

## Energy Power in Foreign Policy – A Theoretical Approach

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### Abstract

This article examines theory of international relations is best suited for the analysis of energy Power in international relations. Findings Realism suggests that energy resources are power included in states foreign policy when states seek to expand influence abroad. Detailed examination of classical realism and neoclassical realism suggests that neoclassical realism allows extend the analysis of energy power role in states foreign policy. Interactions and variables in neoclassical realism suggest the broadest explanations and predictions. Originality/value. The article suggests that realism paradigm theories might provide a useful starting point from a descriptive method in the studies of energy power in foreign policy.

**Keywords:** Energy; energy power; foreign policy; realism paradigm.

### قوة الطاقة في السياسة الخارجية - مقارنة نظرية

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### ملخص

تبحث هذه المقالة في نظرية العلاقات الدولية الأنسب لتحليل قوة الطاقة في العلاقات الدولية. الموجودات تشير الواقعية إلى أن موارد الطاقة هي قوة متضمنة في السياسة الخارجية للدول عندما تسعى الدول إلى توسيع نفوذها في الخارج. يشير الفحص التفصيلي للواقعية الكلاسيكية والواقعية الكلاسيكية الجديدة إلى أن الواقعية الكلاسيكية الجديدة تسمح بتوسيع تحليل دور قوة الطاقة في السياسة الخارجية للدول. تقترح التفاعلات والمتغيرات في الواقعية الكلاسيكية الجديدة أوسع التفسيرات والتنبؤات. الأصالة/ القيمة يقترح المقال أن نظريات الواقعية النموذجية قد توفر نقطة انطلاق مفيدة من طريقة وصفية في دراسات قوة الطاقة في السياسة الخارجية.

الكلمات الدالة: الطاقة، قوة الطاقة، السياسة الخارجية، الواقعية الكلاسيكية الجديدة



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## Introduction

The concept of power in international relations embodies one of the main determinants of understanding the behavior of states. The power defined as “the ability to influence the behavior of others to obtain the desired results.” It is also a pivotal basis for knowing the extent of the capabilities of states and their ability to be influential in international politics. The subject of transformations in power and forms of power is one of the topics that researched and published in many books and studies.

These researches examined the impact of these transformations in power on international relations, as the contemporary world has witnessed a revolution of transformations from hard power to soft power to the use of new tools of power. This, in turn, has a prominent impact on international relations and the new world order, so the world was facing a new stage in the development of international relations. When we talk about power and its impact on international relations, we faced with a reality that is seeking to dominate the elements of power. Where power was still the variable influencing international relations and is the focus of conflict and human thinking throughout the historical generations. As each stage of the struggle for the development of human societies relied on power in its various forms and types. Power has affected the political, social, economic and cultural life of societies. It is one of the means and tools used by international units to implement their plans and achieve their goals.

Where military power was the only form used by states in their relations with each other. Conflict prevailed over these relationships. Military capability considered the criterion that defines the position of the state and its role in the global system. The concept of power is a relative concept related to the extent of the target state's vulnerability, and the influence on the behavior of states was the purpose of the use of power. Therefore, countries began to search for new elements that affect the behavior of states and achieve their interests. When the economy became one of the most influencing factors on the behavior of states, countries used the economy as a power. This was done in many forms as well, in the form of exemptions, grants and inducements, or by pressure and cut off aid, blockade and monopoly, and the use of economic resources such as oil and energy resources to pressure states through reducing production or Raising prices or threatening to stop oil supplying.

Energy has become a determining factor in drawing the features of countries' foreign policy. Whether exporting or importing energy. Given that the energy sector is one of the sensitive sectors within the state. Where the national energetic capabilities of the state affect the determination of its position and position in the international system.

Energy as a power has become one of the manifestations of political and security concepts that have begun to take shape and take their scientific and practical place within the many variables that followed the post-Cold War era.

Energy has become like many determinants of national security. Energy occupies a prominent place in international relations, as it is the main engine of the economy, especially because of the increasing need for it. It is no longer indispensable because it is the main engine of global economies.

Energy sources as a strategic resource affect the adoption of an active foreign policy or the absence of a foreign policy. It affects the country's standing and position in the international system.

Industrially developed countries pay great attention to the issue of securing their energy requirements, so that their industry and internal growth are not affected. Meanwhile, energy-exporting countries are working on how to use this advantage in their foreign policies to achieve a margin of maneuver.

The energy sector considered the mainstay of the national security of many countries, and an important foreign policy tool, as it plays a pivotal role in the global oil and energy market.

In the context of the geostrategic and geo-economic importance, that energy is gaining as a power in foreign policy on the one hand, and in light of global competition over energy and its sources on the other hand.

This research paper comes to investigate the theoretical approach suited for energy power through the study problematic that comes from the main question:

### **RQ1. How does energy power affect countries' foreign policy?**

This includes number of sub-questions as follows:

#### **Q1. What is the concept of energy power?**

**Q2.** How did realism theory explain the concept of energy power?

**Q3.** How can the Energy Power explained as a National interest?

**Q4.** How does energy power affect countries' foreign policies?

**- The concept of power:**

The concept of power considered a pivotal concept in international relations, and many perspectives and theories of international relations revolved around it, that reflected an international reality based on power due to the competitive, conflictual and chaotic nature of the global system, or according to the nature of interdependence and competitiveness of the global community. (Rothegeb, 1993)

Sociology defines power: "the ability to cause a certain matter" and "the influence of an individual or group through some means on the behavior of others".

The topic of power considered one of the topics that the science of geopolitics and international relations is interested in. Therefore, the definition and interpretation of the concept of power came to many writers and thinkers in this context. (Al-Samalouti, 1978) (Al-Qabaj, 2016)

In the sixteenth century, Machiavelli focused on the role of power in the political practice of his time, stressing that the ruler must rely on moral standards different from those adopted by the average individual in order to ensure the security and survival of the state, including power. (Dorty, 1985)

In Karl Frederick's view, the best definition of power is "the ability to establish a relationship of dependency".

Hans Morgenthau defined power: "the means and the end that the state seeks to reach in the field of international relations". (Guzzini, 2018)

Morgenthau also says that power is always the direct goal of any action, so it becomes acceptable to assume that all political action reduced to power for any other goal that used later in global politics, and this work appears in the three objectives of the state's work: preserving, improving and proving its power. (Guzzini, 2018). So there is no need to analyze the actual motives.

Joseph Nye defines power "is the ability of a state to achieve the desired goals and results", as well as the ability to make others do what they did not intend to do". (Nye, 2002-2003)

Arnold Wolfers defines power "as the ability to push others to do what you want and prevent them from doing what you do not want". As for Raymond Aaron, he describes it as "the ability to do, to make, or to destroy".

Max Weber sees power as "the potential that a person possesses, within the framework of social relations, in a position that helps the fulfillment of his desires, despite the rejection and resistance of others to him". (Weber, 1957)

So power is not a static act, but it's a relationship between two or more parties in which interaction takes place through means and methods of influencing wills and behaviors, and this is what the United States of America highlights by using its power to influence the behavior of other countries within the framework of the international system.

The role the power plays has enabled it to act as an instrument of foreign policy, The concept of power in the intellectual context transcended from the military meaning to a broader content to include political, economic, social, cultural and technological power.

The existence of a group of sources, whether material or non-material, such as the structure of military power, the size of the state, the population, and the national product are considered as sources and indications of the power of the state and its ability. And the state's possession of those tangible or intangible resources means its possession of power and the ability to achieve its goals and influence its foreign policy. (Hart, 1976). A country's capacity is its ability to control outputs, events, and the environment as a means of measuring power. (Nye, 2011)

**Energy, the main driver of economic power:**

The main thing related to the concept of power is that the influence of any state on the orientations or behavior of other states. Does not achieve any significant results unless it is based on various material and moral capabilities, by mobilizing

certain elements to influence persuasion, temptation, threat or punishment. The importance of the availability of capabilities as a component of the concept of power has reached the point of crystallizing a flow between power analysts offers another definition of power that not based on being a revenue-influencing process. But a symbol of possessing capabilities. (Schweller, 2004)

The concept of power became anything owned by the state that could affect other countries, and it could be used in a soft and easy way, or even in an invisible and hidden way, and it could be used in a hard and rough way through threats and sanctions, or the state exercised its power in the external domain.

Joseph Nye refers to the change in the sources of power, as the economic power of the state has become of great importance to determine the power of the state and its ability to influence the international arena. Rather, relying on these new sources has become less expensive than relying on military power in many ways, and as a result, international strategies and the calculations of each country have changed.

The situation has shifted from the desire of each country to increase its power at the expense of others to cooperation with others to increase its power and maximize its benefit, and to benefit from this cooperation in overcoming the challenges it faces, which it cannot face alone.

All of this has led to an impact on the role of the military power of countries as a determinant of their power and international influence, and the most prominent example of this is the rise of major powers that were not primarily military, such as Japan, Germany and China, so their reliance was mainly on the rise of the ranks of the major countries on the economic side. (Soliman, 2016)

There are two main forms of using economic power. The first form is represented in sanctions, which may take the form of boycotting imports, bans on exports, imposing restrictions on investment, and preventing travel, for example the success of the United States in forcing Britain to withdraw from Suez, during the tripartite aggression on Egypt in 1956, after threatening to impose economic sanctions on it.

The second form represented in grants and economic aid, i.e. rewarding the state a result of changing its behavior in favor of the other party, or in an attempt to change it.

Joseph Nye has argued that "Economic resources not only express hard power, but may produce soft power as well, as the country may offer an attractive development model for other countries, as in the case of Japan. (Nye, 2011)

Therefore, if the state has a strong economy, it is a strong country both militarily and securely. Economic power considered one of the most important elements of state power, and the state's gross national product is a clear indicator of the state's economic power. The per capita income also gives an indication of the state's progress and the welfare of its people. (Taha, 2016)

The economic power of the state depends on its power in the various production areas of energy resources, industry, and mining, and the most important indicators that determine the state's capacity in terms of the economic framework are the following indicators: (Sweilam, 2010)

1- **Natural Resources:** The state relies, in building its industries - including the military industries - on its natural wealth in the first place, and industry.

The most important resources of natural wealth are energy resources, which generate the dynamics of industry, agriculture, transportation, equipment and combat weapons by land, sea and air, as well as many productive services such as electric power generation, irrigation and drainage works, as well as other unproductive services. In addition, It is essential to life as heating and sanitation.

Among the most important energy resources are the following: (Al-Uqibi, 2018)

I- **Oil and gas:** Oil and gas is a major source of economic power, and thus the political power of the countries producing it in the regional and international arenas. In return, it makes these countries coveting other countries in the regional and international circles that want to control it, especially since the companies working in exploration, extraction, transport and refining are global monopolies belonging to the world's great powers - especially the United States, Britain, France, and China.

II- **Electricity:** Electricity is a vital energy resource, especially for countries that do not find their need for natural energy resources (coal, oil and gas).

III- **Nuclear energy:** Many countries have moved towards the use of power plants using nuclear power by nuclear fission reactors or nuclear fusion.

IV- **Other energy sources:** such as solar and wind energy, which are still in the process of development and growth,

Energy resources - such as oil and gas fields and facilities, coal mines, oil refineries and export facilities, dams, power generation plants, and fuel depots, are among the strategic goals.

2- **Industry:** The industrial sector represents the backbone of the state's power. Western countries are a model in their dependence on the industrial sector, which constitutes the highest percentage of revenues in the national income. The comprehensive power of the state and its economic power depend to large extent on the extent of its industrial progress. To measure the power of industry in the country, thinkers of comprehensive power have taken different methods. There are many political and economic analysts, such as Brunwquie, who have emphasized that measuring the power of an industrialized country by measuring the energy consumption of these countries is prominent. The importance of the state's economic power is generally evident in that it plays a role in building and developing the armed forces to maintain its national security and achieve its national and strategic goals and objectives. (al-Hadi, 2016)

It is evident from the above that economic power depends almost entirely on energy. Even those countries that depend on agriculture or mineral wealth as an economic power need energy as a main engine in the field of mineral extraction or refining or in the field of agriculture and agricultural industries, and this indicates that energy is the real economic power.

In order for the state's power to be measured economically, it must measure its energy potential and the extent of its self-reliance in the field of energy, or its dependence on importing energy resources, which works to subordinate its economic decision, or weaken its economic power based on its energy needs and energy market fluctuations, and international relations that based on the energy market in the world, such as oil and gas.

### **The role of Energy Power in Foreign Policy: Realism Theory**

The lack of theoretical background renders studies of energy power incomplete, without adequate foundation or guidelines for future or broader analysis.

The lack of theoretical background could related to the fact that the energy power or energy in foreign policy has not adequately defined or analyzed in international relations.

The issues arising from energy resources dominated by other elements of national and international security, especially military security, and dominated by the realism model. The so-called soft power elements arising from the ideal (liberal) model, and the emphasis on social structures and history in the constructivism model.

The lack of theoretical background in energy issues has created a situation where in most cases a descriptive method or historical analysis completely dominates discussion of the role that energy resources play in foreign policy.

One of the clear and frank writings that looks at the concept of energy power is what published by the Journal of Foreign Affairs issued by the Council on Foreign Relations in the March / April 2015 issue - an article entitled "Hard Power, Soft Power, Energy Power... The New Tool of Foreign Policy" by the author Michael T. Klare.

He explained the debate about whether the preservation of interests is through hard power (coercive means such as military power) or soft power (less aggressive means of persuasion such as diplomacy, economic aid, and propaganda) or energy power as an alternative to hard power in its cruelty and superiority. Soft power in its results, and its impact on US policies. (Klare, 2015)

The concept of "energy power" defined as the exploitation of the country's advantages in energy production and technology to advance its global interests, and to undermine and weaken its competitors. (Klare, 2015)

This means, for example, supplying friendly countries and allies with energy, which depends greatly on meeting their needs on the opposing powers, in what appears to be the method of influencing the behavior of others and the method of persuasion and reward, which is one of the clear methods of using power in foreign policy.

Energy power can be used to strengthen relations with a geo-strategic partner, such as the nuclear agreements between the United States and India, or to punish "rebellious" neighboring countries, as in the repeated suspension of Russian natural gas supplies to Ukraine.

Although the power of energy is not cruel like hard power, it may lead to policies that may exceed the level of soft power, which also explains some methods of using power in foreign policy, such as the method of coercion and influence.

This can be illustrated through the reflection of this concept in the American efforts to keep European countries away from Russian natural gas.

And the power of energy may be used to set up an oil production platform in the disputed waters as a means to assert control, as is the case in the Chinese drilling operations in the Southern China Sea. (Klare, 2015)

Primary energy resources are important elements of state power. The more resources, the stronger the state. Of course, the state's perspective on energy resources depends on the state's ability to extract and transfer resources, as well as the global demand for them.

There are views on energy resources as physical elements of power, which assume that energy resources in the realm of external relations should be analyzed through two possible theories: realism or idealism. (Česnakas, 2010)

Realists point out that throughout history, certain commodities, particularly energy, minerals, water, and food commodities had a strategic value that exceeded their market price, and thus were repeatedly used as foreign policy tools by exporters and were among the main drivers of armed conflict. (Korin, 2009)

Realists have long insisted that control of material resources in world politics lies at the core of realism. (Moravcsik, 1999)

The phenomenon of increasing globalization and increasing global interdependence among nations leads to a world in which the benefits accrued through military action are in question and there are more effective means of expanding influence abroad. Therefore, in the contemporary international system, energy resources, or more precisely, energy diplomacy, become an effective method, as the energy supply policy is part of the policy arsenal, as other economic tools, military power and diplomatic tactics. (Shaffer, 2009)

Therefore, it does not appear that military power is the main variable that explains the place of states in the international system.

Michael T. Klare goes even further in referring to a "potential superpower war", may break out to gain control of energy resources. (Klare, 2009)

In this case, energy resources are not only elements of power that simply replace the military elements of power, but become the main objectives of military action. This hypothesis refers to the changing nature of the elements of the nation-state power.

Accordingly, Hans Morgenthau's theorizing can be reformulated in Realism, "The dependence of military power and greater reliance on economic power and the ability to survive on energy resources", until energy resources have become the most important physical factor in determining the political power of a nation. (Česnakas, 2010)

Neoclassical realism provides good methods for analyzing energy resources in foreign policy, as the theory focuses on material power, as it is difficult to transfer energy resources from the national authority to the state power where the energy sector is more distinct from government structures. This explains why countries farthest from democracy are using energy resources in foreign policy more commonly and efficiently when expanding the state's interests in the country.

This explains why countries furthest from democracy use energy resources in foreign policy more commonly and efficiently when expanding a country's interests abroad.

This indicates that non-democratic countries have more possibilities not only to use energy resources in foreign policy to expand interests abroad, but also to ensure energy security if the countries are consumers and countries in which energy supplies pass, Decision-making in democratic countries is decentralized and in order to maintain democracy and competitiveness a lot of measures must be implemented, with fewer undemocratic measures and processes, non-democratic countries can convert energy power into state power more efficiently in order to expand national interests abroad. (Česnakas, 2010)

It is clear that not all economic power of a nation could be transferred to military power, and never can all national economic power be utilized for the propose of achieving states goals, as well as energy power or any other type of power. Energy resources are not part of foreign policy until it is possible to extract them for states purposes. (Orban, 2008)

Neoclassical realism offers good avenues for the analysis of energy resources in foreign policy as theory concentrates on material power, and underlines importance of state domestic structure, as well as statesmen perception of international system. These aspects create the opportunity to explain the different positions of energy resources in foreign policy of different states. They even allow analysing changes of energy resources in foreign policy perception in certain periods of time when national energy power does not change. Examples of Russia or Venezuela here fit perfectly, as energy resources became more important in foreign policy after changes in government (when Vladimir Putin and Hugo Chavez took the offices). Presented aspects of neoclassical realism allow for the analysis of energy resources in foreign policy not only in exporting states, but also in importing and consuming states.

The neoclassical realism theory also suggests a quite simple approach without the need to analyze domestic politics in detail. When changes in decision-making group or changes of perception in it are found they could be used to explain changes in states' interests in the international system, and changes in foreign policy. This would not lead to a very deep domestic analysis that would distort the analysis, and would give attention to other objects, rather than object of analysis.

#### **The Energy Power as a National interest:**

The tenacious grip on contemporary thinking is rooted in the trine of political realism (realpolitik). Which the conception of the national interest flows from its assumptions about the nature of international society and its generalizations about the motivations of nations. Its dominant theme is that anarchy-the defining trait of international society-makes security the paramount foreign policy concern of most states. Security, in turn, requires the acquisition and rational management of power, and only policies conducted in this spirit can serve the national interest.

The national interest plays a crucial role, since it is the junction between the ontologically posited drives, which constitute the logic of politics, and the utilitarian theory of action, which explains political behavior. It is that which makes power move from an ontological anchor to the prime explanatory factor. Put differently, the two roles of power so far encountered meet in the national interest: power as an innate drive for behavior (of A), and A's power causing B's behavior in a social relation.

Morgenthau saw the drive for power as insatiable; and He reducing interests to power and persistent. Morgenthau is explicit that the purpose of behavior, the interest of an actor, is not just survival, but something that can never really be secured. (Morgenthau, 1945)

Hence, all the analysis has to do is to establish the most rational course in terms of the national interest defined as power. Effectively black-boxing the actual preferences of any actor, assuming preferences as externally given (the national interest) and then comparing them to the actual behavior makes this is a specifically behavioralist approach to rational action. All other items are not needed; all can be subsumed under an interest in power. (Guzzini, 2018)

And Power can be defined in terms of economic, military, and cultural power; they will change over time. (Burchill, 2005)

This motivates states to become the great power which allow them to be supreme than other states. With the great power, states can pursue effectively their national interests. (Sutch, 2007)

And Realists agree that foreign policy is only to serve national interest in the realm of international politics. Realists see foreign policy and national interest in terms of the struggle for power and the survival of state. (Jackson & Georg , 2003)

For realist, the core national interest of all states must be survival because other interests such as economic, environmental, and humanitarian can't be achieved if the existence of states is jeopardized. (Manan, 2015)

Therefore, the States must always provide for their own security, deferent domestic political actors typically have competing visions of their country's best interests.

The Power of the nation illustrated how the pattern of economic relations can profoundly affect international politics by shaping the way governments define their interests.

Which in turn, the economic relations shape national interests and foreign policies; this is always true but is most vivid

in asymmetric relations, where the effects are typically large, visible, and most wholly found within the smaller economy. (Abdelal & Kirshner, 1999)

## CONCLUSIONS:

Because energy resources are material objects, the realism paradigm is best suited for analysis. Energy resources in foreign policy should be analyzed in a realistic paradigm, as material power or hard power is in the center of this paradigm.

In addition, states not only maintain their dominance over energy resources, but try to increase it, as energy resources are elements of strategic importance.

The changing environment of the international system suggests that non-military aspects of power are becoming more important. Energy resources in the contemporary world become very important elements of power, where military power is used in order to expand control over energy resources. States struggle for survival or compete for domination, and in order to reach goals states compete for power, namely, in the form of material elements.

Classical realism has a state-centric view, a concept of motivation and political action that is power, for which states compete with each other. Material resources are elements that allow for expanding states greater influence abroad, which leads to increased power in the control of material resources. This applied to energy resources as well. Energy resources create possibilities to increase a state's relative power.

Neoclassical realism is a synthesis of classical realism, neorealism with the inclusion of domestic variables, and some aspects of constructivist theory. Foreign policy depends on states' capabilities to use power elements in that matter and energy resources. Different state power and different perception of international system allows for explaining different roles of energy resources in states foreign policy. States seeking to expand influence abroad use energy resources in foreign policy more commonly and states having greater state power – power to extract resources from national power – can use energy resources in foreign policy more actively and efficiently.

National interest flows from the motivations of nations, which explains political behavior, and foreign policy serves national interest, and in order to reach goals states compete for power. Realists see foreign policy and national interest in terms of the struggle for power, and the economic relations shape national interests and foreign policies, so Energy Power is one of the most important interest of the states.

## Findings

Realism suggests that energy resources are power included in states foreign policy when states seek to expand influence abroad. Detailed examination of classical realism and neoclassical realism suggests that neoclassical realism allows extending the analysis of energy power role in states foreign policy. Interactions and variables in neoclassical realism suggest the broadest explanations and predictions.

## Originality/value

The article suggests that realism paradigm theories might provide a useful starting point from a descriptive method in the studies of energy power in foreign policy.



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