

A Complexity Theory of Power

The Mechanical	The Complex
<p style="text-align: center;">Equilibrium-Oriented Political Order A exercises power over B from viewpoint of A</p> <p>From A's point of view, order ensues as long as B responds obediently and without question. Power imposed achieves a very real equilibrium-oriented order but it is a mechanistic human order: it mechanizes human relationships</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Equilibrium Political Order B exercises power mutually with A</p> <p>From a complexity perspective such questioning or disobedience introduces a bifurcation or power restructuring crisis whose end result, if B succeeds in exercising power on equal terms with A, is an enhanced state of self-organization.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Equilibrium Political Disorder Autonomous action by B from viewpoint of A</p> <p>But for B to take some autonomous action —to question or disobey — is to disrupt A's order, to generate disequilibrium and disorder</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Equilibrium-Oriented Political Disorder A exercises power over B from viewpoint of B</p> <p>From the point of view of B, to be pressed toward equilibrium is the inverse of an orderly process. It is incapacitating and disorganizing</p>

Figure 2. A complexity theory of power

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