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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Reconsidering Power in International Relations

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Abstract

This article provides a conceptual and empirical review of power analysis in International Relations. The main objective of this article is to bridge the gap between conceptual and empirical research on power. First, it reviews various definitions of power by focusing specifically on International Relations literature. Second, it identifies and illustrates key measurement issues concerning the national power capacities of major powers. In this article, the Composite Index of National Capabilities for 20 countries for the period between 1991 and 2012 is used to demonstrate the change in power distribution among major powers. Lastly, it introduces diplomatic representation and war proneness as two new variables that enhance the empirical analysis of power by adding a relational dimension while working with tangible and quantifiable data. These two variables are both indicators and sources of national power. The article concludes by suggesting that diplomatic representation, and war proneness of countries, should be taken into consideration analytically if one wants to comprehend the dynamics and effects of power distribution among the most powerful countries in today's world.

Keywords Power · Measuring national power · Composite index of national capability · Diplomatic representation · War proneness

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1 Introduction

Power is the central concept of international politics. There exists a fundamental conviction that power politics is the ultimate game played among sovereign states. A great deal of arguments within the discipline of International Relations (IR) revolves around the concept of power, such as the balance of power, power transition, soft power, smart power, major-minor powers or superpowers. Then, there are questions such as Where does power lie? Who wields it? For what purpose is power exercised? These have been fundamental questions for the practitioners and students of international politics since classical realist scholars such as Hans Morgenthau infamously described international politics as power politics (Schmidt 2005, 527). Conceived as a game of maximising power, international politics is assumed to be played by political actors whose major objective is initially to increase the potential capacity, and then the scope and domain of their countries' national power. Interesting enough, the major instruments employed by those political actors can be the tangible and intangible resources of their countries. Therefore, analyses of power distribution and power concentration have taken centre stage in IR for quite some time.

This article assesses the existing literature on power in general. In particular, the focus of this article is the scholarly discussion on measuring the national power of states in world politics. The article begins with a general review of power analysis in the social sciences. In the first part, several definitions of power are discussed in detail. The article proceeds with a discussion of the academic debates on the pros and cons of creating an index that would help us to grasp the breadth and depth of power concentration and distribution among states. Then, in the remainder of the article, the widely used Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) scores or 20 countries are supplied to compare and contrast national powers for the period of 1991–2012. In the rest of the article, diplomatic representation and war proneness as new variables are examined. Diplomatic representation and war proneness are two quantifiable variables that enable researchers to observe and measure seemingly intangible factors, namely diplomatic capacity/connections and the successful utilisation in the past of national material capabilities. We argue that these two variables enhance the comparative analysis of national material capabilities by highlighting the relational aspect of power in action. Thus, these two variables complement the existing index of national material capabilities. These two variables are both reflections of and contributors to national power in action. National power is generally associated with variations in the quantity and quality of material capabilities. However, in this article, it is argued that diplomatic representation and war proneness enable researchers to include a relational dimension while generating objective data by avoiding the contextual and perceptual analysis of power relations among states.

Diplomatic representation and war proneness are not solely perceptual factors that affect power relations among states. In addition to the perceptual dimension, diplomatic representation and war proneness contribute to the material capacities of states not only by creating an image of a materially powerful state but

also by demonstrating to what extent a state has been and will be likely to take part in world politics via its uses of national power. Without diplomatic or military activities regardless of their positive or negative outcomes, we cannot really grasp the impact of national material capabilities on other states. The more a state is engaged with other states, either in diplomatic or in military ways, the more opportunities/chances it finds to make use of its national capabilities. Any national capability which is not put into use can represent potential power. Hence, relational power, as we conceive it here, is the power a state possesses due to its actions and connections at the international level. We discuss this point at length in Sects. 4 and 5.

2 A Brief Overview of Power Analysis in International Relations

Although the term power requires an unambiguous and precise definition, power is regarded as a contested concept by many. Hence, there are various definitions of this significant term provided by several scholars working in different research fields. An early definition of power was offered by Max Weber. Weber defines power as 'the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests' (Weber 1947 quoted in Baldwin 2002, 180). Thus, if A successfully puts its own will into action which may even be at odds with its environment, we can say with a high degree of probability that A is powerful enough not to be influenced by its environment. Drawing on Weber's definition, Robert Dahl also proposes a definition of power, which draws particular attention to the abilities of an actor to impose its own will on others. According to Robert Dahl, being powerful means having the ability to change the behaviours of others. In Dahl's own words, 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do' (Dahl 1957, 202–203). In international politics, power is simply defined as 'the general capacity of a state to control the behaviour of others' (Holsti 1972, 155). In a similar vein, Karl Deutsch defines power as 'the ability to prevail in conflict and to overcome obstacles' (Deutsch 1968, 22). According to Kenneth Waltz (1979, 192), a powerful actor is not only able to cope with outside pressures but is also more influential on others. Jeffrey Hart succinctly summarises that power is more about control over actors, events and resources (Hart 1976). This implies that exerting influence on others necessitates, at a minimum, a dyadic or triadic relationship. All these efforts to conceptualise power entail a conflict between A and B, an intentional exercise of power by A over B and a zero-sum game in which B is forced to act contrary to its interests.

To make progress and move away from fruitless efforts to define the term power, some scholars have categorised power according to different usages, forms or effects. The debate on the several faces of power (Bachrach and Baratz 1962; Lukes 2005 [1974]; Digeser 1992), the typology based on four types of power proposed by Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall (Barnett and Duvall 2005) and the popular discussion on the uses of power in its hard, soft and smart forms have been the foci of recent research on power (Nye 1990, 2004, 2009).

The faces of the power debate were initiated by Bachrach Baratz (1962). Bachrach and Baratz point at the indirect and unintentional effects of power in situations of nondecision-making and agenda-setting, which Dahl's definition of power lacks. The authors differentiate the effects of the power of A over B's decisions and behaviours from the effects of A's power over institutions or agendas. They underline that 'power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to the public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A' (Bachrach and Baratz 1962, 948). Thus, A exercises its power over B by maintaining norms and institutions and by defining the key political issues. Having control over the political agenda and the normative context on which B decides circumscribes the scope and range of B's activities in the international arena.

As a response to the definitions proposed by Dahl and by Bachrach and Baratz, Steven Lukes contends that 'A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping, or determining his very wants' (Lukes 2005 [1974], 27). For Lukes, Dahl's definition of power cannot account for situations in which there is no conflict between A and B. A can exercise power over B even though there is no relation between them. No conflict between the two parties might refer to two things: first, it means that there is neither a positive nor a negative relationship between the two; or it means that there is a special relationship (consensual or manipulative) between the two, which prevents any conflict from arising or any resentment being built up. By manipulating B's desires, A makes B believe that B is acting in accordance with its own interests. For Lukes, the power exercised by A over B in such instances is a typical example of the third face of power. This third face of power is the 'most effective' yet the 'least accessible to observation, to actors and observers alike' (ibid, 64). Even though the power of A over B seems to be indirect at first glance, Lukes advances the argument that power that can control and influence others' desires, wants and thoughts is the ultimate power. Hence, power over desires is superior to power over decisions.

In a similar vein, looking through the lens of international political economy, James Caporaso and Susan Strange claim that the structures of international political economy, based on the principles of free market and free trade, put some states in a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis states that have interests in the maintenance of international financial structures (Caporaso 1978; Strange 1990). Structural power implies that B's options, desires, thoughts, interests and ultimately behaviours are all bound by structures either created and controlled by A or structures that function in favour of A's interests. Structural power is a disguised expression of A's superiority and dominance systematically imposed on B. For instance, Caporaso contends that 'The structuring of unequal exchange relationships is an example of value-allocation that arises purely from the operation of structural relations' (Caporaso 1978, 29). In this context, power is neither naturally embedded in material resources nor is it generated by and within the strategic interactions between A and B. A's power over B is ubiquitous and can be found in structures rather than in the actions and capabilities of agencies.

Drawing on Michel Foucault's work on power and knowledge, the fourth face of power is introduced by Digeser (1992). Digeser takes issue with the 'presupposed' and 'taken as given' nature of A's and B's subjectivity that is assumed by the other three faces of power (1992, 980). Unlike the other three faces of power, the fourth face of power emphasises the social and historical construction of A's and B's agency and autonomy. Digeser contends that any analysis of power must first account for the production of A's and B's agency. According to Foucault, knowledge is power, and power can only be exercised over the production of knowledge and meaning. Thus, whoever controls the production of knowledge and enjoys the ability to establish the truths of social and political life can exert power over others. Power, therefore, is embedded in knowledge and meaning-making practices rather than in structures, interactions or capabilities (also see Bilgin and Eliş 2008).

Instead of producing a definition of power, Barnett and Duvall introduce a typology of power based on two dimensions: 'the kinds of social relations through which power works, and the specificity of the social relations through which power's effects are produced' (2005, 48). As a result, the authors offer four types of power, namely, compulsory, institutional, structural and productive. To a certain extent, this typology reflects the debate on the faces of power. Yet, the authors also note that there is no clear-cut difference between the different conceptualisations of power. All four types of power are 'not only distinct, but also intertwined' (ibid, 68) and thus can work simultaneously. Along the same line, Felix Berenskoetter (2007) succinctly reviews the faces of power and conveniently categorises the functions of power as the ability to win conflicts, the ability to limit alternatives and the ability to shape normality.

Discussion on the definition of power has revolved around a conviction that power either causes an action by directly or indirectly controlling the decisions, desires and preferences of others, or it constructs them by (re-)producing structures, agency, and knowledge. Despite the fact that this causal and constitutive divide of the functions of power has been widely accepted in the field of political science and IR, some scholars have devoted more attention to the significance of scope conditions and socio-political variables which affect the ability of one state to influence other states (Holsti 1972; Baldwin 2002). For instance, Holsti proposes four variables that can have an impact on the successful exercise of power by state A over others. These are (i) perceptions of other states regarding A's capabilities, (ii) needs or dependency of other states, (iii) credibility of A's threats and promises, (iv) the extent of responsiveness to A's demands (Holsti 1972, 161–165). Holsti continues to argue that power functions differently in different modes of relationship. According to him, a state chooses different instruments to exert its power over others, depending on the type of relationship between the two states. He categorises interstate relations into four types: relations of consensus, relations of overt manipulation, relations of coercion and relations of force (ibid, 169–171). These different modes of relationships create different contexts in which A exerts its power over B.

David Baldwin also underscores the scope conditions of power in action. When conceived as the only cause of an outcome, the function of power can only be grasped in operation and within a specific scope and domain. Thus, Baldwin stresses the importance of specifying the domain and scope of power, if the aim is to analyse

the influence of one actor over others (2002, 178–179). For him, claims of causation can only be substantiated by answering the following questions: Which aspect of B's behaviour is affected by A? On which particular issue can A influence B's behaviour? How many other actors are influenced by A's power? (ibid, 178).

Another pivotal question in power analysis is how a researcher can differentiate the effects of power from the effects of other causes. Baldwin draws our attention to the unintended effects of power by pointing out that 'It is quite possible to differentiate between situations in which A intentionally causes a change in B's behaviour and situations in which A does so unintentionally' (2002, 181). According to Baldwin, power as a cause may not always work intentionally. Thus, intentionality is not a necessary condition to see the impact of power. However, there might be some instances when 'A might wish B to do X, but does not try to influence B for fear that B will do Y instead, which is an unfavourable response from A's point of view' (Holsti 1972, 157). Here, Holsti draws our attention to the indirect effects of power. Such indirect effects of power rely on the anticipated reaction. Holsti also notes that the anticipated reaction can be triadic and may cause a chain reaction that involves third parties (ibid, 157).

Before concluding this part, we also need to review the different forms of power. Power has been used with various different adjectives in the literature. The well-known forms of power are hard power, soft power, civilian power, and normative power. As a response to the neorealist privileging of hard power, or rather military force, Joseph Nye suggests that states like the US needed to use instruments other than military force to achieve their objectives and maintain supremacy in world politics after the end of the Cold War. As opposed to hard power, Nye contends that getting 'others to want what you want' is a distinct way of exercising power over others (1990, 31–32). He claims that intangible factors in a globalised world have become more influential than tangible factors when a state wants to influence others and change their behaviours. This is because, in the new world order, it is more effective and less costly to attract others and make them work with you voluntarily using soft power than commanding and controlling them with hard material power. In this way, Nye argues, the supremacy of the US would last longer. Nye's concept of soft power has been the target of criticism by many. Putting aside the realist critique of soft power, Bially Mattern stresses that the term 'soft power' proposed by Nye is, in essence, based on a presumption that the US has an inherent capacity to attract due to the norms, cultural traits and institutions upheld by Americans (Mattern 2005). She argues that such an essentialist model of attraction does not account for the 'sociolinguistic construction' of soft power (2005, 596). Thus, she posits that American soft power is socially constructed, and it actually exerts a 'representational force' that aims to define its own truth, alter the subjectivity of others and shape normality (ibid, 602). Subsequently, Nye adjusted his concept of soft power to the new circumstances that emerged due to the war on terrorism led by the US. Nye coined the smart power concept that would enable American policymakers to see 'not just the strengths but also the limits of US power' (Nye 2009, 162). Nye suggests establishing a balance between hard and soft power and using both forms in to 'invest in global public goods—providing things that people and governments in all parts of the world want but cannot attain on their own' (ibid, 163). In other words,

a country with smart power refrains from using its hard power coercively. Instead, smart power refers to the employment of hard power for the benefit of others and for the maintenance of an international order imposed by the US.

Similar to the soft power debate in American academia, in Europe, there has been a burgeoning literature on the civilian characteristics and capabilities of the European Union (EU) in contrast to the military might of superpowers in world politics. As early as the 1970s, François Duchêne preferred to define the European Community as a 'civilian' or 'civilizing power' (Duchêne 1972). Some other authors have dealt with the question of whether the EU has been evolving from a civilian power to a new superpower with a coercive force of its own (Whitman 1998), and others have pointed that in the post-Cold War era the EU has generated its unique type of power called 'normative power' (Manners 2002). We have neither space nor intention to go into the details of these various concepts related to the EU's power in the international arena. Moreover, rather than contributing to the conceptualisation of power, the debates on Europe's international actorness and the soft power of the US are all policy recommendations based on a liberal and progressive vision for the future of international politics.

For most scholars, the most important question is how a state employs its power and what that power yields. Notwithstanding the relative aspect of power, scholars have strongly emphasised the relational aspect of power (see Guzzini 2011, 563–566). Power, or rather power over somebody or something, can only be highlighted in relations and processes. Guzzini aptly explains that 'In a relational understanding of power, power is not the possession of a person, nor does it correspond to a mere production of effects; it is constituted within a social relation' (ibid, 563). He continues to argue that 'Only by knowing the respective value systems and beliefs specific to the relationship can the analyst make an attribution of power' (ibid). Even though our point of departure is Guzzini's arguments on the relational aspect of power, we think that measuring value systems and beliefs is not an easy task because of their perceptual and cognitive nature. Yet, to elaborate on the relational dimension of power, we introduce diplomatic representation as a network of diplomatic relations and war proneness as a total sum of past usages of material power. These two variables are both products and sources of national power. In the next part, we will delve into the measurement of national power or rather material capabilities. We will also compare and contrast the CINC scores of 20 countries to evaluate the relative change in power distribution among states.

3 Why, How and What to Measure? Empirical Considerations on Power

A considerable amount of literature on the measurement of national power has been published since the early 1900s (see Höhn 2011). In previous research, there have been two nested dimensions in the measurement of the national power of a country, namely the absolute material capacity and the relative size of this capacity.

Hart (1976) argues that power has three important dimensions, namely, control over actors, control over events and outcomes, and, lastly, control over resources.

A question arises here as to what forms the basis of this *control* and how it can be achieved. Hart and some other scholars have answers to these questions, mostly focusing on the capacity of the state. A substantial body of literature has been published on what power is or is not (Stoll and Ward 1989). Power has been considered as a necessary and constant phenomenon especially by realists and the like in the IR discipline. The most significant determinant of this phenomenon is the material capacity of a country. Although it is widely accepted that the power or influence of any state cannot be assessed thoroughly by simply listing its material capabilities, some scholars have stressed that the power distribution/concentration is best measured by an index of material resources (e.g., Waltz 1979; Gilpin 1981; Mearsheimer 2001). Gilpin, for instance, combines the military, economic and technological capabilities of states to assess national power. Mearsheimer stresses military power as he endorses that 'force is the ultima ratio of international politics' (2001, 56). Furthermore, some other scholars working with power transition theory assume that observing and measuring the growth rates of national capabilities would help us to answer which country will, and when it can, challenge the existing order and trigger a conflict with other states (e.g., Organski and Kugler 1980; Kugler and Lemke 1996). Thus, not only observing power discrepancies between two states but also measuring relative rates of growth may help us to explain the emergence of conflicts, the formation of alliances or coalitions, and the existence of amicable or hostile acts of states. Not only does the material capacity of a country make it powerful but also it may generate more power which in return may help the country to accumulate a greater material capacity. For these reasons, the measurability of power has gained importance for the timely observation of the fluctuations of power and the prediction of systemic transformations.

Furthermore, with the rise of behavioralism in political science and IR, some scholars have emphasised the significance of the measurability of power by collecting observable data on the material resources of each state. The aim is to test hypotheses and ultimately to find regularities and highlight trends in the behaviours of states to the extent made possible by the data (Hollis and Smith 1990, 28–29). The measurement of material capabilities enables students and practitioners of IR to compare and contrast the potential capacity of states with reference to objective data.

According to previous research on power, excessive material capacity concentration may cause states to fight each other (Geller 1992; Mansfield 1992, 1993; Geller and Singer 1998). Therefore, if power concentration can be measured, political scientists may predict future interstate conflicts. Measuring power capacity helps to transform an intangible and abstract idea into a tangible and observable form, such as balance of power or polarity. It is used today to understand long-term systemic change, hegemonic relations or superpower positions along with the politics among nations. In this context, measured or numerically calculated power enables us to operationalise these concepts or metaphors empirically and might generate concrete results for hypothesis testing.

The classic works on power measurement have focused strongly on one or two different indicators that can demonstrate the potential of a nation. Today, there are several variables that can be used to explain the power of a state. In that context, the

power formulas can be divided into two groups: single variable analysis and multivariate analysis (Höhn 2011). First, specific variables such as total population and the size of territory are considered as a single variable which can be regarded as a significant indicator of power. The number of military personnel and the magnitude of military force can be found as indicators of power in most of the research on power measurement (Alcock and Newcombe 1970; Singer and Small 1972; Cline 1975; Singer 1979; Kadera and Sorokin 2004). For most authors in the IR discipline, power capacity is related to military capabilities and personnel. It is believed that the military capacity of a nation produces more coercive power over others than any other type of national capability. For this reason, the hard dimension of power is commensurate with the military and economic potential of nations. The last issue is the economic capacity of a state. Almost all different power formulas include one or more variables, including economic factors such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), GNP per capita, and industrial capacity etc. One can argue that all other single variables stem from the economic base while others reinforce the economic capacity.

The meaning of national capacity varies in IR due to the multifunctional nature and ever-changing agendas of states. According to Hanson and Sigman (2013), national capacity may include the strength, fragility or failure of the state, infrastructural power, institutional and political capacity, quality of government or governance and the rule of law. In this connection, it can be anticipated that power of a state includes its internal capacity and its political stability and economic strength. However, in general, economic size, population and military power plus nuclear capability are the most significant variables in the analysis of national power.

Notwithstanding the importance of material capabilities, the national power generated by the material capabilities of a state should be measured by comparison with others. In other words, the national power of one state can only be meaningful if it is compared to other states. For instance, nominally, *X* state's GDP or military personnel may increase yearly; however if the rate of growth in state *Y* is much more than in state *X*, state *Y* becomes powerful more quickly than *X* due to its relative growth.[1] This does not mean that *X*'s power decreased. However, it means that the power of *Y* is rising substantially more rapidly than that of *X*. Furthermore, if state *X* in the region maintains its capacity within the same interval, it demonstrates that *X*'s power declines in comparison to the cumulative power of all other states within the same region, thereby, demonstrating the increasing power of other states in the same region.

The most commonly used power index and compared dataset was produced by the Correlates of War Project (COW). The power index released by COW is known as *The Composite Index of National Capability* (CINC score). The CINC score generates a numerical magnitude by measuring six different variables for describing the internal capacities of states. These variables are coded in the national material capabilities dataset (NMC-v.4.0) as (i) total population, (ii) urban population, (iii) iron

[1] For more information on relativity and measurement of power, see K. H. Höhn, *Geopolitics and the Measurement of National Power*, (PhD Dissertations, Hamburg 2011). Online at https://ediss.sub.uni-hamburg.de/volltexte/2014/6550/pdf/Dissertation.pdf. Accessed on 01 March 2019.

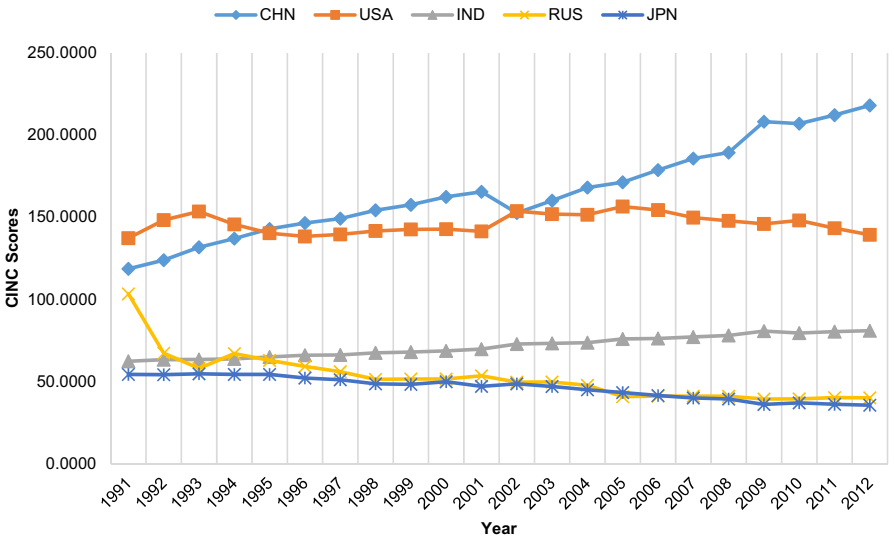

Fig. 1 The first five states by national material capabilities. Source: NMC dataset of COW project (multiplied by 1000 by the authors). Online at https://www.correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/national-material-capabilities. Accessed on 01 March 2019 (Singer et. al 1972)

and steel consumption, (iv) primary energy consumption, (v) military expenditure and (vi) military personnel (Singer et al. 1972; Singer 1988). In this context, the CINC score may present a measurable magnitude for each country even if it cannot explain its control over actors, resources or events. Although the CINC score is the most popular formula, there are other power formulas which include non-material variables.[2] However, it should be noted that none of them has been found useful because of the difficulties in measuring intangible variables (Singer et al. 1972; Singer 1988). The CINC scores are recorded and calculated in the NMC dataset in floating-point format. To express the existing situation clearly, we multiply each record in the dataset by 1,000 and we present them in Fig. 1.

According to the CINC scores for the years from 1991 to 2012, Fig. 1 shows the most powerful five states whose material capacities are higher than those of other states. The first salient issue here is that contemporary world politics can no longer be considered Eurocentric because four out of the five most powerful countries are located in Asia and the Far East. If we only take into consideration the material capacities of the five states, we can argue that the Asia–Pacific region is the new world centre of power concentration. This also indicates that existing power relations established after WWII have begun to change. This trend

[2] National power indexes gained popularity especially during the Cold War. Höhn's research shows that, from 1741 to 2009, 51 different power formulas have been developed. However, in empirical international relations theory, the CINC score developed by the COW project is still the most popular power formula.

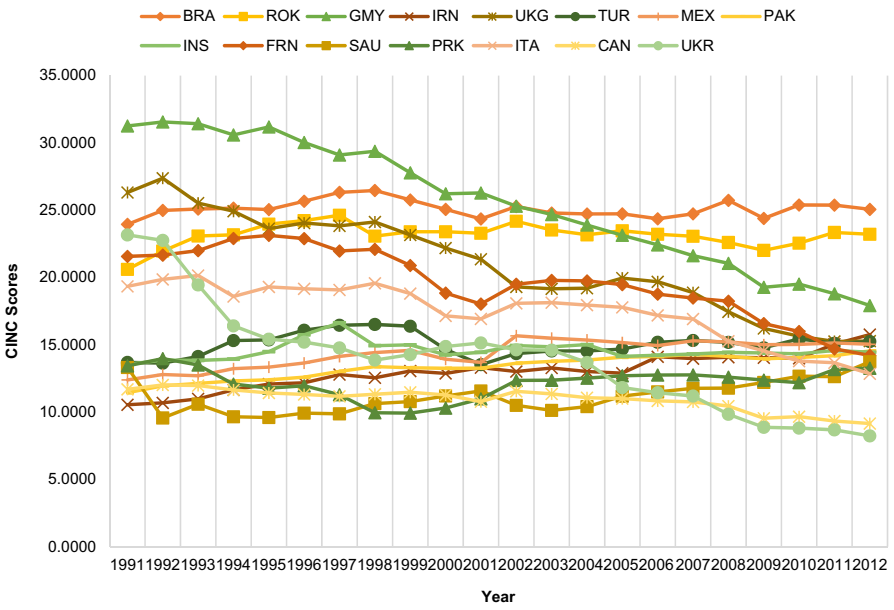

Fig. 2 The next 15 states by national material capabilities. Source: NMC dataset of COW project (multiplied by 1000 by the authors). Online at https://www.correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/national-material-capabilities. Accessed on 01 March 2019

is also demonstrated in Fig. 2. Figure 2 includes the next 15 states according to their national material capabilities. Figure 2 indicates that the national material capabilities of Germany, France and the United Kingdom show a relative decline over the last twenty years. Thus, the power gap between former great powers and emerging new powers has narrowed since the end of the Cold War.

In IR empirical literature, CINC scores are mostly used for the analysis of the measurement of material capabilities. In that sense, the CINC score gives an important insight into the power hierarchy within the international system. Also, it provides an opportunity to observe long-term change in the capability distribution among major and regional powers. As emphasised above, some scholars only used GDP to explain capability distributions (Organski and Kugler 1980). Power has other dimensions that include intangible factors such as self-confidence, status/prestige or fear. Previously, some efforts have been made to create indexes for the intangible factors of power (see McClory 2018). In the words of Renshon, '*power is neither solely material nor social, but both'* (Renshon 2017, 101). Hart's power assessment on control over actors, outcomes, and resources can be explained not only by material capabilities but also by other instruments of state such as diplomacy and war. In that sense, the capability dimension of power can be complemented by other relational instruments. As a framework for this argument, this study proposes that the measurement of cooperative and conflicting behaviours of states would be useful in the understanding of the power sources of

states. Our argument on this issue raises a question as to how diplomacy and war are interconnected to explain hard power.

As highlighted above, change in material capabilities is the first and most significant dimension of national power. However, power is also a given 'status' for nations. Renshon (2017, 42) emphasises that '*power and status might be said to have common ancestors.'* By confirming the findings of those scholars, status inconsistency emerges among major powers as a result of this rising trend in their capabilities. However, it can be argued that status depends not only on material capabilities but that other variables are also important. These are the diplomatic and conflictual processes of nations. States that have more diplomats and diplomatic missions can be regarded as more important in comparison to countries with smaller diplomatic potential (Ward 2020, 275). We argue that recruiting more diplomats is a form of state strategy used to maintain national interests and a means of elevating status in the hierarchy of states. As shown in previous studies, specifically on the power transitionist tradition, status inconsistency makes decision-makers more war-prone. Volgy and Mayhall propose that high-level military and economic capability, in combination with low-level prestige, may create a desire for combat on the part of decision-makers (Volgy and Mayhall, 1995, 68). According to the empirical findings of Ward on militarised interstate disputes, '*…victory also appears to improve diplomatic rank, but there is greater uncertainty about its long-term effect'* (Ward 2020, 276). In that sense, we can argue that diplomatic representation and war proneness are nested concepts that are effective in power generation. In this context, we focus separately on two other tangible variables to enlarge power definition: diplomatic representation and war proneness.

4 Diplomatic Representation and National Power

Empirical analyses show that the rise in the level of national capacity increases national power relatively. However, how can we explain the small but powerful states or the states that have relatively lower capacity but a higher level of power? The same level of capabilities does not produce the same level of power due to the effects of the relational and perceptual aspect of power relations. When we compare theoretical and empirical understandings, we could argue that the most difficult issue is how to integrate these understandings into a unitary model of power capacity. We believe that a unitary model of power capacity should take into consideration the impact of diplomatic representation and war proneness not only as indicators but also as sources of national power. We now introduce diplomatic representation as an additional variable to analyse national power.

Any scholarly effort at defining relations between two states entails subjective and context-dependent factors. That is why the main problem here is how a researcher can include relational aspects of power while maintaining the objectivity of their data. Since our aim is to add a relational dimension without falling into the trap of quantifying subjective or contextual variables, we believe that measuring diplomatic representation as a component and source of national material capabilities is the optimal choice to enhance the quantitative analysis of power in IR. We

assume that a general level of involvement of a particular state in the international system is needed for that state to be part of the power game with other states; some kind of relationship or interdependence between states must exist before national material capacity is put into action. This kind of relationship does not necessarily imply asymmetry, dominance, dependence or a continuous form of communication. We begin our analysis of the relational dimension of power at the lowest possible level. We do not argue that recognition and some sort of official connection via diplomatic missions are compulsory to observe power relations among states. There might be instances where one state can exert its power over other states in the absence of diplomatic connection or recognition. Furthermore, we do not aim to measure diplomatic power or diplomatic importance by counting the number of diplomatic missions (cf. Small and Singer 1973). In some instances, states with lower economic and military power can exert diplomatic influence on major powers. Diplomatic power may include tangible variables such as the number of memberships in international organisations and the number of diplomatic staff as well as intangible variables such as national image, the international reputation of diplomatic staff and their communication and bargaining skills. Alliances can also generate diplomatic power and even increase material capacity. Despite these several different indicators of diplomatic power, we focus on the number of diplomatic missions to gauge the additional value of diplomatic representation since our objective is to explore the effects of the networks of diplomatic relationships rather than to measure diplomatic power.

At the dyadic level, diplomatic representation as recognition functions as a context in which acts of influence can be performed through diplomatic instruments such as bargaining or persuasion. We argue that instead of observing diplomatic representation at the dyadic level, diplomatic representation as a network of dyadic relations reveals that this relational aspect can be a power asset. Therefore, diplomatic representation becomes an indicator as well as a product of national material capabilities. Not only is opening a new diplomatic mission a political decision depending on the political will of both recipient and sender countries but also it is an economic decision due to the costs of financial and human resources allocated for the mission (Russett and Lamb 1969; Small and Singer 1973; Neumayer 2008). Also, the number of diplomatic posts shows the geographical scope of the political interest of a particular state. Besides, it means that a high level of diplomatic posts can be regarded as the maintenance of regular commercial, economic, political, cultural relations between the two countries. In addition, diplomats play an important role between states concerning information exchange and prevention of misperceptions, especially in times of crisis. It is believed that despite the diversification of diplomatic actors and new ways of communications in today's world, diplomatic missions are the only reliable and satisfactory diplomatic instrument of every nation-state (see Sharp 1997; Cooper 1997/98; Neumayer 2008, 230). Because of these reasons, diplomatic representation measured by the number of diplomatic missions abroad enables us to add a quantifiable relational dimension into the comparisons of national material capabilities.

The perceptual aspect of diplomatic representation has been suggested as a source of soft power. We agree that diplomatic representation has a soft power

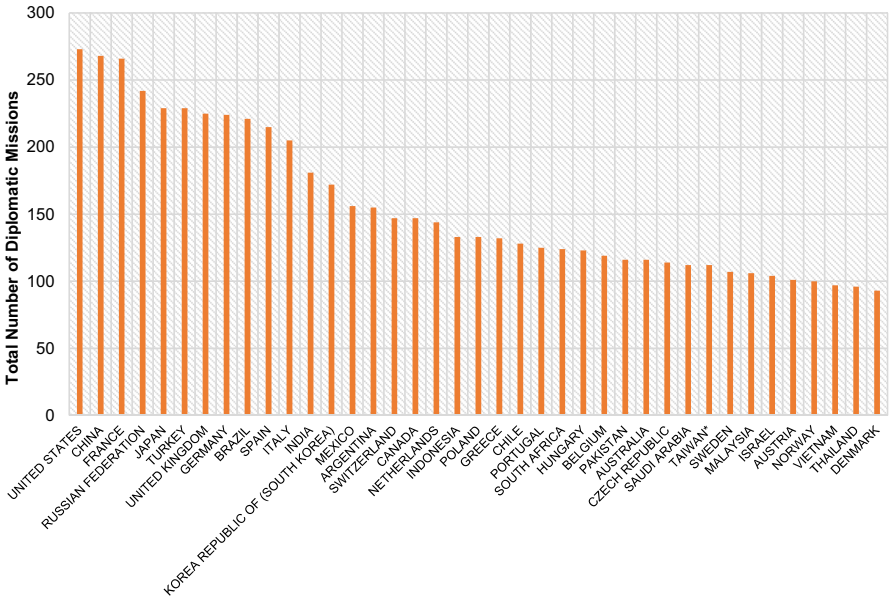

Fig. 3 Total Number of Diplomatic Missions by Country. Source: Lowy Institute Global Diplomacy Index. Online at https://globaldiplomacyindex.lowyinstitute.org/Accessed on 01 March 2019

aspect. However, alongside the cognitive-perceptual dimension, we claim that the rise in the number of diplomatic missions of a particular country does not just elevate its status in the international system and boosts its image in the eyes of others. It also enhances economic, social and political relations with other countries by making a country more engaged and connected, which, in turn, contributes to its hard power.

We reviewed data drawn from the Lowy Institute Global Diplomacy Index to calculate the number of diplomatic posts to compare diplomatic relations among states. Figure 3 shows the number of diplomatic posts by country. Interestingly, four of the top five states in CINC score ranking are in the same order for the number of their diplomatic posts. The next 15 states have approximately the same number of diplomatic posts. In that sense, we must emphasise that there is a link between national material capabilities and diplomatic instruments. Eric Neumayer (2008, 229) also argues that in addition to geographical proximity and ideological affinity 'Countries that are economically and militarily more powerful send and receive more diplomatic representations than less powerful countries'. Thus, not only does diplomatic representation demonstrate the material capacity of a particular state but also material capacity is used as a way of enhancing national power and multiplying its influence over others. In addition to diplomatic representation, in the next section, we elaborate on the effects of past acts of power in the form of war.

5 War Proneness and National Power

Capacity building is a long-term process for a state, during which, historically, states frequently resort to war. Either because of status-seeking or prestige gaining, states and their decision-makers often use power instruments against other states. However, the origin of these behaviours comes from and depends on material capabilities. In that sense, war proneness is a state behaviour that denotes both status-seeking and the construction of a power image in the international hierarchy.

As already noted, intangible variables in power formulas limit the explanatory power of the empirical analysis of power. It is arguable that power and capacity are not the same concept in determining the potential of a state. The potential may come from its material capabilities such as population, military personnel, or GNP. However, along with national material capabilities, we argue that national power is the result of a constructed image pertaining to the power of one state in the minds of others. These non-material or cognitive images stem from *Y*'s comparison of its own material capabilities with X's as well as *Y*'s perceptions about the nature of its relationship with *X*. In addition to these two perceptual factors, we think that an understanding of *Y*'s perception of *X*'s tendency to initiate and participate in wars is also important in an assessment of the power relations between *X* and *Y*.

Here, we agree that past uses of force in dyads influence mutual perceptions because each defines the other as enemies. However, we aim to focus on the impact, throughout history, of the cumulative use of force by each state. We also consider the accumulation of material capabilities and the construction of an image of a powerful state that is capable, willing and competent to employ its hard material capabilities whenever deemed necessary. War proneness, as conceived in this article, adds the cumulative effects of past uses of force to our analysis of power.

Therefore, it can be argued that the past behaviours of states create a kind of power image. Past behaviours can be quite effective on leaders' perceptions (Jervis 1976, 2017; Huth 1988). For instance, Jervis emphasises the effects of the last war on decision-making processes (Jervis 1976: 266). According to Crescenzi (2007), in a current crisis, rival dyads are constrained by the experiences of past violence. Furthermore, Vasquez points out that capability changes are significant between two actors, depending on their prior interactions (Vasquez 2009: 120). The above theoretical assumptions show that there is a substantial relationship between the past interactions of two states and their perceptions about each other's power capacity. However, instead of looking at rival dyads, we stress the importance of the aggregate experience of past violent acts of power. This would turn the perceptual-cognitive aspect of power into a relational one. Our objective is not to gauge the impact of perceptions and images on national power. In line with these arguments, we introduce war proneness as a new variable as an indicator of past use of national power and a possible source of current material capabilities. The material benefits can be seen as outweighing the economic and human cost of war. In this context, war proneness has a mediating effect on how national material capabilities exert influence over the behaviour of others.

War proneness is a concept which focuses on the total war experience of nations. Together with this concept, several scholars tried to explain why some states are more apt to resort to war and are prone to conflict (Singer and Small 1972; Houweling and Kuné 1985; Maoz 2004). Singer and Small (1972, 258) noted that the war proneness of a nation might come from physical, structural and cultural attributes. The physical attributes include industrial production, natural resources, military capabilities and population. These elements are included in CINC scores along with other dimensions such as ethnic composition and homogeneity, birth rates and other factors. The scores also focus on the military and diplomatic traditions within the cultural dimensions of a state. These variables may support our argument about the relations between capability, diplomatic representation and war proneness. In that vein, Small and Singer conclude that most international wars break out among a small group of states which can be ranked high on their diplomatic status and military-industrial capability (1972, 287). Therefore, it can be argued that the past experiences of states can be measured by the rate of war participation and initiation. While confirming Singer and Small's arguments, we argue that those numbers can be assessed together with national material capabilities and diplomatic scope.

Table 1 shows the rates of war proneness for 20 countries. We used COW interstate and extra-state war data to demonstrate the war proneness of nations (Sarkees and Wayman 2010). A state can either be the attacker or the target of another state. If the state is an attacker, or it participated on the side of initiator, it is coded as initiator. Whether it is an initiator or a target, a state's involvement in a war makes it a participant. We focus on which state and how many times it was an attacker or an initiator of a war. According to the COW dataset, a war initiator is a state 'whose battalions made the first attack in strength on their opponent's armies or territories' (Sarkees 2011, 29). We argue that the war proneness of nations can be measured by the initiation of war rather than by participation in a war. This is because a state can theoretically be a target of several states in a particular time period. Thus, the rate of participation is always higher than the rate of war initiation. However, frequent war initiation demonstrates that particular states are more ready for and prone to war and are able to employ their hard material power in times of conflict. Taking this approach, we take the initiated interstate[3] (Z_b) and extra-state wars[4] (T_b) by considering the independent years (X) of each state. This is formulated as $(Z_b + T_b)/X$ in the table. Each score is multiplied by 100 to facilitate comparison in tables. The same formula is applied to all states based on dispute initiation and war participation. However, as mentioned above, war initiation is given more attention to demonstrate that war has been used as a state instrument to enhance national power throughout history. The levels of participation and initiation rates are shown in Table 1 for

[3] The Correlates of War dataset defines interstate war as a combat between two states which involves 'regular armed forces on both sides and 1,000 battle-related fatalities among all of the system members involved. Any individual member state qualified as a war participant through either of two criteria: a minimum of 100 fatalities or a minimum of 1,000 armed personnel engaged in active combat' (Sarkees 2011, 3).

[4] According to the definition given by Sarkees (2011, 11) an extra-state war is 'between a state and a nonstate entity outside its borders.'.

Table 1 War proneness

State	Total number of Years for each country	Total interstate wars	Initiated inter-state wars	Total extra-state Wars	Initiated extra-state Wars	All wars participated in	Initiated wars total	General War proneness	Interstate war proneness	Extra-state war proneness
	X	Z	Z_b	T	T_b	$Z+T$	Z_b+T_b	$(Z_b+T_b/X)*100$	$Z_b/X*100$	$T_b/X*100$
UK	195	13	6	58	26	71	32	16,4	3,08	13,33
France	195	19	8	34	18	53	26	13,3	4,1	9,23
Russia	195	16	10	9	4	25	13	6,7	5,13	2,05
Vietnam	57	6	2	1	1	7	3	5,3	3,51	1,75
US	195	13	7	6	3	19	10	5,1	3,59	1,54
Egypt	101	7	2	4	3	11	5	5,0	1,98	2,97
Japan	144	9	7	2	0	11	7	4,9	4,86	0
Israel	63	6	3	1	0	7	3	4,8	4,76	0
Pakistan	64	4	3	0	0	4	3	4,7	4,69	0
China	151	14	5	4	2	18	7	4,6	3,31	1,32
Italy	195	13	6	5	2	18	8	4,1	3,08	1,03
Spain	195	6	3	14	4	20	7	3,6	1,54	2,05
Turkey	195	13	3	10	4	23	7	3,6	1,54	2,05
Australia	91	5	1	2	2	7	3	3,3	1,1	2,20
Germany	185	9	5	4	1	13	6	3,2	2,7	0,54
India	64	5	1	1	1	6	2	3,1	1,56	1,56
Netherland	190	3	1	10	4	13	5	2,6	0,53	2,11
Iraq	79	5	2	0	0	5	2	2,5	2,53	0
South Africa	91	2	1	1	1	3	2	2,2	1,1	1,1
Guatemala	143	3	3	0	0	3	3	2,1	2,1	0

Source: Authors' compilation from the Correlates of War Project. Online at https://www.correlatesofwar.org. Accessed on 01 March 2019

comparison purposes.[5] The table shows that the war proneness of today's major and regional powers' is remarkably higher than that of other states. Although distribution of wars over a time frame may produce more comprehensive analysis, we can argue that war proneness enhances our understanding of power relations among major powers.

The power perception of a decision-maker can stem from its material capacity. However, this capacity can be more significant in combination with the historical experiences of a state. This is because particular states are historically more apt to use military force and coercive measures to force others to change their behaviours. It could be argued that this issue has a grandiose emotional symbolism based on previous successful wars. It shows that previous victories create an impression of the successful use of power in the minds of decision-makers. In short, along with material capacity, past use of military force by states may explain the exercise of power over others. We think that the past acts of war initiation (war proneness) are indications of power in the perceptions of others, in addition to a relative comparison of material capabilities. The high level of capacity inequality between two states combined with past experiences may accentuate the image of a powerful state in the eyes of others. This means that the threat to use of force can be a compelling reality. In this way, together with diplomatic relations, past experiences can enable particular states to exercise their power over others without consuming their current material resources to enhance their national power today and possibly in the future.

6 Discussion

As a starting point of our discussion, we argue that the relational power has three kinds of dimensions. These dimensions were regarded in this study as (i) material capabilities, (ii) diplomatic representation and (iii) war proneness. For us, diplomatic representation and war proneness should be included in the empirical analysis not only as controlling variables. The mere inclusion of these two variables as controlling variables misses their dual nature as the product and the source of national power. When considered as a network of diplomatic relations rather than an instance of mutual diplomatic relations between two states, diplomatic representation functions as a mediating factor through which national power is exercised over others. The same argument applies to the concept of war proneness when considered as a total sum of past violent use of hard material power. These two factors are indicators and reflections of the relational dimension of hard material power. We have similar observations concerning diplomatic relations. With few exceptions, the highest numbers of diplomatic missions belong to the most powerful countries in the existing international system. The numbers of diplomatic missions of states such as the UK and France are higher than those of other rising powers due to their imperial connections. Although many diplomatic missions are only intended to enhance cooperation and economic, political and cultural relations, they have the potential

[5] The full list can be found in Akgül (2015:508–509).

to control events, actors and resources. However, it can equally be argued that the number of diplomatic missions may demonstrate the spatial distribution of national interests of states around the globe. By extending their diplomatic outreach, states not only demonstrate their national power but also enhance their relations with other states to gain a favourable position for political, economic and military exchanges vis-à-vis other states.

Similar to the argument concerning the effects of diplomatic representation, past experiences of war may put states in advantaged or disadvantaged positions irrespective of their current national power. These historically developed positions help us to better understand the reality of relational power. Instead of looking into the dyadic aspects of relations between two states, we prefer to take into account the cumulative effects of present and past use of national power in the forms of diplomatic missions and war proneness. National power is embedded in relations and positions that are the outcomes of diplomatic outreach and war proneness. Guzzini (2011) alluded to the psychological aspects of relational power. We agree that the high number of diplomatic missions and the high rate of war proneness contribute to national power by creating an image of a powerful country. However, a national image based on the rate of war proneness is different from a national image created by hostility or friendliness. Two nations may have been at war several times in the past, and one of them can be considered as more aggressive and war-prone in their bilateral relationship. However, war proneness is, in this paper, taken as a cumulative image of national power rather than a freestanding image of national power based on the hostility-friendliness dimension. In other words, the national image created by war proneness is more general than the national image created by bilateral hostilities.

Even though France, the UK and Germany continue to be major powers in today's international system, their power stems from their early industrial developments and their immense and widespread diplomatic outreach all around the globe. In most cases, the industrialisation process involved these major powers in interstate and extra-state wars around the globe. The war proneness of those nations can be related to their early and rapid industrialisation and their tendency to use force in the 19th and early twentieth centuries. Although their war proneness gradually declined after WWII, they still are regarded as major powers in the international system. However, we can argue that some states are more dispute prone than others. There may be several reasons for this, such as historical experiences, political leadership, security concerns or militaristic cultures. Also, war can be considered as a state policy. The UK, Russia and France continue to be powerful countries because they were initiators of wars in the past. This implies that they tended to use their hard material power frequently, and that they might have increased their material capabilities as a result of their victories on the field of battle. Ultimately, these experiences mediate the power relations among states in the international system. However, it cannot be concluded that powerful states should use their hard power and wage war to be seen as powerful. By no means does our argument on war proneness infer that states should initiate wars to create an image of a powerful state for themselves. However, we highlight the fact that most major power states have experienced violent relations with other states to gain status, reputation and hierarchical position. Perceptively,

it makes them more likely to initiate wars. Peaceful diplomatic relations between relatively powerful states and other states are still essential. Also, a rise in the CINC score of any state may exert pressure on the state's foreign policy concerning finding new resources, and that may result in an extension of the geographical scope of national interests. Some scholars of IR confirm this idea (Choucri and North 1972, 1989). Extending the geographical scope of interest may increase the possibility of conflict as well as that of cooperation. Therefore, we argue that there is significant consistency between the CINC scores, diplomatic missions and war proneness of states.

As we highlighted in our literature review, defining, explaining and understanding the dynamics of power is an ongoing process among IR scholars. It seems to us that this debate will continue due to new variables which affect national power. However, other variables, such as powerful leaders and national hierarchies, need to be scrutinised. These new variables could be the subject of further research. Besides, the world is in the age of the fourth industrial revolution. New technologies, new materials and new methods are gradually being integrated into state instruments of development, diplomacy and war. Developments like digital diplomacy, robotic warfare and smart factories could be studied because they will open a new debate on the measurability of power in the near future. Interestingly, nearly all the same countries mentioned above are the current biggest investors in the components of the fourth industrial revolution. It can be predicted that the effects of these tendencies will soon be evident.

7 Conclusion

In this article, we gave an overview of the literature on power analysis. We elaborated on several definitions of power by looking at the various faces, types and forms of power put forward by different scholars. Our aim was to provide a conceptual framework for power analysis. Then, we turned to the empirical issues. We discussed briefly the importance of measuring power. In this empirical part of the article, we highlighted scientific efforts to operationalise national power capacity. We focused on CINC scores because they have been widely used by IR scholars to rank countries according to their national power capacities. In the remainder of the article, we introduced data on diplomatic missions and war proneness so that we could add a relational dimension to the empirical analysis of power. The number of diplomatic posts and the rate of war proneness are two distinct variables not included in the COW project. Nevertheless, we think that they have mediating effects which enable researchers to combine coercive material capabilities with the relational aspect of power in action by looking at the networks of diplomatic relations and by gauging the impact of historical experiences in the form of use of force. We conclude that we need to pay attention to the diplomatic outreach of countries as well as the war proneness of countries if we want to comprehend the dynamics and effects of power distribution among the most powerful countries in the world. Future research should be carried out to dwell on the relationship between armed conflicts on the one hand and war proneness and diplomatic outreach on the other. Our objective has been to

provide a conceptual framework for a better understanding of the effects of material capabilities by including a relational dimension in the analysis of power in action. The relational concept of power makes us rethink national power along social and relational lines by combining material capabilities with relations, positions and images. We argue that this relational dimension of the analysis of national material capabilities can also be considered, along with tangible factors, without shifting the focus of power analysis from hard (material) power to soft power.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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