

I keep coming back to the thought that the distinction between the two basic kinds of authority—"epistemic" and "moral" (Adams), "epistemic" and "deontic" (Bochenski), "nonexecutive" and "executive" (De George)—is somehow connected with the distinction between "brute facts" and "social facts" (Searle).

Another thought I keep returning to is that, while the two basic kinds of authority are indeed distinct, they are nonetheless very closely related and importantly interconnected. Thus, for example, epistemic authority is legitimate only insofar as it is derived from the executive authority of the facts and reason. Or, again, an executive authority is legitimate only insofar as it conforms to the same moral knowledge that can alone legitimate an epistemic authority in matters of morals.

Yet another persisting thought is that, in the case of both basic kinds of authority, there is an intertwining of the personal and the official/universal. Thus, if De George is tempted to call "epistemic authority," personal, he knows (and Watt effectively confirms) that it is nonetheless susceptible of an "objective basis and justification" ("The Nature and Function of Epistemic Authority": 78; Watt: 46). On the other hand, Adams explains that, while "moral" (or "deontic," "executive") authority is always with respect to "some special office or position that one holds," still "[c]ompetence to fulfill the responsibilities and to exercise the rights of the office is assumed" ("The Crisis of Authority": 6).

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