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Coercive Power in Social Exchange describes the progression and results of a decade-long program of experimental research on power in social exchange relations. Exchange theorists have traditionally excluded punishment and coercion from the scope of their analyses; Molm examines whether exchange theory can be expanded to include both reward and coercive power. Working within the framework of Emerson's power-dependence theory, but also drawing on the decision theory concepts of strategic action and loss aversion, Molm develops and tests a theory of coercion in social exchange that emphasizes the interdependence of these two bases of power. Her work shows that reward power and coercive power are fundamentally different, not only in their effects on behavior but also in the structural incentive to use power and the risks of power use. When exchanges are nonnegotiated and secured by the "shadow of the future," rather than by binding agreements, dependence both encourages and constrains the use of coercion.

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Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521574617

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First published 1997

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Molm, Linda D.
Coercive power in social exchange / Linda D. Molm.
p. cm. – (Studies in rationality and social change)
Includes bibliographical references (p. 293) and index.
ISBN 0–521–56290–2. ISBN 0–521–57461–7 (pbk.)
1. Social exchange. 2. Power (Social sciences) 3. Retribution.
I. Title. II. Series.
HM291.M638 1997
303.3—dc20 96–8679
CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-56290-4 Hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-57461-7 Paperback

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Preface and acknowledgments

The product of nearly a decade of theoretical and empirical work on power in social exchange networks, this book describes the progression of a theoretically driven, cumulative program of experimental research, begun at Emory University in the mid-1980s and completed at the University of Arizona. During that 10-year period, many of the results of the individual experiments in the program were published in journals, the typical outlet for experimental research.

As the program progressed and both empirical findings and theoretical knowledge began to cumulate, however, I became more and more frustrated with the impossibility of conveying the substance of the whole in a series of pieces, each of which had to stand more or less on its own. The logic and significance of each successive experiment depended substantially on what had gone before and, as that earlier body of work became larger and larger, the journal format could no longer accommodate what I wanted to say. This book has given me that opportunity.

In writing this book, I had two different, but related, objectives. One was to compare reward-based and coercive forms of power in social exchange relations: how they are different, why they are different, and the implications of those differences for both theory and social relationships. The results of this analysis offer important insights and challenges for both social exchange theory (which traditionally has ignored the role of punishment and coercion in social relationships) and theories of coercive power (which traditionally have ignored the capacities of actors, in most relations, to reward as well as to punish each other).

My second objective was to show how a cumulative program of experimental research can be used to build and test theory. I wanted to show the process – not merely the product – of theory development, and to convey the sense of discovery and puzzle solving that accompanies this kind of work. Consequently, rather than starting with the theory that was

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the final product of this effort and then reporting a series of experiments that test and support it, the book follows the structure of the work itself. It describes the development of a theory of coercive exchange over time, as successive experiments tested predictions, raised new questions, and gradually shaped and refined my understanding of coercive processes in exchange relations.

The book is intended for several audiences. Because it draws on work from a variety of disciplines, it should appeal to sociologists, psychologists, economists, and political scientists who are interested in issues of power, exchange, decision making, and coercion. I intend it for both professionals and graduate students in those fields. Those who are primarily interested in the conclusions of the research, rather than in the methods and data analysis, can follow the substance of the empirical chapters (Chapters 5–9) by reading the "implications" and "conclusions" sections that accompany each of the experiments and skipping over the design and analysis sections. On the other hand, those same design and analysis sections, plus the fairly lengthy treatment of the relation between theory and experimental design in Chapter 4, should make the book useful for graduate courses on research methods.

Experimental work relies, more than some kinds of research, on sizable contributions of both financial support and research assistance. I would like to thank, first and foremost, the National Science Foundation for supporting this entire research program through three grants (NSF SES-8419872, SES-8921431, SES-9210399). I would also like to thank Emory University and the University of Arizona for providing the experimental laboratories in which the research was conducted, and the University of Arizona for providing sabbatical time in which to write the book. Without the generous support of NSF and the universities, the work could not have been carried out.

Numerous students served as research assistants on the project. Three graduate students, who were in charge of coordinating the laboratory experiments and supervising a team of undergraduate experimenters at various times during the project, deserve special mention: Suni Lee at Emory University, and Phillip Wiseley and Theron Quist at the University of Arizona. Their professionalism, skill, and dedication to the project were essential to its success. All three also contributed to the intellectual enterprise, most notably Theron Quist and Phillip Wiseley, who were coauthors

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on the two justice articles on which Chapter 8 is based. Three other graduate students, Sally Fago, Daniel Jones, and David Richmond, were involved in the project for shorter periods of time, but made valuable contributions nonetheless. David Richmond also drew the computer-generated figures for the book. And Gretchen Peterson, a new participant in the project, created the index. Undergraduate students at both universities served as excellent, professional experimenters during the project: Cathy Amoroso, Amanda Gibson, Lynn Motley, Peggy Bausch Ransom, Connie Siegel, and Kent Stock at Emory, and Lawrence Ducchesi, Anne Lane, Nancy Morris, Lisa O'Laughlin, and Angelina Quesada at Arizona.

William Dixon aided the project in many ways, always as a supportive partner, but also as a valuable source of statistical and computing advice. I particularly thank him for his help with the design and execution of the logit analysis in Chapter 5.

Jon Elster, Edward Lawler, and Michael Macy provided valuable comments on an earlier draft of the manuscript. Their suggestions made the final product a much better one. I remain entirely responsible for its shortcomings, of course.

Finally, I would like to thank the reviewers and editors of the journals in which articles from this project appear. Although the material in the book has been extensively revised, it has benefited from their advice. The following chapters draw, to varying degrees, on several of these publications:

Chapter 5:

Linda D. Molm. 1988. "The Structure and Use of Power: A Comparison of Reward and Punishment Power." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 51: 108–122.

1989. "An Experimental Analysis of Imbalance in Punishment Power." *Social Forces* 68:178–203.

1989. "Punishment Power: A Balancing Process in Power-Dependence Relations." *American Journal of Sociology* 94:1392–1418.

1990. "Structure, Action and Outcomes: The Dynamics of Power in Exchange Relations." *American Sociological Review* 55:427–493.

Chapter 7:

Linda D. Molm. 1997. "Risk and Power Use: Constraints on the Use of Coercion in Exchange." *American Sociological Review*. In press.

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Chapter 8:
Linda D. Molm, Theron M. Quist, and Phillip A. Wiseley. 1993. "Reciprocal Justice and Strategies of Exchange." *Social Forces* 72:19–43.
1994. "Imbalanced Structures, Unfair Strategies: Power and Justice in Social Exchange." *American Sociological Review* 59:98–121.
Chapter 9:
Linda D. Molm. 1994. "Is Punishment Effective? Coercive Strategies in Social Exchange." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 57:75–94.

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