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Chapter 1. Perceived Legitimacy: The Concepts and Theories

‘(...) the basis of every system of authority, and correspondingly of every kind of willingness to obey, is a belief, a belief by virtue of which persons exercising authority are lent prestige’ (Weber 1964, p.382)

The question why people accept authority of others and follow rules imposed on them constitutes the core of many studies of legitimacy. The main reference point in social sciences research of legitimacy is Max Weber’s typology of bases of political legitimacy and his work on how political orders can be sustained. According to Weber, there are three pure types of legitimate domination based on three sources of legitimacy. First, traditional legitimation of patriarchs and princes based on sanctity of traditions; second, charismatic legitimation of war lords, plebiscitarian rulers, or political party leaders based on ‘devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person’ (Weber 1978, p.215); and third, legal-rational legitimation ‘exercised by the modern ‘servant of the state’’ (1947, pp.78–79) based on laws and rules. This classification emphasizes the sources of legitimacy available to rulers in different historical contexts.

Moreover, as the introductory quote illustrates, Weber equated legitimacy with a belief in the authority’s right to exercise power. According to this descriptive perspective, any political authority can be legitimate as long as subordinates believe in its legitimacy. This definition of legitimacy in terms of beliefs has been elaborated and restated by many social scientists. Among others, Lipset (1959, p.86) emphasised the role of belief in his definition of legitimacy, which he understood as ‘the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper for the society’. Similarly, Dahl (1956, p.46) thought of legitimacy as ‘a belief in the rightness of the decision or the process of decision making’. Also Friedrich wrote that legitimacy can only be achieved if ‘there exists a prevalent belief as to what provides a rightful title to rule’ (1963, p.237). In line with

Almond and Powell's (1966, p.18) definition, any power can be legitimate 'if a belief in its justifiable use exists'. This is not an exhaustive list of belief-based definitions of legitimacy, but it illustrates the wide-spread understanding and impact of the Weberian treatment of legitimacy.

Weber, however, discussed legitimacy not only in terms of beliefs. Four other meanings of legitimacy can be found in his work: legitimacy as a *claim* for the right to rule, as a *justification* for an existing form of political domination, as the *promises* to contribute to the well-being of the population, and as the *self-justification* by the ruling strata of their privileges (Bensman 1979, p.31) . In fact, although Weber defined legitimacy in terms of beliefs, he devoted much more of his work to the authorities' claims to legitimacy than to the conditions under which the claims are fulfilled according to the subordinates (Bensman 1979, pp.17–48). Hence, the specification of what the belief in legitimacy is supposed to be based on was left out of Weber's theory.

Usually, empirically oriented scholars make a choice of either following Weber's understanding of legitimacy, rejecting it as circular or tautological (authorities are legitimate when people believe in their legitimacy), or amending it in order to better reflect the contemporary political context (Beetham 1991, pp.3–15). It was, however, Weber's idea of legitimacy that became the reference point for descriptive studies of legitimacy, conducted usually by historians, political scientists, and sociologists. In this thesis a descriptive approach will be used to investigate perceived legitimacy, because it allows focusing on the beliefs and evaluations of political authorities by citizens. The main purpose of using the descriptive approach, however, will not be to explore the claims, justifications, promises, and self-justifications communicated by those who want to obtain or have power, but to explore and compare the criteria used by citizens when evaluating legitimacy of political authorities.

As many, if not most, social sciences concepts, legitimacy remains an essentially contested one (Gallie 1955). Searching for an answer to the question of what is legitimacy, we find endless literature that either explicitly or implicitly touches upon the concept. Legitimacy is an object of study in philosophy, political science, law, sociology, psychology, and international relations. The purpose of theories of legitimacy is to explain a certain type of relation between authorities and subjects. In

general, legitimacy is a notion used to understand why individuals and groups accept the authority of others. The multiplicity of understandings and operationalisations of the concept of legitimacy reflects its complexity yet, at the same time, leads to confusion about what the concept really represents. There are scholars of political science who described legitimacy as a ‘murky’ (Horne 2009, p.401) or ‘mushy’ (Huntington 1991, p.46) concept because of the plethora of definitions. Others pose stronger objections pertaining to the lack of construct validity (Booth and Seligson 2009, pp.6–7), insufficient evidence of the consequences of legitimacy (for example, for regime stability in Przeworski 1986, p.52), conflating definitions of legitimacy with its consequences (O’Kane 1993), and tautology of the theory once it is operationalized (Grafstein 1981, p.52). Some scholars warn that legitimacy is a residual container, to which researchers can point when they need an explanation of variance in people’s obedience of laws and authorities that is not accounted for by specific motives such as fear, expediency, habit, or conformity (Hyde 1983, pp.386–387). Following Hyde’s argument, if motives based on legitimacy beliefs lack any distinctive features, the concept does not carry any explanatory value and cannot be a basis for any (predictive) theory. Moreover, treating legitimacy as a residual container that simply accounts for all the cases of compliance that do not fit in any other category is not a satisfactory conceptualization either.

Beside these critiques of the concept of legitimacy, statements like ‘Legitimacy is a key resource for every political system’ (Hurrelmann, Krell-Laluhová, Lhotta, *et al.* 2005, p.121), ‘legitimacy can claim to constitute, not merely an important topic, but the central issue in social and political theory’ (Beetham 1991, p.41), and ‘What is meant by legitimacy or legitimate authority? That is the master question of politics.’ (Crick 1959, p.150) re-occur regularly in various fields of scientific inquiry. Moreover, scholars are continuously refining definitions and conceptualizations of legitimacy and searching for the right operationalisations.

Although the jury is still out on the extent of empirical consequences of legitimacy (e.g. to what extent legitimacy contributes to the stability of political regimes), the concept is undeniably of concern to any discipline dealing with the power relations between authorities and subordinates. The strength of the explanatory

potential of legitimacy, however, depends on the analytical precision with which the concept is defined. In turn, arriving at this precision is the biggest challenge when setting off to research questions pertaining to legitimacy of (political) authorities and systems. This chapter provides an overview of the approaches to study legitimacy and the consequences it has for the concept definition. It concludes with a definition and theories of perceived legitimacy that are at the core of this research project and will be used and tested in subsequent chapter.

1.1. Approaches to legitimacy, levels of analysis, and dimensions of legitimacy

Normative and descriptive approaches to legitimacy

What seems to unite most definitions of legitimacy is their reference to norms and moral aspects of the exercise of power. Scholars of legitimacy take, however, two distinct approaches that pertain to norms: a Kantian normative (prescriptive) approach or a Weberian descriptive approach (Beetham 1991, pp.3–15; Bjola 2008, pp.629–630). In the first approach, authorities are judged according to pre-set (ideal) moral standards, whereas in the latter approach they are judged on the basis of the norms regulating the exercise of power in a given society or shared by a specific population. In other words, ‘Legitimacy is often presented as both an observable historical situation, and as a moral relationship’ (Barker 1990, p.13).

The ‘descriptive school’ is concerned with historical situations, whereas the ‘normative school’ aims to set ‘some benchmark of acceptability or justification of political power or authority and—possibly—obligation’ (Peter 2014). The distinction runs roughly between disciplines: with sociology, political science and history taking regularly the descriptive view on legitimacy, and philosophy, political theory and law usually taking the normative view.

Several examples of influential works using the descriptive approach to legitimacy are an assessment of legitimacy of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe in comparison with the regimes in Western Europe (Rothschild 1977), a cross-national study of the loss of legitimacy and breakdown of democratic regimes in Europe and Latin America (Linz and Stepan 1978), an analysis of relations between societies and authorities in Southeast Asia (Alagappa 1995), and a comparison of the

levels of regime legitimacy cross-country using survey data (prevalingly from the World Values Survey) and data from several other institutions (Gilley 2009). Examples of works using normative approach to legitimacy include a philosophical search of conditions under which political authorities create moral duty to obey them (Rawls 1993), discussions of the link between moral justification and legitimacy (Raz 1985; Simmons 1999), and a treatment of legitimacy as independent from the obligation to obey (Buchanan 2002).

Although the distinction between descriptive and normative approaches to researching legitimacy is the most common one, the two approaches sometimes overlap. Firstly, there are scholars who postulate a conception of legitimacy that combines descriptive and normative elements, which would not ignore the validity of historical context, but also transcend justifying authorities behaviour only with the historical setting within which they operate (Peter 2014). Among these are Habermas (1979, 1996) with his conception of legitimacy grounded in deliberative democracy and Bjola (2008), whose conception of legitimacy of actions in international relations aims to bridge analytical and normative approaches by making legitimacy dependent on the process of deliberation in the decision-making. Also Beetham's approach is a combination of normative and descriptive approaches (Peter 2014). Beetham (1991, p.16) suggested evaluating legitimacy of authorities according to three dimensions: authorities' compliance with established rules, the justification of these rules in terms of beliefs shared by people in a given society, and evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation. Through these three dimensions, Beetham (1991, p.11) elaborated Weber's definition of legitimacy by saying that 'power relationship is not legitimate because people believe in its legitimacy, but because it can be justified in terms of their beliefs'.

Secondly, the normative and descriptive approaches overlap because 'the normative suppositions of the first [normative school] are embedded in the second [descriptive school]. The normative inclination towards democracy guides research in the direction of studies of the opinions of voters and of the efforts of government to influence these' (Barker 2000, p.8). This overlap between descriptive and normative approaches is strongly present within political science and it affects the view on

legitimacy—or rather illegitimacy—of non-democratic regimes, and will be discussed in more detail below.

Levels of analysis in social sciences and dimensions of legitimacy

In general, in social sciences there are two main perspectives used to study legitimacy (Weatherford 1992): macro (top-down) and micro (bottom-up). In the studies from the macro perspective—‘taking the perspective from above’—the institutional system and formal institutions are the centre of analysis: assessment focuses on answering what are the rules of gaining power, is there a possibility of citizen interest representation within the system, who are the citizens that are represented (e.g. consensual or majoritarian system; Scharpf 1998), is there a system of checks and balances in place, are there mechanisms that make a government accountable. In studies from the micro perspective—‘taking the perspective from grassroots’—legitimacy is assessed on the basis of citizens’ evaluations and the focus is on whether the institutions and procedures are perceived as rightful and fulfilling their purposes by citizens.

Using a macro approach, political scientists usually follow a list of theoretically pre-determined criteria of evaluation of a regime and assess regimes’ legitimacy treating these criteria as objective standards. Social scientists in this tradition try to define standards for legitimate authorities and are less concerned with subjective perceptions of citizens—they ‘do argue more or less explicitly that the beliefs of citizens at any given time are not essential information for determining the system’s legitimacy’ (Weatherford 1992, p.150) . In this way, social scientists that assess legitimacy on the institutional level are somewhat similar to normatively oriented philosophers searching for minimal criteria of acceptability of political authorities.

Within the micro perspective, we can distinguish between studies interested in a subjective assessment of legitimacy of political regimes—usually aggregated public opinion of citizens—and individual level assessments concerned with the mechanisms and factors that explain the evaluations of political authorities and granting of legitimacy. While the assessments on the subjective level, similarly to the institutional level, are concerned with establishing the degree of legitimacy of political regimes in

general (e.g. Gilley 2009), the assessment on the individual level is more concerned with the causal explanation of perceived legitimacy (e.g. Tyler and Caine 1981, Tyler 2003, Tyler 2001, Van der Toorn, Tyler, Jost 2011)—how do individuals weigh factors characterizing political authorities against their personal situation when they evaluate authorities (see Figure 1.1). Moreover, the studies interested in the individual assessment focus more on the expectations of citizens rather than their opinions.

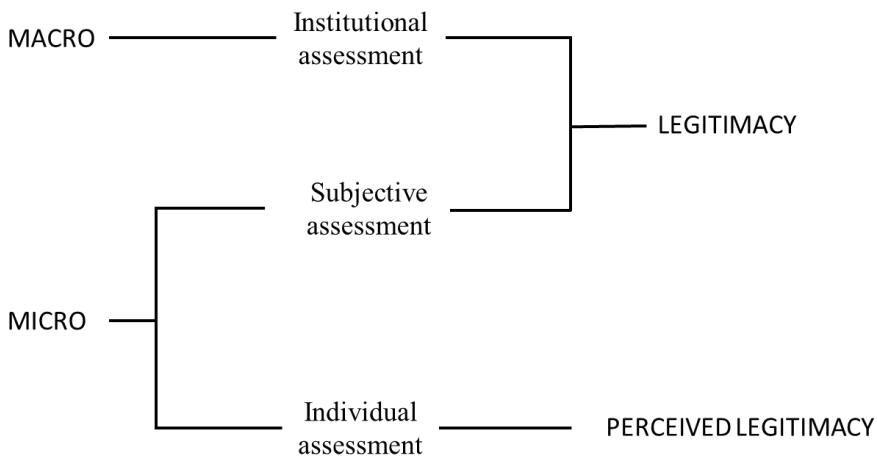


Figure 1.1. Levels of legitimacy assessment.

The studies also focus on different dimensions of legitimacy that can be referred to as input, output, and throughput (Scharpf 1998, 2003; Schmidt 2013). This distinction has its roots in Easton's political system analysis (1957, p.384), who distinguished three elements of political system : input (demands and support), processes within a political system, and outputs (policy decisions.) Input legitimacy is concerned with the conditions that a political system provides to link authorities' actions and the 'authentic preferences of citizens'(Scharpf 1997, p.19). Thanks to the input, the authorities reflect (or ought to reflect) the values, norms, and needs present in society. Output legitimacy deals with the effectiveness of the authorities in achieving common goals and solving common problems (Scharpf 2003). Throughput legitimacy is concerned with the quality of the governance process (Schmidt 2013, p.2). Adding

throughput to the two initial dimensions of legitimacy suggested by Scharpf (2003), completes the list of potential dimensions for evaluating legitimacy of democratic political institutions: output is about governing for the people, input is about governing by (and of) the people (usually referring to representation through a vote in elections), and throughput is about governing with the people (Schmidt 2013, p.3).

Table 1.1 presents how different dimensions (input, output, and throughput) of legitimacy can be analysed on different levels (macro and micro). The macro analyses of input ask questions dealing with what are the right legal-institutional arrangements and how the power relations should be regulated: either according to the moral standards or theoretical models. Here the assessments happen on the level of abstract universal rules (philosophy) or expert and scholar judgments (social science). The macro analyses of output focus on what a legitimate system and legitimate authorities ought to deliver, i.e. the ideal outputs judged on the basis of macro level (aggregated) indicators (e.g. security, economic growth, or protection of human rights). By the same token, the assessments of throughput on the macro level deal with the questions of what are the appropriate processes that the institutions and political authorities ought to use.

Table 1.1. Levels of analysis and dimensions of legitimacy.

	Macro level	Micro level
Input	What are the right institutions?	What do the citizens think about the current institutions? What are the institutions preferred by citizens?
Output	What should the system/authorities deliver?	How do citizens evaluate what the institutions deliver? What do citizens think the institutions should deliver?
Throughput	How should the political system/authorities operate?	What do citizens think about the operation of the political system/authorities? How would the citizens like the system/authorities to operate?

In turn, studies of the micro level focus on the three dimensions from the perspective of citizens. As mentioned above, they emphasize two different aspects of

citizens' perspective (see Figure 1.1). Researchers interested in the subjective assessments investigate the opinions of citizens about the authorities and institutions, whereas researchers interested in the individual level assessments focus on the ideals of and expectations towards the authorities and institutions (Table 1.1). The former ones want to arrive at the aggregate legitimacy score for a country awarded by its citizens, the latter ones are more interested in understanding perceived legitimacy—what is the basis of legitimacy granting, and what are the priorities that citizens set for political authorities to grant them legitimacy.

Following from this, on the micro level, the analyses of input focus on the evaluations of political institutions by citizens and their opinions about what political system is the appropriate one. The research is concerned with, for example, people's preferences for democratic or other type of governance, direct democratic or expert decision-making processes, the type of leadership and electoral system. The assessment of output legitimacy on the micro level deals with the perception of the outputs that the political system and authorities deliver as perceived by citizens. These evaluations can go hand in hand with the expert macro-output evaluations, but can also diverge from the more objective indicators. For example, despite the objective indicators showing steady economic growth, citizens of a particular country can be much more sceptical about the state of economy. And, vice versa, citizens might perceive developments in their country as positive (or at least express such views) despite the objective increase of inflation and poverty. Another type of question answered by the studies of the micro-output type are what do citizens think legitimate authorities should be delivering and the priorities set for the outputs expected from them. The micro-throughput assessments concern the opinions of citizens about how well the procedures work and what procedures should characterize their relation with institutions and authorities.

For the subjective assessments on the micro level (Figure 1.1), surveys of public opinion to evaluate how well the authorities guard citizens' rights (justice/fair treatment) and deliver desired outcomes across society (distributive justice) are the main method of inquiry. Hence, the government is evaluated by citizens themselves, the opinions expressed in representative surveys are aggregated, and the legitimacy scores for political regimes calculated. The score, however, still depends on the exact

criteria of evaluation assigned to each dimension of legitimacy and on the operationalization of the variables used to create a legitimacy score (see below an example of Gilley's subjective assessment of legitimacy).

Political psychologists are concerned primarily with the individual assessments on the micro level (Figure 1.1.) and motivations that people have to support certain institutional arrangements or submit to particular political authorities. Their primary goal is not to aggregate these subjective preferences to inform about the general level of legitimacy of a political system or authorities. Hence, their object of study is not aggregated/absolute legitimacy (of the whole system) but perceived legitimacy. The studies on the individual level explore the mechanisms and causal links behind the factors affecting individuals' judgments about authorities' rights to rule. Through the focus on individuals and the use of methods common in social psychology (such as experimental methods), this approach allows to explore the whole scope of potential preferences that shape individuals' opinions about the authorities, various motivations, and interactions between them.

Moreover, by focusing on the individual level and on perceived legitimacy (rather than legitimacy) it is possible to explore what criteria of evaluation are important for citizens when granting legitimacy to political authorities. More specifically, it is possible to explore the ideas of citizens about what the best institutional arrangements should be (democratic or not), what characteristics legitimate authorities should have, what the duties of institutions and authorities according to citizens are, and what procedures they ought to use. The ideas of citizens about how the political system and state-society relations ought to be have received little attention from scholars (Abulof 2015).

Although public opinion research examines ideas of individuals, to measure legitimacy, public opinion surveys typically use standardized questions with pre-determined answer options and often with a certain democratic bias (e.g. questions about people's satisfaction with democracy or evaluation of their state's respect for human rights; see section below for a more detailed discussion of democratic bias in studies of legitimacy). This may limit public opinion surveys in the scope of ideas that they examine (Hurrelmann, Krell-Laluhová and Schneider 2005, p.4). Across regime

types, citizens may have particular criteria on the basis of which they ascribe legitimacy to political authorities and different reasons for positive evaluations of authorities.

Furthermore, public opinion surveys typically are not concerned with the mechanisms that shape the citizens' views of authorities, i.e., they are not concerned with folk political philosophy. Although folk political philosophy is not a common term in political science, I will use this term to explain the topic of investigation. If scholarship on what constitutes good political organization is the study of political philosophy, for example defined as 'philosophical reflection on how best to arrange our collective life—our political institutions and our social practices'(Miller 2016), then scholarship of people's reasoning and intuitions about what constitutes good political organization might be called folk political philosophy. I define folk political philosophy as the study of ordinary citizens reflections on how the political system is organized and how it is ought to work. Such a use of the term folk political philosophy is analogous to how anthropologists and psychologists use terms like folk biology and folk physics (or intuitive physics) to refer to the study of people's beliefs and reasoning about the biological entities and physical objects (see Wilson and Keil 1999, pp.317–319 and 577–579).

Taking such a folk political philosophy perspective seems fruitful for studying value-based legitimacy. Levi, Sacks and Tyler (2009, p.356) distinguish between value-based legitimacy concerned with the 'sense of obligation or willingness to obey authorities' and behavioural legitimacy understood as 'actual compliance with governmental regulations and laws. There is not much research into value-based legitimacy from the perspective of individuals although 'moral thinking about politics is not the prerogative of philosophers and scientists; social actors, endowed with reflexivity, do it too' (Abulof 2015, p.8). Unlike typical studies of public opinion, my studies of folk political philosophy are not concerned with comparing the opinions of people across countries, but aim to illuminate the system of judgments that people use when evaluating authorities. In other words, my primary focus is not on *what* opinions about the political system people express (e.g. the degree to which they evaluate their government as legitimate), but on their ideas about *how* the political system ought to

function that produce these opinions. In my view, taking such a folk political philosophy perspective is suitable to investigate how people reason about and justify the presence and influence of political authorities, regimes, and systems. Through this, I build on the work of Carnaghan (2007, 2010) who approached citizens as ‘political analysts’ in her intensive interviews with ordinary Russians.

By applying a folk political philosophy perspective I have combined elements of both approaches to legitimacy discussed above. I have incorporated elements of the descriptive approach by putting people’s beliefs at the centre of analysis and assuming that legitimacy results from citizen’s subjective evaluations of authorities. I have also incorporated elements of the normative approach by exploring what kind of ‘benchmark of acceptability or justification of political power or authority and—possibly—obligation’ (Peter 2014) individuals have. At the centre of this thesis are questions about the citizens’ conceptions of legitimacy, their ideas about what constitute the input, throughput, and output dimensions of legitimacy, and the antecedents of perceived legitimacy (i.e., value-based legitimacy, rather than its consequences or behavioural legitimacy).

Because my studies aim to assess what conditions political authorities need to satisfy to be attributed legitimacy by citizens, I focus on how individuals attribute legitimacy to authorities. This means that my studies examine perceived legitimacy and do not attempt to evaluate the overall or objective legitimacy of a given regime. Such study of the individual-level processes might help avoid the (liberal-) democratic bias that often characterizes the institutional and subjective assessments of legitimacy (Figure 1.1). Possibly, such an individual-level approach might contribute to the comparative study of legitimacy.

Democratic bias and research into legitimacy

Social scientists frequently narrow down the applicability of the concept of legitimacy to countries with democratic regimes. Using Sartorian vocabulary (Sartori 1970), the intension of the concept is more detailed and the extension is more limited. The intension (connotation) is ‘the collection of *properties* which determine the things to which the word implies’, whereas the extension (denotation) is ‘the class of *things* to

which the word applies' (Sartori 1970, p.1041). In the case of legitimacy, the concept is often defined with multiple properties and as a consequence the range of cases (the class) fulfilling all of them is smaller. This narrower understanding of legitimacy can be linked to the development of modern liberal democracies in the Western world and the rejection of other forms of rule that are considered morally unjustified. Therefore, legitimacy is often seen as an attribute of authorities only in the liberal-democratic context (Linz 1988; Habermas 1996). Consequently, when using democratic criteria to evaluate and compare the degree of legitimacy from the macro perspective (on the institutional level), it is unavoidable that countries with non-democratic regimes are judged by scholars and experts as having a deficit of legitimacy or being fully illegitimate. This would mean that countries that end up on the top of the regimes' ranking—the most democratic ones—are the most legitimate as well. Using democratic criteria to assess the legitimacy of the regimes often ignores the preferences of citizens, who might perceive their own regimes differently than the experts. Moreover, the scales used to categorize political regimes such as Freedom House or Polity IV use different criteria to score the regimes, and therefore rate the regimes of the same countries differently; i.e. 'Freedom House and Polity IV come to (...) different conclusions about the level of democracy in several countries in the world' (Högström 2013, p.218).

Other macro level studies investigate legitimation strategies of political institutions and authorities. This body of research addresses the 'claims to legitimacy' as understood by Weber (Bensman 1979, p.31). The legitimation strategies of authoritarian and hybrid regimes (regimes that are characterized by relatively competitive elections and many authoritarian measures to limit pluralism and dissent in society) rather than legitimacy are the object of increasing number of studies: from the evaluations of the bases of communist legitimacy in Eastern Europe to the assessment of legitimation narratives of contemporary Russia, shifts in legitimation strategies in post-Soviet Eurasia, and comparing different legitimation strategies in non-democratic states (Rigby and Fehér 1982; Di Palma 1991; Holmes 1993; Sil and Chen 2004; Feklyunina and White 2011; Gerschewski 2013; Kailitz 2013; Brusis *et al.* 2016; Mazepus *et al.* 2016; Morgenbesser 2016; Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016).

Legitimation, however, is not equivalent to legitimacy. The difference is crucial, because legitimation does not necessarily entail legitimacy, although it aims to achieve it.

Legitimation involves strategies used by political authorities to justify their right to rule in front of citizens, elite groups, international community, and themselves (Barker 2001). There are many modes of legitimation used by political authorities (Brusis 2016). One of the common forms of legitimation is rhetoric of incumbents and other individuals or groups trying to gain political power. The rhetoric of (potential) authorities aims to convince citizens that they have the right to rule over them on the basis of certain procedures and laws, tradition, or comparative advantage over other (potential) authorities with regards to outcomes that they can secure and values and norms they represent. These justifications are attempts at gaining legitimacy and they ‘must be distinguished from the judgements made about the legitimacy of that authority by those persons toward whom commands for compliance are directed’ (Uphoff 1989, p.300). Furthermore, as Hyde (1983, p.389) noted, legitimation is not a sufficient proof of the existence of legitimacy as ‘[Political] Elites could be attempting to induce something that does not exist’. On other occasions, elites can be justifying their right to rule with incomplete or false information and hide their inability to deliver what they have promised to citizens. They might also be simply unable to convince a larger audience about the validity of their justification. To be effective, however, these legitimation claims have to come in the shape of ‘arguments that are able to establish a moral duty to obey (...) collectively binding decisions even if they conflict with individual preferences’ (Scharpf 1998). To my knowledge, there are no empirical studies that compare the legitimation strategies of democratic regimes with the legitimation strategies of non-democracies.

One of the most important empirical studies that compares legitimacy (rather than legitimation) of countries with different political systems is the work of Gilley (2009). In his study of legitimacy in 72 countries, the author takes the micro perspective and creates legitimacy scores predominantly on the basis of subjective assessments. Gilley adopts Beetham’s (1991) main argument stating that there are three dimensions of legitimacy that need to be analysed all together to be able to formulate a

judgement about legitimacy of a political system. Moreover, according to Beetham, legitimacy ‘is not a single quality that a system of power possesses or not, but a set of distinct criteria, or multiple dimensions, operating at different levels, each of which provides moral grounds for compliance or cooperation on the part of those subordinate to a given power relation’ (1991, p.20). The three listed dimensions are legality of the authorities, justifiability of rules in terms of values and beliefs, and consent of the governed. The legality of authorities as a dimension of legitimacy means that the power needs to be ‘acquired and exercised in accordance with established rules’ (Beetham 1991, p.16). The second dimension of legitimacy is that the power ‘can be justified in terms of beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate’ assumes that the legitimacy depends on the ‘beliefs current in a given society about the rightful source of authority; about what qualities are appropriate to the exercise of power and how individuals come to possess them; and some conception of a common interests (...) that the system of power satisfies’ (Beetham 1991, p.17). The final dimension of legitimacy is concerned with the demonstrations of subordination to the rulers—‘actions expressive of consent’ (Beetham 1991, p.18).

To illustrate how using these criteria can introduce democratic biases, Table 1.2 shows empirical application (operationalization) of Beetham’s ideas about legitimacy by Gilley (2006, 2012). If legitimacy scores are based on such criteria as a vote in free and fair elections and evaluation of human rights performance, it is implicitly assumed that the preferred and legitimate system of rule is liberal democracy in which the vote in free and fair elections and human rights are decisive for legitimacy. In other words, it is assumed that the current belief is that liberal democratic values provide justification for the authorities rule. This becomes problematic when the study aims to compare the evaluations of authorities and institutions by citizens socialized in different political regimes. It automatically introduces an assumption that citizens in all (non-) democratic regimes have a preference for multiparty system and human rights, therefore these are the right designators of legitimacy. Furthermore, this assumption about democracy can be problematic (see, e.g. Carnaghan 2010) and the universality of understanding of individual human rights and the importance of particular rights in different cultural

contexts is rather controversial (Donnelly 1982, 1984; Kausikan 1993; Freeman 1995; Howard 1995). Gilley's study is an example of how the normative suppositions about legitimacy are embedded in its empirically-oriented (descriptive) assessment.

According to Barker (2000, p.8) , 'The normative predisposition towards democracy guides research in the direction of studies of the opinions of voters and of the efforts of government to influence these' and Gilley's study shows how difficult it is to completely separate the ideas about legitimacy from democratic rules. Even in such a conceptually thorough and impressive study the bias cannot be completely avoided. The tensions and connections (Beetham 1991, pp.243–250) between the (macro) philosophical debates and (micro) empirical perspective on the one hand and the availability of systematic empirical evidence without democratic bias on the other represent the main challenge for scholars studying legitimacy in comparative perspective.

Studies on the individual level using experimental methods can to some extent avoid democratic bias if in the design of experiments they do not assume the preference for democratic form of government. They can also explore the causal links between various factors and legitimacy, as well as interactions between included factors. This thesis uses experimental vignettes to search for causal links between values and perceived legitimacy. Moreover, it explores how individuals in different regimes justify the right to rule of authorities: what exactly are the normative criteria on the basis of which the authorities can be considered as rightful in different societies. The main limitation of experimental studies is that often they are not conducted on representative samples (which is the advantage of the study mentioned above), but they compensate with providing knowledge about the causal mechanisms behind evaluations of political authorities and the ideas about legitimacy, which can be very informative as well. The methods and data used for this thesis are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Table 1.2. Dimensions of legitimacy according to David Beetham and operationalization by Bruce Gilley.

Dimension	Beetham (1991); definition	Beetham (1991); suggested operationalization	Gilley (2009); online appendix, p. 4 Used variable	Gilley (2012, p.698) Used variable
Legality (rules)	Power is legitimate if it is acquired in accordance with established rules (p.16)	Separation of powers: Independence of judiciary from the legislative and executive branches (p.123)/ additional condition— independent media (p.124)	Confidence in police	Confidence in justice system
	-	Obtaining power according to the rules; e.g. free and fair elections based on full suffrage	-	-
	Power is legitimate if it is exercised in accordance with established rules (p.16)	Effective subordination of the military to civilian control (p.124)	Confidence in civil service	-
Justification	-	Commitment from the side of the authorities to uphold the rule of law (p.126)	Evaluation of state respect for individual human rights	Perceived respect for human rights
	‘Power is legitimate to the extent that the rules of power can be justified in terms of beliefs shared by the dominant and subordinate’ (p. 17)	Provision of physical security/ Chronic failure at defence (security issues)	Satisfaction with democratic development	Confidence in civil service
	‘Power must be seen to serve recognisably general interest, rather than simply the interest of the powerful’ (p.17)	Satisfying general rather than only particular or sectional interests (chronic corruption, growing inequality, unequal treatment/discrimination/patronage) (p.142-145)	Evaluation of current political system	Rating of how democratically the country is being governed
	-	Providing economic social welfare (expanding duties of the state) (p.140)	Satisfaction with operation of democracy	-
	-	-	Use of violence in civil protest	Sum of security legitimacy (repression) and political legitimacy (exclusion)
Consent	‘... demonstrable expression of consent on the part of the subordinate to the particular power relation in which they are involved, through actions which provide evidence of consent.’ (p.18)	Voting in elections (directly expressing consent) (p.151-152) (assumption of choice/competition)	Voter turnout in national legislative elections	Voter turnout in national legislative elections
	‘positive actions taking place in public’, (p.150)	Mobilization: participation in political activity at the grass-root (p.151)	Quasi-voluntary taxes compliance	Taxes on income, profits and property as a percentage of central government revenues less social contributions

1.2. Concept definition and theories of legitimacy

Theories of legitimacy are very difficult to test. The difficulties with testing are caused by imprecise definitions of legitimacy. According to Gurr (1970, pp.19–20), for a theory to be a subject of empirical testing it has to fulfil two necessary and two desirable (additional) conditions. A social science theory should have clear definitions and be falsifiable (necessary conditions) and, preferably, it should be able to identify relevant variables at various levels of analysis and be applicable to a large universe of events (desirable conditions). While theories of legitimacy seem to be applicable (or at least applied) to a relatively large universe of events, they are often difficult to falsify, and do not always provide clear definitions that help to identify all the relevant variables.

Definitions of the concept

The first challenge in the study of legitimacy is to define legitimacy. Not many definitions actually state what legitimacy is—instead they describe what being legitimate means or what the sources and consequences of legitimacy are. The definitions vary from stating that legitimacy is a belief (Dahl 1956, p.46; Fraser 1974; Linz 1988), quality of a regime (Merelman 1966, p.548), ‘the compatibility of the results of governmental output with the value patterns of the relevant systems’ (Stillman 1974, p.42), and ‘institutional loyalty’ (Gibson *et al.* 2005a, pp.188–189), to treating legitimacy as ‘the complex moral right to impose decisions on others’ (Simmons 1999). The multiplicity of definitions causes discrepancies in theories of legitimacy and leads to conceptual confusion (see Appendix A for a selection of definitions of legitimacy).

Moreover, as mentioned above, treating legitimacy as a belief follows arguably the most influential definition of legitimacy, namely Weber’s definition (1978, p.213), which states that legitimacy of authorities is derived from ‘the belief in its legitimacy’. This definition, however, can lead to circularity in thinking about legitimacy, when it does not specify where this belief comes from, i.e. what are the specific grounds and

reasons that people have to hold their beliefs. When there is no mention of the conditions that the authorities need to fulfil to engender the belief in legitimacy, achieving legitimacy may be reduced to the effective public relations campaigns of the governing elites (Beetham 1991, p.10).

As already shown above, in the scholarly debate within political science multiple components of legitimacy were distinguished and many studies of legitimacy have emphasized the multi-dimensional nature of the concept (Friedrich 1963, p.234; Stillman 1974, p.39; Easton 1975a; Beetham 1991; Alagappa 1995, pp.11–30; Scharpf 1998). However, the lack of consensus on how many dimensions the concept of legitimacy has and what these dimensions encompass leads to different definitions and difficulties in operationalization. For example, Alagappa (1995) names four elements/dimensions of legitimacy: shared values and norms, conformity with established rules, proper use of power, consent of the governed. Booth and Seligson (2009, pp.547–548) recognized seven dimensions of legitimacy: existence of political community, support for core regime principles, evaluation of regime performance, system support, support for regime institutions, support for local government, and support for political actors. As mentioned above, Scharpf (2003) distinguished between input and output dimension of legitimacy and Schmidt (2013) expanded the list with the third dimension—throughput. Without a consensus about the number of dimensions and what they are supposed to represent, the critics of legitimacy research have reasons to claim that legitimacy is a residual container concept. Moreover, the lack of consensus and sometimes clarity on what legitimacy entails makes replication of studies very difficult. For example, Gilley's replication of his own study assigns different variables to different dimensions of legitimacy in 2012 than in 2009 (see Table 1.2).

In line with Gerring's (1999) views on social science concept formation, a good concept has to balance out eight criteria³, among which there are at least three that are especially relevant for improving the definition of legitimacy, i.e. parsimony, coherence, and differentiation. A good conceptualization of legitimacy needs to be

³ The eight criteria are (1) familiarity, (2) resonance, (3) parsimony, (4) coherence, (5) differentiation, (6) depth, (7) theoretical utility, and (8) field utility.

more precise and concise about the list of defining attributes of legitimacy (parsimony), their relations (coherence), and distinctiveness of legitimacy from other concepts such as trust and support (differentiation). In many cases, to solve the above mentioned problems with the concept of legitimacy, five questions could be helpful. First of all, 'what is legitimacy?' Is it an attribute of authorities, their right, or a belief of citizens? The second question is 'what is the object of legitimacy?'. For example, following Easton (1965), political community, regime, or authorities can be an object of legitimacy. Next question is 'who assesses authorities and grants legitimacy?'. Are these scholars, philosophers, elites, individuals, majority, minority, or citizens in general? Moreover, in any socio-political context there needs to be a reference to the sources of legitimacy, hence the fourth question is 'what are the grounds of legitimacy?'. Sources and causes of legitimacy identified by scholars are multiple: law, tradition, or charisma (following Weber's (1978, p.215) typology), elections, competence, performance, or fairness. An additional question that could solve the circularity problem of legitimacy theory is 'what are the expected consequences of legitimacy?'. Testing the theory of legitimacy can be more fruitful if the researchers are clear about its influence on stability of regimes and authorities, trust, participation in civil society, or tax compliance.

Theory of legitimacy: Legitimacy among other resources of power

Next to precise definitions of the concepts, the second necessary condition for a good theory (Gurr 1970, pp.19–20) is the possibility to falsify it. Legitimacy of a regime is often analysed retrospectively when a regime has had already collapsed. As noted by Rothschild (1977, p.496) 'It is easy to be wise after the event and to find, say in 1918 or 1959 that the Russian Tsarist or French fourth republican regimes had earlier exhausted their legitimacy'. If the break-down of a regime is a sign of illegitimacy, the opposite, i.e. existence of a regime, is not the proof of its legitimacy. In terms of good theory, the collapse of a regime is not a sufficient condition to make judgments about the preceding presence of legitimacy. Moreover, it makes the testing and falsification of the theory impossible. Alternative approaches use voter abstention, protests and demonstrations as a sign of decrease of legitimacy, however, the opposite—voting and

the lack of protest—does not necessarily confirm legitimacy of a system, because it can simply be a sign of either compulsion, apathy, lack of alternatives, or fear of coercion. Situating legitimacy in the context of other resources of power and causes of stability can help to solve the falsifiability problem.

Political legitimacy is one of many sources of power. Power can be defined as ‘the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action’ (Weber 1947, p.180). In other words, power is ‘the ability to achieve our purposes’, it is ‘unevenly distributed’ (Beetham 1991, p.43), and implies influence ‘over other man’ (Friedrich 1963, p.160). Aristotle named several modes of assuring compliance of people, i.e. force, distribution of rewards, education, or a combination of these. Rothschild translated them into coercive, utilitarian, and normative techniques of rule (1977, p.488). Political legitimacy, the normative mode of assuring compliance, is therefore always connected to the exercise of power (Beetham 1991). While the understanding of other resources of power (i.e. economic resources, social status, information, and physical force) is clearer, the role of legitimacy is far less transparent.

In the systematisation based on the works of Weber (Uphoff 1989, p.306), legitimacy represents a resource of legitimate power that produces normative compliance of the ruled (Table 1.3). Hence, legitimacy is based on different reasons to transfer power to political authorities than economic resources, social status, and information (instrumental/utilitarian reasons) and physical force (coercive reasons). Legitimacy is achieved thanks to normative considerations by the ruled: it concerns an interaction between the authorities and society on the level of moral values.

Linking the motivations to transfer power to authorities to the problem of falsifiability, legitimacy should be equated neither with voluntary compliance with authorities’ orders nor with stability of regimes. This is true for two reasons. Firstly, voluntary compliance can be driven by different motives, such as economic and non-economic rewards. For example, clientelism is a good example of strategy that can mobilize support and result in voluntary compliance (Rose *et al.* 2011), but it is based on the provision of ‘material resources as quid pro quo for political support’ (Stokes 2007) accompanied by threats of defection. Hence, clientelism is not contributing to

the transfer of power based on the normative criteria—which is a requirement of legitimacy—but rather on the personal gains or fear of punishment. Similarly, stability can be achieved thanks to coercion, system of rewards and punishments, lack of imaginable and feasible alternatives, collective action problem, or conformity (Marquez 2016, pp.10–13). If these are the reasons behind the compliance, it is not an effect of ‘a moral duty to obey’, but of instrumental gains. In short, support and compliance can be forced or bought from individuals, whereas legitimacy cannot. Secondly, ‘a moral duty to obey’ is a belief rather than action. Hence, the belief should not be conflated with action that might be expected to result from this belief—actions are more situational and depend on other factors aside the belief itself.

Table 1.3. Resources of power and the type of power transfer.

Resources of power	Type of power	Type of power transfer
Economic resources	Reward power	Utilitarian/instrumental compliance
Social status	Referent power	
Information	Expert power	
Physical force	Coercive power	Coercive compliance
Legitimacy	Legitimate power	Normative compliance
Authority	Political power	Political compliance (combination of other types of compliance)

Source: Adapted from Uphoff (1989, p.306); based on French and Raven 1959; Etzioni 1961; Ilchman and Uphoff 1969.

To sum up, placing legitimacy (back) within the theory of resources of power and possible motivations people may hold to obey, support, and to legitimize authorities shows that legitimacy cannot be considered in isolation from these other motivations and cannot simply be equated with stability of a regime. The norms and values that political authorities need to represent to be recognized as legitimate—factors influencing perceived legitimacy—are the main theme of this dissertation and the specific theoretical model used here is discussed in the subsequent section.

1.3. Perceived legitimacy and its antecedents: theoretical model and hypotheses

This project is concerned specifically with perceived legitimacy. Hence, it is not aiming to say anything about legitimacy of a state in general or to evaluate a whole regime using an ideal standard such as liberal democracy or other theoretical or philosophical constructs. This project aims to evaluate whether the following working definition of legitimacy is a useful one: *perceived legitimacy is an attribute ascribed to a political authority (or its representative) by individuals on the basis of evaluation of their normative qualities and resulting in a willingness to voluntarily transfer power to these authorities.*

The working definition emphasizes the normative qualities (moral standing) of authorities as the basis for legitimacy judgments, because as mentioned above in the discussion of the resources of power, citizens can support a regime for many reasons. They can express support because of fear of coercion or because of personal rewards received in return for support. Granting legitimacy, however, is based on the positive evaluation of the moral standing of the authorities—evaluation as just or unjust. Legitimacy should result from a normative compatibility of the values promoted by the authorities with the views and beliefs of citizens, which is what Beetham (1991, p.17) refers to as ‘justifiability in terms of beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate’. Therefore, it seems to be at least theoretically possible to distinguish between involuntary obedience (which is caused by the fear of coercion), voluntary support that can result from instrumental gains (such as economic rewards, information, or social status), and, arguably, the highest form of acceptance of authorities, namely perceived legitimacy, which is caused by the positive normative evaluation of authorities (see Figure 1.2). In practice, all these motives interact and (possibly) depending on the particular context of political socialization, contribute to the assessment of authorities by citizens. Therefore testing different motives (e.g. instrumental and normative) against each other can help us determine to what extent the authorities enjoy support or legitimacy in the eyes of citizens.

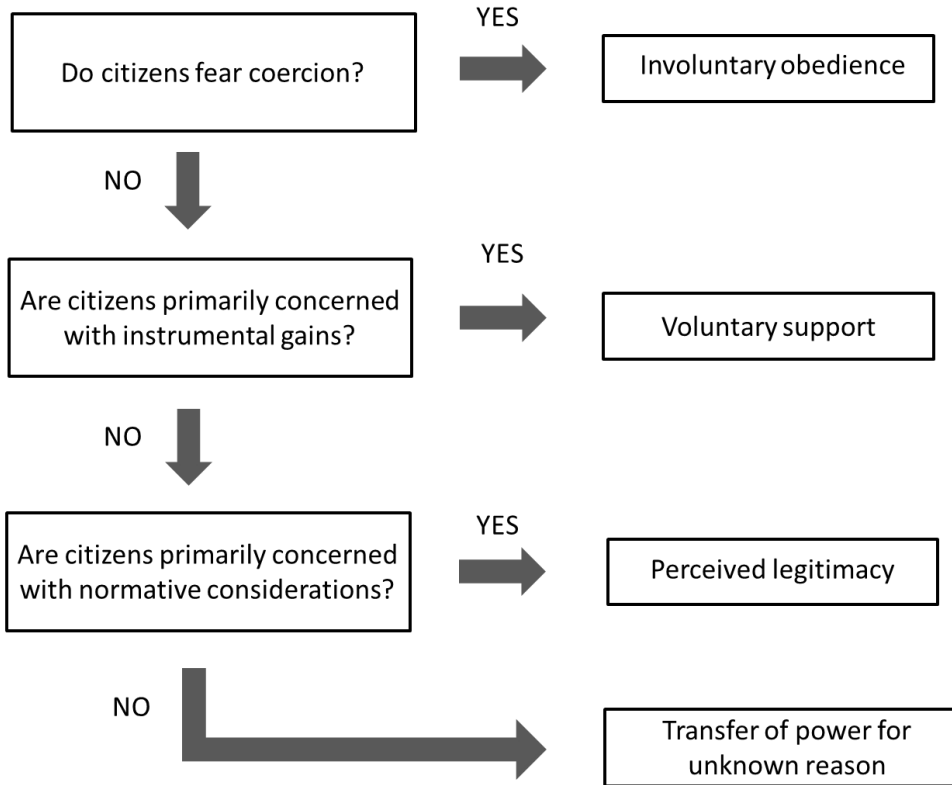


Figure 1.2. Factors determining the type of power transfer.

The working definition makes clear that the approach to study legitimacy in this project is attitudinal rather than behavioural. The focus is on the process of shaping the evaluations of authorities by an individual and his or her normative assessment of the authorities. Perceived legitimacy could be understood as *covert legitimacy* (Easton 1965, pp.153–170). While *overt legitimacy* concerns the behaviour/actions (an observable that does not inform us about the underlying motivations though), the *covert legitimacy* concerns the attitudes/sentiments (Easton 1965, pp.153–170). Using Easton's categorization, the covert (perceived) legitimacy and motivations people hold when judging authorities' legitimacy are in the centre of this project. This approach fits also with the studies by Tom Tyler, who tests psychological models of authorities' assessment: 'viewing subjective judgments on the part of the public about the actions of the police and the courts as central to the effectiveness of legal authorities' (2003,

p.285). Perceived legitimacy as the recognition of the authorities' right to rule based on the evaluation of certain moral standards that individual citizens are committed to links up with Easton's (1965, p.278) understanding of legitimacy as 'a strong inner conviction of the moral validity of the authorities or regime'. However, because of a plethora of uses and interpretations of the term 'legitimacy' and multiple and often confusing definitions of it, it seems useful to clarify also what is not meant as legitimacy here.

First of all, legitimacy is not equivalent with diffuse support for a political system defined as 'a reservoir of support—frequently described as patriotism, love of country, loyalty, and the like' (Easton 1965, p.125). Neither is it the same as diffuse support defined as a preference for certain institutional arrangement or 'attachment to political objects for their own sake' (Easton 1975a, p.445). The use of the concepts of legitimacy and diffuse support is inconsistent (Fraser 1974, p.121) and sometimes legitimacy and diffuse support are conflated. However, Easton (1965, p.278) himself wrote about legitimacy not as an equivalent to but as one of the major sources of diffuse support:

The inculcation of a sense of legitimacy is probably the single most effective device for regulating the flow of diffuse support in favour both of the authorities and of the regime. A member may be willing to obey the authorities and confirm to the requirements of the requirements of the regime for many different reasons. But the most stable support will derive from the conviction on the part of the member that it is right and proper for him to accept and obey the authorities and to abide by the requirements of the regimes.

Apart from delineating a difference between diffuse support and legitimacy, the above quote shows also that legitimacy is not only 'a quality that is ascribed to the norms and structures of a regime' but it can be assigned to authorities too (and other political objects like policies and laws; in Easton 1965, pp.286–287; Rothschild 1977, p.494; Gilley 2006, p.501). Nevertheless, these two are linked, because legitimacy of particular authorities—incumbents—can affect legitimacy of the whole system (Easton

1957, p.393, see also Table in 1965, p.287). This can happen in any political system, but seems to be even more pronounced in non-democratic (personalized) systems, where the leadership of the country is often associated with the system itself and embodies and shapes the institutional arrangement. In addition to the general doubt about citizens' capacity to separate their preference for a regime (political system) from particular outputs that the regime in place delivers and particular inputs it offers (Mishler and Rose 1996, p.556), the distinction between the authorities and the regimes in the case of authoritarian regimes becomes much more blurred and it has consequences for the citizens' perceptions of both. Similar problem occurs with investigating new political regimes (Mishler and Rose 1996). My goal here is to assess mainly the legitimacy of political authorities (and government specifically) and not the legitimacy of an abstract regime (type), although the role of general ideas about the preferred regimes type will be a part of investigation in Chapter 5. Moreover, the regime type was a selection criteria for the cases included in the study, as this thesis aims to investigate the differences in factors influencing perceived legitimacy across different political regimes.

Factors influencing perceived legitimacy: a causal model

As discussed above, legitimacy is one of and arguably the most precious resource of power. It makes people voluntarily acquiesce with authorities because of normative compatibility of the values promoted by the authorities with the views and beliefs of citizens. Studies of legitimacy and motivations identified several elements of this normative compatibility, however we know relatively little about which normative factors influence perceptions of legitimacy and how do they differ across regimes and societies. Several factors that cause the increase of perceived legitimacy of authorities were identified in empirically oriented studies in the field of social psychology. These factors are fairness in distribution of goods among individuals, fair procedures guiding the interactions between the authorities and individuals, following the rules of a community in which an individual was socialized, and the power-position of an individual relative to authorities, also called outcome dependence (Van der Toorn *et al.* 2011). With the exception of dependence, which is a less clear-cut factor, all these

motives have to do with communal rather than with instrumental personal good and are linked to the issues of justice. The reference to moral standards unites these motives as possible (albeit not all) predictors of perceived political legitimacy.

Personal outcome and normative explanations

In contrast to normative explanations that focus on justice, rational choice theory emphasises the role of personal economic gains (instrumental gains) in decisions of individuals and it predicts that transferring of power to authorities is based on a calculation of personal costs and benefits. The personal interest (understood mainly as material gains) is the primary interest of individuals and should play the most important role in the decision-making process. Also, it used to be a widespread notion in political science that people “generally care about ends not means; they judge government by results and are ignorant of or indifferent about the methods by which the results were obtained” (Popkin 1991, p.99). Therefore the first hypothesis following from the rational choice theory is: *Positive personal outcome increases perceived legitimacy of political authorities (H1)*.

However, Tyler and Caine’s (1981, p.643) overview of political science literature yielded ‘widespread anecdotal evidence’ of higher support for authorities and institutions that act ‘according to fair and impartial procedures’. In fact, since the 1990s also political science studies have been undermining the pure self-interest explanation of support for authorities and examples of studies in the democratic context emphasise the ‘dual utility function’ in the decisions about compliance and support, meaning that people are motivated both by normative reasons as well as instrumental ones (Levi 1991; Rothstein 1998; Wilking 2011). Similarly, psychological models of the citizen ‘suggest that citizens make normative judgments, rather than focusing upon whether they are personally benefited or harmed’ (Tyler *et al.* 1986, p.972). According to Tyler (1997, p.325), in opposition to rational-choice (resource-based) models⁴, ‘legitimacy theory’ predicts that people ‘seek evidence of integrity and caring when judging

⁴ For elaboration of economic models’ predicting citizens’ choices and their influence in political science see Tyler, Rasinski, and Griffin (1986). The self-interest assumption is at the heart of the economic theory of value. The subjective expected utility is in turn the main predictor of citizen’s behaviour in the economic theory of judgment.

authorities'. There is a growing body of studies providing evidence that legitimacy is enhanced by popular perception of authorities as just. These studies are mainly concerned with courts and laws, and police (Thibaut and Walker 1975; Tyler and Caine 1981; Gibson 1989; Tyler 1990; Tyler and Huo 2002; Sunshine and Tyler 2003).

To test the normative factors determining perceived legitimacy, empirical studies especially in the field of (social) psychology investigated the link between norms and values, perceptions of fairness of authorities and their evaluations. Studies showing an independent effect of fairness of procedures and outcome that is fair for the community are contrary to earlier research, which indicated that citizens focus primarily or exclusively on outcomes they personally get when evaluating authorities (Leventhal *et al.* 1980). According to the studies of normative motives, perceived justice of authorities increases positive evaluations of these authorities by citizens and, as a consequence, makes the odds for compliant behaviour of people higher. The two aspects of justice that feature in this body of literature are distributive and procedural justice (Leventhal 1980; Kluegel and Mason 2004, p.817). These two antecedents of perceived legitimacy together with outcome dependence and socialization will be tested in the first study of this dissertation to see to what extent they determine the perception of legitimacy of a government among the respondents (Figure 1.3). If only instrumental motivations would have an effect on the evaluation of political authorities, then one could speak of the presence of support, but not perceived legitimacy (see Figures 1.2 and 1.3).

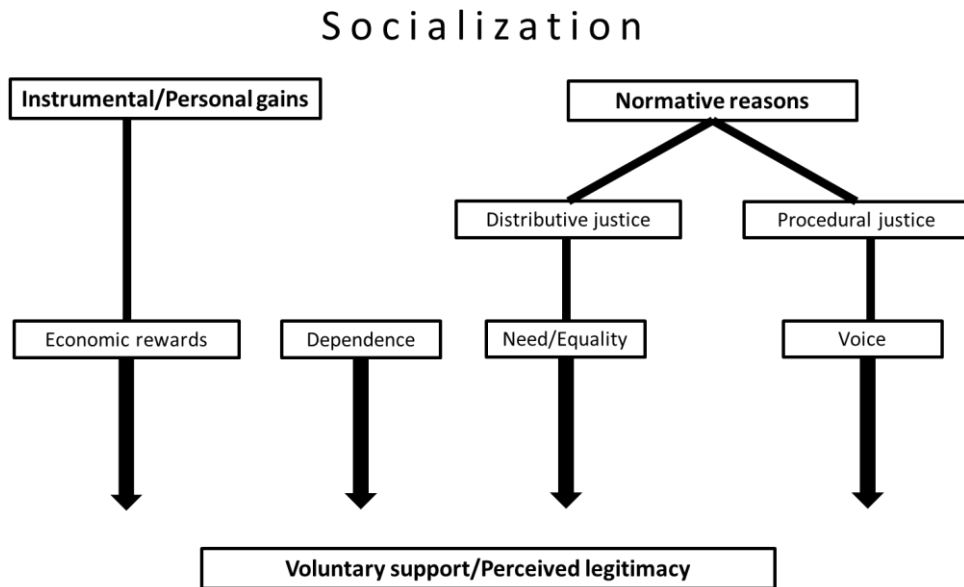


Figure 1.3. Factors influencing perceived legitimacy/voluntary support tested in this study: economic rewards (personal outcome), dependence, distributive justice (based on the principles of need and equality), procedural justice (voice), and socialization (in different countries).

Procedural justice

Social order is built on the principle of procedural justice. In line with Leventhal (1980, p.5), procedural justice rule is defined as ‘an individual’s belief that allocative procedures which satisfy certain criteria are fair and appropriate’. In the context of granting legitimacy, procedural justice refers to people’s evaluations of procedures used by authorities as fair or unfair, right or wrong.

Tyler and Caine (1981, p.643) observed that political science research suggests ‘that support for authorities is more strongly dependent on acceptance of the belief that government leaders and institutions function according to fair and impartial procedures than upon outcomes received from the political system or specific government decision’. Their experiments and survey study showed that satisfaction with leaders was influenced by judgments about fairness of procedures in allocation of benefits irrespectively of the achieved outcomes.

The body of research on procedural justice has been growing in the past couple of decades within the field of social psychology (see (Tyler 2006). A number of studies showed that legitimacy of laws and police increases when people experience fairness of procedures (Tyler and Caine 1981; Tyler 2001; Sunshine and Tyler 2003). Fairness of procedures usually refers to the fairness of decision-making process used by authorities. It is, however, comprised of several dimensions and can be operationalized in various ways, i.e. as providing opportunity to voice people's opinions about a particular matter (voice/public deliberation/participation), considerations of all the relevant information on the issue, following established formal rules guiding the decision-making process on a certain issue, neutrality and consistency of authorities across people and cases (unbiased and impartial decision-making), and treatment with dignity and respect (Thibaut and Walker 1975; Leventhal 1980; Tyler *et al.* 1985; Tyler and Rasinski 1991; Tyler 2000; Peter 2009). The importance of different criteria of procedural justice varies depending on the institution under evaluation, issue, dispute, or context (Tyler 1988, p.107).

At the same time, the role of deliberation processes has been emphasised in the political science discussions of conceptions of democracy (Manin *et al.* 1987; Miller 1992a; Habermas 1996; Bohman 1997; Dryzek 2009, 2010; Gutmann and Thompson 2009). Deliberation is 'a process of careful and informed reflection on facts and opinions, generally leading to a judgment on the matter at hand' (King 2003, p.25), which involves citizens in a discussion and provides them with an opportunity to voice their opinions and inquire about the issues that are decided on by the authorities. The deliberative practices link with the concept of procedural justice and with the throughput dimension of legitimacy (see p. 14).

On the basis of the theory of procedural justice the following hypothesis is formulated: *Procedural justice increases perceived legitimacy of political authorities (H2)*. To test whether the effect of procedural justice is dependent on personal gains (positive vs. negative outcome), a hypothesis about the interaction between these two factors is formulated based on rational choice theory: *The effect of procedural justice on legitimacy is stronger when individuals experience positive personal outcomes (H3)*

(i.e., when individuals experience negative personal outcomes, the effects of procedural justice on legitimacy are weak or absent).

Distributive justice

Another aspect of justice linked to citizens' evaluations of authorities is distributive justice. In line with the thesis of distributive justice, people are expected to 'be more willing to give power to legal authorities when they feel that those authorities deliver outcomes fairly to people' (Sunshine and Tyler 2003). Distributive justice however, can be seen either as an instrumental motive to comply with authorities, when the main focus of the subject is their own gain, or it can be understood as 'the fairness of the allocation of desirable outcomes across people' (Tyler 2012, p.345). Only the latter one represents a normative motive linked to legitimacy of authorities (see Figure 1.2). And although favourable outcome and distributive justice are related, they are clearly distinct (Tyler 1988, p.117). Gilley provides a good illustration of the difference between legitimacy and support based on personal interest: 'A citizen who supports the regime 'because it is doing well in creating jobs' is expressing views of legitimacy. A citizen who supports the regimes 'because I have a job' is not' (Gilley 2006, p.502).

Distributive justice can be seen also as encompassed in the idea of common good—'the conviction that there is something called the interest of the realm, the public, common, or national interest, the general good and public welfare, or the good of the tribe, of "our people"' (Easton 1965, p.312)'. According to Easton, the political authorities are supposed to promote and contribute to the common good and their failure to do so will diminish perceived legitimacy of a regime. Distributive justice refers to one aspect of the common good, namely the distribution of resources in a manner that helps the society as a whole (e.g. creation of jobs). Distributive justice can be based on different principles depending on the information available to the people, the type of group in which the distribution takes place, the particular situation, and socio-economic status of an individual. The main principles on which distributive justice can be based are equality, desert (equity) or need (Miller 1992b; DeScioli *et al.* 2014).

Similar to procedural justice, distributive justice has its link to Scharpf's ideas about legitimacy, specifically to what he calls 'output legitimacy'. One of the main goals of government is to achieve some sort of common interest. If the pursuit of the 'common purposes and dealing with common problems that are beyond the reach of individuals and families acting on their own' (Scharpf 2003, p.4) is positively evaluated by citizens, legitimacy of an institution increases. Following from this, if the goods and services are distributed in a way that serves the communal interest (rather than individual interests) and citizens do not experience strong relative deprivation (Gurr 1970), then the government will be normatively appreciated and will enjoy higher legitimacy. The research into distributive justice also addresses a question 'when those who are advantaged are willing to re-distribute resources to the disadvantaged' (Tyler 2000, p.119). Consequently, distributive justice is inherently linked with individuals' perceptions of their situation in comparison to the situation of others belonging to the same community (relative deprivation). The reflection on this relative situation is supposed to influence normative judgments of authorities. Studies by Van den Bos et al. (1997, 1998) showed that procedural justice had a different impact on outcome satisfaction depending on the presence or absence of fairness in distribution (equity).

A hypothesis following from the theory of distributive justice is: *Distributive justice increases perceived legitimacy of political authorities (H4)*. The same as in the case of procedural justice, to test whether the effect of distributive justice is dependent on personal gains (positive vs. negative outcome), a hypothesis about the interaction between these two factors is formulated based on rational choice theory: *The effect of distributive justice on legitimacy is stronger when individuals experience positive personal outcomes (H5)* (i.e., when individuals experience negative personal outcomes, the effects of distributive justice on legitimacy are weak or absent).

Outcome dependence

Apart from normative considerations of justice of authorities, the factor that could influence legitimacy judgments of authorities by citizens is their dependence on these authorities resulting from a disadvantageous position in the social system or specific situation. Dependence is a factor that is linked to both expectation of economic rewards

(instrumental/personal gains) and to distributive justice (normative/justice motivation) based on the principle of need. It is neither a clear cut instrumental motive nor a normative one. Despite the intuitive assumption that disadvantaged individuals—individuals experiencing some sort of negative inequality—will express their disapproval of the authorities, there is evidence that people who are powerless or highly dependent on political authorities express positive evaluations of these authorities. System justification theory offers an explanation of this phenomenon (Jost *et al.* 2003, 2004; Jost and Van der Toorn 2012).

According to system justification theory, people want to see their social system as fair and just. As a consequence, they are motivated to ‘defend, bolster, and justify prevailing social, economic, and political arrangements (i.e., status quo)’ (Jost and Van der Toorn 2012; see also Jost *et al.* 2004). According to Jost *et al.* (2003, p.14), ‘this means that they should often view systems and authorities as above reproach and inequality among groups and individuals as legitimate and even necessary’. This need for justification of the system seems to have significant effects on perceived legitimacy of authorities. Several studies showed that people who are dependent on the system (powerless) tend to legitimize it and approve the position of those who control those systems. Using Fiske and Berdahl’s (2007) vocabulary, individuals who depend on the authorities for their mental and physical health, safety, and economic well-being are in the *outcome dependent* situation (in other words, the authorities can exercise their power over them). The main hypothesis in the studies of outcome dependence is ‘that dependence on authorities for desired resources activates system justification motivation, and this contributes to the legitimation of power holders’ (Van der Toorn *et al.* 2011, p.128). Moreover, dependence contributes to the legitimation of political authorities independently from the outcomes that people receive from them. The tests of this hypothesis were conducted in educational, political, and legal setting. The political study was completed at the time of water shortage in California, which created a naturally occurring situation for measurement of perceived legitimacy of governmental authority responsible for water allocation decisions. The results of this study showed that people who felt very affected by the water shortage, evaluated the

authorities as more legitimate. In general, studies driven by the system-justification theory hypothesis provided evidence that people in dependent positions express acceptance of power differences, support status quo, and boost legitimacy of (unjust) power relations (Van der Toorn *et al.* 2011). The evidence, however, comes mainly from studies on American respondents. A cross-national comparison of perceptions of fairness in the workplace by Americans and Hungarians indicated that system justification levels are lower among the respondents from the post-communist new democracy (Van der Toorn *et al.* 2010).

Furthermore, there is evidence from large-N cross-country surveys that people belonging to high-status groups are more likely to see their governments as legitimate (Brandt and Reyna 2012; Brandt 2013). These divergent results might be partially explained by the way in which outcome dependence is operationalized. Brandt's studies use standard measures of social status such as gender, income, education, race, and social class, whereas in the studies by Van der Toorn the outcome dependence is situational and hence much more specific and contextualized. The present study contributes cross-cultural evidence to assess the viability of the system justification theory and specifically outcome dependence in predicting levels of perceived legitimacy. The hypothesis based on the system justification theory that will be tested in this project is: *Dependence on political authorities increases perceived legitimacy of the authorities (H6).*

Socialization/Politicization

Perceived legitimacy requires 'a generalized sense of identification with and feeling of obligation toward the regime that motivates citizens to comply' (Gurr 1970, p.185). This generalized sense of identification and obligation to comply with the rules of the regime is achieved through socialization (social learning). Political socialization according to Easton and Dennis (1980, p.7) refers to 'those developmental processes through which persons acquire political orientations and patterns of behaviour'. Easton (1965, p.208) linked socialization with legitimacy as contributing to the authorities' capacity to rule, which is 'closely connected to the presence of an ingrained belief,

usually transmitted across the generations in the socialization process, that the occupants of the political authority roles have a right to command and the other members of the system a duty to obey'. The assumption of Easton is that citizens (members of a system) are 'imperceptibly socialized' to believe in the political order's legitimacy and this belief is reinforced further in life (1965, p.280). Furthermore, 'As members of a society mature, they must absorb the various orientations toward political matters that one is expected to have in that society' (Easton 1975b, pp.397–398). Moreover, knowledge about political institutions and their designated authority and duties, about the way citizens and the state institutions interact, and about the formal and informal procedures guiding the behaviour of political authorities and citizens is passed on by teachers and parents, and is shaped by early experiences of associational and political life (e.g. Galston 2001; McFarland and Thomas 2006). Since political socialization is supposed to be deeply rooted in the political culture of every country, the ideas about how a political system should function and what the role of political authorities is may vary depending on the values promoted in a given society and through its education system. Moreover, the strength of different motives to support authorities held by citizens as well as the combination of methods used by authorities to gain legitimacy can vary from system to system (Easton 1965, p.185). Also, according to Inglehart (1988, p.1228) societies 'tend to be characterized by reasonably durable cultural attributes that sometimes have major political and economic consequences'. Although evidence on the individual level is rather anecdotal and scarce, the expectation is that evaluations of political authorities and the importance of different factors for these evaluations can be affected by the regime type in which an individual has been socialized. The specific comparative hypotheses following from socialization are formulated in the section below.

Perceived legitimacy in different regimes: a comparative model

The definition of perceived legitimacy as an attribute ascribed to political authorities by individuals on the basis of evaluation of their normative qualities and resulting in a willingness to voluntarily transfer power to these authorities allows for comparisons in different political and cultural contexts (Dogan and Pelassy 1990, p.3). In line with the

socialization/politicization theory, the sources and understanding of legitimacy can be culturally determined and the relation between citizens (subjects) and the state culturally prescribed. The influence of socialization in different political regimes can be reflected in the ideas about what makes authorities legitimate held by citizens in different societies.

According to Huntington (1991, pp.46–58), the survival and legitimacy of authoritarian regimes depends heavily on their economic performance, so this could result in citizens being more sensitive to receiving individual positive outcomes from the authorities. In the Soviet Union in the earlier totalitarian phase of the Communist Party's (CP) rule, the regime referred to terror and coerced mobilization while imposing ideology as the source of its right to rule. The authorities were convinced that they had the monopoly of 'Truth' and were guided by the superior knowledge about what is right for society (Di Palma 1991, p.50; Saxonberg 2004, pp.146–151, 2013, pp.59–60). In its post-totalitarian form (after the death of Stalin), the CP legitimized itself more on the basis of performance: it justified its rule through proclaimed "economic superiority" over the West, prosperity and improving living standards. Authoritarian regimes also rely heavily on fear—"the ultimate inducement that a regimes can use to compel individuals to comply with its demands" (Rose *et al.* 2011, p.21), so it is difficult to distinguish to what extent the normative motives (concerns with justice or ideology) or instrumental gains (individual economic rewards) were and are of importance for citizens' assessments of the authorities. However, if authoritarian legitimacy is believed to be performance-based, then positive outcomes from the authorities should be the basis of positive evaluations of these authorities. Therefore, a hypothesis regarding the influence of individual positive outcomes in non-democracies can be formulated: *The most important motives citizens have to grant legitimacy to/support authorities in non-democracies are of instrumental nature (H7).*

The legitimacy of democracies is based mainly on input: shared ideas about what the political system represents and relatively durable electoral procedures assuring representation of citizens' interests (Easton 1975, p.447). Moreover, in more recent works on legitimacy a strong link has been established between democratic legitimacy and the need for deliberation and participation of citizens (Manin *et al.*

1987; Miller 1992a; Habermas 1996; Bohman 1997; Dryzek 2009, 2010; Gutmann and Thompson 2009). Western democracies have in general higher levels of civic participation than, for example, post-communist new democracies (Howard 2003). Low participation and lower trust in institutions in Central and Eastern Europe after the collapse of communism is to a large extent linked to the past of forced participation and mobilization in these societies. The expectation is thus that participation and deliberation are more crucial to the conception of legitimacy among citizens of Western democratic countries than in post-communist democracies and non-democracies. So two comparative hypotheses based on these expectations are formulated: *'Procedural justice is a more important factor for perceptions of legitimacy among democratic citizens than among citizens socialized in new democracies and hybrid regimes (H8)'* and *'Citizen participation is more important for perceived legitimacy in old democracies (H9)'*.

Despite lower social engagement in political and civil processes, according to Kluegel and Mason (2004, p.817) also a strong preference for egalitarianism among citizens in post-communist countries is a legacy of the previous political system and makes citizens sensitive to fair economic distribution. Moreover, the salience of distributive justice was enhanced in this region by the initial results of transition from communism to capitalism and democracy, which increased social inequality and benefited the old *nomenklatura* more than average citizens. The increase of unemployment and inequality measured by the GINI coefficient meant a widening gap between the rich and poor and feelings of distributive injustice (Mason 2003). On the basis of these social developments and the results of the analysis of the International Social Justice Project data by Kluegel and Mason (2004), justice in economic distribution is expected to be more important for the perceived legitimacy among people in post-communist countries. Hence another hypothesis that will be tested in this project is: *'Distributive justice has a more important role in perceptions of legitimacy among citizens socialized in post-communist regimes than among citizens socialized in democracies (H10)'*.

Hybrid regimes seek confirmation of their right to rule through the institution of elections, which are usually seen as a defining attribute of democratic systems

(Gerschewski 2013), but these elections are characterized by controlled competition and manipulation. In fact, the role of elections in supplying legitimacy might be less important for domestic legitimacy than other factors—elections might be used merely to signal ‘that alternatives are unlikely’ (Marquez 2015). Authorities in hybrid regimes use various legitimation strategies to convince multiple audiences about the rightfulness of their rule. For example, in Russia multiple narratives are used by elites to justify the current political system as the most suitable one for the good of the nation. The common narratives are those of stability and order that should be the values guiding how the country is governed as well as references to exceptionalism of Russians and national values. These narratives find support from citizens as reflected by public opinion surveys (see Carnaghan 2010, p.155), but the implications of this are not clear. It is, for example, not sure whether the authorities’ ideas about what constitutes order are the same as the citizens’ ideas about it. Moreover we do not know if order (or nationalism) constitutes the grounds for granting legitimacy in the eyes of citizens. Therefore the last hypothesis that will be tested in this project is: *Stability and order are expected to be important for evaluations of legitimacy of political authorities in Russia (H11).*

Summary of research questions and hypotheses

The main purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to answering two questions: what factors contribute to perceived legitimacy and how do they vary across citizens socialized in different political regimes. The different political regimes under investigation are old democracies (France and the Netherlands), new post-communist democracy (Poland), post-communist hybrid regime in crisis (Ukraine), and post-communist hybrid regime with growing authoritarian tendencies (Russia). The choice of cases will be explained in Chapter 2.

The first empirical study investigates the causal links between four factors identified above—distributive justice, procedural justice, dependence, and personal outcome—and perceived legitimacy. It compares these links across five countries with different political regimes. In the study in Chapter 3 hypotheses H1-H8 and H10 will be tested. The second empirical study is concerned with citizens’ idea of legitimacy

and it explores the views of citizens socialized in different regimes about what should characterize legitimate political authorities. This study presented in Chapter 4 will try to find support for the hypotheses H7-H11 with a different method. The third empirical study researches the evaluations of real political authorities in each of the five countries and analyses the contribution of the ideas about what the political system should represent and how it actually performs to the explanation of perceived legitimacy (Chapter 5). It addresses hypotheses H2, H4, and H6 (see the list below).

Chapter 2 will discuss the methodology used in each of the three empirical chapters: the selection of cases, design of the studies, data collection procedures, sample, as well as some data organization procedures.

List of hypotheses:

H1: Positive personal outcome increases perceived legitimacy of political authorities (tested in Chapter 3).

H2: Procedural justice increases perceived legitimacy of political authorities (tested in Chapters 3 and 5).

H3: The effect of procedural justice on legitimacy is stronger when individuals experience positive personal outcomes (Chapter 3).

H4: Distributive justice increases perceived legitimacy of political authorities (Chapter 3 and 5).

H5: The effect of distributive justice on legitimacy is stronger when individuals experience positive personal outcomes (Chapter 3).

H6: Dependence on political authorities increases perceived legitimacy of the authorities (Chapters 3 and 5).

H7: The most important motives citizens have to grant legitimacy to/support authorities in non-democracies are of instrumental nature (Chapters 3 and 4).

H8: Procedural justice is a more important factor for perceptions of legitimacy among democratic citizens than among citizens socialized in new democracies and hybrid regimes (Chapters 3 and 4)

H9: Citizen participation is more important for perceived legitimacy in old democracies (Chapter 4).

H10: Distributive justice has a more important role in perceptions of legitimacy among citizens socialized in post-communist regimes than among citizens socialized in democracies (Chapter 3 and 4).

H11: Stability and order are expected to be important for evaluations of legitimacy of political authorities in Russia (Chapter 4).