

# Political power:

AN APPROACH FROM THE  
PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

The power, as obtained, exercised, organized and preserved, is the subject of political science. In this premise exists absolute identity between political science and *communist sensis*, what is understood as the set of shared knowledge within a community tradition. Also, there is a consensus in ancient and modern societies, that power is primarily a relationship of subordination, in which a group of people set the rules and others comply with them, in which decisions are made within a set of rules that are obeyed and the acceptance is made in the consensus or by imposition, in a democratic or authoritarian way but it establishes the recognized and accepted relationship of subordination.

The definition of power is by a basi-

cally a construction of historical narrative reason about what power is, especially the political power. It is the result of the reasonable deliberation of man in his own history; in his social relations, in the social sphere. Greeks in classical ancient times described the power, the *kratos*, as the object of politics. Greeks not only tried all related to the political power but also their concern and reflection including everything that deal with power, such as the family, the economic and, in recent times, with the ideological. In the first political science treatises in ancient classical Greece, Plato in *The Republic* and *The Laws* and Aristotle in *Politics*, established criteria about what power was in their era and philosophers and scientists in modernity and the contemporary life. Bobbio remem-

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bers that power, “(...), has been traditionally defined as <<consistent with the means to get certain advantage>> (Hobbes) or, similarly, as <<the set of means to achieve the desired effects>> (Russell)” (Bobbio, 2009).

The texts that Bobbio mentioned are the *Leviathan* by Hobbes in chapter X and *Power in men and in the villages* by B. Russell. In the same essay quoted from Bobbio, he adds, “(...), the definition of power as a kind of relationship between subjects must be completed with the definition of power and possession of the means (in which the main ones are the domination over the other men and over nature) that let somebody to achieve, in fact, <<some advantage>> or the <<desired effects>>. The political power belongs to the category of the power of one man over another one (not the power over nature)” (Bobbio, 2009).

It is remarkable that Max Weber, from Sociology, declares that “the concept of power is amorphous sociologically, adding, with great wisdom, that all conceivable qualities of a human being and all sorts of possible constellations can put a man in the position of impose his determination in a given situation. However, he separates the power concept from domination and obedience concepts” (Weber, 1977). As a result, by separating the power and obedience domination, he does not allow to identify correctly what power is, not even at least, what the political power is.

On the sides of political science and in general terms, Consuelo Laiz and Paloma Roman do not define what they consider to be

the political power, but their effort allows to identify a set of tracks that facilitates a proper understanding of what the political power is. For them, political power contains a set of elements that identifies what the political power is. Among this set of elements, based on a foundation, that says political power “(...). From the perspective of the political theory and in the context of this text, power is understood mainly in terms of a relationship. In addition, reference to democratic political authority will be made, because to explain today what the power is will require to do it also in the field of democracy” (Laiz and Roman, 2003).

The two above mentioned authors continue to explain political power in terms of relationship, and they do it as follows:

(...). The explanation of the political power as we approach it, emphasizing its condition of relationships and unequal relationship, starts from three hypothesis: 1. The power is always found in the interaction. It is a relationship between actors, or between attitudes, opinions and behaviors. So power is a social phenomenon that involves a relationship between people, in which it is possible to determine the behavior of others (...). By understanding the power as a relationship in which man is subject and object of social power, this power can be defined, in its most generic sense, as <<the ability to determine intentionally others' behavior>> (Stoppino, 1983: 1219).

2. The power relationship is always conditioned by an unequal distribution of resources. It may seem one-sided, dominant/dominated type, or be bilateral and it will be expressed throughout the information exchange, but always it will have some unevenly distributed resources in each of the parties (...).

3. Political power is a specific *category of social power*. It is the power that occurs in the specific area of political activity. (...). But the problem is that power is a common phenomenon and not everything is political power (Laiz and Roman, 2003).

The political power has a direct connection with the violence and force. Political power which is obtained, maintained and exercised from the public sphere and subject to such authority enjoys a monopoly of violence and force. It is inconceivable political power without the violence and force monopoly. Disarming civilians and keeping the violence and force as their own is an essential feature of all political power. In the states, especially in modern states, political power is the only authorized by political and legal systems to have the right as a privilege, excluding others, from the exercise of violence and force, monopoly.

Political power, calls itself as the owner of the privilege to violence and force right. In democratic states, the political power monopolizes the rightful violence and must be put into effect within the strict framework of the Law. Force and its monopoly are necessary con-

ditions but not sufficient in political power. Bobbio says it well when he argues that: “(...). The fact that the possibility of using force is the hallmark of political power against other forms of power does not mean that political power is resolved by the use of force. The use of force is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the existence of political power” (Bobbio, 2009).

Finally, a close definition of what it is considered as the political power has to be assumed that it is a relationship between rulers and ruled, between those who regulate and those who are regulated, in which the first ones have available resources to be imposed over the second ones, in the public space, a will to the public that the second ones are compelled to obey, because if they don't do it, they will suffer a certain consequences and for what they can be legitimately and legally required to comply by force. Political power, as power and energy in the public and in the politic fields, is a human societies phenomenon.

## REFERENCES

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