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Distinguishing Power, Authority & Legitimacy: Taking Max Weber at his Word by Using Resources-Exchange Analysis*

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Power is a puzzling notion. It seems so useful as a way to talk about politics in ordinary discourse, but when used to analyze politics systematically it quickly becomes entangled in a snarl of concepts, its precise nature and meaning growing less clear in the underbrush of related terms. This article seeks to clear away some of this tangle. Using the framework of resource-exchange analysis, the author explores the concept of power, following Weber's formulations, and seeks to clarify its relation to authority and legitimacy. His approach illuminates not only the notion of power but also many problems of political analysis and discourse.

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> *Herrschaft ist, wie gleich zu erörtern, ein Sonderfall von Macht*
> (Authority is, as will be discussed, a special kind of power.)
>
> Max Weber[1]

No term is used more broadly and loosely in political discourse than "power." Some confusion may derive from the broad scope inherent in

the concept, but most results from failure to make and maintain distinctions. Power is often treated as synonymous with "authority," though if the two terms meant the same thing, we would need only one of the two words in our vocabulary. To make matters worse, authority is commonly referred to as "legitimate" power, making the three terms into a conceptual labyrinth.

Equating power and authority is contrary to the distinctions Max Weber made in his analysis of the connection between authority and legitimacy. He did not make the latter a defining characteristic of the former. What has been taken most often from Weber's work on these concepts, unfortunately, is his *typological* analysis which focuses on differences in kind when for political analysis and action one should be concerned with differences in degree. The analysis here builds on but goes beyond Weber's formulations, exploring macro and micro relationships by considering normative, instrumental, and coercive elements of politics.

Power is a central concern for political scientists because it appears both as ends and means in politics. Yet using this concept can cloud more than it clarifies because it is so imprecise a term. Certainly it refers to things that are concrete. There are innumerable power relationships of cause and effect in the world around us. Should power be viewed as a thing, a relationship, or an abstract property? Should it be conceived and measured as something homogeneous or is it better regarded as an aggregate to be identified and studied through its constituent elements? Or is power essentially a descriptive term covering a variety of operative relationships?

The conceptual armory of social science has improved very little since Weber's time. There was an initial wave of efforts to deal with power analytically and rigorously during the 1950s and 1960s. This was deprecated by William Riker and James March, who concluded we would be better off if the term had never been introduced.[2] There was

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Wright Mills's annotated volume, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946). The full work came out in English twenty years later, edited by Guenter Roth and Claus Wittich, *Economy and Society* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968; republished by University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978). Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Weber are from the 1947 Henderson and Parsons edition, with page numbers indicated in parentheses following each quotation.

2. Many of these early efforts are included in Roderick Bell, et al., eds., *Political Power: A Reader in Theory and Research* (New York: Free Press, 1969). See critiques by William Riker, "Some Ambiguities in the Notion of Power," *American Political Science Review,* 58 (1964): 341–49; and James G. March, "The Power of Power," in *Varieties of Political Theory,* ed. David Easton (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1966), pp. 39–70.

another wave of work in the mid-1970s, which displayed different but comparable weaknesses.[3] Most political scientists have simply paid homage to Max Weber or cited someone else and have proceeded to use the word without trying to reduce the ambiguity and abstraction associated with it. By and large, power has become a neglected subject analytically, though with some promising work.[4]

Making consistent, careful distinctions between power and authority remains important in political science, as seen from the longstanding dispute between elitist and pluralist exponents on American politics. The debate has been fueled by the failure of proponents on *both* sides to distinguish clearly between power and authority.[5] Ambiguity in the use

3. Half a dozen books on power appeared in 1975: David V. J. Bell, *Power, Influence and Authority: An Essay in Political Linguistics* (New York: Oxford University Press); Jack Nagel, *The Descriptive Analysis of Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press); David McClelland, *Power: The Inner Experience* (New York: Irvington); Richard Adams, *Energy and Structure: A Theory of Social Power* (Austin: University of Texas Press); Niklas Luhman, *Macht* (translated as *Trust and Power,* New York: John Wiley, 1979); Stewart Clegg, *Power, Rule and Domination: A Critical and Empirical Understanding of Power in Sociological Theory and Organizational Life* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul). But contributors to a National Endowment for the Humanities symposium on Power in 1977 completely ignored this literature. The political scientist speaking at the symposium, James MacGregor Burns, asked:

> What is power? We are told, in one well-known definition by a political scientist, that the power of A over B is equal to the maximum force that A can induce on B minus the maximum resisting force that B can mobilize in the opposite direction. If you are bewildered by that, I am too . . . Is this formula more a metaphor of physics than one of human power? No wonder some would banish the concept of power. ("Power and Politics: An Overview," in *Power: Its Nature, Its Use, and Its Limits,* ed. D. W. Harward, Boston: G. K. Hall, p. 60.)

4. The authors cited most widely, apart from Weber, have been Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, *Power and Society* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950); and Robert A. Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* (1957): 201-215. Important recent works include Dennis Wrong, *Power: Its Forms, Bases and Uses* (New York: Harper, 1979); David Baldwin, "Power and Social Exchange," *American Political Science Review,* 72 (1978): 1229-42; and Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Vol. I: A History of Power from the Beginning to A. D. 1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Writers on power in the "critical theory" tradition such as Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), and Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), use terminology and epistemology that do not connect with most social scientists.

5. The leading contributors to these two contending schools of thought were equally careless in their terminology. C. Wright Mills in *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956) casually equated power sometimes with authority, sometimes with military force, sometimes with both of these and also with economic wealth. Robert Dahl

of these terms makes it impossible to reach agreement on the distribution, sources, or effects of "power." As Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz have correctly argued, the development of any theoretical understanding of power is impeded by

> a good deal of confusion about the nature of power and of the things that differentiate it from the equally [?] important concepts of force, influence and authority. These terms have different meanings and are of varying relevance; yet in nearly all studies of community decision-making published to date, power and influence are used almost interchangeably, and force and authority are neglected.[6]

Unfortunately, Bachrach and Baratz undercut their own plea for making rigorous distinctions by placing power on the same level of generality as force, influence, and authority. This goes against Weber's explicit characterization of power as a general category that subsumes authority, force, and other types or means of power as special kinds or cases (*Sonderfälle*).

Though Weber himself was clear about these distinctions, there is confusion in the literature about power, authority, and legitimacy because certain interpretations of Weber's formulations have blurred the differences among these terms. Talcott Parsons in particular insisted on using the term "authority" to cover only power relationships deemed legitimate.[7] This equation of authority with legitimacy is also found in the influential writing of Harold Lasswell, who identifies power with authority, defining power as "participation in the making of decisions."[8] Inasmuch as some of the leading social theorists in America have lumped power, authority and legitimacy together, it is no wonder ambiguity prevails.[9] Weber's is not the only or last word on the subject, but it is a

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laid claim to great rigor in *Who Governs: Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1961), but was no more careful to distinguish power from authority. His treatment of resources as power bases is discussed in Section III.

6. Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, *Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 17.

7. See, for example, Randall Collins, "A Comparative Approach to Political Sociology," in *State and Society*, ed. R. Bendix (Boston: Little Brown, 1968), pp. 42-57; Jere Cohen, Lawrence Hazelrigg, and Whitney Pope, "De-Parsonizing Weber: A Critique of Parsons' Interpretation of Weber's Sociology," *American Sociological Review*, 40 (1975): 299-41.

8. See Lasswell and Kaplan, *Power and Society*, p. 75.

9. The common equation of authority with legitimacy is seen in the entry on "authority" in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), Vol. I,

good place to begin because his writings are still generally regarded as the most comprehensive and insightful treatments of political, social, and economic relationships.

I. Weber's Treatment of Power and Authority

No definition of power has been more frequently cited than Weber's:

> Power [*Macht*] is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests. (p. 152)

Weber's focus on *the ability to achieve objectives despite resistance* is at the core of the concept "power" whether used formally or informally. Two terms in this definition, "probability" and "basis," should be highlighted because they are crucial for making the concept less vague.

The first term addresses whether or not power exists as something in its own right. Various leading writers have considered it a conceptual advance to affirm that power is *not a thing but rather a relationship.*[10] Yet according to Weber, a statement about power is only a statement about a relationship, i.e., about a probability, not a certainty, someone will be able to achieve his objective. Weber never says "power exists" or even that it is a relationship. He defines it only as a probability. To be more specific, one must examine the *bases* of those relationships in which power is reported.

Weber regarded his concept of power as being "highly comprehensive." It derives from "all conceivable qualities of a person and all conceivable combinations of circumstances [that] may put him in a position to impose his will in a given situation" (p. 153). But how can one deal with "all conceivable" qualities and circumstances? To make the concept more manageable, one needs to determine the bases or means of power. But first, let us consider Weber's conception of authority.

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pp. 474-77. Even someone as sophisticated as Ralf Dahrendorf defined authority as "legitimate power" in *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 166.

10. See Herbert Simon, "Notes on the Observation and Measurement of Political Power," *Journal of Politics,* 15 (1953): 500–516; Robert Dahl, "Power," *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,* Vol. VII (New York: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 405–15; Richard Emerson, "Power-Dependence Relations," *American Sociological Review,* 27 (1962): 31–41; and Peter Blau, *Power and Exchange in Social Life* (New York: Wiley, 1964).

A minefield of controversy surrounds how best to translate Weber's words. Weber himself suggested *Autorität* as an appropriate synonym for the term *Herrschaft,* but Parsons and others have ignored Weber's own words.[11] By declining to translate *Herrschaft* as "authority," however, authority then was equated with legitimacy by definition, reflecting a bias in favor of those who possess authority.

Authority, as I would translate *Herrschaft,* need not be regarded always or by everyone as legitimate, though usually some legitimacy is attributed to authority. Weber's mode of analysis, focusing on differences of kind rather than degree, may have contributed to a fusion of the two terms. Those who accept his "ideal-type" way of thinking tend to equate authority with legitimacy even though Weber himself declined to make legitimacy a defining characteristic of authority.

To link authority to legitimacy *by definition* makes the former hostage to subjective views. Does one really want to maintain that there is no authority if even a small minority refuse to accept it as such? On the other hand, if persons in positions of authority claim that their authority is legitimate, should their claim be always or automatically accepted? The claims of persons in positions of asserted authority must be distinguished from the judgments made about the legitimacy of that authority by those persons toward whom commands for compliance are directed.

Weber himself was clear about this distinction, though he did not try to assess amounts of authority and legitimacy, most often writing in terms of the presence or absence thereof. Distinguishing between authority and legitimacy focuses on whether to accept as fact the problematic claim of those who wield authority, i.e., that it and they are legitimate when making determinations about other people's lives.

Weber's unequivocal declaration that authority (*Herrschaft*) is a special kind of power (*Macht*) should be taken literally. His definitions of authority and power are both stated in terms of probability,[12] so his qualifications concerning power, the parent concept, should apply to authority as well. This makes authority *the probability that a command*

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11. In his chapter on types of *Herrschaft,* Weber inserted *Autorität* in parentheses as a synonym for *Herrschaft* (Vol. II, p. 157, of German edition cited in fn. 1). Parsons, when translating this particular sentence into English, however, omitted Weber's suggested equivalence (1947, p. 324), and Roth and Wittich pass it off as "an alternative colloquial term" (1968, p. 299). They suggest "legitimate domination" as the best synonym for *Herrschaft,* but then proceed to translate it as "authority" throughout most of that chapter.

12. Weber defined *Herrschaft* as "the probability that a command with a specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons" (1947, p. 152). Since Weber is known for his precise use of language, it is significant that when he had a chance to make legitimacy a *defining characteristic* of authority, he declined to do so.

with a specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons, despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which that probability rests. The pivotal term in this conception of authority is "group," of which more is said in Section V.

To understand authority, we need to look at the bases for compliance relationships. These may not be as far-ranging as for power, but they are clearly multiple and range from normative to coercive considerations as Weber himself wrote.[13] The essential condition for the existence of authority is some special position or role which enables a person in it to make commands in the name of the group and to back them with rewards or sanctions in its name. Commands made and complied with because of rewards or sanctions employed in an individual/private capacity, lacking the claim of a group/public basis, would not be instances of authority but of more general compliance relationships best described in terms of power.

Any complete analysis of authority relationships requires attention to both motives and means of gaining compliance. Weber proposed "to classify the types of authority according to the kind of claim of legitimacy typically made by each" (p. 325). He defined legitimacy as a conviction on the part of persons subject to authority that it is right and proper and that they have some obligation to obey, regardless of the basis on which this belief rests. Of authority, he said that "every true relation [entails] a certain minimum of voluntary submission [or of compliance]."[14] Otherwise it belongs to the more general category of power relations. But this can be quite literally a minimum; the submission or compliance may be voluntary only in the sense that a person chooses to avoid deprivation or injury.[15]

Weber's definition of the modern state may have prompted an exaggerated emphasis on legitimacy in authority relationships. The state, he said, is a territorially-defined organization with an administrative staff

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13. After stating that *Herrschaft* "does not include every mode of exercising 'power' or 'influence' over other persons," Weber added: "The motives of obedience to commands in this sense can rest on considerations varying over a wide range from case to case; all the way from simple habituation to the most purely rational calculation of advantage" (p. 324). This range includes both legitimacy and compulsions of physical force. See Cohen, et al., "De-Parsonizing Weber," pp. 238–39.

14. "Voluntary submission" was used in the 1947 Henderson and Parsons translation (p. 324); "compliance" is the word used by Roth and Wittich (p. 212).

15. Weber regarded even coerced compliance as having some element of volition, according to Max Rheinstein and Edward Shils. They cite his use of a Latin phrase: "although coerced, it was still his will." *Max Weber on Law in Economy and Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 37.

"that successfully upholds a claim to the *monopoly* of the *legitimate* use of physical force in the enforcement of its orders" (p. 154). By italicizing certain words, however, attention was drawn away from what in his own analysis is the key term concerning authority, *claim*. The authority of the state exists to the extent and to the degree that its leaders and their agents successfully uphold the claims they make upon their subjects for compliance—regardless of the basis upon which that success rests.

There is always something problematic about compliance relationships. Authorities may expect and demand voluntary compliance on the basis of asserted legitimacy, but the threat of compulsion or the promise of some rewards is always implied if not stated. Every political system

> attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy . . . no system of authority voluntarily limits itself to material or affectual or ideal motives as a basis for guaranteeing its continuance. (p. 325)

Persons in authority invariably claim that they are the right and proper persons to be making demands upon the public, and that what they seek is fully legitimate. At the same time, if their commands are not obeyed they reserve the right to use force or to impose economic or social sanctions.

Such means used to gain compliance may or may not be accepted by members of the public. *To the extent that they are not accepted, this diminishes the probability that the commands will be obeyed,* which is Weber's definition of authority. The legitimacy of all exercises of authority need not be accepted completely by every person subject to it. The legitimacy of authority and therefore the authority itself is best seen as a matter of degree and as always liable to some denial or refusal.

Claims of authority are themselves the subject of political activity, with some persons supporting these while others oppose or at least question them. As long as claims to authority and legitimacy and to a monopoly on the use of coercion ("legitimate force") are usually or probably upheld—by whatever means, including the use of economic resources, receipt and manipulation of information, and maintenance of respect or prestige—one can say that a system of authority exists. Authority as a macro-phenomenon, while based in authority relations at the micro-level, thus has emergent properties. Even if authority at the individual level involves at least some minimum of voluntary compliance, it is possible for a system of authority to exist without all of its members complying voluntarily.

In practice, there is less authority in a system to the extent that less

legitimacy is accorded to persons in governmental positions, to their policies, or to the political system itself. However, there can be a high probability that their commands will be obeyed even by persons who do not regard that authority as legitimate if it is backed by ample force or by control over economic resources and social status or over information.

There is, of course, a correlation between legitimacy and authority, since the power associated with authority depends to some extent on the legitimacy accorded it. Such power, however, does not depend exclusively on legitimacy. Other factors contribute to the probability that commands will be complied with, i.e., to authority. Authority and legitimacy differ in that one is a claim for compliance, while the other is an acceptance of that claim. Different persons are involved—on one side, those whom Easton called "the authorities," and on the other, those who are subject to the authority, i.e., to the claims of the former.[16] A resource-exchange analysis differentiates among various sources of power and illuminates the juncture of legitimacy and authority as each augments the power resulting from the other. This conception is consistent with Weber's analysis but needs to be elaborated after summarizing how power serves as an overarching term under which various specific power means or bases can be delineated.

For Weber, any attribution of power is a statement about the probability someone can achieve his or her own goals, relative to the goals of others, using one or more of a number of means. What exists is not "power" but rather these means and the relationships they establish. While one can speak abstractly about power just as physicists talk about "energy," an analysis is best done in terms of specific kinds.[17]

Rather than operating in its own right, power is a rubric under which a number of similar and convertible phenomena can be grouped and understood. It is a shorthand statement about the consequences of various things, attitudes, beliefs, etc., that contribute to what is broadly and loosely known as "power." What are the sources of power? Resource-exchange analysis, identifying six basic categories of power capabilities, organizes the huge number of conceivable qualities and combinations of circumstances that Weber referred to into a limited number of reasonably coherent sets.

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16. David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York: Wiley, 1965).

17. Bertrand Russell made a strong but unconvincing argument in *Power: A New Social Analysis* (New York: Norton, 1938), that power defined as "the production of intended effects" is "the fundamental concept in social science." Because there is no way to denominate "effects," however, his analysis is not persuasive. Felix Oppenheim presents a similar "monistic" view in "Power Revisited," *Journal of Politics,* 40 (1978): 594.

II. Resources as Power Bases

In the literature as well as in common speech, frequent references are made to resources as bases of power.[18] However, resources are usually either conceived in an abstract, undifferentiated way or are exemplified by shopping lists of possible categories for classifying power resources. The basic requirement that analytical categories be mutually exclusive but collectively inclusive has been generally ignored. Instead of exhaustive or illustrative lists, we need a coherent classification of power means.[19]

If politics is indeed a process, following the reasoning of economic analysis, resources as inputs are converted into outputs. Easton proposed this kind of analysis for politics using the concept of "system," but he left the consideration of inputs at a very abstract level, as did Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell in their structural-functional analysis of politics.[20] Surprisingly little thought has been given to arriving at an agreed-upon set of resource categories for politics, considering how much analytical advantage economists gained from having a widely accepted classification of inputs. For each of these, a body of theory has developed over time.[21]

To deal more concretely with politics in developing countries, Warren Ilchman and Norman Uphoff considered six kinds of resources—economic resources, social status, information, physical force, legitimacy,

18. See Dahl's essay on "Power," cited above. More recent examples include David Baldwin, "Interdependence and Power: A Conceptual Analysis," *International Organization* 34 (1980): 500–503; and L. W. Snider, "Identifying the Elements of State Power: Where Do We Begin?" *Comparative Political Studies,* 20 (1987): 316–19. Mann states in *The Sources of Social Power,* that power though exercised *through* resources is not itself a resource (p. 6).

19. Dahl, for example, in *Who Governs?,* pp. 226–27, cited 16 things that "a list of resources in the American political system might include," adding, "One could easily think of refinements and additions to this list; it is not intended as an exhaustive list so much as an illustration of the richness and variety of political resources." William and Joyce Mitchell, important contributors to resource-exchange analysis, offer a long list of resources in *Political Science and Public Policy* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1970), p. 404. These listings of political resources are shown in Table II below, together with that of Robert Fried, *Comparative Political Institutions* (New York: Macmillan, 1966, p. 2) and several other social scientists cited in footnote 26.

20. See Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life,* pp. 37–56, 154–170; and Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston: Little Brown, 1966).

21. Although land, labor, and capital sound quite concrete in economics, they are actually only *categories* according to which diverse inputs to economic production are grouped for analytical purposes. Each category helps analysts deal with the varied factors involved in economic activity by subsuming diverse but related things.

and authority—to be analogues in political processes for the resource categories used in the study of economics, i.e., land, labor, and capital.[22] The factors of political production identified have general applicability for political analysis. Not coincidentally, they correspond to six main kinds of power—economic, social, informational, physical, moral, and political—and parallel other social science efforts to enumerate resources or power means.[23]

Resource-exchange analysis for politics not only makes clearer the difference between authority and legitimacy; it also clarifies the relationship between them and the other ingredients of power. Political resources are not all material things, but neither are they abstractions. All originate in the activities and attitudes of persons, though some are "stock" resources and others represent "flows." The latter are more readily renewable than the former, much as services in economic production and exchange are different from material goods.

The similarity and convergence in most of the analytical treatments of this subject should be made explicit. The match-up between the political resource categories and the theoretically elaborated analyses of John French and Bertram Raven and of Amitai Etzioni is laid out in Table I.[24]

By distinguishing a number of different types of power resting on various material, cognitive, or psychological bases, French and Raven account for compliance relations more precisely than does Etzioni. This is partly because Etzioni concentrated more on the motives for compliance than on the means by which it is gained. But it is also due to the typological nature of Etzioni's analysis, which is less amenable to dealing with combinations of power modes or mixes of resources.[25] Power in any social system invariably involves some combination of self-interested,

22. Warren Ilchman and Norman Uphoff, *The Political Economy of Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

23. Dennis Wrong, in *Power,* agrees with the distinctions made here among power, authority, and legitimacy (p. 36). But his then delineating five *types* of authority contradicts his conceptual position. Paralleling the analysis of Ilchman and Uphoff, his types (inducement, personal, competent, coercive, and legitimate) match the other five resource categories they identified.

24. See John French and Bertram Raven, "The Bases of Social Power," in *Studies in Social Power,* ed. D. Cartwright (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), pp. 150–65; and Amitai Etzioni, *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations* (New York: Free Press, 1961).

25. A parallel analysis is suggested by Kenneth Boulding in "Toward a Pure Theory of Threat Systems," *American Economic Review,* 53 (1963): 424–34, and amplified in his new book, *Three Faces of Power* (Sage, 1989). Boulding says all actual social systems contain all three kinds of relationships: "Even under slavery, for instance, which has a high proportion of threat, there are elements of exchange, and even of integration" (p. 425).

Table I.   Comparison of Different Kinds of Resources,
Power and Compliance

POLITICAL RESOURCES (Ilchman & Uphoff, 1969)		TYPES OF POWER (French & Raven, 1959)		TYPES OF COMPLIANCE (Etzioni, 1961)
ECONOMIC RESOURCES	=	REWARD POWER ⎫		UTILITARIAN
SOCIAL STATUS	=	REFERENT POWER ⎬ =		(REMUNERATIVE)
INFORMATION	=	EXPERT POWER ⎭		COMPLIANCE
PHYSICAL FORCE	=	COERCIVE POWER	=	COERCIVE COMPLIANCE
LEGITIMACY	=	LEGITIMATE POWER	=	NORMATIVE COMPLIANCE
AUTHORITY	=	POLITICAL POWER[a]	=	POLITICAL COMPLIANCE[b]

[a]Not considered by French & Raven because their typology was formulated to deal with bases of "social" power.

[b]Not formally part of typology, but from Etzioni's discussion this is achieved through a combination of the other three types of compliance. His typology corresponds to those the alternative relationships analyzed by Boulding (1963), who contrasted "exchange" systems (utilitarian or renumerative compliance) with "threat" systems (coercive compliance) and "integrative" systems (normative compliance). It also parallels the analysis of Galbraith (1973), who differentiated pecuniary motivation, compulsion and identification as the three main bases of power.

coerced, and altruistic relationships, as Kenneth Boulding has elaborated. The same can be said of any network of authority relationships. The listings offered by Dahl and some other social scientists are matched in Table II against the resource classification of Ilchman and Uphoff. These other schemes correspond quite closely to the classification proposed.[26]

This analysis is not a theory of politics, since it does not in itself explain political processes or outcomes. Rather it focuses attention on what are judged to be crucial factors, without stating fixed relations among them. In comparison with other schemes delineating the constituent

26. John Harsanyi's scheme is shown for sake of comparison ("Measurement of Social Power, Opportunity Costs and the Theory of Two-Person Bargaining Games" and "Measurement of Social Power in N-Person Reciprocal Power Situations," *Behavioral Science,* 7 (1962): pp. 67–80, 81–92). Lasswell in *Power in Society,* with Kaplan, analyzed eight base values, each of which if backed by "severe sanctions" represents a form of power, rather than just influence (p. 84). His categories are tautological, however, because the base value he called "power" is defined as including severe sanctions.

TABLE II.   Matching Different Schemes for Analyzing Resources

ILCHMAN & UPHOFF (1969)	DAHL (1961)	FRIED (1966)	MITCHELL & MITCHELL (1969)	HARSANYI (1962)	LASSWELL & KAPLAN (1950)
Economic Resources	Access to money, credit & wealth Control over jobs	Economic power Manpower	Money Manpower	Rewards	Wealth
Social Status	Esteem & social standing Popularity	Social power Popularity	Reputation Prestige	Personal affection	Respect Affection
Information	Control over information	Information Expertise	Information	Supply of information	Enlightenment
Physical Force	—	Violence	—	Punishments	Power (as severe sanctions)
Legitimacy	Legitimacy Legality Charisma	Legitimacy	—	Legitimate authority	Rectitude
Authority	Rights of public office Right to vote	Office Rules	Authority Influence		Power (as participation in decision making)
Personal Qualities	Intelligence Energy level	Leadership skills[a]	Sense of efficacy, experience, bargaining abilities, persuasiveness, likeableness, trust, technical and skill resources, competence		Well-being Skill
Other Factors	Ethnic solidarity	Organization[b]	Organization[b]	—	—

[a] Leadership represents *skill* in mobilizing and utilizing resources, and as such, it is not a resource.

[b] Similarly, organization represents the *structuring* of resource flows and thus should not be itself considered as a resource.

forms of power, the resource mode of analysis laid out here has the following advantages:

(1) it is reasonably *comprehensive* in encompassing all major kinds of power, not neglecting force as Dahl did, for example;
(2) at the same time, it is *parsimonious,* employing a limited number of categories;
(3) it is *balanced,* giving attention to the full range of factors from objective to subjective without subordinating one to another; and
(4) it is *rigorous* in that none of the categories includes anything coming under other categories.

Factors like skill or personality might be added to a list of political resources. But they are not included because they are neither divisible nor exchangeable, criteria long accepted as defining features of the factors of production in economics. Adding indivisible things that are not exchangeable would make our political resource categories too dissimilar.

This is not to say that other factors in politics are unimportant, only that they should not be considered as resources. Economists distinguish between resources and infrastructure even though both are productive, as well as between resources and the entrepreneurship that capitalizes on them. Although skill and personality are certainly important for gaining objectives or compliance, they are essentially different from resources when they are analyzed as power means.

Each of the resource categories contains enough diversity that we need to develop refined conceptualizations of each, as has been done for land, labor, and capital as factors of economic production. In particular we need agreement on appropriate subcategories for handling the variety of things, activities, and attitudes, used to achieve objectives in politics and more generally in all social relations. With respect to status, for example, the distinction between ascribed and achieved status is useful though rather gross. There is some consensus on the validity of distinguishing between coercion and violence as types of physical force.[27] Weber's analysis of three types of legitimacy (traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational) and the classifications of authority by Harry Eckstein and Ted Gurr[28] represent the kind of work that needs to be done on these political resources. Despite its central role in politics, authority is the resource least elaborated theoretically, though in distributing it, for example, one can distinguish between deconcentration and devolution.

With enough collective thought and discussion, political and other social scientists should be able to agree on what constitute the factors of political production, just as economists did for their discipline 150 years ago. This conceptualization could pave the way for developing useful accumulation of knowledge about authority, legitimacy, information, force, etc., similar to the bodies of theory economists built up over many decades for capital, labor, and natural resources, introducing illuminat-

27. Force when used with a claim to being legitimate is generally called "coercion." To the extent that persons receiving such force regard it as legitimately employed, the power resulting from that force is greater because there will be less resistance. Agents of the state always claim that they are using "coercion," and that any opponent's use of force represents "violence," i.e., force lacking any legitimacy. Opponents conversely regard their own use of force as justified "coercion," while condemning the state's "violence."

28. Harry Eckstein and Ted Gurr, *Patterns of Authority: A Structural Basis for Political Inquiry* (New York: Wiley, 1975), pp. 197–225.

ing distinctions such as that between renewable and nonrenewable resources.[29]

III. Delineating Authority and Legitimacy

Despite its terminology, resource-exchange analysis is derived more from organization theory than from economic theory, either neoclassical or Marxian. While economic concepts are employed and principles such as diminishing returns and opportunity cost are applied, these are not the exclusive property of economists.[30] A resource-exchange framework does not presume a free or open market since coercion and stratification are widespread facts of political life. Both are associated with authority roles, which provide the impetus for politics and are sustained by politics. As Weber showed, such roles exist at all levels and in all places, indeed wherever organized activity occurs. Thus organization theory is an appropriate foundation from which to deal with power and authority.[31]

State institutions are commonly understood as organizations, but the polity as a whole can also be regarded in organizational terms. Persons in positions of authority are continuously in exchange relations with members of the public, though specific exchanges may be only intermittent or tacit. To sustain the operations of the state and also their authority, persons in authority roles need a variety of resources: economic, status, information, legitimacy, and force.[32] They seek these resources in desired amounts and on favorable terms from the public, though some can also be produced directly by the state or acquired abroad.[33]

29. Legitimacy is an example of a political resource that is renewable within certain limits, like a forest, when not "harvested" too rapidly by the authorities; with "excessive" rates of extraction, it becomes non-renewable.

30. Such analysis has been used by sociologists like Talcott Parsons and Neil Smelser, *Economy and Society: A Study in the Integration of Economic and Social Theory* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1956); Blau, *Power and Exchange in Social Life;* and Emerson, "Power-Dependence Relations." Historians are also beginning to use this framework; see Joan D. Lind, "Exchange Processes in History: Integrating the Micro and Macro Levels of Analysis," *Sociological Quarterly,* 28 (1987): 223–46.

31. Collins argues that Weber, in contrast to Parsons, was more an organization theorist than a systems theorist ("A Comparative Approach to Political Sociology," p. 48).

32. That force is negatively valued by its recipients complicates any discussion of its use in exchange relationships. See discussion by French and Raven in "The Bases of Social Power."

33. For simplicity's sake, the discussion here treats political systems as closed, though in fact, all are open systems, with resources exchanged not only between and among regime and sectors but also with foreign regimes and sectors. Diplomatic recognition, for example, is the institutionalized formal according of legitimacy between states.

Within some limits, authority can be shared with members of the public or can be used to make decisions they desire. Members of the public would like certain benefits from agencies of the state or as a result of its policies affecting resource allocations within the public. Demands from the public create a basis for political exchange, which does not always occur equitably or voluntarily any more than does all economic exchange.[34]

Although the outputs of political processes are varied, they can be categorized similarly to political inputs: economic, status, information, etc. Members of the public from their activities and attitudes produce and can provide most of what the state needs for its purposes. These objectives include providing enough benefits for certain sectors of the public so as to sustain their contributions to the maintenance of the state and of the regime.[35]

A continuous exchange process goes on with the following qualification: Whereas economic resources, social status, information, and force can be produced, exchanged, received, saved, consumed, or deployed by both the authorities and the public, authority and legitimacy originate *respectively* from the regime and the public as two sets of political actors. Authority derives from the existence, exercise, and maintenance of certain roles whose incumbents claim a right to have people's obedience, whereas legitimacy derives from the beliefs and judgments of persons who are subject to those roles. Legitimacy is produced when members of the public accept such roles, their incumbents, and the resulting decisions or commands as right and proper, regardless of the basis on which acceptance rests. Legitimacy is not so much traded for other resources as it is granted or accorded in keeping with the beliefs people have about what is right and proper, when procedures or outcomes meet normative expectations.

Authority roles establish, in Easton's words, "a political division of labor" where some persons make decisions and commands with which other persons are expected to comply. This division of labor may arise by consent or it may be imposed.[36] Occupying an authority role, whether it

34. Coerced or unequal exchange is analyzed by Richard Emerson, in "Social Exchange Theory," *Annual Review of Sociology,* Vol. 2 (Palo Alto, CA: Annual Review Press, 1976), 335-62.

35. These are not the same. Ralph Miliband delineated six elements of the state of which only one is the regime. See *The State in Capitalist Society: The Western System of Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), pp. 49-54.

36. Whether power includes unintended behavioral effects or not is still debated; see Oppenheim, "Power Revisited," and rejoinder by Terence Ball in same issue (pp. 609-18). The controversy persists because analysts seek a single essence of power. From the perspective of power-wielders, intention may be relevant, but not to power-recipients.

has been freely conferred or forcibly taken, permits a person to claim to be speaking and acting in some public capacity, not simply as a private citizen. The greater probability that a person's claims will be obeyed because of association with some recognized role represents his or her authority.

If a person who claims authority has no more success than someone else backed by the same resources of wealth, force, etc., but who cannot make an official claim, we say the first person "has no authority." Compliance with the first person's decisions might be obtained on the basis of wielding physical force or economic inducements, but it would then be an exercise of some kind of power other than that derived from authority.

Does this mean authority is no more than the sanctions or inducements its wielders can employ? When a person making a claim of authority enjoys a greater probability of compliance with decisions than would a private person deciding and demanding the same things, the increment in power attributable to authority is not independent of other factors. But neither is it only the effects of those factors. A person in authority invokes certain rewards and sanctions but also summons up certain attitudes and beliefs in people's minds on behalf of his or her authority. Both the existence of authority roles and the exercise of authority—making claims on others for compliance in the name of the state or some other collectivity—create power consequences of authority over and above those attributable to any other resources. Thus, while power is an abstract descriptive term, authority refers to concrete roles and relationships that establish it alongside other power bases, which also produce behavioral effects.[37]

In economics, would one say that capital is *only* some combination of labor and raw materials? Marx's labor theory of value holds this. But we find in capital more productive possibilities than the sum of the inputs going into it. Similarly, authority in politics is a second-order or derived factor rather than an elementary one like wealth or force. The exercise of authority is crucial for making other factors more productive. Politics without authority would be like economics without capital. Because we cannot imagine politics without the existence and employment of authority roles, authority is the most salient defining characteristic of politics.[38]

37. Using precise Weberian formulations, Peter Blau says that authority "often originates in other forms of power [and] usually has its source in other forms of power." "Critical Remarks on Weber's Theory of Authority," *American Political Science Review*, 57 (1963): 312–13.

38. Politics includes all activities and attitudes that affect in some way the acquisition, influence, and/or exercise of authority (Ilchman and Uphoff, *The Political Economy of*

While operationally, authority is only a claim, the existence of authority roles institutionalizes flows of goods and services, status, information, legitimacy, etc. to whomever occupies those roles. Incumbency entitles them to exercise authority and employ all the resources associated with those roles. The claim to having a right to use these power means may not be acknowledged by all others, or it may be accepted only with qualifications. When the claim to office and to a right to enforce decisions can no longer be upheld, by whatever means, authority ceases to exist.

Legitimacy is a counterpart resource to authority, being produced by those subject to authority rather than by those in positions of authority. While authority comes from the claims of incumbents seeking compliance, legitimacy derives from the beliefs people have about the prevailing division of political labor, to repeat Easton's phrase. Exercises of authority will be complied with more readily to the extent that persons think:

(1) the *authority* role in question has been properly and acceptably established;
(2) its *incumbent* is a right and proper person in that role;
(3) the *content* of the decision or command is within the scope of accepted authority, or has been arrived at by acceptable procedures; and/or
(4) the *system* of authority as a whole is regarded as legitimate.

The amount of legitimacy accorded to a specific decision will be a summation of judgments made about the decision, the role and incumbents from which it comes, and the system of authority. These judgments may be made explicitly, tacitly, or as Weber suggested, habitually.

We noted above Weber's statement that every government "attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its own 'legitimacy.' " This supports the view that legitimacy is produced by members of the public to the extent that they believe, and are willing to act on their belief, that specific exercises of authority are right and proper, deserving to be obeyed. To accord legitimacy to a regime, to a role, to an incumbent, to a policy, or simply to the outcome of a decision process is to grant a kind of political credit which can be drawn on by persons in authority. To the extent the compliance was judged legitimate after the fact as well as before, that "line of credit" can be restored, possibly to an even higher

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Change, pp. 50–51). It exists wherever authority roles give someone control over economic resources, status, information, legitimacy, and possibly force to wield in the name of an organized group.

level if the consequences of complying with authority were judged positively.

Those in authority do well, as Weber suggests, to make investments in the production or granting of legitimacy from the public. This greatly lowers the costs to persons in authority roles of getting compliance with their decisions. To the extent they can draw on beliefs of legitimacy from those whose compliance is sought, whether those beliefs are rooted in tradition, in normative conviction, or in legal-rational principles, authorities need employ fewer other resources such as goods and services, status, or force to get compliance. Indeed, authorities can gain compliance from persons who accord them little or no legitimacy by drawing on the legitimacy that other persons give them.

Economic, coercive, or other resources may be obtained from the latter to buy or compel compliance from the former. Even when certain persons subject to authority do not recognize or accept it as legitimate, authority exists to the extent that there is some probability of their compliance with specific decisions, despite any resistance and regardless of the basis on which that probability rests.

IV. Identifying Other Power Bases

The other four kinds of resources (economic, status, information, and force) may be used either in conjunction with the exercise of authority, in which case they become political resources, or independently to achieve personal or group goals outside the realm of politics. In the latter circumstances, they simply represent bases of power. These four resources can be acquired and used by individual effort whereas legitimacy and authority depend on some kind of institutionalized, political setting.

That economic resources can be means of power has been often recognized. They are a major input for gaining or influencing authority, and the exercise of authority enables persons to acquire or otherwise to benefit from economic resources. Wealth has long been identified as one of the main instrumentalities of power in both the public and private sectors.

Social status has nearly as often been identified as a source of power, though not necessarily in resource terms. One's status is a summation of all the criteria one meets which others regard as worthy of respect, or special or at least equal treatment. As such, status is like the economic asset of wealth, with the difference that the income flows which status yields are esteem and deference rather than goods and services. Actually, both wealth and status can yield both kinds of income streams.[39]

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39. Most of the verbs used to characterize status relations in English are economic: pay one's respects, pay attention, pay homage, lend prestige, etc.

The power resulting from information derives (1) from exchanging or withholding it, or (2) from using other resources more effectively once one has certain information. The first kind of power is determined by supply-and-demand relations, the second by intrinsic or situational value. Information evades the law of conservation of matter. It can be given to others without losing it, but it is still subject to the laws of supply and demand. When information is shared, there is usually some depreciation of its unit value, even though its volume increases. Secret information confers monopoly power when others desire the information possessed.

Force has probably been studied more explicitly as a political resource than any other. In particular, threats can be understood as a "currency" for force, having the same relationship to it as money has to goods and services as a unit of measurement, a medium of exchange, a store of value, and/or a standard of deferred payment. When more threats are issued than are backed by physical resources of force, threats become inflated and their value is accordingly reduced. The value of force in specific situations can be said to appreciate or depreciate depending on how useful it is for achieving the goals sought.[40] We consider in Part V the extent of power associated with force. Certainly any scheme of power bases must include force among its various forms.

More could be said about these resource categories, but a summary comparison of their respective characteristics in Table III will show how each resource has its own modes of production, exchange, and accumulation. These resources are practically as different from one another as land, labor, and capital are from each other in economic analysis.[41] But rather than elaborate on the resource-exchange framework, it is better to see how it can clarify otherwise ambiguous formulations in political discussions.

40. In a resource-exchange analysis of African politics, Aristide Zolberg says regimes there have "frittered way their small initial political capital of legitimacy, [economic resources] and coercion by investing in non-essential undertakings." "The Structure of Political Conflict in the New Nations of Tropical Africa," *American Political Science Review*, 62 (1968): 73. As regimes' legitimacy and other resources diminish, force is resorted to more and more to maintain the *same* level of compliance. This proves insufficient, however, because the use of force itself reduces the legitimacy accorded to the regime. This vicious circle undermines the *power* of a regime.

41. Status and legitimacy appear similar, both being attitudinal and heavily influenced by norms and values, but they differ in their objects. Status is directed toward individuals or groups and reflects judgments about their intrinsic or extrinsic qualities, whereas legitimacy is directed toward authority and those exercising it.

V. Distinguishing Power from its Constituent Forms

If authority is a special kind or base of power, so too are legitimacy, force, wealth, social status, and information. Surely, there are interactions and conversions between and among the various forms of power as Bertrand Russell and Harold Lasswell proposed. But they should be clearly distinguished from and related to one another, at least analytically. Power and authority are too often referred to as if they were a single thing, e.g., as "power'n'authority." When it is said that someone is "in power" or is "out of power," what is usually meant is that the person or party holds or held a position of authority.

The distinction between power and authority should be made because some persons in authority have very little power if their incumbency is not widely recognized and supported, i.e., if it does not enable them to acquire and employ other resources in addition to legitimacy: goods and services, status, etc. Conversely, certain persons without authority may control enough of these other resources to wield considerable power, even more than other persons in authority can demonstrate.

Power and authority should not be used interchangeably because one can have power without authority and, conversely, there can be authority with little if any power. This is usually referred to as "nominal authority," though since zero power is the limiting condition of authority, if there is no power at all associated with authority, the latter disappears. The power derived from authority roles can diminish drastically as control over other resources, including legitimacy, declines. When it reaches negligible proportions, authority itself will be lost. Authority can be lost while it still confers some power if those who possess it are deprived of incumbency by others with superior power means, usually force, or if it is transferred by electoral processes that assign authority to preferred individuals.[42]

This formulation suits Weber's analysis. He stated that any authority depends on the existence of a corporate group (*Verband*). Such a group

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42. One needs always to distinguish between *occupancy* of authority roles (incumbency) and the *exercise* of authority. By definition, if one has authority, i.e., some probability of enforcing decisions, one has at the same time some power, i.e., some probability of carrying out one's will. One might, however, have a purely formal delegation or position of authority without sufficient power means, including legitimacy, to get one's decisions complied with. This would be authority without any substance. We should have different words for the fact of authority and for the claim of authority. One could contrast *ex post* compared with *ex ante* authority, for example. Weber's concept of probability, which is something less than 1.0 before a specific exercise of authority and either 1.0 or zero afterwards, covers both.

Table III.   An Analysis of Political Resources

RESOURCE CATEGORIES	MANIFESTATIONS	CURRENCY	MODES OF PRODUCTION	MODES OF EXCHANGE	MODES OF ACCUMULATION	RELEVANT INFRASTRUCTURE
Economic Resources	Goods and services	Money	Private economic production by firms and persons; Public economic production by government	Buying and selling; Borrowing and lending; Gifts and transfers; Repayment, expropriation	**Wealth**—capital; Fixed assets (investment); Liquid assets (savings)	Factories and farms; Roads, telecommunications and power generation; Banking system; Government fiscal system (revenue and expenditure)
Social Status	Esteem and deference	Prestige	Interpersonal interaction according to criteria or values of what is "worthy"	Giving deference, praise or honor; Paying attention, tribute or homage; Showing respect, esteem, or regard, or *negatively*; Showing disrespect, criticizing, insulting, humiliating, disgracing, ignoring, repudiating, etc.	**Status**—reputation	Social stratification; Mass media and education
Information	Messages (explicit and implicit)	None	Observation and experience; Research and learning	Communication, written or verbal (also non-verbal); Symbols and signals	**Knowledge**—wisdom; Education, expertise and experience	Schools and universities; Research institutions; Intelligence operations; Communication networks
Force	Violence and coercion	Threats	Exercise of force capabilities, the physical strength of individuals or groups to constrain or damage	Physical constraint; Imprisonment; Torture; Injury; Killing	**Strength**—personal or organizational, augmented by mechanical or other technical means	Army and police; Paramilitary organization; Weaponry; Transport and communications infrastructure

TABLE III (continued)

RESOURCE CATEGORIES	MANIFESTATIONS	CURRENCY	MODES OF PRODUCTION	MODES OF EXCHANGE	MODES OF ACCUMULATION	RELEVANT INFRASTRUCTURE
Legitimacy	Political esteem and deference for authority and for authorities	Allegiance, Support[a]	Credit given to authority and to authorities as being "right and proper"—can be replenished voluntarily	Compliance with authority according to normative values rather than (or with less) rewards and/or sanctions. Recognition/acknowledgment of the legitimacy of claims of authority	Precedents, either formal or informal, of compliance with authoritative decisions as being legitimate and thus binding	Authority roles, long established, surrounded with symbols of authority and legitimacy. Ideology and religion. Mass media and education
Authority	Decisions taken in the name of the state. Voting in elections or referenda	Influence	Exercises of authority and making of decisions. Voting when authorized to do so	Authoritative decision-making processes. Elections and referenda. Delegation or devolution of authority. "Access" or "connections" giving people opportunity to influence the exercise of authority	Claims of authority over persons and over areas of activity that are upheld or enforced, leading to de jure and also de facto legitimacy and to greater control over resources that can make authority more effective	Authority roles, long effective for gaining compliance. Additionally, all of the above forms of infrastructure producing resources can be drawn on for upholding and enforcing authority

[a]Support is a general currency in politics, representing a medium of exchange, a store of value, a unit of measurement, and a standard of deferred payment (as money is for economic resources and as threats are for force). It is shown here with special reference to legitimacy (Ilchman and Uphoff, fn. 22, pp. 77–79).

is entirely a matter of the presence of a person *in authority,* with or without an administrative staff . . . it exists insofar as there is a *probability* that certain persons will act in such a way as to *tend* to carry out the order governing the group. . . . (p. 146, emphasis added)

Weber viewed the existence and exercise of authority as always problematic, definable only in terms of probabilities and tendencies. As stated, authority does not rest on the disposition of all persons subject to its commands to comply with them voluntarily. It is sufficient that some can be counted on to comply with these commands, which may include orders to enforce others' non-voluntary compliance.

Weber recognized that authority could be imposed on a community, though he expected that over time as a result of performance, some shared belief would likely take root that the authority was owed obedience even if not completely "right and proper."[43] To the extent legitimacy is accorded to either a policy, an official, a regime, or a political movement, this enables those in authority roles to obtain compliance on voluntary grounds from persons who grant them legitimacy, instead of or in addition to employing positive inducements such as goods and services or negative ones like force.

The legitimacy persons accord to a regime is unlikely to be uniform, over time or with respect to different issue areas. Nevertheless, a regime will claim that what it does is completely legitimate, at all times and in all ways. Legitimacy is not a "free good" since it has costs for whoever produces and grants it, even if these costs are borne willingly. In the terms of resource economics, legitimacy is a "renewable" resource. If persons are satisfied with the exercise of authority, they can maintain or even increase the legitimacy they accord the regime. If dissatisfied, they can reduce it.

Members of the public can withhold legitimacy entirely if completely opposed on normative or practical grounds to a policy, an official, or a regime. They may even feel obliged to oppose such authority, though they may not have the resources, skill, or motivation to do so, or the cost of resisting it may be judged too great. Resisting with force any exercise of authority judged illegitimate is difficult because the state usually has superior organized capacity for producing and deploying its own force.

Persons and groups finding force an ineffective or ethically unaccept-

43. See pages 130 and 144 of the Henderson and Parsons translation. Two types of legitimacy can be distinguished, *de facto* and *de jure,* following international law in characterizing different kinds of recognition of a regime's legitimacy.

able means of responding to authority they regard as illegitimate can manipulate other resources, i.e., withhold goods, services, or money through boycotts, strikes, or tax refusals, or withhold information in a conspiracy of silence. "Civil disobedience" is a better description of this than the term "non-violent action." It is not so much the non-use of force as it is the *withholding* of legitimacy and other resources. Such action aims at getting others also to withhold or at least reduce the resources they contribute to the authorities. Broad withholding of legitimacy, information, taxes, and possibly military service puts great pressure on a regime. Moreover, a regime's use of force becomes less effective once people's resource contributions to it become a contested moral issue.

In some discussions, force is treated as synonymous with power because, if one has the physical capacity to compel or injure others, one has a high probability of getting one's way. In Weber's definition of the state, force is the core resource safeguarding authority as the ultimate means of its enforcement.[44] But force has limitations as a power means. It cannot be used freely because there are costs both in producing it and from others' retaliatory responses. Since force is negatively valued by persons against whom it is used, and it is usually disapproved of by prevailing norms, its use on any broad scale will reduce the legitimacy accorded to a regime, and this will have an adverse impact on its power.[45] So, rather than regard force as power, force is better considered as one kind or base of power. Though in the short run it may be the most assured type or source of power, it is not necessarily the most efficient means because of associated costs. Over time its use may well undermine one's overall power.

This is one reason Weber focuses so much on the *bases* of legitimacy for the exercise of authority and, correspondingly, on their consequences for power. As we have seen, his definition of the state as the highest source of power and authority in any territorial area turned on upholding a claim on the legitimate use of force. But he went on to say:

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44. Hobbes once likened politics to a game of cards. Players need to agree which suit will be trump: elections? hereditary succession? expertise? Otherwise, "clubs are trumps." See D. Rustow, "The Military in Middle Eastern Society and Politics," in *The Military in the Middle East,* ed. S. N. Fisher (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1963), pp. 4–5.

45. Zolberg in "The Structure of Political Conflict" describes coercion as one of the "ordinary" means of government power but one that becomes more widely used as other means are diminished. When a regime's funds, status, legitimacy, etc., decline, "Political power, normally based on the overall social structure, gives way to force" (p. 73). The consequence is a decline in a regime's total power because "the overall social structure" is providing it with fewer of the other resources it needs.

It goes without saying that the use of physical force is neither the sole, nor even the most usual method of administration in political corporate groups [*Verbände*]. On the contrary, their heads have employed all conceivable means to bring about their ends. (p. 154)

Authority rests in part on force but only in part. One also finds economic resources, status, information, and legitimacy used to uphold authority.

Together these different bases for getting others to comply with one's will encompass the major means of power. They are augmented or diminished by skill, motivation, context, and sometimes by other things. Persons in positions of authority, whether freely chosen representatives of the public or self-appointed rulers, deal with the full range of resources. They need always to remember that legitimacy is not produced by themselves, but by the public, and that it is made available to incumbents, policies, and regimes as a kind of political credit. This "division of labor" between authorities and the public is probably the most important clarification of political dynamics suggested by resource-exchange analysis.

VI. Conclusions

The enigma of power which has perplexed social scientists for so long can be de-mystified by following Weber's formulations quite literally. Accordingly, power does not exist literally, though the word refers to concrete and important phenomena. One can never possess power except as a figure of speech. One can only have power means, i.e., resources that are used with more or less skill, more or less determination, and more or less luck (an abstract way of referring to what *others* decide and do).

Efforts to measure power have foundered on the complexity of these relationships, especially on their situational nature and contingency. Weber was careful to speak of authority in terms of the specific content of commands with regard to given groups of persons. Even in concrete situations, outcomes are not certain before the fact. The probability of success varies not just according to the power-wielder's words and actions but also because of what other persons want, think, and do. It is no wonder that the results of quantitative analyses of power have been so paltry. Yet the concern of social scientists with power should not be curtailed because of difficulties in measurement. The consequences and strategies associated with power are too significant a subject. Attention should be focused on the means and combinations of circumstances which can be identified as the sources and conditioning factors of power.

While social science will benefit from any appropriate advances for

measuring power phenomena and relationships, having a clearer and ac-
ceptable conceptualization is itself of scientific value since this is a pre-
requisite for meaningful measurement. By focusing on resources and
their use, we come closer to the proximate causes of effects we wish to
understand. In particular, we should consider combinations of resources
even if we can distinguish them only analytically. The means and motiva-
tions involved in compliance relations are seldom singular. This presents
particular problems for measurement because by omitting some factors,
one exaggerates the import of those that are measured.[46] Unfortunately,
extended substantive analysis of power is not much more advanced than
when Weber wrote 75 years ago.

The distinction between authority and legitimacy suggested in
resource-exchange analysis leads away from a preoccupation with differ-
ences in kind, e.g., charismatic vs. patrimonial, to a concern with differ-
ences in source and degree. Though resource analysis has not been quan-
tified in cardinal terms, it can support ordinal comparisons, e.g., more
or less than. Disaggregated analysis directs attention to who claims
authority over whom, and on what issues? Also, who accords legitimacy
to whom, on what grounds, and with what limitations? Identifying
sources, objects, and conditions of authority and legitimacy as well as
trends, which by definition are ordinally identified, will tell us more
about the dynamics and outcomes of politics than any aggregate esti-
mates of how much authority or legitimacy there may be in a political
system.

Finally, understanding power as basically a descriptive term that is not
itself explanatory reduces the ambiguities and circularities surrounding
most uses of the term. The different bases from which control or compli-
ance can be effected are the significant aspects of power, though they do
not encompass all that is relevant for politics. The skill and motivation of
various actors may be more determinant of outcomes than the resource
bases they control, but large differentials in base power values need
themselves to be reckoned with. The values, goals, strategies, and actions
of other actors are equally important for power outcomes, so both con-

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46. Alfred Marshall, the father of neoclassical economics, put the issue this way with
regard to economic analysis:

> Every economic fact . . . stands in relation as cause and effect to many other facts;
> and since it *never* happens that all of them can be expressed in numbers, the applica-
> tion of exact mathematical models to those which can is nearly always a waste of
> time, while in the huge majority of cases it is positively misleading. (Cited by
> Richard Bernhard in "Mathematics, Models and Language in the Social Sciences,"
> *Symposia Studies Series,* No. 1, 1960).

text and norms are major influences on any power-wielder and on his or her power means.

Efforts to gain greater precision and concreteness in dealing with power phenomena within political science will not expunge the term "power" from our vocabulary or thinking. Its verisimilitude is too great and its intellectual history too rich for us to be able or want to eliminate it. Much utility can be derived from taking seriously Weber's insights into political and social life which he gained by acute observation and shared with precise language. Unfortunately, his abstract methodology of ideal types has gotten more attention than his valuable and very carefully worded analyses. A resource-exchange framework gives both tangibility and substance to these strengths in Weber's work.