

Review Essay

THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF AUTHORITY: WHY DO PEOPLE OBEY AN ORDER TO HARM OTHERS?

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H. C. Kelman and V. L. Hamilton, *Crimes of Obedience*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989. 382 pages.

One of the most troubling problems faced by social scientists seeking to understand human behavior is explaining the willingness of people to do great physical and psychological harm to others. Both a reading of history and the study of current events provide numerous examples of situations in which people in positions of authority commit both systematic and spontaneous acts of torture, rape, and murder. By seeking to understand and explain such behavior, Kelman and Hamilton in their *Crimes of Obedience* have focused on a central problem faced by organized societies: the potential harms resulting from creating powerful political and legal structures. They approach this issue from a social psychological perspective, seeking to understand why people harm others. Their study represents a major effort to systematize past knowledge about the psychology underlying obedience to authority and to expand that knowledge through an extensive research program which uses survey data to examine public reactions to abuses of authority.

Kelman and Hamilton deal with three distinct issues. First, they probe the motivation of people who actually commit crimes of obedience. In considering this issue Kelman and Hamilton discuss the past social science literature outlining the forces that shape people's social behavior. The second issue they explore is the manner in which people think about ethically appropriate behavior in social situations and, through this framework, assign responsibility for their own and others' actions. Finally, Kelman and Hamilton draw these two issues together in an effort to develop an overall model explaining differing orientations toward authority. They test this model using several surveys in which people are asked to react to past and/or hypothetical crimes of obedience.

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THE MOTIVATION FOR BEHAVIOR

The first section of the book seeks to explain what motivates people in positions of power to behave in ways contrary to commonly accepted principles of morality. Concern is with the ability of superior authorities to authorize, or legitimize, engaging in immoral actions. A crime of obedience occurs when immoral actions are linked explicitly or implicitly to the orders of superior authorities (p. 51). The My Lai massacre in Vietnam, in which American soldiers killed unarmed women and children, is a prime example of such an authorized immoral action, a "crime of obedience."

Kelman and Hamilton use the social psychological literature as a basis for developing a conceptual framework within which to understand crimes of obedience. Their effort first explores the structure of authority (chap. 4), differentiating between coercive pressures and the obligatory character of obedience to legitimate authority. The central characteristic of authority, they point out, is a person's willingness to voluntarily obey orders because some aspect of the person who issues the orders confers legitimacy on them.

The authors then examine sources of authority (chap. 5), distinguishing among three motivations for obeying the order of authorities: compliance, identification, and internalization. Each of these motivations explains obedience by differing reasons (p. 111), leading to unique suggestions about the sources and consequences of authoritativeness. Compliance occurs when people obey orders because they fear punishment or expect reward. Identification occurs when people obey orders because of a social bond between themselves and the authority who issues the order (or the group or organization that authority represents). Internalization occurs when people obey orders because their personal values suggest that the orders ought to be obeyed.

Finally, Kelman and Hamilton explore the conditions that promote obedience (binding forces) and those that lead to disobedience (opposing forces) (chap. 6). They conclude that challenges to authority occur primarily when the individual has recourse to an alternative authority regarded as at least equal in status to the authority issuing a command (p. 139). This discussion is enhanced by a historical examination of sources of authority, which explores the continuing tension between state authority, religious authority, and personal conviction as sources of legitimacy for action (chap. 3). The availability of such alternatives to state authority explains many past challenges to "immoral" orders.

This examination of the psychological basis of legitimacy does not present any new research. Rather, it draws together and organizes the findings of research on legitimacy within social psychology, sociology, and political science. This includes Kelman's own prior work on authority (1958, 1961, 1969, 1974), as well as the

work of others such as Milgram (1969) and Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina (1982).

This effort to bring together the results of social science research on legitimacy is important in two ways. First, it provides a well-organized and theoretically integrated framework for thinking about issues of legitimacy. Second, it suggests the value of an important but recently neglected issue in the study of law and the social sciences—the role of attitudes and values (for example, beliefs about the legitimacy of authorities) in shaping social behavior.

The analysis of the forces shaping behavior differentiates between such internal forces influencing behavior as social attitudes, moral values, and beliefs about legitimacy, and such external forces as rewards or punishments. Social science models differ on the relative importance of these two factors (see Tyler, 1986; Tyler, Rasinski, and Griffin, 1986). Social-psychological models have traditionally emphasized the importance of internal forces in shaping social behavior. Social behavior is influenced by people's ethical attitudes about what is right and proper, attitudes that initially develop during the socialization process. Because such attitudes are stable over time and distinct from environmental forces, behavior is consistent across time and situations. The belief that attitudes are important has diminished as sociolegal discourse has been increasingly dominated by the instrumental images of the person contained within public choice models (Laver, 1981; Mueller, 1979), models that focus on the external forces within the immediate environment as the determinants of behavior.

Consider the example of a soldier ordered by a superior officer to shoot civilians. A public choice analysis focuses on the forces within the immediate environment that shape that soldier's response. One is the fear of punishment for failing to carry out the order. Another is the expectation of gain from behaving loyally. These immediate considerations depend on the power—the control over resources and means of coercion—of the superior officer and the organizations he or she represents. A consideration of social attitudes, in contrast, suggests that the soldier's behavior in this particular situation is shaped by his or her values—the soldier's belief that killing is immoral or that military authority is legitimate and ought to be obeyed. These values are not connected to the risks and/or gains associated with obedience or disobedience.

Discussions about the relative importance of social attitudes and environmental forces in shaping behavior deal with more than abstract concerns. The results of such discussions identify the issues that should be the focus of research. During the 1960s, for example, sociolegal scholars who believed that social attitudes were the central influence on social behavior studied both the role of attitudes in shaping adult behavior (Krislov *et al.*, 1966) and the development of attitudes and values during the socialization process (Clausen, 1968; Easton and Dennis, 1969; Greenstein, 1965; Hess

and Torney, 1967; Levine, 1979; Tapp and Levine, 1977). The more recent dominance of public choice models has led to a greater emphasis on studies of the external environment and the manipulation of rewards and costs within it to alter people's behavior (see, e.g., Brigham and Brown, 1980; Gibbs, 1982). *Crimes of Obedience* reflects a welcome reassertion of the centrality of social attitudes for understanding the occurrence of important social behaviors such as obedience to authority (also see Cohn and White, 1990; Tyler, 1990). The authors make a compelling case for the importance of understanding attitudes about the legitimacy of authority in any effort to understand crimes of obedience.

Kelman and Hamilton present an important perspective on the motivations shaping the decision to engage in crimes of obedience. Their articulation of a clear view about authority is very valuable in giving structure to a complex and diverse area of social behavior. It also provides a framework that defines issues the authors, and others, can explore empirically. On the other hand, the authors' perspective recognizes, but gives too little attention to, several potentially useful alternative perspectives on authority.

First, the authors recognize that two different orientations toward authority are relevant to behavior (chap. 2, p. 49): one in which views about legitimacy actually motivate behavior and the other in which behavior is motivated by other factors but is later justified on the basis of legitimacy ("I was just following orders"). In this case, the individuals involved are motivated by personal ambition or ideology to engage in actions they wish to pursue. The authors, however, focus primarily on the first situation. While they recognize this distinction, they do not explore the social-psychological literature on how people make public presentations or "accounts" to explain their own actions (see, e.g., Tetlock, 1985).

Kelman and Hamilton generally present an image of those who commit crimes of obedience as people who feel obliged to suspend their own moral views and obey orders—as reluctant and conflicted people who are responsive to explicit directives from their superiors. This image is consistent with the findings in the Milgram study (1969), in which obeying authority was quite disturbing to subjects, who evidenced a variety of types of psychological stress. Similarly, many of the soldiers in Lieutenant Calley's platoon experienced extreme distress when ordered to kill women and children.

The emerging literature on organizational citizenship behavior provides an alternative view of actors like Lieutenant Calley (Organ, 1988). This literature recognizes that all organizations have "good soldiers" who go beyond their formal duties and voluntarily engage in actions which further organizational objectives. Far from being pressured into engaging in actions that offend their sense of morality, good soldiers eagerly innovate and go beyond the explicit call of duty in an effort to promote the effectiveness of

their group. They discern the implicit policies of their organizations and enact them. Such a description seems to fit well with Kelman and Hamilton's presentation of the My Lai massacre. The officers, described as "upwardly mobile" and "eager" (p. 2), were given vague instructions and encouraged to show initiative in implementing organizational objectives. In other words, some of those involved seem more ambitious than conflicted, more eager to advance than troubled by conflicts between obligation and morality. This image of the American officers also seems consistent with Arendt's image (1963) of Adolf Eichmann as an ambitious junior officer, eager to please and impress his superiors by the zeal and creativeness with which he dispatched Jews to their death during the Second World War. This image is also consistent with the authors' concept of role participation.

Second, Kelman and Hamilton recognize, but consider only peripherally, the question of how those who follow orders and commit illegal actions deal with the psychological conflicts induced by that behavior (see chaps. 6 and 13). They suggest two important psychological processes that aid people in engaging in such behavior by allowing them to avoid considering the morality of their actions: routinization and dehumanization. People who are harming others routinize their actions by following established procedures that allow them to avoid considering the moral issues which must be dealt with when a policy is established (for reviews of research on the use of procedural justifications by authorities see Lind and Tyler, 1988; Tyler and Bies, 1990). Denying victims full human status by dehumanizing them similarly prevents the moral issues which are normally raised when harm is being done to other human beings from being raised in a particular instance. Unfortunately, Kelman and Hamilton say very little about how these two processes operate.

When authorities have power and means of coercion available to them, they can impose their will on others. Under such circumstances, in which the authorities can do what they want, why do they engage in the mental effort required to routinize and dehumanize? An important task for future research is to examine whether people have some intrinsic sense of justice they must deny or neutralize when they harm others. A recently articulated alternative view of justice is that it is only extended to people with whom exchange relations exist (Deutsch, 1985). In other words, what principles of justice influence those in positions of power and what is the scope of their justice concerns?

The primary focus of the discussion in this book is on authorization (the legitimization of orders). Authorization, like routinization and dehumanization, is a way for those harming others to justify their actions. When it occurs, lower-level actors need not deny their moral values, simply their applicability to the situation. When higher authorities are authorized to order harm to others,

lower-level actors are able to commit crimes of obedience and need not justify their actions. Authorization is like dehumanization. With dehumanization people restrict the range of morality and exclude their victims. With authorization people restrict the range of morality and exclude situations in which their moral judgments are irrelevant and in which moral decisions are being made by a superior authority they should obey.

A third problem addressed only peripherally in the book is why "illegal" orders arise in the first place (see chap. 8). If we accept that Lieutenant Calley, for example, actually received illegal orders, why were those orders issued? Further, how did those who decided to give such orders deal with the psychological problems posed by developing policies that lead to such actions? Consider the extreme example of leaders who authorize murder by "death squads" of the type seen in South American countries. Is the psychological experience of deciding to order the creation and use of a death squad the same as the experience of being on a death squad and carrying out an order to kill another person?

Because they focus primarily on people who are the subject of illegal orders, and the conflict created by the discrepancy between those orders and their personal moral values, Kelman and Hamilton give too little attention to the separate question of how those who create illegal orders deal with a similar conflict (for their discussion of this issue see chaps. 8, 11, and 13). Their conflict may be stronger, since they have less recourse to the psychological defense that they are "only following orders." On the other hand, it may be weaker, since they do not have personal contact with the victims. Instead, they are creating orders. This problem is acknowledged by the authors when they note that "to view availability for crimes of obedience as a lower-class phenomenon is to ignore the central part that higher status and highly educated actors play in producing such crimes" (p. 263). Despite this acknowledgment, the authors' theories about obedience focus heavily on understanding why those members of our society who lack education and high social status feel that their social role requires that they accept orders uncritically.

What remains unexplored is why those high in education and social status, who reject the obligation to obey the orders of others, conceive of and order others to commit crimes of obedience when placed in positions of authority. Although Lieutenant Calley, a low-ranking officer of limited education, was placed on trial for killing civilians in Vietnam, it was the well-educated and highly intellectual leaders of American society who conceived of the policies that led to those crimes (Halberstam, 1972). While these leaders did not directly order the massacre at My Lai, they may have given tacit encouragement and perhaps even indirect approval of such actions through policies such as rural pacification which subordinates interpreted as encouraging crimes of obedience.

An interesting example of research on how elites make decisions which ignore important moral and pragmatic issues is the work of Janis on “groupthink” (Janis, 1982; see the authors’ chap. 13 for a discussion of this work). Janis’s concern is with the group processes that lead groups containing intelligent individuals to make and accept unwise group decisions. Future research needs to explore the same issue at an individual level. In particular, it is important to understand how people (1) distort their judgments about morality when making real-world decisions and (2) integrate the conflicting pressures of their moral values and the directives of legitimate authorities. These efforts can build on the extensive and sophisticated literature exploring cognitive heuristics and biases (Dawes, 1988; Fiske and Taylor, 1984; Hogarth, 1980). It is also important to examine how people balance their efforts to (1) view the world as it is, so as to make optimal decisions, and (2) maintain psychologically rewarding flattering illusions about themselves, including the judgments that they are unusually competent and benevolent individuals (for a review of the psychological literature on such illusions see Tyler and Hastie, in press).

Finally, Kelman and Hamilton present us with only a one-sided view of obedience to authority. From their perspective such obedience is negative. Certainly the examples of obedience to authority they discuss are negative in character. But are these examples the entire picture? There are also instances where one might be concerned about disobedience of legitimate authority, not obedience. Consider the issue of civil liberties. In the civil rights movement in the South during the 1960s, those who opposed legitimate orders to desegregate intimidated, murdered, and bombed others to prevent them from exercising their rights. More recently, in the case of the Nazi march in Skokie, Illinois, groups of citizens opposed legitimate orders giving the Nazi party the right to free speech and used extralegal means in an effort to stop the Nazi march (see Gibson, 1989). In these cases people’s own morality was more influential in determining their actions than their feelings of obligation to obey legitimate authority.

The problem raised by Kelman and Hamilton—obedience to legitimate authority—is not one with a simple answer. Social scientists typically think that legal and political authorities can only function effectively if they have legitimate authority (Tyler, 1990; Tyler *et al.*, 1989). Why? Authorities need to be able to expect that people will accept and obey their instructions without requiring elaborate explanations or justifications. If leaders must discuss and justify every order they issue, they cannot lead their groups effectively. Some willingness to accept and obey orders is needed. The key problem is differentiating between “reasonable” and “unreasonable” orders. Kelman and Hamilton cite instances of unreasonable obedience, but instances of unreasonable disobedience can also be found.

What is needed is a better understanding of (1) how to identify objectively “reasonable” orders (orders that “ought” to be obeyed) and (2) how to know which orders will be regarded by subordinates as reasonable and therefore will be obeyed. The development of normative frameworks for evaluating the “reasonableness” of orders is the concern of philosophy, law, and religion. Gaining a better understanding of what leads orders to be regarded as reasonable is a task for social scientists. An impressive example of such an effort is the work of Gamson *et al.* (1982). In their study groups of people are faced with pressure from an authority figure to engage in an immoral action. By systematically varying the nature of the situation Gamson *et al.* identify factors that facilitate or hinder the development of a “legitimizing frame” which enhances the likelihood that such orders will be obeyed.

REACTIONS TO OTHERS’ CRIMES OF OBEDIENCE

Kelman and Hamilton also explore public norms of obedience by examining reactions to the behavior of Lieutenant Calley at the My Lai massacre. Their study uses a national sample of 990 adult Americans and focuses on views concerning the responsibility of those who commit crimes of obedience. Kelman and Hamilton develop contrasting models to explain when people will hold an authority responsible for actions which that authority engages in and punish the authority for those actions (chap. 8). The heart of the analysis lies in the distinction between respondents who assign responsibility to subordinates who commit crimes of obedience (ARs) and those who deny that subordinates are responsible for their actions (DRs). In the case of My Lai, DRs emphasize that Lieutenant Calley was obeying role obligations and not acting out of personal motives, while ARs emphasize the inherent responsibility of individuals for the consequences of their actions (chap. 9). In a second study of Bostonians Kelman and Hamilton further explore the utility of this AR/DR distinction in explaining reactions to other crimes of obedience, such as the Watergate burglary and the Milgram obedience to authority experiments.

Kelman and Hamilton also examine responsibility orientations by asking respondents how they think they themselves would act in a situation in which they were told to commit immoral acts by a legitimate authority. Analysis of public responses to the question, “Would you [most people] shoot” if you were in Lieutenant Calley’s situation? reveals three types of obedience norms (chap. 7). The first group of respondents, labeled “consistent shooters,” think that both they and others would have acted as Lieutenant Calley did. This group emphasizes the importance of the obligation to obey authority, believing that people are not individually responsible for actions taken while acting under orders (the DR perspective).

The second and third groups of respondents thought that they would refuse to fire but differed about what others would do. The second group of respondents, "consistent refusers," believed that both they and others would refuse to shoot civilians in the My Lai situation. This group emphasized the lack of justification for causing the negative consequences of the action (killing civilians). To consistent refusers, the binding force compelling obedience is weak because the norm of obedience does not apply to killing civilians (i.e., they tend to take the AR orientation that people are responsible for the consequences of their actions).

The analysis of "refusers" reveals a third group, not obvious from the simple AR/DR distinction. This third group, "deviant refusers," thought that most people would shoot but that they would not. Rather than raising issues of principle, members of this group emphasized their own negative emotional feelings about harming others. They believed that most people would obey (binding forces were strong), but for them unique personal feelings of revulsion, which may or may not influence others, would override that force (opposing forces would also be strong). Both refusing groups recognized the idea of individual responsibility, a principle denied by those who say that they would shoot.

Kelman and Hamilton's effort to identify antecedents of the differing orientations toward authority is a major contribution. One important antecedent factor is education. Highly educated respondents and those with high social status are less likely to say they would commit crimes of obedience. The authors suggest that "social position—particularly as indexed by educational attainment—proved to be the strongest predictor of responsibility attribution, as well as "shoot-refuse" responses" (p. 262).

Kelman and Hamilton's finding that amount of education is the primary factor affecting attributions of responsibility accords with other evidence that education is a key variable affecting other social attitudes such as social tolerance (Jennings and Markus, 1977) and political tolerance (McClosky and Brill, 1983; Sullivan *et al.*, 1982). Like judgments of responsibility, social and political tolerance involve an ability to respect the lives and values of people from different backgrounds and to take responsibility for extending moral values to interactions with those people.

In examining the development of responsibility attributions Kelman and Hamilton raise a fundamental question about the origin of social attitudes. To what extent do those attitudes arise from personal, family, and social group experiences and to what extent do they develop from indirect learning through formal education in schools? Kelman and Hamilton find education to be central to the development of differing attributions of responsibility. Although they do not directly test the relative power of education and personal experience to develop views about responsibility, their findings seem to suggest that education plays a central role in

this process. This seems surprising. We might expect, for example, that those who have personally suffered from abused authority in their everyday life would be especially likely to resist obeying such authority in the future. While such experiences may influence views about authority, this study does not suggest that personal experience is the most important factor in the development of views about authority. Instead, highly educated respondents are the most likely to resist authority.

Kelman and Hamilton do not directly test the influence of education and other factors on the development of views about responsibility. Future research might profitably extend their ideas by conducting a more direct examination of the effects of personal and indirect experience on the development of orientations toward authority. An interesting example of a study examining a similar issue is the Jennings and Markus (1977) study of experience in the military during the Vietnam War period. That study contrasts the effect of two types of experience on the development of racial/ethnic tolerance: (1) being in the military and having personal experiences with people of differing racial and socioeconomic backgrounds and (2) getting a college education. Jennings and Markus (1977) found that racial/ethnic tolerance was more affected by getting a college education than by being in the military.

One problem with identifying education as an influence on views about authority is that education is confounded with a number of other factors such as race, gender, social class, and occupation. Kelman and Hamilton control for such potential confounds, however, and continue to find education effects. Hence there is some evidence to suggest that education effects are real.

An important question to be addressed in future research is the further specification of what it is about formal education that leads to its important influence on views about authority. Formal education (1) exposes people to information about others' experiences and (2) teaches people about alternative moral systems and systems of authority. In addition, the educational experience (at least at the college level) separates people from their accustomed family and social group surroundings and exposes them to people of differing backgrounds. To what extent is each of these many facets of education responsible for the effects of education on views about authority (see chap. 13, pp. 325–27 and 331–32, for a discussion of this issue).

It is also important to recognize that education may have an additional effect on judgments—it may increase social desirability effects. Those respondents with more education may recognize the socially appropriate way of responding to questions about responsibility and the socially appropriate behavior to indicate that they would engage in. To the extent that this is true, education would appear to increase resistance to authority. Interestingly, Kelman and Hamilton find that education is associated with less, not more,

“yea saying,” suggesting that social desirability effects, if they occur, are complex. The key to removing such effects, if they exist, is a focus on actual behavior, preferably in situations in which the respondents are not aware that their behavior is being observed.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL

Kelman and Hamilton conclude their examination of authority by differentiating three orientations: rule, role, and value (chap. 11). A rule orientation is based on a desire to follow the rules to avoid punishment. A role orientation stresses the desire to uphold social roles. A value orientation leads to the desire to uphold the values underlying the rules. These orientations, which stem from the book's discussion of factors motivating behavior, are introduced to explain judgments about responsibility (p. 278). Hence, the model proposes to integrate the previous two sections into a single discussion of orientations toward authority.

A crucial piece of evidence supporting the central thesis of the book would be a demonstration of a relationship between attributions of responsibility for crimes of obedience and the actual commission of such crimes (i.e., actual behavior). In much of the discussion it is assumed that people's attributions of responsibility influence how they would act if they were in an obedience to authority situation. Yet this assumption may be incorrect. Studies of obedience to authority, such as the Milgram (1969) study, often find evidence that subjects disapprove of their own obedient actions. Milgram's subjects, for example, showed stress when punishing another. Nonetheless, they typically continued to administer punishment. Their values and judgments of responsibility, in other words, did not seem to affect their behavior. It is important to demonstrate that moral attributions influence actual behavior. Such a relationship seems likely, since other recent studies of actual behavior in response to rules suggests that social attitudes strongly influence behavior (Cohn and White, 1990; Tyler, 1990).

The survey approach used by the authors does not give them the opportunity to show that attributions influence actual behavior (see p. 168). Given this limitation, the authors instead attempt to demonstrate that attributions affect how people judge the actions of others. The authors hypothesize that those with rule and role orientations toward authority will think similarly, denying personal responsibility, while a value orientation will enhance the tendency to assert personal responsibility. Their data support this view. They indicate that both rule and role orientations lead to a significantly greater tendency to deny responsibility, while the value orientation leads to a nonsignificantly greater tendency to accept responsibility. The results, while only moderate in strength, are consistent with their model of authority. Hence, while the authors do not directly link attributions of responsibility

and behavior, they provide some indirect evidence suggesting that such a linkage may exist.

The finding that a value orientation enhances the acceptance of responsibility echoes a central theme of this book. People's likelihood of disobeying the orders of a legitimate authority increases when they have some alternative moral framework that is as legitimate in their eyes as the authority they are resisting. Historically, religious authority has provided an alternative to political authority. Among these respondents personal values, however derived, provide an alternative source of authority that allows people to consider resisting legitimate orders.

While the authors' final model of authority effectively connects the first two sections of the book, the model itself is not a new conceptualization of views about authority. The rule, role, and value orientations are a direct extension of the psychological mechanisms of compliance, identification, and internalization, which are outlined in chapter 5. These orientations have also been extensively discussed in the work of Kohlberg (1969), where they are referred to as preconventional, conventional, and postconventional morality, and in the literature on organizational commitment (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986). Although Kelman and Hamilton use already available concepts, they develop those concepts more fully than past studies. They are also the first researchers to integrate these concepts into a single overall model of authority.

The most innovative aspect of Kelman and Hamilton's model is their linkage of orientation to authority to judgments about responsibility. Here, too, however, the basic point has already been hinted at in prior research. For example, Kohlberg (1969) linked moral development stage to willingness to obey authority in the Milgram experiments. What is ultimately needed is a linkage of both judgments about responsibility and orientations toward authority to actual behavior.

The authors also provide a new theoretical conceptualization of responsibility which moves beyond the traditional Heiderian model of responsibility (see chap. 8). Instead of focusing on an actor's causal relationship to his or her acts, as does Heider's model, the authors develop a role-based conception of responsibility.

SUMMARY

Crimes of Obedience is very effective in communicating why a social-psychological model of authority is needed. Its findings suggest that a model of authority that focuses primarily on the control authorities have over rewards and means of coercion is inadequate to explain why crimes of obedience occur. The authors demonstrate convincingly that studies of social attitudes about authority are the key to a better understanding of crimes of obedience and should be a central focus of future research in this area.

This book also suggests several important directions for future efforts to develop a psychological model of authority. First, the authors' empirical work identifies and utilizes the core ideas of existing psychological theories of authority. Unfortunately, their findings, while consistent with their theory, explain very little of the variance they find in people's views about authority. As the authors themselves note, they had many difficulties operationalizing existing models of authority. Future studies need to build on their efforts by developing better approaches to measuring such views. Although these efforts are likely to improve our understanding of social attitudes toward authority, the weakness of their findings also suggests that efforts to expand current theoretical models of authority are needed. It seems unlikely that better measurement of existing concepts alone will lead to a substantial advance in our understanding of the psychology of authority.

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