# Second dimension of power

Stephen Lukes is the author of the three dimensions of power. According to his arguments, the first dimension of power revolves around issues (Cook, 2017). This dimension is founded on the premises of the works of Dahl (2010) who argued that power rests with the person that wins a debate or an argument. Lukes’ first dimension of power conforms to the classical pluralist approach to power (Cook, 2017). For instance, when a parent wins an argument with a child, they have power. It follows that the party that has control over the decision making process has the power. However, critics of Lukes’ first dimension of power argue that this approach solely depends on the outcomes of the decision making process and as such ignores other tenants of power (Cook, 2017). It is this critic on the first dimension of power by non-pluralists such as Peter Bachrah that prompted Stephen Lukes to come up with the second dimension of power.

In the article Donald Trump’s first week in power: executive orders and tweets as president launches radical reform agenda, Barney Henderson discusses how Donald Trump started his regime with the shock and awe of rapid change (Barney Henderson, 2017). In Trump’s own words, “This Congress is going to be the busiest Congress we’ve had in decades, maybe ever. We have to deliver.”These statements by Donald Trump are a clear example of the second dimension of power. According to Stephen Lukes’ second dimension of power, one has real power if they have the ability to set agenda (Cook, 2017). Real power is derived from the fact that by setting the agenda, one has the ability to decide the subject of debate, therefore dictating the situation. In this article by the Telegraph, the agenda of the U.S. Congress is set by Donald Trump, the president of the United States of America.

In his first week in office, Trump uses his powers to sign executive orders and order radical and controversial reforms (Barney Henderson, 2017). In so doing, the president dictates the agenda of the Congress, which has a powerful influence on the political, social and economic environment of the U.S. Looking at this article; the presidents’ first actions are geared towards weakening the Obama Care (Barney Henderson, 2017). Another issue that the president tackles immediately after taking his oath is abortion. The president issued a directive that bans issuance of federal money to organizations that perform abortions or give information related to the option (Barney Henderson, 2017).

President Trump’s actions are a present day example of Lukes’ second dimension of power in play. The president enjoys real power by giving executive orders and dictating the policy reforms undertaken by the new government. These reforms not only affect the agenda of the Congress but also dictate the day-to-day activities in many public and private institutions (Brownstein, 2017). Eventually, the implementation of these orders has a direct effect on the people both in the United States and around the world. The controversial nature of these reforms has prompted other countries to review their relation with the United States. Many countries are contemplating reviewing their foreign policies as a result of Trump’s executive orders (Brownstein, 2017). Trump’s action not only set the agenda for the U.S but also sets agenda for other countries. It is clear from these developments that the president of the U.S enjoys real power.

## Social Capital

Social capital is defined as accessible resources found in social networks that can be organized in purposive action (Dahl & Malmberg-Heimonen, 2010). Social capital is developed from the interactions and social connections of the people. Social capital enables people to access and use resources that one could not be able to access on their own. Social capital in its structure resembles communism, which allows people to acquire and attain things that they could not acquire while on their own (Dahl & Malmberg-Heimonen, 2010). Social capital entails sharing resources and information, providing assistance and establishing trust among individuals in a community.

Natural disasters adversely affect the infrastructure of a region and its people. Natural disasters aggravate social inequalities and as such the negative impacts of disasters are worse among the poor (Science, & Earth, 2017). The article, Hurricane Katrina: Facts, Damage & Aftermath gives an overview of one of the worst disasters in U.S history. According to the article published by Live Science, “The storm surge breached several New Orleans levees, leading to the greatest displacement of a U.S. population ever, the flooding of 80% of the city, the deaths of more than a thousand people in New Orleans alone, and an estimated $100 billion in

damages.” When the Storm hit, low-education, low-income population was left on its own. The population faced difficulties posed by evacuation and lodging (Science, & Earth, 2017). Despite the lack of enough financial and bridging social capital, the population travelled by different means, stayed in makeshift shelters and invented different means of accessing social capital required to confront uncertainties and impeding health threats (Science, & Earth, 2017). Going by the statistics of the article, social support was more than government support.

One of the main problems faced by the population was accessibility and reliability of information from the media (Science, & Earth, 2017). The difficulties faced by the population in accessing information could have been reduced by the use of the internet. For instance, the internet would have been handy in providing relevant information such as neighborhood specific data such as online entries of neighbors. As stated in the article, the main problem for the hurricane shelter-population was unpreparedness to use the internet as an information tool when the disaster struck (Science, & Earth, 2017). Even though there were limited internet terminals in the shelters, part of the population were able to use this resource.

Social capital was fundamental in helping the hurricane shelter residents enjoy psychological health benefits. From the above discussion, it is clear that social capital is important for the well-being of a community. The advantage of social capital is that it does not discriminate the population based on demographic features (Dahl & Malmberg-Heimonen, 2010). Anyone can develop and mobilize social capital, which provides benefits to the society.

## References

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