



## Conflict Prevention and the Legitimacy of Governance Actors

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Research Report

Karoline Eickhoff and Luise K. Müller



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## **Conflict Prevention and the Legitimacy of Governance Actors – Research Report**

*Karoline Eickhoff and Luise K. Müller*

### **Abstract:**

The aim of this research report is to examine the empirical literature on the connection between the legitimacy of governance actors and conflict prevention. As the leading hypothesis for this research report, we take it that legitimate governance actors and legitimate institutions are indispensable in the prevention of conflict. We proceed with our examination of this hypothesis in two steps. First, we clarify the conceptual connection between legitimacy and conflict prevention. We suggest that governance actors should concentrate less on stability and more on legitimacy because legitimate actors and institutions produce stability for the right reasons. Second, we discuss the practical implications of these considerations. Our findings are relevant both for narrow, project-based external policy initiatives in the field of conflict prevention and for more general governance interventions. In both cases, policies can focus on two dimensions. First, improving governance performance will include adjusting external policies to fit local legitimacy perceptions. The second dimension is the transformation of predominant perceptions of legitimacy. We argue that while the second strategy might not be impossible, it is not a viable strategy for external actors. In fact, we believe that the focus on this second dimension explains many of the unsuccessful attempts at governance provision by external actors.

### **Zusammenfassung:**

In der vorliegenden Studie untersuchen wir den Zusammenhang zwischen der Prävention von Konflikten und der Legitimität von Governance-Akteuren. Uns leitet die Hypothese, dass legitime Governance-Akteure und legitime Institutionen für die Konfliktprävention unabdingbar sind. Wir gehen dabei in zwei Schritten vor: zunächst klären wir den genannten Zusammenhang auf der konzeptuellen Ebene. Unser Vorschlag lautet, dass sich Governance-Akteure weniger auf Stabilität, und mehr auf Legitimität konzentrieren sollten, da legitime Akteure und Institutionen Stabilität aus den normativ richtigen Gründen erzeugen. Im zweiten Schritt diskutieren wir die Implikationen unserer Überlegungen für die praktische Umsetzung. Unsere Ergebnisse sind dabei sowohl für enge, projektbasierte externe Policy-Initiativen, als auch für breiter angelegte Governance-Interventionen von Bedeutung. In beiden Fällen können Initiativen an zwei Dimensionen andocken: erstens kann die performance-Dimension von Governance verbessert werden, indem die externen Policy-Initiativen den lokalen Legitimitätsvorstellungen angepasst werden. Zweitens kann auf der konzeptuellen Ebene angesetzt werden, indem lokale Legitimitätsvorstellungen verändert werden. Während diese zweite Strategie nicht unmöglich scheint, sind wir davon überzeugt, dass ihre Effektivität sehr begrenzt ist. In den meisten Fällen sind Versuche, die externen Legitimitätsüberzeugungen auf die betroffenen Bevölkerung anzuwenden, zum Scheitern verurteilt.

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## Executive Summary<sup>1</sup>

The aim of this research report<sup>2</sup> is to examine the empirical literature on the connection between the legitimacy of governance actors and conflict prevention. As the leading hypothesis for this research report, we presume that legitimate governance actors and legitimate institutions are indispensable for preventing conflict.

We undertook this study because we believe that the policy debate on crisis prevention can greatly benefit from a more thorough engagement with conceptions of legitimacy and the interplay between legitimacy and the effectiveness of external interventions. At the same time, we opted for a pragmatic approach that focuses on those findings from the literature that are directly relevant for the design, implementation, and monitoring of projects in the field of crisis prevention, at the expense of a more nuanced review of the different facets of legitimacy debates in the social sciences.

We begin this review by analyzing why legitimacy matters and how the existence of legitimate institutions and actors is connected to stability (chapter 2). We argue that not just stability by itself but rather *stability for the right reasons* is desirable: while compliance with social and political rules can be induced through a range of mechanisms, only some of these prevent conflict in a normatively acceptable and stable way. For this reason, we suggest that governance actors focus less on stability and more on legitimacy. We argue that the nexus between legitimacy and stable governance not only holds for states but also for other non-state governance actors. This is especially true for areas of limited statehood.

We then examine how legitimacy can be conceptualized and what functions it serves (chapter 3). We argue that legitimacy produces stable compliance without costly enforcement mechanisms because governance recipients view legitimate governance as normatively appropriate. Legitimate institutions are thus more efficient because they need to overcome less resistance and employ less drastic means to rule. We further find that *social trust* is the elixir that enables actors to overcome collective action dilemmas in conflict prevention.

The second part of this research report (chapter 4) is dedicated to a discussion of policy implications for external actors, which we have distilled from the literature surveyed. Here, we distinguish between two dimensions for future policy: Improving the *performance* of governance will include adjusting external policies to fit local legitimacy perceptions. Engaging on the performance level requires that external actors and local stakeholders work together on the basis of explicitly shared legitimacy conceptions.

Changing the *conception* of legitimacy involves efforts to transform predominant legitimacy perceptions. This may not be impossible, but we argue that it is not a viable strategy for external actors; many of the unsuccessful attempts at governance provision by external actors are unsuccessful because they confound performance and conception dimensions of legitimacy.

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<sup>2</sup> Sources of this research report are drawn from the existing literature. No new fieldwork was done or commissioned.

Attempts to transform local legitimacy conceptions into conceptions considered morally superior by external actors are bound to fail. External actors are therefore advised to begin their efforts by analyzing their own legitimacy claims and comparing them to the legitimacy conceptions and expectations of the local population.

With regard to the performance of external actors, we conclude that legitimacy is a necessary condition for the effective provision of external efforts at state-building or service provision – thus engagements in conflict prevention. If external actors wish to achieve sustainable results on the ground, they should adopt a reflexive approach to legitimacy conceptions and engage in trust-building measures and “legitimate governance building”. Despite the normative functions performed by federal structures in conflict prevention, external actors should also look to legitimate non-state actors as potential collaborators in areas of limited statehood.

In the last section, we survey the existing literature on which features define legitimate governance actors and how to measure their legitimacy. We compile a list of conceptual elements concerning legitimacy from the literature, which we treat as potential legitimacy indicators. When measuring legitimacy, we primarily measure *normative attitudes* and *beliefs*. We find that legitimacy conceptions are highly context-dependent, meaning that what makes a governance actor or institution legitimate in one context may not count towards its legitimacy in another context. We advise surveying dominant legitimacy conceptions in a given context, matching indicators to these conceptions, and measuring whether given governance actors are *perceived* as fulfilling these indicators, as well as measuring whether these perceived activities are indeed met.

While focusing on non-executive, project-based external interventions in the field of conflict prevention and excluding military or purely humanitarian interventions, we believe that these policy implications are not only relevant for conflict prevention projects in a narrow sense but also in more general terms for project-centered governance interventions in areas of limited statehood.

## 1. Introduction: The Vicious Cycle of Weak Institutional Legitimacy and Violent Conflict

Since 1945, violent conflict has been a phenomenon that mainly occurs within states, rather than between states. In this period since 1945, violent conflict within states occur more often and with more casualties and last longer than conflict between states. Fearon and Laitin compare the numbers: “Between 1945 and 1999, about 3.33 million battle deaths occurred in the 25 interstate wars (...). These wars involved just 25 states (...) and had a median duration of not quite 3 months. In contrast, in the same period there were roughly 127 civil wars (...). A conservative estimate of the total dead as a direct result of these conflicts is 16.2 million, five times the interstate toll. These civil wars occurred in 73 states (...) and had a median duration of roughly six years” (Fearon and Laitin 2003: 75).

More recently, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program recorded 70 active conflicts between non-state actors for 2015, the highest number since the end of the Cold War. 2014 was the second-worst year since the end of the Cold War in terms of fatalities from armed conflict, with only a slight decline in 2015. This intensification is largely attributed to developments in the Middle East, with Syria accounting for more than half of all fatalities from conflict with state involvement. The number of armed conflicts involving at least one state party went up from 41 in 2014 to 50 in 2015, which is the second highest number since World War II. At the same time, only one of these active conflicts occurred between states – indicating a continuation of the trend identified by Fearon and Laitin for the period between 1945 and 1999 (Melander et al. 2016: 727–729).

Empirical evidence suggests that violent conflict often occurs where political institutions are weak and unstable. The World Development Report 2011 (World Bank 2011) indicates that internal and external stresses on weak institutions increase the likelihood of violent conflict: “(...) countries and subnational areas with the weakest institutional legitimacy and governance are the most vulnerable to violence and instability and the least able to respond to internal and external stresses” (World Bank 2011: 7). The World Bank’s view is that missing from countries susceptible to violence are capable, legitimate, and accountable institutions. They use the metaphor of a healthy immune system, embodied in legitimate institutions, that is capable of coping with internal and external stresses. Once the immune system is weakened – when institutions are illegitimate and have thus become weak – internal and external stresses accelerate the deterioration of violence and conflict (World Bank 2011: 86). Worse still, weak institutions are caught in a vicious cycle of low legitimacy. Holsti argues that the weak state “does not have the resources to create legitimacy by providing security and other services. In its attempt to find strength, it adopts predatory and kleptocratic practices or plays upon and exacerbates social tensions (...) Everything it does to become a strong state actually perpetuates its weakness” (Holsti 1996: 117). One major finding in the more recent literature is that weak state institutions do not necessarily translate into instability or violent conflict. Despite exhibiting limited statehood, some areas are surprisingly stable. As Börzel and Risse argue, those spaces are rarely ungoverned or ungovernable: “Weak or limited statehood does not necessarily lead to weak governance” (Börzel and Risse 2015: 6). For example, in some areas of limited statehood, non-state governance actors supply stable governance services from health and education to security and policing (see chapter 4 for examples and references). This is only possible when these governance actors enjoy at least some measure of legitimacy by the population. While

many governance actors at some point use coercion to induce compliance, legitimate actors and institutions also induce voluntary, instead of forced, compliance from their subjects when the subjects' compliance is motivated by normative considerations of rightfulness. Legitimate institutions and actors are stable for the right reasons.

## 2. Why Legitimacy Matters

### *The Nexus between Conflict Prevention, Effectiveness, and Legitimacy*

The term “stability”, as it applies to political institutions such as state structures, is normatively ambiguous. While some forms of stability are based mainly on coercion and repression, other forms of stability are based on voluntary compliance. The term stability itself does not imply whether we talk about the former, normatively dubious type of stability or about the latter, normatively acceptable type of stability. Subjects sometimes comply with norms because to do so coheres with their self-interest; they also often comply with norms because they fear potential sanctions, should they fail to comply. The problem with these modes of stabilization is their volatility, on the one hand, and their high costs to efficiency, on the other hand. Compliance for reasons of coherence with self-interest is highly volatile because subjects will refrain from complying once their self-interest ceases to align with the rules. Besides, it seems unlikely that most subjects' interests would be aligned simultaneously with the given rules, as conflicts of interests are inevitable within political communities. Compliance with rules for fear of sanctions is highly cost-ineffective, as the threat of sanctions must be sufficiently high, large enough in scope, and sufficiently likely to make a difference to the behavior of subjects: “Governments that base their rule primarily on coercion expend enormous resources to create a credible system of surveillance through which to monitor public behavior, reward desired behavior, and punish rule violators” (Levi et al. 2009: 355). It requires a large institutional effort that is almost impossible to achieve, even more so for institutions that employ morally acceptable means. Both mechanisms are not very promising when the goal is long-term stability. Hence, we do not simply want stability, but stability for the right reasons: while compliance with social and political rules can be induced via a range of mechanisms, only some of them prevent conflicts in a normatively acceptable and stable way.

For this reason, we suggest that governance actors focus less on stability and more on legitimacy – because legitimacy induces stability for the right reasons.<sup>3</sup>

Legitimate governance structures are of key importance for stability: stability for the right reasons is a consequence of legitimate governance. Goldfinch found that “states with higher levels of legitimacy will be more stable” (DeRouen Jr. and Goldfinch 2012: 505; 509). Restoring the legitimacy of the state's monopoly of violence is, as Lake and Fariss argue, key to building state capacity (Lake and Fariss 2014: 573). While a lack of legitimacy has been found to make it

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<sup>3</sup> This suggestion is already recognized tentatively in some international documents, for example, in the United Nations Development Goals. The SDG Goal No. 16 refers to access to justice for all and effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions.



more likely that “violent challenges to the state or its policies develop and be sustained” (Schock 1996: 107), promises of rebel leaders are less attractive and credible when legitimacy is widely felt, which makes it easier for the government to hold the state together (Taydas et al. 2010: 199). We find that the nexus between legitimacy and stable governance not only holds for states, but also for other governance actors. When governance actors are considered legitimate by the relevant population, the likelihood of voluntary compliance increases.

Krasner and Risse argue that legitimacy is a necessary condition for the effective provision of external efforts at state-building or service provision. They claim that “the absence of legitimacy inevitably leads to failure” (Krasner and Risse 2014: 563). Politically relevant audiences in target states must “accept the legitimacy of efforts by external organizations”. This, they argue, is a necessary condition for effectiveness: “no legitimacy, no success” (ibid.: 547). However, legitimacy is not a sufficient condition for success in providing governance services. Institutionalization and adequate resources are also important, and especially so when it comes to complex tasks. The three factors determining success in governance provision by external actors – legitimacy, task complexity, and institutionalization (including the provision of adequate resources) – are connected and mutually influential (ibid.: 546). A case study presented by Beisheim et al. shows that a lack of legitimacy led to the failure of two public-private partnerships in one case, while a similar public-private partnership that enjoyed a higher level of legitimacy was successful (Beisheim et al. 2014). The successful partnership also actively built legitimacy among local counterparts and beneficiaries.

The connection between legitimacy and effectiveness has been conceptualized as a virtuous cycle (Schmelzle 2011). More legitimacy leads to more effective governance, which leads to more legitimacy. The attainment of legitimacy proceeds in iterative cycles of legitimation (Gilley 2009: 84). This cycle also works in the opposite direction: a lack of legitimacy often results in resistance from local communities, which in turn hinders efficient and effective service provision. Schäferhoff observes that the success of public health services in Somalia is determined by the perception of legitimacy (Schäferhoff 2014). Similarly, Hönke and Thauer show that multinational corporations effectively contribute to service provision in areas of limited statehood, given that they are perceived as legitimate (Hönke and Thauer 2014). When they assessed which conditions are associated with multinational corporations’ effective contribution to service provision, they found that “[g]overnance attempts by external actors must be built on norms that conform with domestic norms”, or else they will fail (ibid.: 698).

### **3. The Concept of Legitimacy**

#### **3.1 The Function of Legitimacy**

Legitimacy is a normative status that designates whether a political order, institution, actor, or action is justifiable and/or worthy of being recognized (Draude et al. 2012). What makes an institution, actor, or action legitimate? The answer to this question requires a complex explanation that depends on the institution, actor, or action in question, but also on the conception of legitimacy one embraces. The first important distinction is that between the legitimacy of an

institution or actor and the legitimacy of an action. When we say that some action is legitimate, we often merely mean that doing it was justified. In contrast, legitimate institutions or actors are not merely justified in performing one particular action, but in governing generally. This is of particular interest for political scientists because this understanding of legitimacy describes what gives political institutions or actors the general right to govern. In much of the literature, a fundamental distinction is made between normative concepts of legitimacy and empirical concepts of legitimacy. From a *normative* perspective, the question is what makes an institution or actor legitimate according to an external or universal normative or moral standard? And to which normative values and rules must the institution conform to be legitimate? *Empirical* legitimacy assessments ask a different question, namely whether the subjects of the institutionalized rule *believe* that the rule is legitimate. Distinguishing between these two concepts of legitimacy implies that there may be a divergence between what truly makes an institution legitimate and what people believe makes an institution legitimate. Notice however that the object of both the normative and the empirical perspective is normative. Later, we will see that when we measure legitimacy, we mainly measure *normative attitudes and beliefs*.

Because legitimacy is context-dependent, we begin by highlighting the function of legitimacy, utilizing the same distinction between normative and empirical types. One of the main functions of legitimacy is that it signals to citizens or inhabitants of a state whether or not they have reason to follow certain rules and commands. When institutions are perceived as legitimate, it is likely that most of their orders will be obeyed *voluntarily* by most of the subjects, most of the time; institutional legitimacy produces “stable compliance without costly enforcement mechanisms” (Schmelzle 2011: 8). When institutions are perceived as legitimate, its subjects generally hold the belief that its “rules and regulations are entitled to be obeyed by virtue of who made the decision or how it was made” (Levi et al. 2009: 354). For example, an empirical analysis in a number of developing societies in Africa suggests that “the more trustworthy and fair the government, the more likely its population will develop legitimating beliefs that lead them to accept government’s right to make people obey its laws and regulations” (ibid.: 367). This belief habitually translates into compliant behavior, where the compliant behavior is not explained by fear of sanctions or pure habit, but by a normative sense of obligation on the side of the subjects. Assessments of legitimacy turn a command into an obligation. Governance recipients view legitimate governance as normatively appropriate. Legitimate institutions are thus more efficient because they need to overcome less resistance and employ less drastic means to rule. They enjoy increased likelihood of compliance and thus make governance easier, as perceptions of legitimacy reduce transaction costs (Tyler 2006; Levi et al. 2009).

The concept of legitimacy does not simply map onto the concept of political support; rather, empirical legitimacy follows a particular type of political support (Gilley 2009: 5), namely one that encompasses a shared normative evaluation standard. In that sense, legitimacy assessments also have an important *normative* function: to settle a common standard of evaluation in order to trigger enough convergence in individual judgement as to whether an institution is worthy of support (Buchanan 2013: 179). Under circumstances of the relative scarcity of goods and resources, the allocation of such goods and resources requires political decision-making, as goods and resources can be distributed according to a variety of principles and patterns. Additionally, there is a variety of possibilities when it comes to the question of organizing

the allocation. It is likely that different people disagree about what ought to be done, both concerning the outcome of the allocation, as well as the process of allocating the goods and resources. The reason for this disagreement is not necessarily the result of egoism, injustice, or ignorance, but generally due to the fact that there is no one right answer to questions of allocation outcome and procedure. The limitations on knowledge and thought, the variance in personal experience, and the fact that facts usually require interpretation are among the reasons for why even reasonable people tend to disagree about the “right” or “just” allocation outcome or procedure (Rawls 1999). This fact of disagreement explains the normative function of legitimacy assessments, as it denotes institutions and actors that possess a certain standing, which allows them to determine allocations even if they go against the explicit judgements of (a segment of) the governance subjects. As long as the institution or actor is deemed “legitimate”, it will be able to function and will elicit sufficient support, even when this institution or actor acts against substantive conceptions of “what one ought to do”. In short: legitimate institutions coordinate collective action when there is no initial agreement on how to distribute goods.

### 3.2 The Criteria of Legitimacy

Up until now, we have examined the concept of legitimacy in a functional and formal manner, not having said anything substantial about the criteria for legitimacy. How must institutions and actors be constituted to be legitimate, and how must they behave to be legitimate? Unfortunately, there is no easy answer to this question. The reason for this is multi-faceted. The problem of disagreement – for which, as we have seen, legitimacy assessments are a functional solution – repeats itself at the stage of identifying the *criteria* of legitimacy. For example, in terms of legitimacy, some governance subjects may value effectiveness, while others value inclusiveness. Additionally, different criteria apply to different actors, institutions, and services. What makes domestic actors legitimate may differ from what makes external actors legitimate. Lastly, the legitimacy of institutions and actors may be set together from a number of legitimacy criteria. The challenge is thus to identify criteria that are abstract enough and indicators that are of use in a variety of cultural and political contexts. In order to find out what it is that gives specific institutions and actors the normative standing to make political decisions in the face of disagreement, it is necessary to assess the empirical legitimacy conceptions in the relevant population. We discuss the problems and methods of measuring legitimacy, including a list of legitimacy indicators, in chapter 4.

In everyday conversation, we will most likely refer to legitimacy as if it is an all-or-nothing affair. In terms of ideal types, institutions and actors are either legitimate or illegitimate. But in the real world, the line between legitimate and illegitimate is blurred: the history of political regimes suggests that legitimacy is a scale that may slowly slide to one side until it reaches collapse. The idea of a “dichotomous legitimacy”, Gilley notes, fades quickly once one takes a closer look at the real world (Gilley 2009: 11). Measuring legitimacy is then a matter of legitimacy-mapping on a scale from high to low – a scale on which there may or may not be a point of collapse.

What it is for an institution or actor to be legitimate means different things to different groups. Nevertheless, we can make a number of useful distinctions that help categorize and identify different legitimacy conceptions in the abstract. This will aid in fine-tuning the legitimacy indicators that are applicable to different groups. A classic distinction is made by the sociologist Max Weber, who differentiates different ideal types of the sources of legitimacy: charismatic rule, bureaucratic rationality, and adherence to tradition (Weber 1978). For legitimacy based on charismatic rule, trust in the leader by governance recipients may be an important criterion. Legitimacy based on bureaucratic rationality may be assessed by the reliability of governance service provision and the perception of non-corrupt officials. And lastly, the criteria for legitimacy based on adherence to tradition may include the measurement of the population's perception of a leader's respect for values and principles and the population's perception of the local fit of external actors' activities.

Another classic and widely used distinction between different criteria of legitimacy has been introduced by Fritz W. Scharpf, who distinguishes input-legitimacy from output-legitimacy (Scharpf 1999). Because of its formal character, this distinction is applicable to different political and cultural contexts. Input-oriented legitimacy criteria tend to emphasize procedural values such as inclusion and influence of the governance subjects: "Political choices are legitimate if and because they reflect the ,will of the people"" (Scharpf 1999: 6). Output-oriented legitimacy criteria tend to emphasize actual governance achievements or benefits: "Political choices are legitimate if and because they effectively promote the common welfare of the constituency in question" (ibid.: 6). Promotion of the common welfare may come in the form of material goods, security, and the effective capacity to keep order within a territory<sup>4</sup> (Draude et al. 2011). There is increasing empirical evidence to suggest that, for state legitimacy, it matters more "how things are done" (input-legitimacy) than what decisions are made and what services are provided (output-legitimacy): "Perceptions of equity, distributive justice, or fairness in decision-making may matter for legitimacy more than expansions in access" (Combaz and Mcloughlin 2016: 1). In an earlier article, Mcloughlin argues that a purely outcome-oriented approach to legitimacy is insufficient. Instead, we ought to look "beyond the material to the ideational and relational significance of services for citizens' evaluations of the state" (Mcloughlin 2015: 342). These considerations should prompt us to always consider both input- and output-legitimacy criteria and refrain from looking solely at the one or the other.

These points explain why a one-size-fits-all approach to governance legitimacy brings extensive problems along with it. While, in some contexts, effective governance delivery is sufficient to satisfy expectations of legitimacy, in others, only democratic inclusion will do. However, there seem to be some common sources, patterns, and standards of legitimacy that take on different local forms. Legitimacy is not radically contingent. Rather, as Gilley argues, there is an underlying structure to the differing concepts of legitimacy. In particular, Giley claims that this set includes participation, welfare, efficiency, and accountability (Gilley 2009: 43). We capture these common underlying structures in our list of indicators. Nevertheless, these universal structures find distinct expression in different contexts. This gives us reason to

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<sup>4</sup> The World Development Report refers to these criteria as "Performance legitimacy (capacity) that is earned by the effective discharge of its agreed duties, particularly the provision of security, economic oversight and services, and justice" (World Bank 2011: 84).

emphasize some indicators as more important in some contexts, and others as more important in other contexts. This variance also points to the fact that policy measures will have to be contextualized to fit local practice. “Best-fit” approaches instead of “one-size-fits-all” approaches are required if the governance provision is to be successful.

#### 4. Policy Implications

We now come to policy implications of the reviewed literature for external actors who wish to engage in conflict prevention in what we call a “legitimacy-reflexive” manner. The literature reviewed suggests that there is no legitimacy conception that fits all governance constellations. Violent conflict is highly context- and path-dependent. It is thus important to appreciate the fact that there is no blueprint for a successful legitimacy increase that fits every context. Hence, there will obviously be no policy implications that fit all situations and regions. However, we can deduce from the literature that the legitimacy of governance actors matters to conflict prevention in areas of limited statehood and that adopting a reflexive approach to legitimacy conceptions means reflecting on legitimacy in project design, implementation, and evaluation from two perspectives.

The first perspective is concerned with the legitimacy of external actors who become part of a domestic governance setup and, to a certain extent, interfere with domestic sovereignty. Perceptions of the rightfulness and adequacy of external intervention matter to the success of interventions in support of crisis prevention and may vary on local, national, and regional levels. At the same time, external actors have different home constituencies, which constitute decoupled legitimacy arenas for which external actors must account, in order to secure sustained support.

The second perspective pertains to angles external actors can make use of in order to influence the legitimacy of domestic governance institutions. The policy implications focus on the second perspective, while selectively touching on the first, if the findings of the previous chapters allow for inferences regarding the legitimacy of external actors themselves. Indeed, we argue that the legitimacy of external actors intervening in crisis prevention and the legitimacy of the governance institutions supported are contingent on each other and, to a certain extent, represent different sides of a coin in the context of crisis prevention projects.

##### 4.1 Dimensions of Engagement

The first distinction we want to introduce is between performance and conception dimensions of legitimacy as crucial to the structuring of our policy recommendations. We want to stress that many of the unsuccessful attempts at governance provision by external actors are unsuccessful because they confound these distinct dimensions of legitimacy.

Policies for increasing the legitimacy of institutions and actors can attach to two dimensions: they can either attempt to improve the *performance* of governance (I-II), or they can attempt to change the conception of legitimacy (III-IV). Improving the performance of governance will necessarily include taking into account local perceptions of legitimacy and adjusting policy to fit those legitimacy perceptions. Within this dimension, the performance of input-legitimacy (I)

as well as output-legitimacy (II) can be enhanced. Changing the *conception* of legitimacy requires efforts to transform predominant legitimacy perceptions, either applying to the input (III) or the output (IV) of policies. The table with cells I to IV aids in understanding at what levels external actors may take action.

	Input	Output
Performance	I	II
Conception	III	IV

### *I. Increasing performance at the input-level*

External actors can aim to enhance the legitimacy of domestic institutions by enhancing the performance of their procedures, for example by fostering citizen participation in public decision-making or in public accountability. In areas where societal divisions exist concerning which modes of governance provision are deemed legitimate, this could involve facilitating local consensus on legitimate governance provision (including consensus on legitimate conflict management). Importantly, this requires that the legitimacy conceptions of those who are the stakeholders in that very policy field be taken seriously. At the local level, this is the local community. Instead of building up parallel structures that compete against local functional equivalents, external actors should collaborate with local service providers and enable citizens to play a productive role. Engaging on the performance level requires that external actors and local stakeholders work together on the basis of explicitly shared legitimacy conceptions. The objective is to improve the performance of a governance system based on legitimacy conceptions that external actors and local stakeholders agree on.

### *II. Increasing performance at the output-level*

Working solely on legitimacy through measures at the output-level – for example, by improving service delivery – will have limited impact. As the literature suggests, in many cases, strengthening input-legitimacy is indeed more important than output-legitimacy. We argue that external governance services aimed solely at the output side of governance provision should only be considered in situations of imminent threats and humanitarian crisis. Without reflecting the input-side of governance provision in programming, external engagement will do little to prevent conflict in the long run.

However, it should not be forgotten that governance provision is not only about quantity and reach of governance services, but also concerns the parameters of the provision process. This is conceptually close to the input-side of governance performance (procedures, field I) but should be evaluated and considered from a different angle that external actors can utilize. In the actual provision of governance, values of fairness, impartiality, and reciprocity can also serve to improve the legitimacy of governance provision and the legitimacy of the institution providing the services.

### *III. Transforming the legitimacy conception at the input-level*

An entirely different approach to which an external actor may revert is the transformation of legitimacy conceptions. This approach involves a significantly stronger interference of external actors with national self-determination than is the case when working under the assumption of shared legitimacy conceptions. Applied to input-legitimacy conceptions, we can take the example of democratization. In many cases, democratization will be understood as an intervention that only operates at the performance level – when external actors imply that democracy-based legitimacy conceptions already prevail in the area of intervention. However, democratization programs might also aim at a transition from rule by a charismatic leader to rule by democracy. One major insight from the empirical studies is that the attempt to transform local legitimacy conceptions into conceptions considered morally superior by external actors are bound to fail. When external governance actors insist on a procedure that they identify as legitimate, in contrast to the legitimacy perceptions of the local population, procedures will be formal but substantively empty in terms of legitimacy. Mansfield and Snyder (1995) found that, under these circumstances, democratization can even be destabilizing. One hypothesis that emerged during our deliberations is that it is precisely the external actors' (implicit) focus on transforming conceptions of legitimacy in local contexts that has led to the failure of many projects.

### *IV. Transforming the legitimacy conception at the output-level*

External actors can also attempt to transform beliefs about legitimacy conceptions at the output level. Take the example of security. Transforming local conceptions of security might mean, for example, that “being safe” does not only mean “being safe from terrorist or military attacks”, but also “being safe from interpersonal violence”. Like engagements on the input level of legitimacy, this involves strong interference with domestic legitimacy conceptions and requires a substantial normative basis. In view of the interdependence between the sides of input and output, we find that attempts to enhance the output of governance services on the basis of what external actors deem to be a normatively desirable governance service are likely to fail, both on the procedural as well as on the output level.

## **4.2 Implications for Project Design**

The distinction between performance and conceptual dimensions of legitimacy has implications for the planning phase of interventions: External actors are advised to start programming by analyzing their own legitimacy claims and by comparing them to the legitimacy conceptions and expectations of the local population. This should already occur within the conceptualization phase, before interventions even begin. If divisions emerge, which is likely given that legitimacy perceptions are highly context-specific, external actors should appraise the consequences of these divisions for their envisaged theories of change. Are theories of change based on the assumption of shared legitimacy conceptions? Has the organization or the donor erected certain boundaries with regard to legitimacy conceptions that cannot be negotiated? Women's

rights to participate in public decision-making is only one example of divisions in legitimacy conceptions leading to trade-offs.

In the overall picture, transforming local legitimacy conceptions may not be impossible, but we argue that it is not a viable strategy for external actors. If the policy preferences of external actors are imposed, the local population is likely to reject the project, leading ultimately to the project's failure. If a transformation such as the transformation from one type of rule to another type of rule is to take place at all, the external actors need a normatively substantiated basis for their engagement and must make the envisaged depth of intervention explicit. Further required is a local deliberation and transformation process that is not steered by external actors, although it may be possible for external actors to initiate or nudge along such a process.

### 4.3 Implications for Project Implementation

#### *I. Modes of Engagement*

According to Beisheim et al. (2014: 664), the cases they have analyzed “illustrate that PPPs need to build local legitimacy (...) if they wish to achieve sustainable results on the ground. They can do so by investing in communication, building trust, and including local public authorities, communities, target groups, and service providers in the planning and implementation of projects.” If external actors work through and with domestic partners, they have the choice between different modes of engagement. While trusteeships do not build state capacity and have no discernible effect on governance provision (Lake and Fariss 2014: 582), state-building through contracts between host state and external actors are considered more legitimate (Matanock 2014; Börzel and van Hüllen 2014). Another example for the connection between legitimacy perception and best-fit approaches comes from empirical research in Afghanistan. A qualitative study asking Afghans' views on the ISAF troops finds that those Afghans who support the presence of the international troops posited that the troops must not be directly involved in Afghan politics and should merely support the Afghan government in rooting out corruption and implementing Afghan laws in accordance with Islam. These forms of “contracting out” (OECD 2010), however, require a minimum level of state capacity, which, if it is there at all, allows for the delivery of complex tasks. In line with this “contracting-out approach”, Risse and Krasner argue that “External actors are more likely to enjoy input-legitimacy and, hence, to be effective if they are operating through institutional arrangements that were created through contracting rather than imposition. Contracts are voluntary. They will only be signed if all parties perceive themselves to be better off” (Krasner and Risse 2014: 556).

#### *II. Building Governance*

Effective service provision need not always follow a state-centered view of legitimacy. This is why we argue that a policy change is necessary: instead of attempting “liberal state building”, policy actors should engage in “legitimate governance building”. Stabilizing or operating through federal or national governance structures is not always the most effective means of achieving legitimacy and preventing conflict. Existing governance structures on the ground should be



analyzed, and in cases where federal statehood is (severely) limited in terms of effectiveness or legitimacy, measures for crisis prevention should be implemented in collaboration with the local population. In some cases, this may mean including non-state local governance providers. This is of particular relevance in areas of limited statehood.

Despite the positive potential of collaborating with non-state service providers, certain dangers remain. One of them is the danger that the population “may no longer see service provision as the responsibility of the state, but may rather see the role of the state as facilitating the delivery of services by non-state actors” (Denney et al. 2015: 2). This may lead to a further limitation of state capacity and thereby weaken the state’s image as a service provider – and ultimately as a legitimate institution. The other side of the coin is that states may feel less incentivized to invest in national systems that provide reliable governance (Rocha Menocal 2013). Another normative danger lies in the fact that at least some of the services by non-state actors are partisan by nature. This is, for example, the case with multinational corporations, which tend to exclude non-workers from direct service provision (although this does not mean that no non-worker will ever benefit). Some NGOs have specific agendas that may lead to exclusion. Moreover, local leaders may rely on group-based or financial support and therefore exclude a portion of governance service recipients. If governance is not inclusive and roughly equitable, it can reinforce the same grievances and divisions that triggered earlier conflict (UNPSO 2012: 9).

Therefore, the federal state as a governance model still plays a key role. As we have found above, federal structures have the normative function of fencing in disagreements, opening up a space in which those disagreements can be voiced and arbitrated politically, instead of with violent means. Moreover, conflict prevention is a complex task by default. Complex tasks require not only local legitimacy but also institutionalized arrangements to coordinate and structure the provision of governance as well as the interactions between governance actors. (Matanock 2014; Beisheim et al. 2014; Hönke and Thauer 2014; Schäferhoff 2014). Yet building statehood may well be a more long-term project than previously perceived, and external governance actors are well advised to take non-state governance into account.

### *Fostering Social Trust*

“Formal order... is always and to some considerable degree parasitic on informal processes, which the formal scheme does not recognize, without which it could not exist, and which it alone cannot create and maintain” (Scott 1998: 310). The last part of this quote is particularly important to understanding the prerequisites for building a legitimate order. The literature suggests that a lack of social trust leads to the erosion of political institutions. Social trust is “a major precondition for effective and legitimate governance in areas of limited statehood with dysfunctional formal institutions” (Börzel and Risse 2015: 8). As such, social trust is also an important angle for external actors aiming to strengthen legitimate governance institutions.

The reason for the close connection between social trust and legitimate political institutions is that social trust facilitates group agency. We have seen that the normative function of legitimacy is to coordinate collective action in the face of disagreement over what is considered just. For this to function, a minimum of trust in those who are governed under the same institution is necessary: only when I can generally rely on the belief that most others will obey a given rule,

most of the time, is it rational for me to obey a given rule, too. For that general belief to emerge, I need to trust that they share my belief. Social trust is the elixir that enables actors to overcome collective action dilemmas as it provides assurance that others will comply too. Gilley argues that social trust can enable institutions to develop their legitimacy and break out of the vicious cycle, as governance recipients make a leap of faith by having the reasonable expectation that governance performance will get better: “virtuous cycles of legitimation (...) begin with trust and are spurred on by a shared sense of common purpose” (Giley 2009: 92). Similarly, Börzel and Risse argue that where there is intergroup social trust, there is likely to be legitimate authority: “Communities whose members trust each other are likely to put leaders in charge and convey authority and rules to people whom they also trust” (Börzel and Risse 2015: 9). Social trust has three dimensions. Interpersonal trust is trust in individuals with whom one has a personal connection; particularized trust is group-based trust and is contingent on social identities; and generalized trust is trust that reaches beyond personal connections.

Börzel and Risse argue that one main challenge is to move from personalized to generalized trust, so that person A trusts person B even though they have no personal connection. This can occur when both individuals are part of the same imagined community (Anderson 1991). Generalized trust, they conclude, depends on inclusive social identities (Börzel and Risse 2015). According to this thinking, it would be advisable for external actors to focus on generalized trust as a pre-condition to legitimate institutions by fostering social trust and helping to restore inter-group confidence and confidence in local institutions.

At the same time, governance actors should be careful when engaging in building social trust that is not generalized. Börzel and Risse argue that “personalized social trust among ethnic or faith-based communities might prevent rather than foster generalized trust across diverse communities” (Risse/Börzel 2015: 12). Shared normative beliefs and practices are good in principle but can be dangerous, because depending on the distribution of these normative beliefs and practices may result in the exclusion of some groups or individuals. This is true particularly of areas of limited statehood, where social heterogeneity is often high. Here, generalized social trust is difficult to foster, as ethnic or faith-based identities have often been at the center of conflict, and animosities have grown over decades. It is likely that, in these areas, we will find mistrust and hatred among different identities. However, generalized social trust can be “learned”: positive experience fosters trust. Regular social interaction in associations and networks of civic engagements can be the means to this end. Where these experiences are absent, the building of social trust must rely on formal political and legal institutions. Börzel and Risse conclude that it is “crucial in socially and culturally heterogeneous areas of limited statehood to construct overlapping identities that allow for ‘communities among strangers’ (...)” (Risse/Börzel 2015: 15).

Draude et al propose that generalized trust can develop through everyday experiences of fairness, impartiality, and reciprocity, as these experiences contribute to the predictability of institutions (Draude et al 2018). These values should not only be reflected in the theory of change for the domestic institution that is supported, but also in the performance (standard operating procedures) of the external actors as part of the domestic governance setup. If contingent upon one another, external interventions will be more successful in terms of fostering the legitimacy of domestic institutions, if the external actor lives up to the same benchmarks that are expected

to create predictability in the eyes of the affected population. Project activities should therefore be monitored through the lenses of fairness, impartiality, and reciprocity.

#### **4.4 Implications for Monitoring & Evaluation**

##### *I. Measuring Legitimacy*

To date, legitimacy features significantly less in Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) exercises than in effectiveness of external intervention. Therefore, we propose a set of determinants of legitimacy that external actors can draw upon in M&E exercises. In view of the context- and path-dependent character of legitimacy, this list cannot be exhaustive. At the same time, we acknowledge that, from a pragmatic perspective, external actors will not be able to account for all determinants in their crisis prevention programming. The list is envisaged to provide external actors with a “toolbox” for M&E exercises, from which they can pick determinants and transform them into indicators that are relevant and measurable in the context of their projects.

However, M&E should not only focus on the envisaged changes in the domestic institutional setup. In order to also account for the role of the external actor within the institutional setup, a reflexive approach should be adopted, which entails feedback loops and the systematic monitoring of external actors’ actions, as well. International or regional organizations can help to monitor results and evaluate external governance actors.

##### *II. Determinants of Legitimacy*

Measuring legitimacy is difficult. In her 2005 presidential address to the American Political Science Association, Margaret Levi stated that legitimacy “is a complex concept that includes many elements, but no one (...) has successfully sorted out which of the various elements are necessary or how to measure indicators or their interactions” (Levi 2006: 13). As we have seen above, conceptions of legitimacy are highly context-dependent, which makes it impossible to devise one formula for measuring the legitimacy of orders, institutions, or actors. Yet beyond this fundamental problem, other operational and conceptual hurdles await, especially when the aim is to measure legitimacy in contexts of limited statehood. Von Haldenwang notes that “one could almost say that the more precarious the apparent legitimacy of a political order, the more difficult it is to put this impression to a rigorous test” (von Haldenwang 2016: 1). One of the reasons for this is that reliable data on fragile or conflict-ridden areas is limited, as it has not yet been collected. But beyond this issue, there are a number of conceptual problems. One is that there is no consensus on types of legitimacy. Another problem relates to difficulties in finding valued and reliable indicators for the different legitimacy dimensions (von Haldenwang 2016: 2). Both problems contribute to the fact that the empirical literature often measures levels of support instead of levels of legitimacy. Similarly, it is often unclear whether trust in political institutions and legitimacy denote the same phenomena.

What makes measuring legitimacy also difficult is the aforementioned fact that substantive legitimacy criteria are subject to disagreement. Additionally, the set of features that indicate

a legitimate governance actor varies according to context. Measuring legitimacy will thus not be a matter of abstractly identifying what makes a governance actor legitimate from one's own normative standpoint, then measuring whether the given actors do, in fact, conform to those values. Instead, we advise surveying the existing or dominant legitimacy conceptions in a given context, matching indicators to these conceptions, then measuring whether governance actors are perceived to fulfill them, as well as measuring whether these conceptions are indeed fulfilled. In order for such a survey on legitimacy conceptions not to be simply from nowhere, we have collected case studies from the empirical literature. From these studies, we have devised a list of conceptual elements (or subtypes) of legitimacy, which we treat as potential legitimacy indicators.

The first set of indicators, which we call *bottom-up legitimacy determinants (i and ii)*, pertain to the beliefs and behavior of the governed towards the governance actor. Measuring them will require us to look at governance *recipients*. Measuring beliefs is quite straightforward because beliefs can be asked about directly in interviews and questionnaires. They are nevertheless not without methodological problems: respondents might distort results because of fear, discomfort, or absence of opinion on the matter (Gilley 2009: 12). They may, for example, give the reply they think the interviewer wants. Ideally, the belief in legitimate governance translates into compliant behavior, so supplementing the measurement of belief with the measurement of behavior thus seems advisable. Still, behavioral indicators are also problematic: they are based on an assumed causal connection between behavior and belief, and this assumption can simply be false. Compliant behavior can have many reasons other than the belief in the legitimacy of the governance actors – for example, habit or fear of sanction. An indicator like “peaceful political protest” may or may not say something about legitimacy; it may as well say something about the political culture, political institutions, and current political issues (ibid.: 12). Non-compliant behavior can indicate assessments of illegitimacy, as is likely the case with an indicator like “violent political protest”. However, non-compliant behavior can also have nothing to do with legitimacy, as in individual cases of tax avoidance or breaches of the law. We have to be careful about causal connections between legitimacy belief and compliant behavior. Notice that behavioral indicators *alone are not* a good indicator of legitimacy: citizens paying taxes, abiding by the law, or voting in elections can perform these actions for a variety of reasons, none of which are necessarily because they accept the governance actor as legitimate. Behavioral indicators thus only work in tandem with belief indicators, as these can help falsify uttered belief indicators, for example, when respondents perceive judicial institutions as fair and legitimate but routinely resort to violence when judicial outcomes do not accord with their interests. They may also be useful in distinguishing legitimacy phenomena from other related phenomena, such as trust in specific governance officials.

The second set of indicators are *top-down legitimacy determinants (j and jj)*, which pertain to governance actors. The determinants in this set are again distinguished in claims and performance. Measuring them will require concentrating on the claims and actions of governance *providers*. One of the reasons we include top-down legitimacy determinants in the determinants of legitimacy is that, as discussed above, legitimacy can be conceptualized as a virtuous cycle. The performance of governance providers, when viewed in tandem with the dominant conception of legitimacy in the relevant population, can tell us whether the cycle is

indeed virtuous. The legitimacy claims of governance providers, when compared and contrasted to the legitimacy perceptions of the relevant population, can give us information as to the extent at which the claims of governance providers are coherent with the perceptions of legitimacy of the governance recipients and whether the relevant population “buys” or believes the legitimacy claims of governance providers. The claims of governance providers as to why they engage in governance usually refer in some way to their role in satisfying the common good, whatever they hold this common good to be. For this legitimacy determinant, we provide tentative ideal types instead of examples from case studies. Although the claims table deviates from the other tables, it is important to include it, not least because it assists external governance actors who use the list of governance determinants in reflecting critically on their own role. And lastly, when the legitimacy claims of the governance providers are contrasted to actual governance performance, we may learn something interesting about where performance should be enhanced.

Note that neither of the indicators is an element necessary to legitimacy in any given context. Some governance constellations may score very low on some indicators, while having high overall legitimacy. Legitimacy is likely to consist of different elements (denoted by different indicators) that are weighted differently in different contexts. Notice also that none of the indicators apply exclusively to federal governments. Instead, they may be used to measure and evaluate the legitimacy of a variety of governance actors and governance recipients. This is especially important in contexts where federal structures – or for that matter, statehood on any level – are or is limited. It is a misconception that there is no governance activity in areas of limited statehood. On the contrary, the literature abounds with examples of non-state governance actors: those can be external agents, like NGOs, foreign troops, or multinational corporations, as well as non-state local actors, such as warlords and local strongmen, community groups, and traditional authorities. In general, the legitimacy indicators apply both to these external governance actors and local non-state governance actors.

### III. Bottom Up Legitimacy Determinants

Attitudes	
perception of access or influence	<p>“no taxation without representation”</p> <p>Levi and Sacks (2009) find that the under-representation of a group in the legislature or the assignment of permanent minority status may reduce the group members’ sense of ownership, increase their sense of injustice and partiality in the determination of policy, and dampen their quasi-voluntary compliance.</p> <p>The research by Lake and Fariss (2014) suggests that external efforts at state-building that include military interventions and hierarchical imposition are likely to be unsuccessful because “they cannot secure local legitimacy and/or sufficient resources”.</p> <p>Wee et al. (2014: 14) argue that the “perception of historic marginalization and discrimination by the state in the eyes of the Tuareg and Arab respondents constitute obstacles to generating a legitimate state-sponsored justice system” in Northern Mali.</p>

<p>perception of procedural fairness and impartiality</p>	<p>Levi et al. (2009: 366) find considerable evidence of a link between procedural justice and deference to government authority.</p> <p>Brinkerhoff et al. (2012: 278) argue that, in the case of electricity service in Iraq, the perception of some groups having access to state services while others do not can lead to withdrawal of acceptance and potentially the re-ignition of conflict. In this case, delivering more services did not enhance legitimacy.</p> <p>In their qualitative research in Liberia, Nepal, and Colombia, Dix et al. [2012, quoted in McLoughlin (2015: 350)] found that unequal or exclusionary access to public goods was detrimental to citizens' views of the state's rightfulness.</p> <p>Fisk and Cherney (2017) find that procedural justice, measured as perceived fairness, respectful treatment, voice, and neutrality is more strongly associated with citizen perceptions of institutional legitimacy than in instrumental outcomes, such as service delivery, distributive justice, and outcome favorability: "Results indicate that the relationship between service delivery and legitimacy is not as simple as previously assumed. We conclude that procedural justice is crucial for building perceptions of government legitimacy in post-conflict societies and discuss implications for policy and practice relating to post-conflict governance and institutional trust building" (ibid.: 263).</p> <p>Stel and Ndayiragije (2014: 9ff.) report the process of stakeholder interaction, coordination, and implementation to be more relevant for an improvement in people's perception of state institutions' legitimacy than the quality of services delivered. They conclude that, especially in cases when the state is not expected to deliver high-quality service, people base their judgement of state institutions' performance more on perceptions of procedural fairness.</p> <p>Linde (2012) identifies public perceptions of procedural fairness and impartiality as a key source of support for democratic rule in Eastern Europe, while Booth and Seligson (2009) show that perceptions of procedural injustice and corruption have a negative impact on political support in eight Latin American countries (quoted in Von Haldenwang 2016: 11).</p>
<p>demand for governance/interest in politics</p>	<p>Political interest is found to be positively correlated with support for democracy in a study on the new Eastern European democracies (Linde 2012), while Mishler and Rose (2001), in a quantitative assessment of 38 countries, find a correlation between their indicator for political interest and political support for a regime.</p>
<p>satisfaction with and support of political institutions and agents</p>	<p>Taylor and Jackson (2013) operationalize legitimacy as citizens' perceptions of whether or not state institutions and agents of the law are rightful holders of authority.</p> <p>The CAST Fragile States Index Indicator for State Legitimacy, used for the Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index, includes a measurement of the extent to which the government has the confidence of the people (FfP 2014: 11).</p>

trust in institutions	Fisk and Cherney (2017: 270) measure legitimacy as citizens' expressions of their trust and confidence in the government, respect for the government, and the perception that the government is operating in the best interest of the people.
confidence in leaders	Von Haldenwang (2016: 27) argues for a cautious, context-specific evaluation of perceptions of leaders: "The opinions respondents in Venezuela held in 2010 regarding their ruler Chávez were probably much more relevant for the legitimacy of the political regime than what people in Germany at the same time thought of chancellor Merkel. This is so because the procurement of legitimacy in Venezuela under Chávez was based much more on personal leadership (charismatic rule) than in the German case."
perception of social policies	Beisheim et al. (2014) examine determinants of the effectiveness of public-private partnerships for food fortification. They find that local activist networks in India have urged consumers to reject two PPPs' products, arguing that the products open the door for multinational corporations, which will destroy local markets. Further, the activist networks have suggested that these PPPs' approaches are wrong-headed, as more emphasis should be given to viable political strategies that secure food supply. Activism is assumed to be indicative of a lack of PPP legitimacy and has been found to lead to the rejection of these specific PPPs.
perception of administrative competence and perception of corruption	<p>Levi et al. (2009: 365) find that "a perception that the government is competent, as opposed to believing that the government is corrupt, translates into an average 17.33 percentage point increase in the probability that a respondent will accept the court's, tax department's, and police's authority, respectively".</p> <p>Similar results are found for the correlation between perceptions of administrative competence and tax compliance (Levi and Sacks 2009: 326). Brinkerhoff et al. (2012: 278) report that perception of state incapacity threatened the legitimacy of governments in post-invasion Iraq. For example, they argue that when user cost for some services were increased without evidence of better service, the trust in state legitimacy may be undermined.</p> <p>CAST Fragile States Index Indicator for State Legitimacy, used for the Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index, includes a measurement of the extent to which federal and/or local officials are considered to be corrupt (FfP 2014: 11).</p> <p>Wee et al. (2014: 14) report that "judicial corruption fuels the perception of state illegitimacy" in Mali, as well as the "widespread perception that money trumps authority and legitimacy".</p>
perceptions of security	<p>There is no conclusive evidence as to how perceptions of security relate to state legitimacy. Indeed, findings from different cases are directly contradictory, whereas there is a lack of more encompassing quantitative studies.</p> <p>Sabarre et al. (2013) find that perceptions of high security are correlated with perceptions of greater state legitimacy in their survey of 2,039</p>

	<p>Afghans. Suggesting that the reverse is also true, Jackson (2014) finds that, in South Africa, higher levels of worry about crime and the experience of victimization are correlated with lower levels of perceived legitimacy of state security agents, particularly the police.</p> <p>Complicating the picture, Stollenwerk (2015: 21), for the case of Nigeria, finds that “the safer people feel, the less likely they are to attribute legitimacy to the state”, which he attributes in part to the relevance of non-state security providers combined with the historically problematic role of the state in security provision. Carter (2011) finds that as people’s fear of crime increases, they are more likely to support the state, with one possible explanation being that victimization brings individuals in contact with the state, which can have a legitimizing effect.</p>
<p>identification with political order/local fit/ respect for local values, traditions, customs</p>	<p>Building on a case study of Afghanistan, Karlborg (2014) argues that governance providers’ interaction with the local population must resonate with local norms, values, and principles, as it may otherwise be that host citizens do not accept their legitimacy. Afghans that supported the withdrawal of ISAF troops did so on the grounds that the Afghan police force and military may be corrupt and far from perfect, but more suitable to protect Afghans because “they respect the religion, law, and morals of Afghan communities” (ibid.: 439).</p>
<p>perception of overall government performance</p>	<p>Barma et al. (2014) define and measure legitimacy equivalent to satisfaction with an agency’s performance. But Combaz and McLoughlin (2016: 3) criticize this unproven assumption that satisfaction with services has an automatic effect on the legitimacy of regimes.</p> <p>Therefore, McLoughlin (2015: 341) cautions researchers and practitioners about equating perceptions of government performance and legitimacy, as “the relationship between a state’s performance in delivering services and its degree of legitimacy is nonlinear. Specifically, this relationship is conditioned by expectations of what the state should provide, subjective assessments of impartiality and distributive justice, the relational aspects of provision, how easy it is to attribute (credit or blame) performance to the state, and the characteristics of the service” (ibid.: 341).</p> <p>Sacks’s (2011) quantitative study across Africa, Latin America, and Asia finds weak correlations between objective measures of delivery (e.g., the mere presence of facilities) and citizens’ satisfaction with services. In this case, citizens’ assessment of performance appeared to depend instead on perceptions of how well government was “trying” to improve them. Recent Afrobarometer public opinion survey data similarly indicate the mere presence of physical infrastructure is not significant in shaping popular views about government performance. Rather, the quality of the experience (waiting times, availability of materials such as drugs/textbooks) and the accessibility of the service (capacity to pay fees, payment of bribes) are key (Asunka 2013).</p> <p>Indeed, perceptible improvements in performance may be more significant than absolute or verifiable measures of performance for legitimacy. In his study in Medellin, Colombia, Guerrero (2011) finds that a quick up grade of basic services (infrastructure, health, education) in the city’s less-</p>



	<p>avored districts improved political support for and trust in government. Rapid improvements generated greater legitimizing returns than slower, less perceptible progress. Collectively, these studies indicate that subjective interpretations of quality and effort (rather than objective measures of quality and effort) are significant for the relationship between service delivery and state legitimacy.</p>
sense of obligation to institutions	<p>Taylor and Jackson (2013) operationalize legitimacy as citizens' perceptions of whether or not they view the legal system and state agents as conferring upon them an appropriate and reasonable duty to obey.</p>

<b>Behavior</b>	
electoral behavior and voter turnout	<p>Gilley (2006a: 509) holds that, beyond for the question of who voters vote for, the mere act of voting, "or working from within existing structures", constitutes evidence of consent to the political system.</p> <p>In a quantitative study of Costa Rican citizens' attitudes towards their political regime, support for federal and local government, as well as political participation behavior, Booth and Seligson (2005) find that both voting and civil society activism are associated with what they operationalize as legitimacy.</p>
protest activities and contestation	<p>CAST Fragile States Index Indicator for State Legitimacy includes a measurement of the occurrence of violent riots and peaceful demonstrations (FFP 2014: 11).</p> <p>Wee et al. (2014: 15) argue for the case of Northern Mali, that the "2009 Family Code protests (...) were fueled by a population conception that the expansion of state judicial power would infringe upon the authority" of informal justice systems, which they contrast with the lack of legitimacy of formal systems.</p> <p>Booth and Seligson (2005: 546) caution against assuming a linear relationship between political protests and illegitimacy: While disagreement with regime principles indeed correlated with protests in their sample of Costa Ricas, lower support for regime performance did not.</p> <p>Gilley (2006a: 508) thus argues that specifically violent protest, which shows "the extent to which citizens feel that they must, or are forced to, use violence, as opposed to regular and legal forms of social protest", should be a good effect indicator of a state's justification failures.</p>
law abidance	<p>Gilley (2009, 2012) identifies legality and moral justifiability as basic sources of support, evidenced in observable actions of consent (quoted in Von Haldenwang 2016: 6).</p>
voluntary tax-payment	<p>Levi (1988) and Lieberman (2002) view the ability of states to rely on the payment of "quasi-voluntary" taxes (taxes that are easier to evade than directly levied taxes, like sales and export taxes) as an important measure of state legitimacy. States with legitimacy, they argue, will be able to rely more on such taxes.</p>

IV. Top Down Legitimacy Determinants

Performance	
rule of law	<p>Gilley (2006a: 509) holds that, beyond for the question of who voters vote for, the mere act of voting, “or working from within existing structures”, constitutes evidence of consent to the political system.</p> <p>In a quantitative study of Costa Rican citizens’ attitudes towards their political regime, support for federal and local government, as well as political participation behavior, Booth and Seligson (2005) find that both voting and civil society activism are associated with what they operationalize as legitimacy.</p>
security	<p>CAST Fragile States Index Indicator for State Legitimacy includes a measurement of the occurrence of violent riots and peaceful demonstrations (FFP 2014: 11).</p> <p>Wee et al. (2014: 15) argue for the case of Northern Mali, that the “2009 Family Code protests (...) were fueled by a population conception that the expansion of state judicial power would infringe upon the authority” of informal justice systems, which they contrast with the lack of legitimacy of formal systems.</p> <p>Booth and Seligson (2005: 546) caution against assuming a linear relationship between political protests and illegitimacy: While disagreement with regime principles indeed correlated with protests in their sample of Costa Ricas, lower support for regime performance did not.</p> <p>Gilley (2006a: 508) thus argues that specifically violent protest, which shows “the extent to which citizens feel that they must, or are forced to, use violence, as opposed to regular and legal forms of social protest”, should be a good effect indicator of a state’s justification failures.</p>
In general, most studies use bottom-up indicators of security (perceptions) rather than “objective” numbers of security incidents to probe a relationship between security and legitimacy.	<p>Gilley (2009, 2012) identifies legality and moral justifiability as basic sources of support, evidenced in observable actions of consent (quoted in Von Haldenwang 2016: 6).</p>
minimal level of social welfare (e.g. provision of health care, drinking water, roads, electricity, sanitation)	<p>Levi (1988) and Lieberman (2002) view the ability of states to rely on the payment of “quasi-voluntary” taxes (taxes that are easier to evade than directly levied taxes, like sales and export taxes) as an important measure of state legitimacy. States with legitimacy, they argue, will be able to rely more on such taxes.</p>

<b>Claims</b>	
representation	e.g. democratic governments, populist leaders
enforcement of law and order	e.g. local strongmen, military leaders or juntas
religious authority	e.g. religious leaders
provision of goods and services	e.g. NGOs, multinational companies
provision of security	e.g. warlords, external military actors in conflict areas

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## Research Framework

Governance has become a central theme in social science research. The Collaborative Research Center (SFB) 700 Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood investigates governance in areas of limited statehood, i.e. developing countries, failing and failed states, as well as, in historical perspective, different types of colonies. How and under what conditions can governance deliver legitimate authority, security, and welfare, and what problems are likely to emerge? Operating since 2006 and financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Research Center involves the Freie Universität Berlin, the University of Potsdam, the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB) and the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA).

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