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WHY AND HOW CENTRAL POWER GROWS: A JOUVENELLIAN PERSPECTIVE

Emre DİDİN*

Abstract

In this study, Bertrand de Jouvenel's political theory has been focused upon. Firstly, Jouvellenian concepts that constitute a basis for his theory, liberty, authority, sovereignty, and central power (Power), have been investigated. It was seen that the concept "authority" is the basis of the Jouvellenian model of society. Every society has different power centers based on their respective authorities on individual groups and a central authority: Power. Power naturally wants to expand and clashes with lesser powers, creating constant conflict. The reasons why and with which method Power grows, according to the Jouvellenian paradigm, have been investigated. This study constitutes a detailed analysis of Jouvenel's work and supplements it with recent literature on Jouvenel. The study aims to provide a basis for further studies on Jouvenel.

Keywords: *Bertrand de Jouvenel, Authority, Sovereignty, Power, High-low middle mechanism.*

MERKEZİ İKTİDAR NEDEN VE NASIL BÜYÜR: JOUVENELCI BİR BAKIŞ AÇISI

Öz

Bu çalışmada Bertrand de Jouvenel'in siyaset kuramına odaklanılmıştır. İlk olarak, Jouvenelci kurama temel teşkil eden kavramlar olan özgürlük, otorite, egemenlik ve merkezi iktidar (İktidar) incelenmiştir. Jouvenelci toplum modelinin temelinde "otorite" kavramının olduğu görülmüştür. Her toplum, farklı birey grupları üzerinde elde ettikleri otoritelerinden temel alan güç merkezlerine ve iktidar olarak isimlendirilen merkezi bir otoriteye sahiptir. İktidar doğal olarak genişlemek istemekte ve diğer güçlerle çatışarak sürekli çatışma yaratmaktadır. Jouvenelci paradigmaya göre İktidarın neden ve hangi yöntemle büyüdüğü araştırılmıştır. Bu çalışma Jouvenel'in eserlerinin detaylı bir analizini yapmakta ve bunu literatürdeki Jouvenel hakkındaki güncel çalışmalarla desteklemektedir. Çalışma Jouvenel hakkındaki daha sonraki çalışmalara kaynaklık etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Bertrand de Jouvenel, Otorite, Egemenlik, İktidar, Üst-alt orta mekanizması.*

1. INTRODUCTION

French political theorist Bertrand de Jouvenel (1903-1987), most famous for his magnum opus "On Power", is one of the most original thinkers of the 20th century. Dubbed a conservative liberal similar to his fellow Frenchmen Benjamin Constant and Alexis de Tocqueville, Jouvenel is a liberal in the nominal sense, while he maintains a thoroughly realistic view of political science. Despite not being considered among the more prominent liberal thinkers, his general contributions to political theory are becoming more and more apparent, and, according to Parvini (2022: 23), Jouvenel should be seen as one of the greatest political thinkers of the twentieth century, even as one up to the level of the great Carl Schmitt. According to Bond (2019: 139), the Jouvenellian model surpasses modern political models. His approach has been briefly summarized by Rosenberg (2016a: 126) as "an attempt to restore political liberalism in the vein of the nineteenth-century tradition". He was completely free of the doctrinarism of modern political philosophy and wanted to revive the political prudence of pre-modern Western political tradition (Mahoney, 2005: 26).

Jouvenel has a somewhat distinct approach to liberty, sovereignty, power, and authority. Some of his thoughts share great similarities with the works of Ibn-Khaldun, Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, Robert Michels, and Carl Schmitt. Other than them, he often draws from thinkers such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Benjamin Constant, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Jouvenel's alignment with the Italian Elite School has been noticed by different writers, such as Ciampini (2013a). However, one thing that is truly unique in Jouvenel's thought is that he goes further and builds up a model to explain the phenomena identified by the aforementioned thinkers. While the identification of an elite (called "Power" in the Jouvenellian framework) as a distinct entity from society or nation as a whole and its study as such did not start with Jouvenel, the Jouvenellian model provides a rationale for phenomena identified by other writers such as Mosca, Pareto and Schmitt (Parvini, 2022: 86). Jouvenel's approach to history avoids the widespread mistake of departmentalizing political, economic and social phenomena into their respective spheres and thus provides a refreshing holistic and non-ideological approach that is extremely rare in contemporary political science. In this work, the concepts in Jouvenel's thought will be investigated, and the reasons why and the method with which Power grows according to the Jouvenellian model will be presented. We are of the belief that understanding Jouvenel's perspective is especially beneficial in current times when central Powers' growth all over the world is becoming increasingly evident and mainstream models' shortcomings in making sense of current events are becoming increasingly apparent.

2. JOUVENELLIAN MODEL OF LIBERTY, AUTHORITY, SOVEREIGNTY, AND POWER

Jouvenel is a liberal; thus, his work contains a clear preference for "liberty". However, since his lens is entirely realist, his moral assumptions play a negligible role in his model. He proposes a model to understand how and why Power behaves the way it does and thus make liberty possible. His work aims to warn everyone about the state's illiberal tendencies (Ciampini, 2013b: 452). Thus, to understand the Jouvenellian framework, we must first explore Jouvenel's notion of liberty. In Jouvenel, liberty is the primary doctrinal value, while authority is the main theoretical element. There is a unique interplay between these two concepts (Slevin, 1971: 50).

For Jouvenel, a person can only be deemed to have full liberty when he has full autonomy. Liberty is based on "not an act of generosity on the part of Power", it is a "*subjective right* that belongs only those who are capable of defending it" (Jouvenel, 1962: 319). For Jouvenel, a libertarian mentality is neither natural nor general, has to be nurtured, and can only exist in a small portion of the population (Jouvenel, 1962: 322). Freemen are patricians, eupatrids, spartiates, and aristocrats who enjoy liberty based solely on their own power. They are expected to behave in a certain way, uphold customs, and be fully responsible for their actions. This is called "full liberty". There is a second type of liberty, which may be called transient liberty, caused by two masters preoccupied with fighting each other while the subject enjoys a temporary liberty (Jouvenel, 1962: 344). There is also a third type of liberty, a false liberty that is granted by Power itself, a liberty decreed by others on a man, but "if the state is to guarantee to a man what the consequences of his actions shall be, it must take control of his activities." (Jouvenel, 1962: 350). This is not liberty since the subject has no independent power nor responsibility, and there are strings attached. In that sense, it can be argued that Jouvenel's liberty is similar to classical liberal "freedom from" à la Hayek (2011: 133);

Liberty not only means that the individual has both the opportunity and the burden of choice; it also means that he must bear the consequences of his actions and will receive praise or blame for them. Liberty and responsibility are inseparable.

Note the emphasis on “responsibility”. However, for Jouvenel, making someone free from coercion is not enough as “libertarian spirit” is not something that everybody has “for liberty is a property only of men who are free.”. For him, such men are to be formed (Jouvenel, 1962: 276). Thus, granting “freedom from” is not enough to form free individuals; to gain liberty, one should be willing and able to protect his “subjective rights”; “Liberty was an achievement, which won the name of subjective right by self-assertion.” (Jouvenel, 1962: 319). It has been claimed that Jouvenel was attempting to salvage a pre-modern liberty concept based on community, freedom, and “the good life” (Rosenberg, 2016a: 118).

From the “autonomy” of true liberty, there also comes “authority”. This authority is natural, which operates as a propagator of trust in society, and is not only prohibitive but also productive (Rosenberg, 2016b: 131). Authority does not necessarily imply force or threat of force. What is meant is *auctor* (author), meaning father or ancestor; “he is the father of actions freely undertaken whose source is in him though their seat is in others.” (Jouvenel, 1972: 30). Authority lays the foundation of society and is a guarantor that makes cooperation possible. “Authority” is a reward gained for such service. In Jouvenel, there are strong links between authority, foundation (*autoritas*), and authorship, all boiling down to personal responsibility (Rosenberg, 2016b: 137). Elsewhere, he claims “a statement is authoritative by virtue of the credit afforded to its particular author” and links it closely with authorship (Jouvenel, 1963: 92), rendering it strictly personal.

We can contrast Jouvenellian authority with *potestas*, thus calling it *auctoritas*. Authority is a prerequisite for society, and it is natural, as “were men deaf to all authority, they would have among them neither co-operation nor security—in short, no Society.”. For him, the formation of great societies or nations in the past is no different than the organization of a small group of children playing a game today. Someone takes the initiative and organizes the group, which gives him authority and prestige. However, when the group becomes institutionalized and outlives the founder, then it becomes the organization that gives prestige to its successors; this he calls “induced authority” (Jouvenel, 1972: 31-32). Such is the dichotomy of *dux-rex*, *dux* being the formative energy, *rex* being the stabilizing, peace-keeping force. The similarities between Jouvenel’s authority and Weberian “charismatic authority” are obvious, but one key difference is that for Weber, charismatic authority cannot be found easily in modern society, while for Jouvenel, it is everywhere (Rosenberg, 2016a: 124).

Authority for Jouvenel is the only principle that can explain the initial formation of groups between humans. Against the “models of voluntary association” such as social contract theories, Jouvenel (1972: 29) underlines the role of the “founder”;

There is in fact no such thing as spontaneous convergence of wishes which have arisen simultaneously in the breasts of all. What we see in fact is, not participants coming together, but one or several promoters making incessant approaches to potential participants with a view to bringing them together. The process of formation gets into gear through the initiative of a single man, who sows among others the seed of his purpose; some of them, in whom it rises, turn into a small group of apostles for the scheme, and these form the nucleus that preaches and recruits.

This understanding of group-formation is not liberal. Let alone thinkers like Locke, a social contract theorist, even Burke, a conservative liberal/reactionary, who is known to have pushed against the consent-based notion of society, did not say that a nation was the making of a single man. Burke merely said societies cannot be consent-based because they are ancient, no one can know when and how they are formed, and a compact cannot be recalled (Canavan, 1960: 126). Jouvenel’s notion is similar to the conception of a reactionary thinker such as Maistre, who said that since humans are created social, they naturally come together and form societies (Maistre, 2017: 96). The implication is that the popular sovereignty notion attributed to consent is false. However, Jouvenel differs from him as well. He agrees that the collective conscience of a group can indeed be ancient, and it can be attributed solely to man’s social nature, but the fusion that creates a society must come from “command”. According to him, man’s social nature can explain only small societies; large societies are not “natural” and require will and “instinct of domination” on behalf of one person or group (Jouvenel, 1962: 99).

Thus, the formation of a society can only be attributed to an individual will. It almost reminds us of “The Great Man Theory” of Thomas Carlyle (2017: 13), but Jouvanel’s idea of “individual will” also captures the group level. For example, a confederation of peoples can only be unified if one people takes the initiative, by force if necessary; “The parasitic domination of a small society over a collection of other societies—that is everywhere the mark of the big formation, the state.”. Then, the formation of monarchy is a two-fold process; after the small society of conquerors conquers other peoples, one person among conquerors conquers the rest of the conquerors, thus forming a monarchy (Jouvanel, 1962: 102-105). As it could be naturally drawn from here, Jouvanel’s group-formation model is based solely on authority. It can seem consensual, but underlying that, force is always involved. He calls this formative force, authority (Jouvanel, 1972: 29).

From authority derives power, which is “nothing more than the capacity to make themselves obeyed”. However, for Jouvanel, one distinguishing factor between power and authority is that authority is only exercised on those who are willing to obey. Thus, authority is voluntary, and this gives power to the ruler, which may or may not be expanded on others on which the ruler enjoys no authority, to coerce them (Jouvanel, 1972: 33). Since authority is the formative force for human cooperation, men in the state of nature are always found bound to some authority; “the individual whom I can see is institution-ridden and institution-supported” (Jouvanel, Hale & Landy, 1992: 89). Individuals cannot haggle with institutions, cannot fight them, only other institutions can, and individuals exist in society as part of an institution.

Jouvenellian “Power” is the central authority of society, which enjoys superiority over all other powers. Power is as natural as authority, and for humans, living under a Power is as natural as having a father; just as he finds a father upon entering physical life, he finds Power upon entering social life (Jouvanel, 1962: 22). What Jouvanel calls Power does not imply sovereignty. It is simply government, defined as a distinct entity from the ruled. In fact, Power can be defined as any government in history and all governments are of the same essence, which is Power (Jouvanel, 1962: 17). A non-sovereign Power, such as a feudal monarchy, is more common in history than a sovereign one. When central authority (Power) gains sovereignty, it becomes sovereign authority; or *imperium* (Jouvanel, 1962: 37). According to Jouvanel, the actual makeup of Power and the governing system in place might alter how it operates daily, but it does not change its underlying nature. Also, just as Power does not imply sovereignty, it does not imply legitimacy. A Power can continue existing or even be sovereign with no legitimacy as Power is command. In other words, it would need no authority (*auctoritas*) and survive merely on *potestas*. Power has a life of its own; it does not have to have a rightful reason and end; it can continue existing solely as command, as long as it succeeds in making its command obeyed, one way or another (Jouvanel, 1962: 96). This is “pure Power”.

This conception’s similarities to Mosca’s rulers and the ruled and also Schmitt’s decisionism are uncanny. However, Jouvanel also claims that this type of rule based on pure Power cannot last, as the commanding core will disintegrate in time. To prevent that, Power forms institutions and they can help it in gaining legitimacy. Similarly, Mosca suggested that any ruling elite needs a “political formula” that is accepted by the masses. Such notions are also found in Pareto’s “Sentiments” or Schmitt’s “political theology”. Moreover, Jouvanel’s understanding of the Power’s nature is similar to the Gramscian “hegemony” and especially its later, further developed form by Louis Althusser. For Althusser, Power has two sides, “Repressive State Apparatus” (RSA) and “Ideological State Apparatus” (ISA), and the soft side (ISA) is for ensuring day-to-day compliance. For him, ISA rests on “beautiful lies” that are forged by “Priests or Despots” (Parvini, 2012: 68-69). However, when it is forced to, Power will always resort to using naked force, its RSA. Althusser’s student, Michel Foucault, almost completely disregarded hard power and focused on soft power as the compliance mechanism. For Foucault, the prison is in peoples’ heads, and there is no need for hard power, or RSA, since there is no escape from ISA. The focus on “culture” and ideology is replaced by “power relations”, held together by “discursive events” (Parvini, 2012: 79).

Jouvanel does not go into as much detail regarding the role of ideology at the micro level thus no similarities to Foucault is observed. However, his understanding somewhat resembles Althusser’s but with key differences. Jouvanel has a similar opinion to Althusser as he states “...rule of Power over society is not the work of force alone...nor is it the work of partnership alone” (Jouvanel, 1962: 21). Jouvenellian Power has three qualities

and these are force, legitimacy, and beneficence; belief in the legitimacy of Power, hope of its beneficence, consciousness of its strength. Then, obedience is based on creed, credence, and credit (Jouvenel, 1962: 25). However, for Jouvenel, as we will see in the related section, Power does not benefit its subjects only cynically. This is more similar to Mosca as for Mosca the ruling elite itself is also affected by the ruling formula. Thus, if a king genuinely believes that he has been divinely ordained, even if he has absolute power, he will assume responsibility towards his subjects. Jouvenel underlines this fact multiple times. For example, contrary to the popular belief that religion always acts as a handmaiden to Power, Jouvenel believes that an ultimate divine law that is completely binding for even Power itself is the basis of any great civilization (Jouvenel, 1962: 201). This notion echoes Giambattista Vico, the father of historicism, whom Jouvenel read and regularly cites, who attributes great importance to religion for a society and even said “among all peoples the civil world began with religion” (Vico, 2020: 10). Moreover, Jouvenel’s understanding is more general while Althusser is more concerned with the capitalistic state. As we will see later, in Jouvenel, the components of Althusser’s ISA, such as churches, unions, and families, do not need to be mere propagators of state ideology as they can be Power’s opponents if they have authority. However, it can be said that Jouvenel’s model could be supplemented with a more detailed understanding of “ideology”, either in Foucauldian sense or similar to the Mosca-Pareto line.

To explain Power’s beneficial behavior, Jouvenel attributes a second nature to Power and calls this phenomenon the “duality of Power”, which means the initially egoistic Power will eventually start benefitting society. It should be noted that this process can completely change Power itself, either its mentality or personnel, similar to Pareto’s circulation of elites. However, for Jouvenel, this does not change the general picture as always and everywhere, Power has “continuation”. In fact, even revolutions, violent overthrows of existing elites, change nothing as the revolutionaries that capture Power will constitute a continuation of Power.

3. FEATURES OF JOUVENELLIAN POWER

In Jouvenel’s thought, there are some features of Power that causes it to behave as it does. Here, we will mention some crucial features of the Jouvenellian Power theory: the duality of Power, the existence of multiple Power centers, and the continuity of Power.

3.1. Duality of Power

Power is something separate from society. It does not matter how many services it renders at the moment or if it has formed the nation in the first place; Power is not the nation, it is not the society; it is a separate entity. The ones with Power will separate from society, form an *esprit de corps* or *assabiyah*; these are the “elite” with different goals. It is best if the elites’ goals align with the society to some extent, but there is no guarantee of that. The Power is, in short, a group that can be called “tribute-eaters” (Jouvenel, 1962: 115), or in a more modern sense, it can be called “tax-consumers” (Hoppe, 2001: 100).

According to this understanding, Power has no reason to care for its subjects. But apparently it does care. Jouvenel attributes this phenomenon to a psychological feature of Power. “Power is neither angel nor brute, but, like man himself, a composite creature, uniting in itself two contradictory natures.” (Jouvenel, 1962: 114). These natures are social and egoistic. Power starts its journey as “pure power”, that is based on “command” (*potestas*) only. It is entirely self-serving and egoistic. For Jouvenel, this cannot last indefinitely. A smart Power will start benefitting the subjects, even if it is entirely egoistic, similar to a farmer tending to his crops. However, in time, through a psychological process, Power does start really caring about the subjects since “nature of man is such that his affections are stirred by the pains he gives himself”, and eventually, “command which is its own end comes in time to care for the common good”. And thus, thanks to its dualistic nature, Power moves from parasitism to symbiosis. (Jouvenel, 1962: 105-107).

While the egoistic feature cannot be separated from Power per se, Power, being a living being, adapts its egoism and becomes as social as required. It consciously develops altruism. Thus, “legitimate Power is one in which Power’s interests and those of society have reached an accommodation through getting used to each other” (Jouvenel, 1962: 117-124). Similarity to Burke’s “prescription” (Canavan & Payne, 1999: 22) is hard to miss. Jouvenel also shares the distaste of Burke towards sudden changes of Power because a new Power will not have taken the time to adapt to society.

It is worth noting that, in his recent book on Jouvenel, Bond hit back at this notion. Bond stated that affording a social nature or altruism to Power is unnecessary and misleading. According to him, altruism is but one theory of explaining human eusocial behaviors and is strictly liberal (Bond, 2019: 60-62). For him, the supposed altruism of Power is not psychological and has nothing to do with its inherent social, altruistic nature, but it only arises due to power conflicts. Despite providing a realist model for the role of authority on the individual, Jouvenel interestingly keeps moving forward from the individual as an epistemological basis. Thus, he stays blind to the “role of power centres in selecting and shaping these traditions” (Bond, 2019: 50)—traditions, such as altruism.

Following from that, it is clear that the observed “social nature” is not inherent to Power; it is forced upon it by some authority as a necessity. Power, or authority in general, does shape public opinion and does shape or even form “tradition”. Thus, it will not be long until Power perverts ancient limitations and even turns them into justifications for its growth. In fact, it can be said that the traditions that limit Power today are traditions of a previous Power (or the same Power’s previous iterations) that served that old Power, and that is why the traditions work to limit the current Power. Then, traditions are only slightly more useful in stopping Power than written laws, since Power is able to subvert them all the same. That is unless someone else is upholding it, someone else with power independent of the central Power. Thus, the only thing stopping Power’s growth is other powers. If there are none, tradition, customs or ancient laws can hold Power only temporarily. They are obstacles, but Power has all the tools to break them down. They are but castles without garrison. This could indeed be directly drawn from the Jouvenellian understanding, and we agree with Bond that the concept of Power’s duality is unnecessary for the Jouvenellian model.

3.2 Continuity of Power

“The face of Power changes, but not its nature” (Jouvenel, 1962: 215). For Jouvenel, antiquity to feudal monarchy to absolute monarchy, and lastly republicanism,¹ there is continuity in Power. Above all else, Jouvenel completely rejects the supposed divide between modern and pre-modern epochs in the context of political theory, as pointed out by Bond (2019: 24). This allows him, as a great innovation, to draw from pre-modern governmental structures to supplement his theory of Power. According to him, even a revolution does nothing to change the nature of Power. For example, by replacing old Power with a new Power, French Revolution purged weaknesses and made Power stronger. Meanwhile, the new government picked up where the old Power left off; it did not start over the centralization process, and all the power centralized by the absolute monarchy carried over to the republic, just as it did later from the republic to Napoleon (Jouvenel, 1962: 218);

... the true historical function of revolutions is to renovate and strengthen Power. Let us stop greeting them as the reactions of the spirit of liberty to the oppressor. So little do they answer to that name that not one can be cited in which a true despot was overthrown...These kings died not because of their tyranny but because of their weakness.

In short, Power, in addition to being something separate with its own life, is also immortal. “The king is dead, long live the king”, even if it’s no longer called a king.

3.3 The existence of multiple Power centers

“...there are in society, in addition to the state and the individual, social authorities as well.” (Jouvenel, 1962: 158). Drawing on the concept of authority, it is clear that different power centers exist in a society with their own patronage that is loyal to them. The society’s central power (Power) rules the other powers, not the individuals. In fact, in many cases, Power’s grasp on the individuals is very limited or sometimes even non-existent; such is the feudal power structure. These minor powers constitute “castles”, as coined by Parvini (2022: 79), which stand between Power and individuals. These social authorities can be instituted, such as the Church, or tacit, such as mores and customs, and provide great limitations to Power’s growth (Jorge, 2021: 6). People that have studied Jouvenel have come to name Power “high”, lower powers “middle” and individuals with no power “low”.

The situation mentioned above has attracted a vast amount of attention recently. Echoes of the Jouvenellian mechanism can be heard in the famous work of author “Spandrell” (2017), in which he coins the concept

¹ Bond (2019, p.128-136) adds to it civil governance, the regime of today.

“Bioleninism”, which means a central power elevating the lower castes of society to create itself a loyal administration body. Even though he doesn’t mention Jouvenel, it is Jouvenellian, but it captures only a portion of the model. Moreover, Spandrell’s model is based strictly on individual loyalties, while for Jouvenel, the more essential parts are groups, institutions, authority, and power. Curtis Yarvin is another one who conceptualized Jouvenel’s power model and tried to give expressive names to the high, middle, and low, calling them nobles, commoners, and clients, respectively (Parvini, 2022: 78-79). However, the best conception of the Jouvenellian model is found in Bond (2019: 4), where he calls high, middle, and low center, subsidiary, and periphery, respectively, although he keeps using Power for the high as well.

Bond’s name for “middle”, subsidiary (he also calls them intermediaries), captures the nature of the middle remarkably, as a lesser power (not Power) that holds independent authority. Bond correctly takes great pains to underline the existence of “authority” for the subsidiaries; without separate authority, they are not rival power centers, and even if they have power, their power is simply an extension of Power. Rivalry is the key factor in determining the subsidiaries (Parvini, 2022: 78). It also would be helpful to remember the Jouvenellian notion of “full liberty”. So, in the middle is power centers that stand *between* the central Power and the periphery: churches, religious sects, feudal bonds, corporations, trade unions, and the family itself. The decisive factor is the autonomy and subsequent authority. Thus, when a class becomes autonomous, it can emerge as a new subsidiary. Such was the case for the merchant bourgeoisie. On the other hand, if a subsidiary class loses its authority and becomes subservient to Power, it will lose subsidiary status, such was the case for feudal aristocracy and the Catholic Church. Jouvenellian “low” was called by Bond “periphery”. Here again, the nomenclature is perfect. It captures the utter powerlessness of the low in the Jouvenellian paradigm.

All in all, the Jouvenellian model sees society as consisting of different power centers, Power, and subsidiaries. As we will see in the next section, Jouvenel asserts that these centers compete for the dominance of the periphery. Jouvenellian understanding of history is built upon the conflict between power centers for the loyalty of the periphery; “...it is in essence a battle of dominant wills, fighting in every way they can for the material which is common to everything they construct: the human labour force.” (Jouvenel, 1962: 177).

4. WHY AND HOW DOES POWER GROW?

So far, we have seen society at a given time, viewed from the Jouvenellian lens. Now, we are going to take a dynamic view. As mentioned, at any given time, different power centers will have authority over different portions of the population, and there will be competition between them to gain more authority. Now, two questions come to mind: why and how?

4.1 Why does Power grow?

...as history shows, obedience has certain limits within which Power must keep, just as there is a limit to the amount of a society’s resources which it can take for its own. These limits, as observation shows us, do not remain static throughout the history of a society. For example, the Capetian Kings could not impose direct taxation, and the Bourbons could not exact military service... the more completely Power can control the actions of the members of society and turn their resources to its uses, the greater is Power’s extent. (Jouvenel, 1962: 18).

It is clear here that, firstly, Power does not imply sovereignty, and in medieval European history, it was most of the time strictly limited. However, in its pure form, Power is command. Then, something should be limiting it from exercising full command. In the Jouvenellian model, these are the subsidiaries. Since being a subsidiary means authority and having power, they too are command. Thus, any intermediary authority exercised by subsidiaries decreases authority of Power, and Power, if it is to be sovereign, should take away power from them. However, none of this means that Power should want to grow, it might in theory be content with its situation. In that sense, the correct question may be, “Why does Power *want* to grow?”. Jouvenel points out that the desire for growth is inherent in Power. We can state the reasons for this phenomenon in two categories: psychological and circumstantial.

The first reason why Power desires to grow is that Power is, as mentioned above, egoist. For Jouvenel, egoism is not only inherent to Power, but it is also *necessary*; “in the nature, everything dies which is not sustained by an intense and brutal love of self.” However, it does not end here, as being in power encourages these thoughts as just the act of ruling gives intoxicating joy and feeds men’s ego (Jouvenel, 1962: 120-121). Since Power is exercised by men, it is no wonder that Power wants to grow and conquer (Jouvenel, 1962: 12).

There are also psychological factors related to the ruled. For Jouvenel, people have utopic tendencies that support Power’s growth. And, if Power is ever to achieve utopia, it must be unconstrained, become arbitrary. Jouvenel underlines man’s unsatisfiable passions; “if he had the power, would reconstruct the universe”. But he does not, so he reconstructs the social order since “this is a sphere in which he reckons that the laws of nature do not run for him.” (Jouvenel, 1962: 131). This is exactly the “unconstrained vision” defined by Sowell (2007: 162) in his book “A Conflict of Visions”. Jouvenel also echoes Burke’s conception of order when he says (Jouvenel, 1962: 132);

So soon as an intellectual imagines a simple order of things, he is serving the growth of Power. For the existing order, here as everywhere, is complex and rests on a whole mass of supports, authorities, sentiments, and adjustments of the most varied kind.

Jouvenel observes that whenever a pillar is removed from the existing structure in the name of progress, what replaces it will be Power since nothing else can be considered by anyone to be up to the task. Thus, unconstrained vision supports Power’s growth.

In addition to the psychological reasons, there are also circumstantial reasons; some sort of crisis can occur, making Power’s growth desired or even required. Alternatively, when a competing Power has achieved growth in an area, it becomes necessary for other Powers to match that growth otherwise they might face the danger of being overrun. According to Jouvenel, as Power increases in scope domestically, its potency for war against its rivals also increases. On the other hand, rivals take note and they too then try to increase their scope domestically if they are to at least protect themselves. “War is like a sheep-dog harrying the laggard Powers to catch up their smarter fellows in the totalitarian race.” (Jouvenel, 1962: 140-142); it is sufficient for one Power to gain the ability to mobilize its population for war to mobilize a whole continent (Jouvenel, 1962: 12).

4.2 How does Power grow?

Thus far, we have seen why Power wants to grow. But wanting to grow is different from being able to grow. Surely, 11th century monarchies also wanted to grow, what was stopping them? How did European princes, starting from a point where they were not even able to tax their population to the point of being able to field armies consisting of millions of people by issuing one decree? Explanation of these is the true innovation to the political science granted by Jouvenel as he has constructed a generally applicable model outlining the methods by which Power grows.

The model is known as the famous “High-Low Middle” mechanism; these high, middle, low we have identified before. Jouvenel himself did not coin this term. However, it can be very naturally drawn from his work. In fact, the concept of permanent revolution that he speaks about in Book IV of “On Power” is very similar, and the remaining parts of the model can be found in various sections throughout the book. Thus far, it has been made clear that, in Jouvenel’s thought, in a society, there is an entity called Power, and there are different powers called subsidiaries, which have gained loyalties from different groups of people and exercise authority over them. Moreover, Power wants to expand its grasp on individuals to become more powerful, which can only be done at the expense of subsidiaries. From these two, an obvious conclusion is drawn: Power is in constant conflict with subsidiaries. One less obvious thing, though, is that the best method for Power to grow is to form an alliance with the common people “periphery” against the subsidiaries—hence the High-Low Middle Mechanism; meaning an alliance between high and low versus the middle.

People, being powerless and unstable themselves, for whom Jouvenel makes an analogy to chemistry and calls them “atoms”, are in nature under the influence of “social authorities” and thus are in the state of “molecules”.

It is similar to the atoms in nature, which are unstable in atomic form, and they are almost always found in molecular form in nature, with only a few exceptions called noble gases. The bonds between the atoms are an analogy for social bonds in society. If Power does not break these molecules and release the atoms, it can never truly and directly rule people; it can only deal with the molecules (social authorities), and just like a molecule is an entirely distinct being from the atoms that form it, social authorities are different from the individuals. Most importantly, social authorities have individual power. Thus, if Power does not “liberate” the individual from his social bonds, it will be a very limited Power, its governance will be shared, its direct influence on the periphery will be minimal and it can never exercise something even remotely resembling sovereignty. Jouvenel says, as a completely natural process, Power always attacks subsidiaries (Jouvenel, 1962: 158-160).

“The passion for absolutism is, inevitably, in conspiracy with the passion for equality” (Jouvenel, 1962: 177). Any call for equality is a call from Power to the periphery for support to attack subsidiaries, since equality forbids any authority by man over his fellow man, in essence forbidding subsidiary power. Any type of subsidiary is maintained by a specific form of accepted and upheld inequality, “subjective rights”. Their legitimate authority on the periphery gives them power which Power has to acknowledge. In such a state, Power’s strength is so incomplete that a feudal king has been merely called “first among equals”, a far cry from the absolutist kings of the 17th century, such as Louis XIV, who in turn is utterly pitiful in comparison to any modern republican Power. This was achieved by hundreds of years of centralization via the destruction of the subsidiaries.

Thus, Power’s road to enlargement lies in the breaking down of the social order. There is a constant war between state and social authorities for mastery of the individual. Social authority does not imply one-sided domination (although it may be), it is a voluntary relationship, most of the time also characterized by services and dues. First, if Power breaks down the social bonds and makes the periphery subservient to itself instead of to the social authorities, the individuals in the periphery do not lose any liberty since they have none to begin with. They can even feel freer in the short term, having been freed from their bonds (Jouvenel, 1962: 130). Thus, the periphery has no reason to resist Power’s growth. In fact, Power can easily mobilize them and use them against subsidiaries. Jouvenel notes the tendency of kings to install common people inside their own organs, which are normally seated by nobles.² First, King’s Court came to be dominated by plebeian bureaucrats, eventually turning into a parliament. And when kings, thanks to gaining the ability to be able to tax at will, became able to afford mercenaries, and these mercenaries, thanks to the advances in military tactics, became able to withstand noble cavalry, absolutist Power was complete to assert its domination (Jouvenel, 1962: 181-183). On the other hand, subsidiaries are the ones being attacked, so they naturally try to defend themselves and thus only they can limit Power growth. If all the subsidiaries lose out and Power’s domination is complete, when the many petty tyrannies of them are replaced by one great tyranny, there will only exist complete totalitarianism that is Power and its slaves.

This notion is at odds with the conventional understanding, as it argues that the different power centers inside the society do not converge with the state; on the contrary, they are in constant conflict with it. It is true that in many instances, Power has actively protected subsidiaries, such as its protecting the barons from unrest and industrialists from strikers. However, according to Jouvenel, since Power needs subsidiaries to provide it with troops and taxes, it is officially compelled to uphold their interests. Thus, the state’s organs’ duty is the daily upholding of the existing order, which it does, meanwhile, state strives to undermine the existing order via legislation, “...in course of time it (Power) does to a natural death the social order which gave it birth” (Jouvenel, 1962: 161-162). This is the general progress of things, but it is not without obstacles. Firstly, Power can fall to the weak hands. Then, the state apparatus can be partly captured by the agents of the subsidiaries, who direct it to their advantage. It should be noted, though, that if this situation lasts for a long time, then the subsidiary can be said to have captured Power, thus becoming Power. Secondly, just because Power has liberated people from social bonds, it does not guarantee that Power will capture them itself. For example, the people liberated from their feudal bonds mostly ended up being captured by capitalists, forming capitalistic bonds instead. And then, the war was between the state and the capitalists (as subsidiaries) (Jouvenel, 1962: 162-163). In fact, Jouvenel identifies three subsidiary cells that captures its historical progression; “clan cell”, “baronial cell” and “capitalistic cell” (which consists of “industrial cell” and “financial cell”).

² Here it should be noted that these plebeian bureaucrats later become powerful enough to become subsidiaries themselves. But initially, they are not a separate class, they are part of Power itself.

In city states, society consisted of clan cells completely closed to Power. Power existed only to judge on inter-clan conflicts. Jouvanel calls this mere “chairmanship”. On the other hand, in feudal monarchies, “baronial cell” is the subsidiary cell that is based on land ownership. Lastly, “capitalistic cell” is the subsidiary cell of modern state, simply based on money (Jouvanel, 1962: 164-169). This progression of the subsidiary cell is entirely in line with Power’s growth. From an individual who is in the clan cell, who has nothing to do with Power whatsoever, to a corporate employee who does not even know whom he is working for and has very weak ties, if any, to his cells. Moreover, Jouvanel points out that the “false dogma of equality” does not vanish a ruling elite; it simply frees them from their obligations towards their patronage (Jouvanel, 1962: 374). No industrialist is made to feel obliged towards his workers since he is neither a lord nor ruler; he is simply seen as contracting on equal terms, even though a vast power imbalance exists between him and his employees. Even though capitalistic cells did make attempts to imitate the bonds of older cells, the best example being the almost independent “factory towns”, such attempts have been quickly crushed. Since “In its jealousy of any and every command, however small, which was not its own, Power could not tolerate such independence.” (Jouvanel, 1962: 169).

In today’s world, we can safely say that the “capitalistic cell” is already as crushed as the “baronial cell” ever was; with Power’s legislation imposed on any employer, there is no aspect of the capitalists independent of Power. Power might have allied with other subsidiaries, such as the unions, for this purpose, but soon after its victory over capitalists was complete, circa the 1980s, they too were crushed since they were another subsidiary Power would not allow power to. In short, what Power ultimately wants is to destroy every bond and constraint on individuals that is not directly tied to itself and make people completely atomized and individualistic but also all equally tied to Power. For a state’s growth and centralization, equality and individualism are a one-two punch, since both serve to break down human molecules and ensure they never form again (Rosenberg, 2016a: 121). As Power grows by breaking up natural human bonds, the spontaneous social processes become less and less possible, and Power becomes more and more necessary to maintain public order; this constitutes an infinite feedback loop (Rosenberg, 2016b: 140). “The extremes of individualism and socialism meet: that was their predestined course.” (Jouvanel, 1962: 172).

Here, we see it crucial to mention James Burnham’s concept of “managerial revolution”, to bring up to date the Jouvanelian progression of history. Burnham (1941: 91) argues that the old capitalist class has been overthrown by the new managerial class; just as the old aristocracy had been overthrown by the capitalist merchants who at first merely did their bidding, capitalists have been overthrown by the managers who at first merely did their bidding. Money power beat land power back then, and now administrative power is beating money power. In true Jouvanelian fashion, we can say that Power has infiltrated and destroyed the “capitalistic cell” using the managerial class (just like it had used the capitalistic class to destroy the aristocratic class), but now we are witnessing the rise of a “managerial cell”, as a new subsidiary. Or maybe, the “managerial cell” did already succeed in infiltrating Power itself and thus they are now Power, as observed by Parvini (2022: 83).

As Power succeeds in destroying or absorbing bigger social authorities it moves on to pick on smaller ones; such as the family. Intact and independent families based on natural parental authority constitute small but resilient subsidiaries and rival Power. Familial authority can be subverted via state education, or families can be forced into dependency to be stripped of their autonomy. Power can also try to discourage family formation or encourage smaller families via a plethora of methods. Also, if a particular group in society is known to have a high amount of autonomy, Power will try to keep them away from positions of power. This is particularly true for peoples that constitute the “founding stock” of a nation and groups that traditionally outperform other groups. The best example of the former is the “Devshirme” system of the Ottoman Empire, while the support given by Power to egalitarian doctrines is an example of the latter.

According to Jouvanel (1962: 135), “history is the register of the strife of authorities”. Presenting endless historical examples from a wide variety of fields that do exist is not possible due to the space limitations of this paper. Works of Jouvanel, Bond, and Parvini present many older and recent historical examples. If the reader is interested, we invite them to refer to these authors. To summarize the phenomenon, we will end by citing Jouvanel (1962: 157);

The process (of Power's growth) is not uninterrupted, but the checks and recoils which it receives have not prevented the advance of the state through the centuries, as is sufficiently proved by the history of taxation, the history of armies, the history of legislation, and the history of police forces. It is clear enough that the fraction of society's wealth appropriated by public authority is a growing one, as is the fraction of the population which it mobilizes. It regulates private activities more and more closely, and watches more and more narrowly those who are its subjects.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, French political philosopher Bertrand de Jouvenel's thought has been focused upon. Jouvenel has been studied by various academics in the past, but it cannot be said that he has gotten the attention he deserves. Recently, his thought gained more prominence, mainly thanks to the works by Chris Bond and Neema Parvini, which build upon the famous Jouvenellian "High-Low Middle" mechanism. However, while immensely valuable, these works, focusing mainly on implications and practical insights, paint a partial picture of Jouvenel's thought. The primary aim of this paper is to provide more theoretical rigor to the various recent theories built upon Jouvenel's work. This paper provides a bridge to the gap between technical and practical studies on Jouvenel.

In the first chapter of the paper, Jouvenellian concepts of liberty, authority, sovereignty, power, and Power have been explained, followed by presenting some unique features of Jouvenellian Power, which are duality, continuity, and existence of different power centers, in order to present the theoretical basis of Jouvenel's understanding. In the second chapter, Jouvenel's ideas on how and why Power grows have been investigated, also taking into consideration Bond's framework.

It has been seen that Jouvenel's conceptions of liberty, authority, sovereignty, power, and Power are directly formative to his further theory. Jouvenellian liberty has differences from the classical liberal notion of liberty, and it is rather the revival of ancient pre-modern liberty that is based, above all, on autonomy and responsibility. Such liberty provides authority (*auctoritas*) to an individual, which is the sole basis of natural and voluntary social bonds. Jouvenel's model of group formation is wholly based on his idea of authority, whether on individual or group level, which is at odds with consent-based conceptions, especially common in classical liberal thought. Authority is fed into the group by its founder (*auctor*) and this authority is later fed by the group to the founder's successors. Social bonds that create and maintain these groups form social authorities, which persist in society as alternative power centers. On the other hand, every society coexists with a separate entity called Power ("the" power center), simply defined as society's governing body, which is as natural as humans themselves.

One of the most critical insights of Jouvenel is the observation that Power is always and everywhere in endless conflict with social authorities. This is because social authorities bond individuals to themselves and keep them out of reach of Power. Power, always anxious to grow, can only do so via breaking down social authorities and "liberating" the individual. Here, Bond's model provides the perfect nomenclature for the phenomenon as he calls social authorities "subsidiaries" (intermediaries) and powerless masses "periphery". According to the Jouvenellian "High-Low Middle" mechanism, throughout human history, Power allied with the periphery to attack subsidiaries and had immense success.

We believe the insights of Jouvenel briefly explained here provide a basis for a more successful framework for a wide variety of subjects including pre-modern and modern history of the World and Türkiye, past and current international relations issues and even local politics. In future studies, the model outlined here can be applied to these issues in narrower and more detailed senses. There are other important aspects of Jouvenel's thought omitted here due to space limitations. In addition to his theory of how Power grows he has important insights about how Power can be limited. It would not have made sense to focus on that before first explaining what Jouvenellian Power is and why and how it grows. Now that it has been concluded, in a further study, these aspects can be focused upon.

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