

**Analyse the concept of power with reference to the work of Steven Lukes. (12)**

The first face of power Lukes speaks about is Decision Making. This is the "open face" of power that is clearly seen to be used; the ability to affect the content of public policy. Usually, we can identify where the power lies and that it is exercised in accordance with the will of the people. This form of power can be illustrated through the formation of laws. When governments propose bills to be debated in the houses of parliament they are discussed by various sources such as; the media, pressure groups and various MPs. This is significant because it reveals that there is no secrecy within the process as the decision is transparent and open to amendments and discussion. This example is important as it collaborates with Lukes theories that they are logical and evident in our own political systems modern-day work. Through, for example, televised parliamentary debates we can see this type of power coming into action.

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The second face of power Lukes speaks about is Agenda Setting or Non-Decision Making. This is the "secretive face" of power that is exercised behind closed doors. Lukes suggests that an important source of power is to set the political agenda. This is being able to decide what will or won't be discussed. Power is as much about limiting choices as well as making them. We can view this form of power through Scotland's fight for Devolution. Under the Conservative government of 1979-1997, the topic was never allowed to be discussed in parliament as it was never on their political agenda. This changed however when Labour was elected into power in May 1997 as their manifesto included the option of a Devolution referendum. This appealed to many Scots and a referendum was held. Another example of limiting power is when the

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Scottish National Party wished there to be a question regarding independence in the referendum but Labour denied this as it wasn't in their political agenda. As a result of this, we have been shown that this theory is, in fact, valid as again there are modern examples backing up Lukes claim. Everyone has different opinions, governments and parties choose to make, or not to make decisions based on their beliefs and interests. This type of decision making is not really denying choice but controlling the choices that people have which advances power.

Key

A

The third, and arguably most important, face of power Lukes speaks about is Manipulating Desires or Thought control. This is explaining that power can go even further and be exercised by manipulation. This is the ability to influence popular beliefs and ideas and persuade us that decisions are being made in our best interests. To view this we can look at an example of Feminism. Feminists argue that women were persuaded that being a housewife and mother is the best way to support society. However, they argue that when women do this, they are just being exploited by men into doing their bidding. This idea of functionalism was pushed onto the women and they were made to feel they had to do this as it was the social norm of the time. From the above Lukes has drawn his theories from modern examples. The remnants of which or indeed active examples we see being exercised in our society today.

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This is significant because it could be argued that manipulating desires through a secret face of power is highly relevant. We may believe we are making decisions about our lives using free will, but really our ideas and perceptions are being shaped by powerful forces which define our boundaries and expectations.

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Well done - a well structured & clearly written response! I have added in 2 more A points

K: 4/4 Key: 4/4 A: 2/4