A conceptual framework for the measurement of legitimation in a context of political change

Abstract

The legitimacy of political orders is an important reference point in political analysis, but the concept is difficult to operationalise and measure – particularly in those countries where legitimacy is critical, i.e. cases of political transformation, non-democratic rule and high state fragility. The paper develops an analytical framework based on a dialogical understanding of legitimacy. It argues that to be successful, legitimation (the strategic procurement of legitimacy) has to fulfill two separate functions: relate demands for legitimation to government performance (the 'demand cycle'), and relate legitimacy claims issued by the rulers to behavioural patterns of the ruled (the 'supply cycle').

Based on these two legitimacy cycles, the paper identifies four dimensions of measurement. If the success of legitimation is understood as effective common-interest orientation of rulers, the revealed attitudes and opinions of individual and collective actors determine the range of performance responses on behalf of the political leaders or the 'government'. If, on the other hand, the success of legitimation is considered to lie in effectively guiding the behaviour of members of society, the legitimacy claim issued by the rulers entails an offer of inclusion, echoed by patterns of behaviour on behalf of the ruled.

For non-democratic settings, the 'supply cycle' may lend itself more easily to empirical research, since data on attitudes and opinions are not always available in this group of countries. The 'demand cycle', however, may be better suited to capture the legitimation efforts of regimes undergoing profound change and struggling to survive. In this context, new research has highlighted the relevance of performance-related legitimation. Performance criteria are sometimes used as independent variables to explain changes in attitudes. In contrast, the mechanisms through which revealed attitudes and opinions might repercute on the performance of political regimes have been studied less extensively so far.

1. Introduction

Politics is about dealing with change, but sometimes change affects various societal subsystems simultaneously and in ways which challenge the boundaries of path-dependent adaptation. Such situations may be triggered by major natural disasters, economic crises or other exogenous factors, they may be accompanied by violent conflict and war, and they may lead to a generalized perception of crisis and insecurity among social actors, with a concomitant loss of trust in political leaders, and a shortening of economic, political and private planning cycles. In this latter sense, change is associated with major political events that transcend everyday political operations.

In dealing with change, states use *power* (Avelino & Rotmans, 2009). There are three interrelated dimensions of power which together constitute the universe of resources states can bring into play: The *authority* to effectively produce binding decisions, reflected in the political power game and its decision-making procedures, the *capacity* to implement public policies, collect revenues and provide public services, embodied in the public administration and infrastructure, and the *legitimacy* a political order enjoys if the state's claim of acting for the common good is acknowledged by members of society (Grävingholt, Ziaja, & Kreibaum, 2012; Lemay-Hébert, 2009).

While the first two dimensions have been extensively explored in the political science literature, the latter dimension – legitimacy – has only recently received more attention. As an analytical concept, legitimacy refers to "a particular type of political support that is grounded in common good or shared moral evaluations" (Gilley, 2009, p. 5). Every political order conceived as a lasting institutional arrangement engages in the strategic procurement of legitimacy – an activity called *legitimation* in this paper. Even the most authoritarian regimes[1] design strategies to substantiate their claim that the political order they impose is the one that under given circumstances serves best the common good (Backes, 2013; Kailitz, 2013; Kendall-Taylor & Frantz, 2015; von Soest & Grauvogel, 2015). From a normative point of view, a political order is *either* legitimate *or* illegitimate. From an analytical viewpoint, however, it is *more or less successful* in procuring legitimacy (von Haldenwang, 2016).

Two properties of legitimacy make it especially important in situations of political change: First, due to its dialogical character legitimacy contributes to political stability by matching expectations of citizens with regime performance levels, and by linking expectations of rulers to behavioural patterns of the ruled.[2] Second, legitimacy increases the efficiency of rule, thus

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[1] This article uses the term *'political rule'* to refer to the practice of producing and implementing binding regulative and allocative decisions. *'Political order'* is the overall institutional and normative setting in which political rule takes place. *'Regimes'* are understood as sets of institutions, norms and procedures that cover specific aspects of a political order. Political regimes characterize a political order as being democratic, autocratic, etc. Finally, *'state'* refers to the part of a political order which produces and enforces binding decisions invoking a notion of common good.

[2] Please refer to von Haldenwang (2017) for an in-depth discussion of the dialogical character of legitimation. In short, political rulers issue *legitimacy claims*. Members of society either endorse or

enhancing the ability of rulers to mobilise and use societal resources. In times of crisis or war legitimate rulers are able to secure elite cohesion, manage access to political decision-making (Svolik, 2009; von Soest & Grauvogel, 2015), impose extraordinary burdens on citizens and corporations, and mobilise support in other ways. To give an example: When threatened by a military overthrow in July 2016, Turkish president Erdogan called citizens to the streets to defend the democratic order.[3] Many were ready to risk – and some, in fact, lost – their lives in the ensuing public mobilisations. Some regimes invoke real or feigned threats from external forces to muster support, while others engage in material or symbolic policies to address specific groups of society (Josua, 2016a). Obviously, legitimacy affects the ways political regimes deal with crisis and change.

It appears equally obvious, however, that situations of political change have a strong impact on legitimation. Rulers modify legitimation as a response to changing preference orders and power constellations, striving to manage the situation in a context of insecurity and risk. Public debates on the legitimacy of political rule are often particularly vigorous in situations of political crisis and transformation. In the worst of situations, rulers face a three-fold challenge: They have to justify their rule against alternative legitimacy claims; they have to deal with important strains on their resource base as a consequence of contested rule; and they have to mobilise additional resources to stabilise the regime.

From the perspective of those who oppose a given political regime, legitimacy is a vital resource as well. In order to successfully confront an existing order deemed illegitimate, opposition forces must be able to challenge the legitimacy claims of the rulers by influencing societal demands, mobilising social groups and issuing credible alternative claims. In times of regime breakdown, they must procure legitimacy for specific corridors of regime change and the political operations necessary to install a new order, often under conditions of 'limited statehood' (Börzel & Risse, 2016). Once a new order is in place, legitimation has to be geared towards regime stabilisation and, eventually, consolidation.

Hence, legitimacy in times of crisis and change can be considered a moving target. A key resource to rulers and power contestants alike, it is at the same time subject to marked oscillations. Assessing the 'amount' or 'degree' of legitimacy in these situations may prove a truly challenging task, and political analysts are sometimes just as surprised by the course of events as the average citizen. The difficulty to conceptualise and measure legitimacy precisely in those situations where it appears most relevant has led some scholars to dismiss the concept

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reject these claims. From the perspective of rulers, legitimation is successful to the degree that it allows the regime to effectively guide the political behaviour of the ruled. At the same time, however, members of society express *legitimation demands* – attitudes and expectations directed towards their governments, which rulers can decide to meet, repress or compensate. From the perspective of members of society, the success of legitimation lies in the effective common-good orientation of the rulers and the political regimes they represent.

[3]   This does not mean to imply that the political regime represented by President Erdogan is fully democratic in all its facets.

altogether as analytically useless or irrelevant (for instance, see Marquez, 2016; Przeworski, 1986).

This paper holds that it is too early to acknowledge defeat. It proposes an approach to assessing legitimation in times of crisis and change that seeks to be less demanding in terms of conceptualisation and empirical analysis. The framework described here is based on the observation that there are different ways in which legitimacy is procured. Individual political regimes are characterized by a specific mix of legitimation modalities, which shapes their capacity to respond to political change. This mix is called *legitimation profile* in the present paper. The paper argues that deviations from ideal typical legitimation profiles characterise situations of political change. Further, the fate of new regimes is determined by their ability to re-organise legitimation.

The study proceeds as follows. The next section identifies six modalities of legitimation. Section 3 introduces the concept of legitimation profiles with reference to different ideal types of political regimes. Section 4 explores pathways to operationalisation for the study of legitimation profiles. Section 5 presents a conceptual framework for the assessment of legitimation in a context of political change by identifying three different moments of legitimation, while Section 6 introduces four properties of legitimation that shape the way it is brought into play in situations of political change. Section 6 concludes by discussing options for empirical inquiry with regard to young democracies.

2.   Modalities of legitimation

Legitimacy has been introduced above as a particular type of political support, but the term refers to very different political practices. Various studies distinguish 'input' and 'output legitimacy' to capture these differences, with the first category referring to access to political decision-making and the second category referring to political regime performance (see Scharpf, 2004). Another strand of the literature cites Weber's (1976, p. 124) basic distinction of rational-legal, traditional and charismatic legitimacy (Unsworth, 2010, pp. 15-20). Some authors use Easton's (1965) discussion of specific and diffuse support as a basis for their conceptualisation efforts (Booth & Seligson, 2009; Stark, 2010). Yet another line of research relies on Beetham's (1991) approach to legitimacy as a combination of legal validity, moral justifiability and evidence of consent (Gilley, 2009, 2012). Attempts to categorisation identify legitimacy or legitimation *claims* (von Soest & Grauvogel, 2015), *patterns* (Kailitz, 2013), *strategies* (Mazepus, Veenendaal, McCarthy-Jones, & Trak Vásquez, 2016), *objects* (Nullmeier et al., 2010), *sources* (Gilley, 2009; Unsworth, 2010), *types* (Josua, 2016b), *modes* (Schlumberger, 2010), and *varieties* (Sedgwick, 2010). Before adding to this plethora by introducing yet another set of notions, some clarifications are obviously required.

While it is certainly true that political orders claim legitimacy and rulers devise strategies of legitimation, it is also true that members of society do not constantly engage in deliberations about the legitimate or illegitimate character of the political order they are living in. Rather, legitimacy issues tend to pop up in extraordinary circumstances and they typically relate to

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particular policy decisions, as shown, for instance, by media analyses (Nullmeier et al., 2010). Based on Easton's (1965, pp. 151-243) discussion of the input of support, policy decisions are defined by six elements (von Haldenwang, 1999): They have a *material content* which affects a specific group of actors; they express *value judgements* and preference orders; someone issues and implements them, acting as a person (*authority*) and at the same time as the embodiment of an institution (*authority role*); decisions are produced and implemented through institutionalised *procedures*; and they rest on *normative principles* and ideas whose common denominator lies in the claim of the political order to be 'good' or 'adequate' for a given society.[4] Each element can be linked to a specific legitimation modality (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Modalities of legitimation

Norms	**Normative legitimation** refers to the basic ideas or principles incorporated by a political order in order to qualify as "good"
Procedures	**Procedural legitimation** is based on institutionalized patterns of decision-making and implementation
Roles	**Role-based** legitimation is based on trust in specific institutions (for instance, central banks)
Persons	**Charismatic** legitimation is based on trust in the superior quality of a political leader or ruler
Preferences	**Value-based** legitimation refers to specific preference orders (for instance, giving security priority over individual liberties)
Contents	**Content-based** legitimation is based on material policies and performance levels

Source: von Haldenwang (1999)

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[4] In legitimacy debates, it is quite common for normative and value judgements to be conflated into one single category, 'norms and values' (see Drori & Honig, 2013; Habermas, 1996; Jackson et al., 2012; Rogowski, 1974; Suchman, 1995). This paper refers to value judgements as expressions of preference orders framed in terms of 'more' or 'less'. To give an example, a typical value judgement would be: "Given the current political crisis, strengthening our security forces is more important than increasing social expenditures". In contrast, normative judgements are framed in terms of 'right' or 'wrong', 'good' or 'bad', etc. A typical normative judgement would be: "No government has the right to impose the death penalty". In situations of conflicting norms, value judgements are necessary to arrive at political decisions. In this sense, every normative judgement can in principle be re-framed as a value judgement, and every value judgement has a normative underpinning.

Take for instance the decision to depose a president and bring him to a third country.[5] The *content* of this decision may cause considerable legitimacy problems, if parts of the society reach the conclusion that the move is unjustified. These legitimacy problems can perhaps be settled through other material decisions (e.g., flying the president back in). But they can also be lifted to another level, by appealing to the *value preferences* underlying the decision (e.g.: "Protecting the society from the president's decisions was more important than procedural correctness"); by referring to the *charismatic quality* of personal leadership (e.g.: "Our new ruler has superior qualities which justify the move"); by alluding to *authority roles* (e.g.: "If the Supreme Court supports the decision, it should not be put it into doubt"); by bringing up underlying *procedural* issues (e.g.: "The decision to depose the president has not been taken according to constitutional regulations. It is therefore unlawful and should not be obeyed"); or by referring to *basic principles* (e.g.: "Every nation has the right to defend itself against tyrants").

As can be seen from the example, each element of regulative or allocative decisions issued by the representatives of a political order can be linked to a specific legitimation modality:

Content- or performance-based legitimations employ material policies.[6] They can be directed towards large parts of the population (e.g. distribution through social policies), but they can also be concentrated on small target groups, whose support is deemed crucial for the regime. This legitimation strategy may acquire crucial relevance at certain stages of time, e.g. at the beginning of a new regime seeking to consolidate itself, or in a situation of acute political crisis.

Value-based legitimations refer to a given order of preferences by emphasizing values such as security and public order, individual or collective well-being, personal freedom, etc. For instance, if a political regime consistently fails to address security and public order as key values, some parts of society may begin to consider a military coup as a legitimate response.

Charismatic legitimations offer a perspective of political and social inclusion, typically achieved through the direct relationship between individual political subjects and an 'enlightened' ruler. Their main advantage lies in relieving the political regime from particular legitimation demands: trust or devotion to a person replace the acknowledgment of specific

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[5] In fact, this has happened in Honduras in 2009, when President Zelaya was ousted and flown to Costa Rica by military forces. However, the points mentioned in this paragraph are examples of issues that *could* be raised in such a situation. They do not relate directly to any specific case.

[6] Please note that this does not refer to the self-interested exchange of political support for material benefits. Obviously, this also exists in politics, and the boundaries between content-based legitimation and the serving of particular interests are often blurred. Legitimacy as a resource can only be generated if the policy in question is accepted as functional for society as a whole, not just for specific groups. This, of course, may itself become the issue of political conflict. Above all, those who benefit from individual policies are often inclined to consider these policies to be to the benefit of society as a whole, whereas those who are left out might consider the same policies to be expressions of pork barrel politics.

legitimation claims, thus granting the ruler additional political autonomy and access to resources.[7]

Role-based legitimations focus on the 'charismatic appeal' of authority roles.[8] Through tradition, heritage, or, alternatively, a high and sustained degree of technical capacity, institutions as such can become trustworthy. As a result, incumbents can change (for instance in the wake of elections) without a concomitant loss of trust in a public policy. For a political order, this legitimation strategy has the additional advantage of avoiding political questioning within specific policy areas.

Procedural legitimations are based on institutionalized patterns of decision-making and implementation. Most importantly, through the mechanisms of political representation and legality, procedures endow individual decisions with *presumed legitimacy*: citizens do not have to examine each and every decision that affects them. Rather, they presume that decisions based on established procedures can be accepted as 'rightful' or 'good' for society as a whole. This presumption even covers future decisions, or decisions that affect citizens negatively.[9] Consequently, this modality supports a broader range of decisions in a more stable way than the modalities discussed so far.

Normative legitimations refer to the basic ideas or principles incorporated by a political order in order to qualify as 'good'. The ideas of national identity, sovereignty and human dignity, or the principles of democracy and rule of law may serve as examples. At this level, legitimation often entails acts of symbolic integration, for instance the use of state symbols (flags, national anthems), as well as the reference to traditions and founding myths ('grand sagas'). The inclusion of overarching norms and goals in political constitutions is yet another reference to this legitimation strategy.

To give an example, the migrational flows to Europe in 2015 have been accompanied by an upsurge of right-wing movements in several European countries. As a common denominator, these movements question the legitimacy of policies that would open the borders of Europe to refugees from the MENA region or other conflict-ridden countries in Africa. It is important to understand that this view refers to normative convictions with regard to national, ethnic and religious identity. People who adhere to these – often xenophobic and sometimes openly racist – positions feel that their governments fail to deliver on fundamental principles that hold their nations together. Their opposition is therefore framed as legitimate resistance to illegitimate governmental action, including the right to use violence against objects (such as

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[7] See Weber (1976, pp. 140-141) for the original argument.

[8] See Weber (1976, pp. 142-148; 662-679).

[9] It is important to bear in mind, though, that citizens are always free to stop *presuming* and actually *question* the legitimate grounds of any decision they chose to put into doubt, even if it is produced in the most democratic way. For instance, if a democratically elected parliament established obligatory military service for male adults, some members of society could choose to disobey this ruling because of their religious or moral convictions. Their position would be that the state has exceeded its legitimate right to rule at this point.

refugee homes) or even persons (for instance, members of the police or public officials). As this position is not primarily founded in rejecting legitimacy claims referring to humanitarian or economic *values* (even though such attitudes do also exist within these movements), its supporters can hardly be reached by any references to those values.

From these six modalities of legitimation, it is possible to infer to the respective *sources* and *strategies* of legitimation, as outlined in Table 1. However, this paper will not refer to sources and strategies as analytical categories, as they are not necessary elements of the conceptual framework for the study of legitimation in times of political regime change.

Table 1: Modalities, sources of legitimacy and strategies of legitimation

Modalities	*Sources of legitimacy*	*Strategies of legitimation*
Normative legitimation	Normative and symbolic identification	Acts of normative and symbolic integration
Procedural legitimation	Stabilisation of expectations through rule-based procedures of political decision-making and legality of public administration	Rule conformity in the selection of leaders and in the formulation and implementation of public policies
Role-based legitimation	Reputation of institutions	Strengthening of institutions and depoliticisation of specific policy areas
Charismatic legitimation	Trust in the personal qualities of rulers	Strengthening of direct relationships between ruler and ruled, centralisation of power, mobilisation of mass support
Value-based legitimation	Congruence of preference orders of rulers and ruled	Discursive and policy signals underlining specific value preferences
Content-based legitimation	Congruence of material expectations with regime performance	Satisfaction of collective interests of stakeholders through material policies

Source: author's own elaboration

3.   Legitimation profiles

Political regimes are never characterised by one single modality, but it is easy to see that the charismatic appeal of a Hugo Chávez in Venezuela differs from the value-based law-and-order approach of an Augusto Pinochet in Chile, from the rich symbolism and historical legacy embodied by Queen Elizabeth II in the UK, or from the low-key procedural legitimation patterns prevalent in Germany's 'Bonn Republic' before reunification. The mix of modalities employed by different regimes varies considerably, according to the reasons given for being 'good' or 'justified', the addressees of legitimacy claims, the stability or flexibility of the relations these modalities establish and, not least, the costs connected to legitimation. In this sense, every political regime can be described with reference to a specific legitimation profile.

In their insightful and innovative study of legitimation in post-soviet countries, von Soest and Grauvogel (2015) identify six legitimacy claims that partly resemble the legitimation modalities introduced above. Based on expert surveys, they are able to capture the specific mix of claims (called 'legitimation strategy' by the authors) that characterises each political regime.[10] Following a similar approach, it is possible to construct idealtypical legitimation profiles with regard to political regime types identified in the literature. This approach is chosen, for instance, by Kailitz (2013), who looks at 'legitimation patterns' of liberal democracies, electoral autocracies, communist ideocracies, one-party autocracies, monarchies, military regimes and personalist autocracies.

The idealtypical profiles presented below refer to a slightly different set of regime types. On the one hand, this set distinguishes (i) parliamentarian and (ii) presidentialist democracies. The first type refers to democratic regimes where the executive and legislative branches of government are based on one and the same claim of procedural legitimacy. The second type covers democracies where the head of state is legitimated separately from the legislative branch. Usually, this means direct elections of the president, but for the sake of simplicity this type include cases of constitutionalist monarchies, typical for many Northern European countries. On the other hand, the set conflates the typology developed by Kailitz (2013) and others (for instance, see Burnell, 2006) into five non-democratic regime types: (iii) electoral autocracies, (iv) one-party autocracies, (v) personalist autocracies, (vi) military autocracies and (vii) absolute monarchies.

In all cases, ideal typical legitimation profiles refer to stable and legitimised rule. Each modality can take on four different values: 0 = none, 1 = low, 2 = medium and 3 = high (see Figure 2). 'None' means that the modality has no relevance for the legitimation of the political regime in question. 'Low' means that the modality has some relevance, but it is not a characteristic feature of the regime. 'Medium' means that the modality has considerable relevance and failed legitimation in this dimension would lead to political crisis and regime stress. 'High' means that the legitimacy claim of the regime is fundamentally based on this modality. Failed legitimation in this dimension would imply regime collapse or change. Total numbers add up to nine or ten in each case, but the approach does not require a specific benchmark value in order for a regime to qualify as fully legitimised.[11]

Following this presentation, both types of democracies appear to be rather similar with regard to their legitimation profile, with presidentialist democracies slightly more reliant on charismatic legitimation and less on role-based legitimation, due to their direct relationship between ruler (head of state or government) and citizens. In both cases, legitimacy is carried above all by normative and symbolic identifications combined with the stabilisation of expectations as a result of democratic rule of law.

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[10] von Soest and Grauvogel (2015) distinguish the following six dimensions: foundational myth, ideology, personalism, international engagement, procedures and performance.

[11] Please refer to Table A1 (Annex) for the numerical values.

Figure 2: Legitimation profiles of political regimes
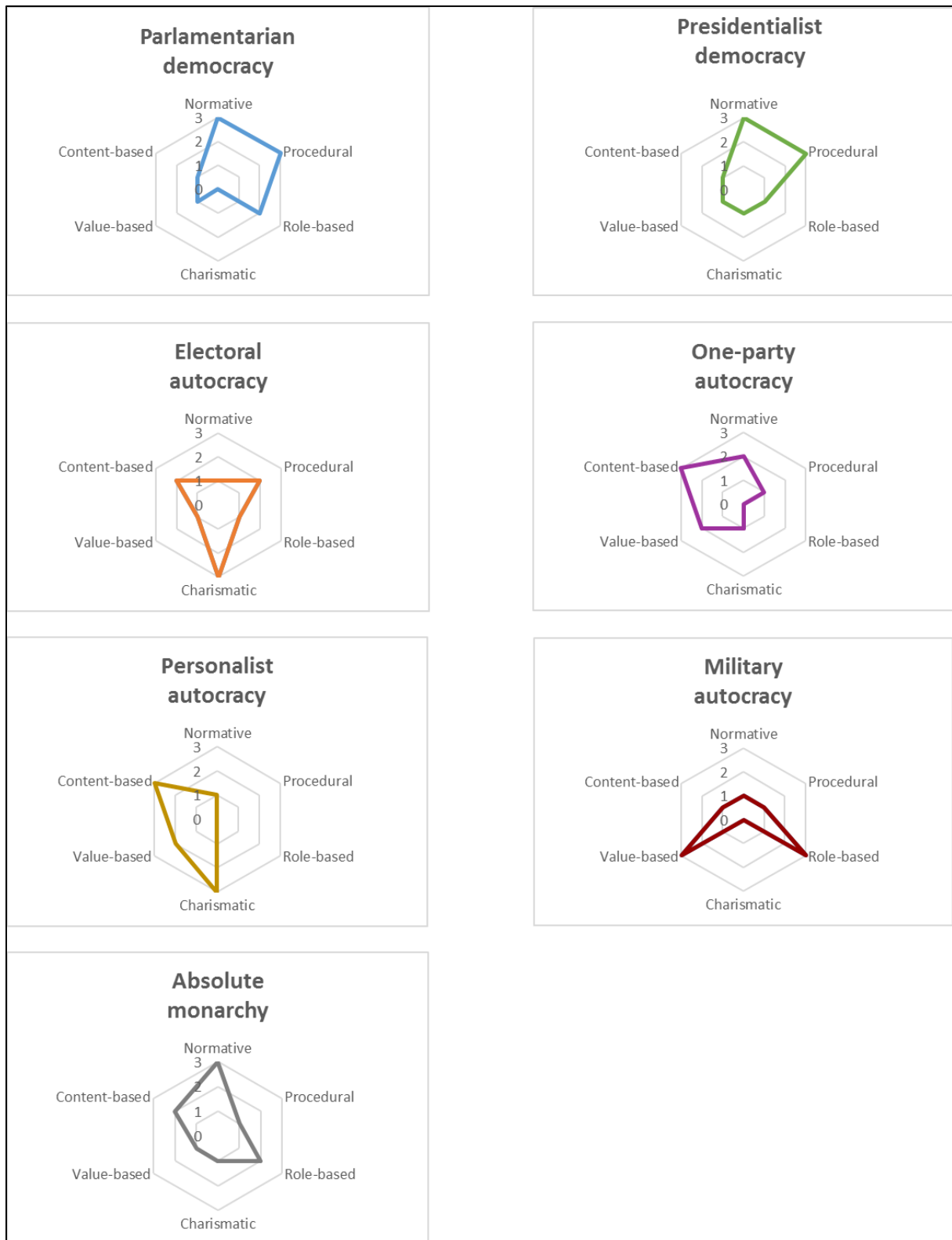
Autocracies show higher degrees of variation between types. As a general observation drawn from a large number of case studies on non-democratic legitimation (see the literature review provided by von Haldenwang, 2016), autocracies seem to be more performance-oriented, which implies higher values in content- and value-based legitimation modalities. In contrast, normative and procedural legitimation play a less prominent role.

Unlike other autocratic regime types, *electoral autocracies* rely on procedural legitimation (though at least in part manipulated) to some degree. Apart from that, their legitimacy is based above all on charismatic along with content-based legitimation, evolving around a strong leader and, typically, strong economic performance. Singapore can be taken as an example for an electoral autocracy that approaches this idealtypical characterisation (Morgenbesser, 2016; Rajah, 2011).

One-party autocracies include communist regimes with a strong emphasis on regime performance, based on a promise of welfare and equality. In addition, these regimes often rely on a broad range of normative (ideological) and symbolic appellations, as shown for instance by their focus on excellence in sports and by their frequent references to foundational myths. This is combined with value-based (law and order) legitimation. Personalism (charismatic legitimation) is not a key defining feature of this regime type, but it can play a role. As a real-life case resembling this idealtype, China has attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent years (for instance, see Gilley, 2007; Holbig, 2013; Hwang & Schneider, 2011; Zhu, 2011).

Personalist autocracies depend to a high degree on charismatic legitimation. This often entails a direct (populist) appeal to broad sectors of society, embedded in a grand saga of nation-building or political emancipation. As an additional feature, personalist autocracies are highly performance-based, with material distribution highly centralised in the person of the ruler. Turkmenistan may serve as an example of a regime that shares important characteristics with this ideal type (von Soest & Grauvogel, 2015)

Stable *military autocracies* justify their rule above all with reference to specific preference orders along with role-based patterns of 'technocratic' legitimation. The latter refers above all to the military as a provider of security and public order, but it may also include a technocratic, market-led approach to macro-economic management. Chile under Pinochet can be considered a real-life example in this case (Garretón, 1986; Huneeus, 1998).

Finally, compared to the other non-democratic types, *absolute monarchies* rely to a larger degree on normative legitimation, as the traditional or religious origin of monarchic rule is a key element of normative and symbolic integration. Role-based legitimation and regime performance (indicating the ability to 'take care' of the people) complement the ideal typical legitimation profile of this regime type. Several regimes in the Arab World (Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco) seem to fit this description reasonably well (Schlumberger, 2010).

Again, these presentations should not be taken as exact blueprints of real-world legitimation. Rather, they serve to illustrate the point that political regimes differ widely in the way they

legitimise themselves and that these differences can be described with regard to the mix of legitimation modalities. Also, it should be noted that these idealtypical descriptions entail a certain degree of discretion, as the approach followed here does not allow for a completely formalised definition of the legitimation modalities. Given the complexity of concepts and regime types, it is plausible, but obviously not beyond any doubt, that a specific legitimation profile should in fact be represented as shown in Figure 2.

4.   Pathways to operationalisation

The choice of indicators should reflect the dialogical character of legitimation. It should either look at how rulers respond to the revealed preferences of their constituencies by adapting the performance of political regimes – or analyse the behavioural response of individual and collective actors to the legitimacy claims raised by the rulers. Given that reliable data on attitudes and expectations are particularly difficult to come by in times of profound political change and in situations of fragile statehood, this paper will focus above all on the second dimension, linking legitimacy claims to observable behavioural patterns. The range of indicators suggested below is supposed to cover those modalities that have 'medium' or 'high' relevance for the legitimation profile of the respective regime type. It should be kept in mind that the indicators introduced below do not seek to measure *legitimacy*, but *legitimation*, which is the strategic procurement of legitimacy.

Parliamentarian democracy: For this regime type, normative, procedural and role-based legitimation play a pivotal role.

–   Successful normative legitimation rests on the identification of members of society with the basic ideas and principles of the political order. Apart from attitudinal data obtained through surveys, possible indicators include (low) levels of political violence and (low) levels of support for anti-system political parties and movements.
–   Procedural legitimation refers to the stabilisation of expectations by means of rule-based patterns of political decision-making (including the selection of leaders) and the legality of public action. Possible indicators refer to political participation and the ratio of direct taxes (taxes on income and property) to GDP.[12]
–   Role-based legitimation hinges on the reputation of institutions. Perceptions of corruption are a suitable indicator to measure this modality, even though perceptions are not an 'observable behavioural pattern'.

Presidentialist democracy: Indicators for this regime type are basically the same as the ones for parliamentarian democracy, covering normative and procedural legitimation. Given the separate bases of legitimacy of the two branches of government, legislative and executive,

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[12] Garcia and von Haldenwang (2016) find a U-shaped relationship between polity and the tax-to-GDP ratio, with full autocracies and full democracies collecting more taxes and hybrid regimes collecting less. According to the authors, the ability to collect taxes can be taken as an indicator for the stabilisation of expectations.

procedural legitimation seems to be particularly relevant in this case. Successful legitimation would hinge upon a minimum working relationship between the two powers.

Electoral autocracy: Charismatic legitimation is a key ingredient for this regime type, while procedural and content-based legitimations play also important roles.

− Regarding charismatic legitimation, the mobilisation of mass support for the incumbent ruler can be taken as an indicator. Another indicator is the ratio of seats held by parties supporting the regime against seats held by opposition parties in parliament.

− Procedural legitimation refers above all to the use of elections. In this regard, one indicator could refer to voter turnout. Another indicator covers the rule of law with regard to economic activities by measuring the ease of doing business and the flows of foreign direct investment (FDI).[13]

− Content-based legitimation refers to the economic and social performance of the regime. Possible indicators include the size of the shadow economy and child labour.

One-party autocracy: This regime type seeks legitimacy through a combination of content-based, normative and value-based modalities.

− Regarding content-based legitimation, the same indicators can be used as in the case of electoral autocracy, as both autocratic regime types appeal to broad sectors of the society (shadow economy and child labour).

− Normative legitimation is achieved by high levels of identification with the regime, based on a broad-based appeal ('broad range', as discussed below) to the members of society. In this case, one indicator could refer to asylum sought abroad. Another indicator could be the proportion of a country affected by political violence and anti-regime protests (Lee, Walter-Dropm, & Wiesel, 2016; Marshall, Gurr, & Harff, 2016)

− Regarding value-based legitimation, low levels of crime and political mobilisation would indicate successful legitimation at this point.

Personalist autocracy: For this regime type, charismatic legitimation is a fundamental modality, as is regime performance, epitomized in value- and content-based legitimation.

− As for electoral autocracy, the (lack of) mobilisation of mass support for the incumbent ruler can be taken as an indicator for charismatic legitimation.

− With regard to content-based legitimation, broad-based distribution is less important for this regime type, compared to promises of welfare geared towards specific sectors of society. In this context, private domestic investment flows could indicate success in this dimension.

− Indicators for successful value-based legitimation are low levels of crime and political mobilisation.

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[13] To give an example, a recent study by Schmaljohann (2013) shows that the application of regular reporting standards of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is associated with higher FDI growth rates.

Military autocracy: This regime type is legitimised by a combination of role-based and value-based modalities.

- The reputation of the military as impartial, technocratic and non-corrupt provider of public services is key to the legitimacy of this regime type. Perceptions of corruption cover this dimension.
- Value-based: To the degree that the regime's legitimacy is based on the promise of public order and security, low levels of crime and political mobilisation are indicators of success.

Absolute monarchy: In this case, normative and symbolic references to tradition, religion and the unity of ruler and ruled constitute the centre of legitimation. To a lesser degree, role-based and content-based legitimation are also relevant.

- As in one-party autocracies, the broad appeal inherent to the normative dimension can be assessed by looking at the number of cases of people seeking asylum abroad and the proportion of a country affected by political violence and anti-regime protests.
- Regarding role-based legitimation, the reputation of the monarch as head of government can be assessed by looking at perceptions of corruption.
- Content-based legitimation employs broad appeals to the people, as in other cases of autocratic rule, and a small shadow economy and low levels of child labour would indicate successful legitimation in this dimension.

Table 2 summarises the indicators identified for each regime type. All in all, 17 indicators cover a total of 19 measurement dimensions (that is, modalities with medium or high relevance for the respective regime type).

Recent years witness a growing availability of data on the quality of public institutions and political rule. Relevant data sets that cover most countries in the world and rely partially or entirely on expert codings include the World Governance Indicators (WGI) published by the World Bank Group, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI), the Political Risk Rating of the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG), the Freedom House ratings on Civil Liberties and Political Rights, the Polity IV dataset on Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Dataset, the Correlates of War (CoW) Project, the Political Terror Scale (PTS), the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) published by Transparency International and the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) data set.[14]

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[14] Most of these data sets are updated annually. They can be retrieved from the following websites: http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#home; https://www.bti-project.org/de/startseite/; http://epub.prsgroup.com/products/international-country-risk-guide-icrg; https://freedomhouse.org/; http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html; http://www.humanrightsdata.com/; http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview; https://www.v-dem.net/en/; http://www.correlatesofwar.org/; http://www.politicalterrorscale.org/; all accessed 13.10.2016.

Table 2: Indicators for the assessment of legitimation profiles

	Parliamentarian Democracy	Presidentialist Democracy	Electoral Autocracy	One-party Autocracy	Personalist Autocracy	Military Autocracy	Absolute Monarchy
Normative	3 Levels of political violence; Levels of support for anti-system political parties and movements	3 Levels of political violence; Levels of support for anti-system political parties and movements	1	2 Asylum sought abroad; Proportion of country affected by political violence and anti-regime protests	1	1	3 Asylum sought abroad; Proportion of country affected by political violence and anti-regime protests
Procedural	3 Political participation; Ratio of direct taxes to GDP	3 Political participation; Ratio of direct taxes to GDP	2 Voter turnout; Ease of doing business; Flows of foreign direct investment	1	0	1	1
Role-based	2 Perceptions of corruption	1	1	0	0	3 Perceptions of corruption	2 Perceptions of corruption
Charismatic	0	1	3 Mobilisation of mass support; Ratio of seats held by parties supporting the regime against seats held by opposition parties in parliament	1	3 Mobilisation of mass support for the incumbent ruler;	0	1
Value-based	1	1	1	2 Levels of crime; Levels of political mobilisation	2 Levels of crime; Levels of political mobilisation	3 Levels of crime; Levels of political mobilisation	1
Content-based	1	1	2 Shadow economy Child labour	3 Shadow economy Child labour	3 Private domestic investment flows	1	2 Shadow economy Child labour

The empirical strategy that follows from this approach will, first, identify the legitimation profiles of existing regimes based on the six ideal types defined above. Second, the indicators introduced above will be tested for validity. Under the assumption that political regime change is associated with changes in the legitimation profile, the third step consists in comparing observed legitimation patterns of political regimes under stress with the ideal typical patterns. Before doing this, however, it is necessary to specify what 'regime under stress' means in terms of legitimation. The next section distinguishes three moments of legitimation in a context of political regime change.

5. Moments of legitimation in a context of political regime change

As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, political regime change can be described in terms of three different moments of legitimation. First, the incumbent regime experiences *de-legitimation*, as its legitimacy claims are rejected and alternative legitimacy claims gain support by members of society. Second, in a situation of regime crisis or breakdown, contending political forces seek legitimacy for specific types of reform and regime change by formulating 'offensive projects' (Stepan, 1985). Third, the newly installed political regime changes the 'legitimation game' from mobilisation to stabilisation in order to stabilise societal expectations and re-gain political and fiscal space.[15] Stages two and three require different patterns of legitimation, even within one and the same regime type.

De-legitimation

Situations of political change are characterised by deviations from the ideal typical legitimation profiles described above. If an incumbent regime fails to guide the behaviour of the ruled and to perform according to the expectations of its supporters, it experiences a legitimacy crisis (von Haldenwang, 1999). This occurs when parts of the society do not accept anymore that the existing political order is the best (available) alternative to serve the common good. Shifting social preferences, for instance, may profoundly challenge the legitimacy of a political order if the state fails to deliver on the new priority values of the society. Social groups may cease to believe in the superior qualities of their charismatic leader, or in the adequacy of democratic procedures. It should be noted, however, that situations of stress and change are not necessarily linked to de-legitimation. Sometimes they even enhance the legitimacy of the incumbent political regime. This can happen, for instance, in a situation of external aggression.

Also, de-legitimation is not always associated with mass mobilisation, anarchy and violence. Political regimes that depend mainly on the support of small groups of societal actors may

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[15] Needless to say, the real sequence of events differs from this description in most cases. De-legitimation can be followed by re-legitimation or by extended periods of contested rule, with no party really able to implement their offensive projects. Newly installed political regimes may encounter serious obstacles in their quest for stability. Societies may experience long periods of violence, insecurity and state fragility.

experience profound change without public upheaval, following a reshuffling of elite alliances and legitimation demands. While any member of a given society can, in principle, raise legitimacy issues, it is obvious that not every member of society has the same chance to be heard and respected.

Legitimation of regime change

Any political regime change should, in principle, be announced by alterations in its legitimation profile, but the direction of change and the final outcome of the legitimacy crisis are impossible to infer from the set of indicators introduced above. Phases of legitimacy crisis or regime breakdown are marked by generalised perceptions of insecurity and risk. In these situations, politics is characterised by a juxtaposition of different legitimacy claims, backed by diverse societal forces in a game of shifting alliances.

In order for a legitimacy crisis to lead to sustained political regime change, however, it is necessary that new legitimacy claims gain impact, causing changes in the behaviour of the ruled (Unsworth, 2010, pp. 37-40). To give an example, in autocratic regimes without formal or informal succession rules, any change in leadership can be accompanied by profound political crises without necessarily leading to regime change. In order to assess the probabilities of success of specific changes, case-specific analysis based on a thorough knowledge of the domestic (and sometimes international) political power constellations is necessary. Given the dynamics and opacity of many events, academic research is not always able to deliver this kind of analysis on time. It is possible, however, to provide a common framework for analysis, as will be discussed in more detail below.

Regime stabilisation

A newly installed political regime is often faced with a highly diverse mix of political factors that impact on its legitimacy. On the one hand, incoming rulers can draw on the reputation of having successfully ended a political regime that had been deemed illegitimate by important segments of society. Rulers may be able to tap additional sources of revenue, such as private capital flowing (back) into the country or increased flows of development aid – particularly, if the outcome of the legitimacy crisis is political opening and democratisation. Not least, the mobilisation of regime supporters can give the new rulers access to important resources in terms of human labour and public services, provided for instance by local civil society organisations (Grävingholt & von Haldenwang, 2016).

On the other hand, newly installed political regimes often suffer from a critical lack of resources. Widespread crises and violent conflict may have caused severe damage to the public infrastructure. The outgoing regime has probably plundered the public coffers. Economic and political insecurity may have led to lower levels of private investment and tax collection. At the same time, expenditure needs are often particularly high after political regime changes, as citizens expect the new rulers to quickly deliver on their promises with regard to public welfare, security and reconstruction.

In these situations, management of expectations is key. This entails important changes in legitimation patterns, as the regime moves from mobilisational forms, based on charismatic or normative appeals and material benefits, to more institutionalised forms of legitimation, based on the 'normal' functioning of government. At this moment, the legitimation profile should become, once again, more reliant on those modalities that identify the respective regime type.

6. Four properties of legitimation

Researchers often aspire to measure the 'amount' of legitimacy political regimes hold at a given point in time (for instance, see Gilley, 2009). The durability or vulnerability of legitimacy is hardly ever addressed. However, it appears obvious that some legitimation patterns provide a more stable basis for legitimacy than others. At the same time, some legitimation patterns can be more easily used on an on-off basis in times of crisis and change.

The three moments of legitimation – and the shift from one stage to the other – can be assessed by taking a closer look at the specific properties of legitimation modalities. Legitimation profiles differ with regard to their design and impact. Based on the discussion of the modalities in Section 2, four properties seem to be particularly relevant: scope, reach, adaptability and cost.

− *Scope* refers to the question whether legitimacy is procured in connection with a specific policy, a policy area, or a broader set of policy areas. For instance, the reputation of the armed forces as an independent, technical body (role-based legitimation) generates legitimacy with reference to a specific policy area (security policy). In contrast, the procedural legitimation that characterises parliamentarian democracy typically extends to the whole range of policy areas subject to parliamentarian deliberation. Related to this is the question whether a legitimation modality may create a 'stock' or 'reservoir' of legitimacy concerning future decisions (durability).[16] This is an essential ingredient of efficient rule.

− *Reach* refers to the addressees of legitimation: is legitimacy procured from a small group of actors, from larger parts of a society, or from society as a whole? For instance, the decision to put on hold a major dam project (content-based legitimation) may be crucial to (re-) gain legitimacy from the local population affected by that project. In contrast, public adherence to the principles of human rights and rule of law (normative legitimation) may be designed to gain legitimacy from society as a whole. If legitimation is directed toward specific groups, the risk is higher that it will be contested by other groups.

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[16] A 'stock' of legitimacy is generated if members of society feel that they can infer from the current situation to the future legitimacy of the decisions produced by a political regime or a particular institution. Booth and Seligson (2009, pp. 3-4) discuss, and dismiss, the idea of a legitimacy 'reservoir', but they relate this idea to the historical performance of regimes, not to the modality of legitimation as suggested here.

- *Adaptability* refers to the question of how flexibly a specific modality responds to changing legitimation demands. For instance, for a military regime that bases its legitimacy on the promise of public order and security (role- and value-based legitimation), it may be difficult to adapt its performance if the prevailing preference order happens to shift towards higher degrees of freedom once public order is restored. Related to this issue is the question of *complexity* that refers to the number of actors and institutions involved in a legitimation modality. A modality based on executive action alone might be easier to adapt than a modality that involves several branches of government.

- *Cost* refers to the resources a political regime has to mobilise in the context of its legitimation efforts. For instance, the mobilisation of supporters, a typical feature of charismatic legitimation, often requires considerable efforts in terms of logistics, infrastructure and material policies. In contrast, a modality based on rather constant regime characteristics (such as role-based or procedural legitimation) should be less costly in principle. This category also includes the limits to revenue mobilisation imposed by legitimation, for instance by making it impossible to collect taxes from particularly powerful groups.

For a given political order characterized by a specific legitimation profile, it should be possible to describe the resulting picture of scope, reach, adaptability and cost in form of a scorecard with low, medium or high scores in each dimension. A political order that ranks high on the first two dimensions – scope and reach – is likely in a good position in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, while a political order with high scores in adaptability may find it easier to react to rapid changes in the demand structure. If legitimation costs are already high under normal circumstances, they may become exceedingly high in times of change, particularly if there are severe limits to revenue collection built into legitimation.

Also, while it is difficult to imagine political orders with high scores in scope and reach and at the same time a low overall legitimacy, it should be noted that the focus here is on the strategic *procurement* of legitimacy (legitimation), not on legitimacy itself: even political orders with broad scope and reach may experience legitimacy crises, if key political actors refuse to acknowledge the legitimacy claim. The 'strength' or 'degree' of legitimacy at a certain moment in time is not necessarily linked to a specific combination of scores, even though some combinations appear more likely than others.

Successful legitimation relieves both rulers and ruled from the pressure of rationalising rule at every point and moment in time. The broader the scope (range of issues) and reach (range of addressees) of a legitimation strategy, the more important its contribution to regime efficiency and effectiveness. In a period of crisis and change, however, other features of legitimation may become more relevant, above all the capacity to adapt to changing demands and the cost legitimation entails in terms of additional resource mobilisation required.

Public finance data can be an important source of information regarding the combination of properties that characterise a specific legitimation profile in a situation of crisis. For instance, do rulers enjoy the fiscal space (meaning, access to additional resources) necessary to engage in costly forms of legitimation? Are they able to increase expenditure on short notice, in order

to meet the expectations of powerful interest groups? Do changes in the sectoral composition of the budget reflect the preference order of a political regime relying on value-based legitimation with a limited scope, or are they in line with broad-based legitimation in terms of scope and reach? Are budget powers concentrated in the executive branch of government, endowing it with the necessary power to flexibly adapt expenditure to changing needs? Does fiscal decentralisation mean that important veto players exist at subnational levels of government?

Table 3: Four criteria for the assessment of legitimation modalities

	Scope	*Reach*	*Adaptability*	*Cost*
Content-based legitimation	Limited to specific policies or areas, legitimacy cannot be put 'on stock'	Mostly focused on specific groups but can be performance-based in general	Highly flexible, based on executive action	High cost because of material content and rising demand levels
Value-based legitimation	Limited scope, not very durable because of shifting preferences or disappointment	Rather broad reach, but can also be focused on specific groups	Not flexible if the regime is firmly attached to a specific preference order	Typically low cost
Charismatic legitimation	Broad scope, durability hinges on trust put into leadership	Often directed towards specific sectors of society ('them' vs. 'us'), may be contested	Highly flexible	High cost because of in-built mobilisation
Role-based legitimation	Limited to specific policy areas, highly durable (based on reputation)	Normally broad reach, sometimes focused on a specific 'policy community'	Not flexible	Typically low cost
Procedural legitimation	Broad scope, highly durable	Broad reach, extends typically to all political subjects	Not flexible	Typically low cost
Normative legitimation	Broad scope, highly durable	Broad reach, but may be contested by alternative visions	Typically not flexible, but can be shifted towards new collective visions and goals	Rather low cost in normal times, but can become exceedingly high in times of crisis

Source: author's own elaboration

7.   Conclusions: Options for empirical inquiry with regard to young democracies

The previous sections have introduced the notions of legitimation modalities and legitimation profiles, which characterise individual political regimes. It has been argued that situations of regime change are associated with important deviations from the ideal typical legitimation profile that characterises the respective regime type. Once the new regime is firmly installed, legitimation should return to patterns that are again more reflective of the (new) regime type. Accounting for the dialogical character of legitimation, these patterns have been described by looking at specific behavioural indicators. The paper has identified 17 indicators covering a total of 19 measurement dimensions (that is, modalities with medium or high relevance for the respective regime type).

The process of moving from one political regime to the other is the tricky part with regard to legitimation analysis, however. The indicators proposed above to describe stable political rule against a set of ideal typical legitimation profiles are not suitable for the assessment of the change process itself. Rather, careful case-specific analysis based on a thorough knowledge of the respective politics seems to be the most suitable approach. The paper proposes an analytical framework that discusses prevailing legitimation patterns from four different perspectives: scope (referring to the range of topics), reach (referring to the range of addressees), adaptability (the capacity to adapt to changing legitimacy demands) and cost (the resources spent on legitimation).

From the point of view of international development cooperation, the change from non-democratic to stable democratic rule is of upmost importance. It is also supposed to reflect the values and aspirations of broad sectors of the societies experiencing political change – in particular the growing urban middle classes. At the same time, recent years have seen the reversal of changes towards democratisation in several countries. A deeper understanding of the legitimation processes underlying these developments would be helpful to sharpen the focus of public policies, both domestically and at an international level.

Young democracies can be classified in many ways, according to the research interest driving the classification and the academic debate driving the conceptualisation (Klein & Sakurai, 2015). In the context of the research interest and analytical framework introduced above, it makes sense to look at patterns of regime emergence. This approach is based on the assumption that different patterns of regime emergence are associated with different requirements for legitimation. From the data provided by the Polity IV dataset (see Marshall, Gurr, & Jaggers, 2010), four broad patterns can be identified:

Democratisation after the collapse of long-lasting autocratic rule (examples: Latin American cases of democratisation in the 1980s, Eastern European transformations after the implosion of socialist rule): In many cases, democratisation is achieved after a profound de-legitimation of the autocratic regime (with Chile probably being the most notable exception of the rule). Legitimation is based on pro-democracy mobisations in the transition phase, but quickly moves to more institutionalised patterns of procedural rule, combined with a strong foundational narrative of civic empowerment and sovereign rule.

Democratisation after extended periods of violent conflict and state fragility: In these cases, newly installed regimes are above all faced with the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction and the provision of basis services. In the transition period, legitimation is strongly performance- and value-based and probably also quite costly, given low levels of trust and institutional reputation. The change to procedural and normative legitimation with a broad reach can take many years and several electoral cycles.

Back-and-forth democratisation refers to those cases where previous attempts to introduce democratic regimes have failed due to performance deficits, above all with regard to peaceful conflict resolution and the provision of basic services. Those performance deficits may have been caused by capacity constraints, but also by exogenous factors or by the actions of powerful veto-players. In these cases, trust in the reliability of political institutions and agreements among members of society is a particularly scarce resource. A major challenge consists in broadening the reach of legitimation in order to include relevant sectors of society. In addition, it may be necessary to appease or co-opt veto-players through performance-based, procedural and normative approaches geared specifically towards these groups.

Incremental democratisation: In some countries, political regimes move towards democratic rule in an incremental process of peacemeal reforms. In these cases, procedural and role-based legitimation is probably key, as rulers need to build up trust in the functioning of the political institutions. Scope and reach will be broadened, but specific patterns of procedural or performance-based legitimation will be geared towards specific groups of society in oder to make sure that the process is not undermined by powerful interest groups.

To sum up, while legitimacy associated with consolidated democratic rule might be relatively easy to identify and describe, pathways towards consolidation will be conditional on the specificities of regime change with its three moments of de-legitimation, legitimation of political regime change and stabilisation. If the assumption holds that different patterns of regime emergence condition the 'legitimation game' of young democracies, analysing these situations by making use of the framework introduced above could be a promising line of research.

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Table A1: Legitimation profiles and political regimes

Modality	Parl. democracy	Pres. democracy	Electoral autocracy	One-party autocracy	Personalist autocracy	Military autocracy	Absolute monarchy
Normative	3	3	1	2	1	1	3
Procedural	3	3	2	1	0	1	1
Role-based	2	1	1	0	0	3	2
Charismatic	0	1	3	1	3	0	1
Value-based	1	1	1	2	2	3	1
Content-based	1	1	2	3	3	1	2

Note: 0 = none, 1 = low, 2 = medium, 3 = high. Source: Author's own elaboration