuclear weapons, for instance, can only be meaningful and relevant if and when a nuclear state deploys such weapons in a war with another nuclear state. Otherwise, when such weapons are deployed against a non-nuclear state, they become inappropriate because of the conflict context in which they are used.

Power as a concept could also be examined from two other dimensions. From one end, the analysis of the concept may simply hold that power relations are features of inter-state relations, among a number of other features. On the other extreme, an analyst may argue that power distinguishes International Relations from other forms of human activity in the international system. Apologists of the second view relate power to national politics vis-à-vis other human activities. For instance, Lasswell and Kaplan (1950, p. xiv) believe that as an empirical discipline, political science is the study of how power may be relatively concentrated or diffused, and the share of it held by different individuals, strata, classes, ethnic groups, et cetera, may be relatively great or small. In the words of Dahl, "The analysis of power is often concerned(...) with the identification of ethics and leadership, the discovery of the ways in which power is allocated to different strata, relations among leaders and between leaders and non-leaders and so forth" (1968, p. 405). However, since context and circumstance determine when and how a state could use its power, the term "power" could be simply defined as a state's capability to appropriately use its resources to achieve its national interest under a given circumstance. Capability here is synonymous with strength, while resources include human, natural, and technological resources. Power is, therefore, objective and verifiable. This means that there are criteria for measuring how powerful a state is. They are not things that can be assumed or inferred. They are empirical because they could be used as an instrument to induce, threaten, persuade or punish (Holsti, 1977, p. 165). Most importantly, a state that has the capacity to exercise influence over others on account of its power must also be able to resist being influenced by other states. Power is thus not just the ability of a state to exercise influence, but also its capacity to resist its influence attempts (Pearson & Rochester, 1992, p. 80).

III. DETERMINANTS OR ELEMENTS OF POWER

The determinants of any given state's power could be examined within three major factors, namely:

- 1) The base factors or geo-demographic factors
- 2) The means factors
- 3) The capacity means

A. *The Base Factors or Geo-Demographic Factors*

Subsumed here are three categories of factors, namely, spatial factors which include the territorial surface and dimension of a state, as well as its location and strategic position, types of frontiers, power and attitudes of its neighbors, and the geotechnical distance of the state from other powers' military reach.

Secondly, there are the material factors which are also subsumed by the base factors. The material factors refer to the dimension and facility of arable land and natural resources of energy and raw materials. The third of the base factors is the populational factors that is, density, ethnic homogeneity, cultural and educational levels, distribution of technical and organizational skills, as well as the population size. For

instance, the climatic condition of a state will determine how much food its land can support, while its location will influence the kind of foreign policy it will pursue; that is, a state's national power or interest will directly be influenced by its location. A land-locked state that has a militarily strong littoral or coastal state as a neighbor will certainly exercise caution and restraint in its policy towards such a neighbor. Similarly, a state's organizational-administrative skills, that is, its form of government and the relationship which exists between the government and the citizens, are important in assessing a state's power. According to Hartmann (1978, p. 59-60), "(...)the government and how it operates to reflect the experience of a people and their attitude toward, and expectations of, what the government is to do". Also, a country's natural resources and raw materials such as minerals and forests which are known and exploitable are important indices of a state's power along the base factors.

Finally, a country's population size, including not only the number but also its trend (that is, whether it is growing or not) and its structure (or balance) is equally vital elements of a state's power. A country with a young population is obviously more powerful than one with an aging population because of the need to have young people work in factories or join the military.

B. The Means Factors

These are also divided into three categories, namely, military, economic, and political factors. The economic factor refers to the per capita production, Gross National Product (GNP), industrial production, total revenue and expenditure of the central government, government's spending as a percentage of GNP, gross domestic capital formation, the value of accumulated national capital, annual growth of GNP (which determines the economic strength and could be compared with per capita GNP), development of the whole economy, level of the industrial, technical and commercial sectors, level of development of international trade, the technological relationship of dominance, subordination, independence, and interdependence. The military means could be assessed by looking at total defense expenditure, the extent to which military structure is dependent on or independent of foreign trade and aid, the quantity and quality, as well as the type of weapons and systems of combat, and the quality of military organization and discipline. On its part, the political means involve knowing the government's expenditure for foreign aid, support of factions and movements, Foreign Service, foreign intelligence, foreign political penetration, the quality of operational organizations, and the systems for political strategy. The economic factor or capability, for instance, has to be used in assessing the power status of the leading industrialized countries which also have the largest economies in terms of sheer size (such as the U.S., Russia, Japan, China, Germany, France, Britain, Canada, and Italy).

The countries mentioned above have been able to effectively use their capital as well as human and natural resources to increase and sustain economic productivity. That is why they are regarded as powerful states in the international system. They enjoy higher standards of living than the raw-materials exporting countries of the Third World which are more susceptible or vulnerable to price fluctuations in the global market. On the other hand, the military means or capacities of a state to not only maintain internal order and security but also (and more importantly) defend it from external aggression and attacks, impact heavily on its relative power position. This is especially so with regard to nuclear weaponry which, even when not used, still enhances the international reputation and prestige of those states that possess them (Viotti & Kauppi, 2009, p. 126).

C. The Capacity Means

These are concerned with the capacity of a state for collective action. The three dimensions involved in these are the social, psychological, and political capacities. The social dimension is about a state's degree of social integration, degree of national cohesion, popular unity, degree of social organization, institutional flexibility and solidarity, and the social discipline of the populace. The psychological dimension refers to the national character of the population, their flexibility, moral spirit, inventiveness, perseverance, and adaptability. The political aspect refers to the quality of command, diplomacy, bureaucracy, policy, and rule. Fluctuations in the capacity for collective action account, in part, for many policy failures. A state with a large population but with internal diversity that works against national cohesion because of the government's political and administrative ineptitude would not be able to harness and coordinate its human and natural resources to achieve greatness. In this case, therefore, the quality of leadership is important in a state's ability to maximally utilize the other elements or parameters of power to achieve its national objectives. A democratic and charismatic leader is more likely to mobilize the population for national greatness than an authoritarian or despotic ruler, though this depends on circumstances. For instance, in a war situation, a centralized authoritarian form of leadership is more expedient than one where power is decentralized. Conversely, in times of peace and prosperity, centralized or authoritarian leadership could elicit opposition to the government, thereby affecting its national power and international respectability. Also, a country's brand of diplomacy would determine whether it can successfully enter into alliances that will protect and advance its national interest, or allow other states to take advantage of her to improve their

own power status or positions. Here, it becomes imperative for a state to have well-trained and skillful diplomats because a country's diplomacy is a veritable element of its power (Papp, 1994, p. 406).

All in all, it has to be admitted that attempts at measuring power are divergent, and therefore, difficult. It is not easy to measure any of the elements with any degree of precision or specification. For instance, how does one say which of the factors is more important? What are the criteria to be used in assessing their relative importance? Can one justifiably argue, for instance, that military and economic capabilities are more important than the strength and coherence of a society, or that the quality of leadership is more important than the social discipline of the populace? That is why it is very important to be critical and selective in emphasizing any particular capacity or group of capacities as an indicator of the overall capabilities of a state. The relative economic strength of a state alone cannot be used without taking into account its military capabilities because the status of the latter could either increase or weaken the economic relations of such a state.

Geo-demographic base factors are useful, for instance, in understanding why there is a long-time fear of Nigeria by other states in the West African sub-region, a fear so apparent in the foreign policy objectives of those states. In other words, except for long-run considerations, the influence of geo-demographic factors in policy is slower than that of the material base factors. The fluctuations in the military, economic, and material base factors are more immediate than the slower fluctuations of geo-demography. Also, the larger the material and populational base, the greater the long-term economic capacity of the state. That is to say, a very large base complex and a potential for military and economic capabilities may promote long-term planning, and, therefore, bring about a shift in foreign policy concerns away from immediate gratification.

The capacity for collective action can undergo a radical transformation. One can count from extreme incapacity to capacity, a steady decreasing capacity, a reversal of the deterioration, and a significant unsteady decline. There could be gross and apparent changes over time in the collective capacity of any state to act. Where this is the case, one must know that there are causes and that perhaps these can be controlled. High capacity for collective action permits rapid mobilization of the geo-demographic base which will then increase economic capabilities and result in the effective application of the capacity means. Put differently, a country's power position in the international system is determined by its ability to harness, coordinate, and maximally utilize all the elements of power in an interdependent manner.

IV. POWER AND INFLUENCE

It is not unusual to come across authors who see power and influence as synonyms, while others make a distinction between the two concepts. Deutsch's idea of influence is as an instrument of power with which a state could have its values and interest as well as policies promoted in and supported by a target country (Deutsch, 1978, p. 166). Holsti (1977, p. 165) goes beyond this to argue that influence is not only an aspect of power but also serves as a means to an end. In his view, influence is like money and is used essentially for purposes of achieving other national goals or objectives, such as prestige and security, among others.

Although the two concepts are not the same, they enjoy an umbilical relationship: there is no power without influence, and influence without power is not possible. This is because a powerful state employs influence in order to control the behavior of other actors in the international system. Influence in the context of inter-state relations is therefore a process that could be by way of force or inducement, intended to achieve the desired objective by changing the behavior, goals, needs, and values of a given state by another. The state that is influencing the other must, of course, be more powerful than the one it is targeting to influence. In other words, the stronger state uses the advantages of its power over the target state. There must also be an existing relationship between the two states involved. If that is not the case, then it would be very difficult for a powerful state to successfully influence a target state without contravening the provisions of International Law and the United Nations Charter.

At other times, however, a less powerful state in a hostile relationship with its neighbor may desire to purchase military hardware from a powerful state but cannot influence the powerful state to facilitate the sale for fear that the hostile neighbor may use that as an excuse to build up, or stockpile, more weapons. Here, the hostile neighbor has influence over its neighbor's government because, even without any deliberate effort or intention to do so, it has compelled its neighbor to act in a certain manner. Thus, influence in international relations could be achieved without a deliberate action being taken or one country communicating its position in any manner. In the example cited here, the state that wants to buy weapons from a powerful state has to be cautious because of the likelihood that the reaction of its hostile neighbor to the plan to buy weapons could be counterproductive to its own national goals or objectives. Influence, therefore, includes a state's ability to control outcomes by deploying its resources. A state with limited resources (human and natural) may have a limited capacity to exert influence on others intentionally, though this may not always be the case because even a country like the former USSR could not, despite its enormous resources, prevail in its effort at influencing events in resources-poor Afghanistan between 1979

and 1989 (Kaarbo & Ray, 2011, p. 99). Therefore, power does not always translate into influence, even with all the economic, military, political, and geo-demographic capabilities. That is why the U.S. could not win its war with North Vietnam in the 1960s and early 1970s. The influence could be more appropriate in times of peace, especially in diplomacy. In situations of hostility, it could be used in conjunction with propaganda to achieve set objectives.

V. NATIONAL INTEREST

Power theorists or realist scholars such as Morgenthau do not draw any distinction between power and national interest. They use the two concepts as two sides of the same coin in the analysis of international relations. For instance, Morgenthau (2012, p. 5) contends that national interest is defined as power and that statesmen should think and act along that direction. Waltz (1979) sees national interest as the maximization of power. Other authors like Pearson and Rochester (1992, p. 158) and Papp (1994, p. 44) believe that as a concept, national interest is ambiguous and therefore connotes several things, while Hartmann (1978, p. 7) defines it as “(...)Those things that states could or do seek to protect or achieve vis-à-vis other states”. However, James N. Rosenau is of the view that national interest could be seen from two dimensions, namely, as an analytical tool, and as an instrument of political action. According to him, “while analysts have discovered that the value-laden character of the concept makes it difficult to employ as a tool of rigorous investigation, [political] actors have found that this same characteristic renders the concept useful both as a way of thinking about their goals and as a means of mobilizing support for them” (1968, p. 34). In other words, Rosenau’s position is that national interest in its action usage lacks structure and content, though it serves its users (the political actors) well. As an analytical tool, it tends to be more precise and elaborate, though it also tends to confuse the political actors who employ it. But the concept appears to have lost some of its early appeals as an analytic tool, though it still enjoys considerable favor as the basis for action, especially among political actors who tend to perceive and discuss their goals in terms of the national interest, a claim which Rosenau (1968, p. 34) regards as one that “(...)often arouses the support necessary to move toward a realization of the goals”.

The ambiguous nature of the concept arises from the fact that there is no agreement as to who should define what constitutes the national interest, how, and why. In China, for instance, it is the Chinese Communist Party (C.C.P.), the sole political party in the country, that decides what constitutes the country’s national interest and where it lies. When thousands of Chinese students argued otherwise, to say that their country’s national interest should include greater political freedom and gathered at Tiananmen Square in 1989 to express that viewpoint through a peaceful protest, the C.C.P., with the active support of the army, broke up the protests, killing in the process, several protesters. At other times, it is either the national leaders or a segment of the dominant class that is said to define what their countries’ national interests are. In the first instance, charismatic national leaders like Adolf Hitler and Winston Churchill influenced the idea of national interest in Germany and Britain respectively, during the Second World War. Any other leader could, in a wartime situation, redefine his country’s national interest. That is, a state’s national interest could change in order to suit a given situation. This is despite the complex nature of the concept.

A. Categories of National Interest

As used here, national interest refers to those values or ideals that a nation so cherishes that it will rather go to war than compromise. A value is an ideal that some individuals or a group of individuals have accepted as positive and desirable. Such values or ideals must therefore be those which the citizens of the given state are willing and able to identify with, wherever they may be. They include political, normative, and material values. Political values correspond roughly to political culture, while normative values relate to what is morally right or wrong as perceived by the state, and material values are about the economic and social well-being of the citizens and their state. In formulating their countries’ foreign policies, therefore, policy-makers must take into account what their citizens value most (Kaplan, 1957). According to a source, “An entity’s ideals usually function as a way to set firm guidelines for decision making, with the possibility of having to sacrifice and undergo loss being in the background” (Wikipedia, 2020).

National interests could be categorized into three, namely: core or vital national interest, secondary or tertiary interest, and general national interests. Core or vital national interests, according to Hartmann “(...)are those for which a state is normally willing to fight immediately or ultimately. It is characteristic of vital interest that states do not usually give its alternative serious thought, but reject it out of hand” (1978, p. 7). These include the protection and defense of a state’s existing territory (land, water, and air territories), the well-being of the citizens, as well as such ideological criteria as political culture and national worldview. For instance, the United States and Britain, respectively, would not take kindly to any political culture outside of presidential or parliamentary democracy, as the case may be. Similarly, until the end of the Cold War, the former Soviet Union and other communist states were all of the Marxist-Leninist ideological camps and saw their vital national interests as the same vis-à-vis the capitalist states. For Third World

countries, economic interests are considered vital in their international relations, and addressing international economic inequalities have remained the bedrock of their foreign policies. Such interests are often considered immutable or unchangeable. It has been pointed out that though the general belief is that a country can only achieve its vital national interest at the expense of another state, there is always room for negotiation, especially where two states share a common interest. The reverse is the case where they have opposing interests. It is only in the latter case that a resort to the armed conflict could arise. In other words, when a state insists on satisfying its national interests at the expense of other states, its behavior is said to be “aggressive”. On the other hand, when a state is ready to compromise what it considers its national interest instead of going to war, it is said to be committed to a policy of appeasement (Hartmann, 1978, p. 8-9).

Secondary national interests are those that states consider desirable but not necessarily worth fighting for. These would include the protection of citizens legally living abroad, and the protection of interests that are coincidental, such as cultural affinities or ethnic, religious, and racial issues. For instance, many African peoples are split across two or more different countries as a result of European colonialism. In as much as there are shared cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious affinities between Rwanda and Burundi, for instance, these constitute secondary national interests that could be resolved amicably in the event of any misunderstanding rather than resorting to war. Not only would going to war contravene the UN charter provision on the renunciation of war as a national policy (see Chapter I, Article 2, sections 3 and 4 of the UN Charter), but it will also be against the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member-states and the sovereign equality of states as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union (see Article 4(a) and 4(9) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union). Also included among secondary national interests are foreign trade, foreign aid, access to foreign markets, and sources of supply. Participation in international trade, for instance, is important in the growth of a state’s domestic economy, and by implication, improving the welfare of the citizens of such a state. The establishment and maintenance of diplomatic relations is also part of secondary national interest and is an extension of the duty of states to protect their citizens wherever they may be. Establishing diplomatic relations with other states helps in improving a state’s international image and prestige.

Finally, general national interests refer to those developments in the international system which impact individual states as members of the comity of nations. These include adherence to the rules governing inter-state relations, as well as the roles that are expected of specific states. That is, states not only make demands on the international system but also owe some duties to the global system, failure of which could impact negatively on the system. For instance, states are expected, under the UN Charter, to resolve all their international disputes through peaceful means and to avoid interfering in each other’s internal affairs. Also, they are expected to contribute troops for peace-keeping operations whenever they are requested to do so by the UN. At the same time, issues like environmental management and protection, abuse of human rights, genocide, and human trafficking, among others, need international cooperation and adherence to extant rules. States are therefore expected to honor such rules and participate in all programs and activities intended to guarantee a safer and more peaceful world. International cooperation and economic interdependence thus constitute part of what is referred to as general national interests. It can therefore be argued that it is because of general national interests that there has been relative peace in post-1945 international relations. This is because economic and other forms of interdependence have reduced areas of conflict resulting from both economic and political differences. Without political cooperation between states, for example, international trade would suffer and so would national prosperity. That is why it has been said that “Interdependence alters the cost-benefit calculations of national leaders so as to make military leverage less attractive” (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2010, p. 187).

VI. NATIONAL INTEREST AND FOREIGN POLICY

When a country has identified its national interests, such interests do not remain in the domestic domain but are executed in the international arena to influence the behavior of other actors. The idea is to make such other actors accept the policies of the state in question. Foreign policies are therefore intended to advance the national interests of states in the international system, although sometimes, governments seek to generate public approval and legitimize certain domestic actions to formulate foreign policies for such a purpose. For instance, a government that decides to wage war or intervene one at a time when it is embroiled in a domestic crisis may have done so in order to divert the attention of its citizens and thus increase its public support base at home.

The relationship between national interest and foreign policy is such that some authors actually see the foreign policy objectives of states as their national interests. For instance, Holsti (1977, p. 145-152) and Viotti and Kauppi (2009, p. 104-108) have categorized foreign policy objectives into three, namely, short-term, middle-range, and long-range objectives. The short-term or short-range objectives seek to achieve

security, economic prosperity, and human rights and are often regarded as very important and of high urgency. Middle-range objectives such as managing unresolved conflicts and keeping them from escalating are seen as being important but not necessarily urgent, while long-term or long-range objectives are seen as not being urgent, though they are usually of great importance and include the need to support durable or lasting peace in the international system, as well as international trade. It is obvious that this categorization corresponds with that of national interests into core, secondary and general national interests. Hartmann's observation that "(...)a foreign policy consists of selected national interests presumably formulated into a logically consistent whole..." (1978, p. 69) further establishes the very close relationship between national interest and foreign policy. Like Holsti, Viotti, and Kauppi, he does not seem to separate national interests from foreign policy objectives (Hartmann, 1978, p. 75-87). Writing from the perspective of power politics, Morgenthau (2012, p. 586) believes that every state's foreign policy objectives must be defined in terms of the national interest. This, according to him, must be supported with adequate power. Similarly, Pearson and Rochester (1992, p. 158-159) believe that it is the national interest that determines all foreign policy behaviors of any importance. The essence of all these views is that the foreign policy process of a state is the most important means by which it formulates and implements the policies that determine its interactions with other actors in the international system.

It could be argued, therefore, that the relationship between the national interests and foreign policies of states is based on the fact that while the latter is the identification and formulation of a state's national objectives in its relations with other actors, foreign policy is the practical application of the identified national objectives. Put differently, national interests are theoretical and only find practical expression in foreign policies. A state formulates its foreign policy to contain threats to its sovereignty and other vital interests, like the economic well-being of its citizens. It also uses such a policy to maximize opportunities in the international system to its own benefit and advantage. Where there are conflicting foreign policy objectives, these could be sorted out and prioritized by those entrusted with the policy-making process after careful scrutiny and assessment of the costs and benefits of such policies.

In his contribution to the debate on national interest and foreign policy, Frankel (1970, p. 17) posited that not only is the national interest the basis on which foreign policies are formulated, but national interest is also used to both evaluate and rationalize or criticize foreign policy. It is therefore quite difficult to separate a state's foreign policy posture from its national interest. In other words, a nation's foreign policy is intended to protect and project its national interest which could also include the protection of its internal interests, such as freedom, democracy, human dignity, economic freedom, et cetera. A country that believes in democracy, such as the United States, could have as part of its foreign policy, the adoption of democratic reforms by states under military dictators. The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, for instance, represents a good example of how foreign policy could be used to advance a domestic national interest externally. In an increasingly globalizing world, U.S. national values are now being internationalized and thus constitute part of the fulcrum of U.S. foreign policy in the post-Cold War international system. The U.S. is today not only protecting its national interest but also promoting its national values through its foreign policy (see Haass, 2002 Mearsheimer, 2016).

VII. CONCLUSION

As a concept, power has many dimensions and it is, therefore, difficult to measure. It is also not synonymous with influence, though influence could be regarded as an aspect of power. In other words, a powerful state has the capacity to influence a less powerful one in their relations with each other. Similarly, national interest and power are often treated as two sides of the same coin by realist scholars. However, there is no denying the fact that a given state's national interest is encapsulated in its foreign policy objectives. Put differently, a state's national interest is the fulcrum of its foreign policy formulation and implementation. Also, every state in the international system seeks to protect and promote its national interest through its foreign policy. It is in this context that the nexus between power, national interest, and foreign policy becomes manifest.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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