A CROSt NATIONAL STUDY OF PERCEIVED LEGITIMACY

A cross-national study of perceived legitimacy: what factors matter in the evaluation of governments in different political contexts?

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Abstract

Does justice matter for citizens’ evaluations of political authorities? Or is it all about a favourable personal outcome? Research into perceived legitimacy of police and courts showed that procedural and distributive justice play an important role in granting legitimacy to authorities in a Western democratic context. This paper is based on a cross-national vignette experiment testing the influence of procedural and distributive justice on evaluations of a government. One aspect of procedural justice was analysed, namely the extent to which the opportunities for representation—voice—were provided (Tyler 1988). The distributive justice was operationalized as the relative allocation of benefits. Moreover, two additional factors were manipulated in the vignette: dependence on governmental help and personal outcome (positive versus negative). The vignette experiment was a part of a survey conducted with students socialized in Ukraine, Poland, The Netherlands, and France. As socialization in different political contexts is expected to have an effect on the ideas about political mechanism and justice, several hypotheses about the impact of the above mentioned factors on the evaluations of governments in old democracies, new democracies, and non-democratic regimes were tested. The results of the vignette experiments showed that the effects of socialization on the perceptions of legitimacy were not strong. Moreover, evaluations of political authorities based on justice and personal outcome were not mutually exclusive. Perhaps the most important and consistent result of this study is that independent from where the participants of the experiment were socialized, they all were more satisfied with the government when they received a positive outcome and the distribution of help was fair.

Keywords:
Comparative Politics, Democracy, Government, Political Psychology, Social Justice
Introduction

Any political authority wants to appear legitimate. Even the cruelest dictator needs at least a section of population to recognize his power, believe in his right to rule and the appropriateness of his decisions. Coercion—including the use of force—and distribution of rewards is believed to be a costly manner of making people comply with laws and support a regime. Relying on legitimacy—understood as a voluntary transfer of power to authorities based on normative grounds—at least in principle, makes ruling easier and cheaper. Studies of perceived legitimacy of police and courts showed compelling evidence that a set of factors linked to fairness enhances favourable perceptions of political authorities. These studies, however, were conducted prevalingly in the context of the USA and Western Europe. This article explores what makes people deem governments legitimate and what role does justice play versus other motives in the evaluations of authorities. Moreover, the study presented in this article is a comparative one and it aims to test the influence of the same factors believed to influence the perception of legitimacy in different political regimes, i.e. two old European democracies (Netherlands and France), a post-communist democracy (Poland), and a post-communist mixed regime in crisis (Ukraine).

Citizens’ willingness to transfer power to political authorities is often explained through alternative models of authority-citizen relations. On one hand we have a self-interested, oriented towards personal gain, and following the logic of rational (public) choice theory citizen interested mainly in the outputs provided by authorities. On the other, a community-interested, justice-oriented, and following the logic of a fairness-based psychological model citizen whose main concern are the fair distribution and procedures (Tyler, Rasinski, & Griffin, 1986). In this article, I explore the relationship between these two models of a citizen in different political regimes and try to answer whether the same factors matter in evaluations of authorities among individuals socialized in different political contexts. The article starts with outlining the theories of legitimacy and the approach to legitimacy used in this study, as well as presenting factors that were theoretically and empirically identified as antecedents of perceived legitimacy. It continues with the discussion of the methodology used to test the hypotheses drawn from these theories and with the report of the experiment’s results in each country. The discussion, comparison and conclusion close the article.
Theory, definitions and hypotheses

Legitimacy

Legitimacy is an attribute of authorities assigned to them by citizens. According to Easton (1965, p. 278), it is ‘a strong inner conviction of the moral validity of the authorities or regime’. What seems to unite most definitions of legitimacy is their reference to norms and moral aspects of the exercise of power. Scholars of legitimacy take, however, two distinct approaches that pertain to norms: Weberian descriptive approach and Kantian prescriptive (normative) approach (Beetham, 1991, pp. 3–15; Bjola, 2008, pp. 629–630). The first approach is concerned with the norms present in a given society or held by a specific population in relation to the exercise of power whereas the latter approach judges authorities according to the pre-set (ideal) moral standards. In other words, ‘Legitimacy is often presented as both an observable historical situation, and as a moral relationship’ (Barker, 1990, p. 13). The ‘descriptive (empirical) school’ is concerned with historical situations, whereas the ‘normative school’ is preoccupied with moral relationships. I research legitimacy using the descriptive approach, which does not presume a universal set of values as a criterion of evaluation of authorities in different social, political, and historical contexts. More specifically, I focus on differences of evaluation criteria influencing legitimacy in different countries.

Moreover, in this article the focus is specifically on perceived legitimacy—evaluations of legitimacy of authorities on the level of an individual without aggregation of these evaluations to the system level. In other words, the goal of this article is to show the mechanisms behind the judgments about authorities’ rights to rule rather than to make a statement that these authorities either do or do not have this right.

Factors influencing perceived legitimacy

Authorities can use different sources of power to make citizens acquiesce with them, comply with their decisions, and support their actions. Figure 1 illustrates the resources of power at the disposal of political authorities. Among the resources of power there are instrumental (utilitarian) ones (Rothschild, 1977, p. 488; Uphoff, 1989) such as economic incentives, social status, and information: an individual receives some kind of personal profit—favourable outcome—in exchange for acquiescing with or supporting decisions of authorities. Another way to achieve obedience is to use force, which leads people to submit to
authorities because of fear of coercion. The third and arguably the most precious resource of power, legitimacy, makes people voluntarily acquiesce because of normative compatibility of the values promoted by the authorities with the views and beliefs of citizens. Studies of legitimacy and motivations identified several elements of this normative compatibility. The main factors that lead to the increase of perceived legitimacy of authorities were identified in more empirically oriented studies. These factors are fairness in distribution of goods among individuals, fair procedures guiding the interactions between the authorities and individuals, following the rules of a community in which an individual was socialized, and the power-position of an individual relative to authorities, also called outcome dependence (Van der Toorn, Tyler, & Jost, 2011). All these motives have to do with communal rather than with instrumental personal good and are linked to the issues of justice and equity. The reference to normative and moral standards of evaluation of authorities by individuals unites these motives as possible predictors of perceived political legitimacy.

Figure 1. Factors influencing perceived legitimacy and compliance with political authorities

In contrast, rational choice theory emphasises the role of personal interest (outcome favourability) in decisions of individuals and it predicts that transferring of power to
authorities is based on a calculation of personal costs and benefits, which makes legitimacy a concept without a link to empirical evidence. Some scholars called for abandoning the concept of legitimacy and focusing political science on the cost-benefit calculations when it comes to motives for obeying authorities and laws and support (Hyde, 1983).

However, Tyler and Caine’s (1981, p. 643) overview of political science literature yielded ‘widespread anecdotal evidence’ of higher support for authorities and institutions that act ‘according to fair and impartial procedures’. In fact, since the 1990s also political science studies have been refuting the pure self-interest explanation of support for authorities and examples of studies in the democratic context emphasise the ‘dual utility function’ in the decisions about compliance and support, meaning that people are motivated both by normative reasons as well as instrumental ones (Levi, 1991; Rothstein, 1998). Similarly, psychological—as opposed to economic—models of the citizen ‘suggest that citizens make normative judgments, rather than focusing upon whether they are personally benefited or harmed’ (Tyler et al., 1986, p. 972). According to Tyler (1997, p. 325), in opposition to rational-choice (resource-based) models, ‘legitimacy theory’ predicts that people ‘seek evidence of integrity and caring when judging authorities’. There is a growing body of studies providing evidence that legitimacy is enhanced by popular perception of authorities as just. These studies are mainly concerned with courts and laws, and police (Gibson, 1989; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Thibaut, Walker, & others, 1975; Tyler, 1990; Tyler & Caine, 1981; Tyler & Huo, 2002).

To test the normative factors determining perceived legitimacy, empirical studies especially in the field of (social and political) psychology investigated the link between norms, perceptions of fairness of authorities and their evaluations. Studies showing an independent effect of fairness of procedures and outcome that is fair for the community are contrary to earlier research, which indicated that citizens focus primarily or exclusively on outcomes they personally get when evaluating authorities (Leventhal, Karuza, & Fry, 1980). According to the studies of normative motives, perceived justice of authorities increases positive evaluations of these authorities by citizens and, as a consequence, makes the odds for compliant behaviour of people higher. The two aspects of justice that feature in this body of literature are distributive and procedural justice (Kluegel & Mason, 2004, p. 817; Leventhal,

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1 For elaboration of economic models’ predicting citizens’ choices and their influence in political science see Tyler, Rasinski, and Griffin (1986). The self-interest assumption is at the heart of the economic theory of value. The subjective expected utility is in tur the main predictor of citizen’s behaviour in the economic theory of judgment.
These two antecedents of perceived legitimacy together with outcome dependence and socialization are tested in the present study to see to what extent they determine the perception of legitimacy of a government among the respondents.

**Procedural justice**

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

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

The body of research on procedural justice has been growing in the past couple of decades within the field of social psychology (see (Tyler, 2006). A number of studies showed that legitimacy of laws and police increases when people experience fairness of procedures (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2001; Tyler & Caine, 1981). Fairness of procedures usually refers to the fairness of decision-making process used by authorities. It is, however, comprised of several dimensions and can be operationalized in various ways, i.e. as providing opportunity to voice people’s opinions about a particular matter (representation/public deliberation/participation), considerations of all the relevant information on the issue, bias suppression, following established formal rules guiding the decision-making process on a certain issue, neutrality and consistency of authorities across people and cases (unbiased and impartial decision-making), and treatment with dignity and respect (Leventhal, 1980; Peter, 2009; Thibaut et al., 1975; Tyler, 2000; Tyler & Rasinski, 1991; Tyler, Rasinski, & Spodick, 1985). The importance of different criteria of procedural justice varies depending on the institution under evaluation, issue, dispute, or context (Tyler, 1988, p. 107).
At the same time, the role of deliberation processes has been emphasised in the political science literature discussions of conceptions of democracy (Bohman, 1997; John S. Dryzek, 2010; J. S. Dryzek, 2009; Gutmann & Thompson, 2009; Habermas, 1996; Manin, Stein, & Mansbridge, 1987; Miller, 1992). Also, the concept of procedural justice can be linked to what in the political science literature is known as one of the dimensions of legitimacy, namely throughput. Throughput is used mainly as an element of systems theory and in the analyses on the level of the European Union, but it refers to similar issues as procedural justice does on the individual level. It is concerned with citizens’ normative evaluations of the quality of the governance process and their influence on the legitimacy of European institutions (Schmidt, 2012, p. 2). Adding throughput to the two dimensions of legitimacy developed by Scharpf (2003), completed the list of potential normative standards for evaluating democratic political institutions: output is about governing for the people, input is about governing by (and of) the people (usually referring to representation through a vote in elections), and throughput is about governing with the people (Schmidt, 2012, p. 3). Hence the inclusion of throughput into the analysis of factors contributing to legitimacy of institution emphasised the role of the quality of processes in decision-making: their efficacy, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and openness to interest intermediation. This fits with the above mentioned deliberative turn in studies of democracy.

Distributive justice

Another aspect of justice linked to citizens’ evaluations of authorities is distributive justice. In line with the thesis of distributive justice, people are expected to ‘be more willing to give power to legal authorities when they feel that those authorities deliver outcomes fairly to people’ (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Distributive justice however, can be seen either as an instrumental motive to comply with authorities, when the main focus of the subject is their own gain, or it can be understood as ‘the fairness of the allocation of desirable outcomes across people’ (Tyler, 2012, p. 345). Only the latter one represents non-instrumental normative motive linked to legitimacy of authorities. And although favourable outcome and distributive justice are related, they are clearly distinct (Tyler, 1988, p. 117). Gilley provides a good illustration of the difference between legitimacy and support based on personal interest: ‘A citizen who supports the regimes ‘because it is doing well in creating jobs’ is expressing views of legitimacy. A citizen who supports the regimes ‘because I have a job’ is not’ (Gilley, 2006, p. 502).
Distributive justice can be seen also as encompassed in the idea of common good—‘the conviction that there is something called the interest of the realm, the public, common, or national interest, the general good and public welfare, or the good of the tribe, of “our people” (Easton, 1965, p. 312)’. According to Easton, the political authorities are supposed to promote and contribute to the common good and their failure to do so will diminish perceived legitimacy of a regime. Distributive justice refers to one aspect of the common good, namely the distribution of resources in a manner that helps the society as a whole.

Similar to procedural justice, distributive justice has its link to Scharpf’s ideas about legitimacy, specifically to what he calls ‘output legitimacy’\(^2\). One of the main goals of government is to achieve some sort of common interest. If the pursuit of the ‘common purposes and dealing with common problems that are beyond the reach of individuals and families acting on their own’ (Fritz W. Scharpf, 2003, p. 4) is positively evaluated by citizens, legitimacy of an institution increases. Following from this, if the goods and services are distributed in a way that serves the communal interest (rather than individual interests) and citizens do not experience strong relative deprivation (Gurr, 1970), then the government will be normatively appreciated and will enjoy higher legitimacy. The research into distributive justice also addresses a question ‘when those who are advantaged are willing to re-distribute resources to the disadvantaged’ (Tyler, 2000, p. 119). Consequently, distributive justice is inherently linked with individuals’ perceptions of their situation in comparison to the situation of others belonging to the same community (relative deprivation). The reflection on this relative situation is supposed to influence normative judgments of authorities. Studies by Van den Bos et al. (1997; 1998) showed that procedural justice had a different impact on outcome satisfaction depending on the presence or absence of fairness in distribution (equity).

**Outcome dependence**

Apart from normative considerations of justice of authorities, the factor that could influence legitimacy judgments of authorities by citizens is their dependence on these authorities resulting from a disadvantageous position in the social system or specific situation. Despite the intuitive assumption that disadvantaged individuals—individuals experiencing some sort of inequality—will express their disapproval of the authorities, there is evidence

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\(^2\) In his works, Scharpf discusses different aspects of output and input legitimacy and the tensions and trade-offs between them. This discussion is related mainly to the analysis of the European Union and also refers to institutional arrangements that are favourable for different dimensions of legitimacy (Fritz W. Scharpf, 2003; F. W. Scharpf, 1998, 1999, 2007).
that people who are powerless or highly dependent on political authorities express positive evaluations of these authorities. System justification theory offers an explanation of this phenomenon (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Ni Sullivan, 2003; Jost & Van der Toorn, 2012). However, a cross-cultural study of the social status’s influence on support for authorities showed no such effects (Brandt, 2013).

According to system justification theory, people want to see their social system as fair and just. As a consequence, they are motivated to ‘defend, bolster, and justify prevailing social, economic, and political arrangements (i.e., status quo)’ (Jost and Van der Toorn 2012; see also Jost et al 2004). According to Jost et al. (2003, p. 14), ‘this means that they should often view systems and authorities as above reproach and inequality among groups and individuals as legitimate and even necessary’. Moreover, this need for justification of the system seems to have significant effects on perceived legitimacy of authorities. Several studies showed that people who are dependent on the system (powerless) tend to legitimize it and approve the position of those who control those systems. Referring to Fiske and Berdahl (2007), individuals who depend on the authorities for their mental and physical health, safety, and economic well-being are in the outcome dependent situation (in other words, the authorities can exercise their power over them). The main hypothesis in the studies of outcome dependence is ‘that dependence on authorities for desired resources activates system justification motivation, and this contributes to the legitimation of power holders’ (Van der Toorn et al., 2011, p. 128). The tests of this hypothesis were conducted in educational, political, and legal setting. The political study was completed at the time of water shortage in California, which created a naturally occurring situation for measurement of perceived legitimacy of governmental authority responsible for water allocation decisions. The results of this study showed that people who felt very affected by the water shortage, evaluated the authorities as more legitimate. In general, studies driven by the system-justification theory hypothesis provided evidence that people in dependent positions express acceptance of power differences, support status quo, and boost legitimacy of (unjust) power relations (Van der Toorn et al., 2011). The evidence, however, comes mainly from studies on American respondents. A cross-national comparison of perceptions of fairness in the workplace by Americans and Hungarians indicated that system justification levels are lower among the respondents from the post-communist new democracy (van der Toorn, Berkics, & Jost, 2010).

Furthermore, there is evidence from a large-N cross-country surveys that people belonging to high-status groups are more likely to see their governments as legitimate
These divergent results might be partially explained by the way in which outcome dependence is operationalized. Brandt’s studies use standard measures of social status such as gender, income, education, race, and social class, whereas in the studies by Van der Toorn the outcome dependence is situational and hence much more specific and contextualized. The present study contributes cross-cultural evidence to assess the viability of the system justification theory and specifically outcome dependence in predicting levels of perceived legitimacy.

**Socialization**

Perceived legitimacy requires ‘a generalized sense of identification with and feeling of obligation toward the regime that motivates citizens to comply’ (Gurr, 1970, p. 185). This generalized sense of identification and obligation to comply with the rules of the regime is achieved through socialization (social learning). Political socialization according to Easton and Dennis (1980, p. 7) refers to ‘those developmental process through which persons acquire political orientations and patterns of behaviour’. Easton (1965, p. 208) linked socialization with legitimacy as contributing to the authorities’ capacity to rule, which is ‘closely connected to the presence of an ingrained belief, usually transmitted across the generations in the socialization process, that the occupants of the political authority roles have a right to command and the other members of the system a duty to obey’. The assumption of Easton is that citizens (members of a system) are ‘imperceptibly socialized’ to believe in the political order’s legitimacy and this belief is reinforced further in life (1965, p. 280). Since political socialization is supposed to be deeply rooted in the political culture of every country, the ideas about how a political system should function and what the role of political authorities is may vary depending on the values promoted in a given society and through its education system. Moreover, the strength of different motives to support authorities held by citizens as well as the combination of methods used by authorities to gain legitimacy can vary from system to system (Easton, 1965, p. 185). Also, according to Inglehart (1988, p. 1228) societies ‘tend to be characterized by reasonably durable cultural attributes that sometimes have major political and economic consequences’. Although evidence on the individual level is rather anecdotal and scarce, the expectation is that evaluations of political authorities and the importance of different factors for these evaluations can be affected by the regime type in which an individual has been socialized. According to Huntington (1991, pp. 46–58), the survival and legitimacy of authoritarian regimes depends heavily on their economic performance, so this this could result in citizens being more sensitive to receiving individual
positive outcomes from the authorities. Moreover, the sources and understanding of legitimacy can be culturally determined and the relation between citizens (subjects) and the state culturally prescribed.

Hypotheses

H1: Procedural justice understood as having a say/voice is more important for perceptions of legitimacy among democratic citizens than among citizens socialized in new democracies and mixed regimes

The expectation is that people socialized in democratic regimes will be more sensitive to being included in the decision-making process—citizens pay more attention to the throughput aspect of government (Schmidt, 2012). The culture of deliberation, consultation, and participation is stronger in old democracies than in post-communist democracies, and is expected to be much stronger in old democracies than in mixed regimes (H1).

H2: Distributive justice has a larger effect on perceptions of legitimacy among citizens socialized in post-communist regimes than among citizens socialized in democracies

H3: Negative outcome decreases the positive influence of distributive justice on perceived legitimacy in post-communist countries and old democracies

According to Kluegel and Mason (2004, p. 817) a strong preference for egalitarianism among citizens in post-communist countries is a legacy of the previous political system and makes citizens sensitive to fair economic distribution. Moreover, the salience of distributive justice was enhanced in this region by the initial results of transition from communism to capitalism and democracy, which increased social inequality and benefited the old nomenklatura more than average citizens. The increase of unemployment and inequality measured by the GINI coefficient meant a widening gap between the rich and poor and feelings of distributive injustice (Mason, 2003). On the basis of these social developments and the results of the analysis of the International Social Justice Project data by Kluegel and Mason (2004), justice in economic distribution is expected to be more important for the perceived legitimacy score among participants in post-communist countries (H2). However, the positive effect of distributive justice on perceived legitimacy is expected to decrease in case when individuals receive a relatively negative personal outcome (H3). A sense of negative personal outcome and relative deprivation despite the distribution that is principally just, is expected to decrease
people’s favourable attitudes toward a government. This prediction follows from the rational choice theory and fits with the self-interested citizen model.

**H4: Dependence on the authorities increases perceived legitimacy of the authorities**

Following the system-justification theory, the expectation is that outcome dependence will increase the perceived legitimacy despite the political system in which citizens were socialized (H4).

**H5: The most important motives driving citizens’ relations with authorities in mixed regimes are of instrumental nature**

And finally, following the political science literature on legitimacy, the expectation is that citizens socialized in countries different than old democracies will favor authorities that provide them with positive personal outcomes (H5).

**Methodology**

The method used to investigate perceived legitimacy was a factorial vignette experiment\(^3\). The vignette text described a hypothetical situation in which a government made a decision about helping the victims of a flood that had occurred in their country. In the vignette four factors were manipulated each taking two levels: being strong/present (level 1) or being weak/absent (level 2). This 2 (procedural justice) × 2 (distributive justice) × 2 (dependence) × 2 (personal outcome) design yielded 16 versions of the story. The same 16 vignettes were presented to students in four different countries in their native language. The survey was administered as a paper-and-pen task to students in the Netherlands, Poland, and France, and online to students in Ukraine.

In each country we collected samples of students, because they are a comparable group in the cross-cultural context: they come from similar backgrounds, more often than other groups use the internet as a source of information, and—most importantly—because of their similar age, they were equally recently socialized into their respective political communities. In this way we kept many variables constant and were able to look for the differences in the evaluation process linked to different political context in which the respondents grew up.

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\(^3\) It is also known as factorial survey. The term factorial survey is more often used in case of nationally representative studies.
Each participant was presented with one vignette only so that all manipulations were between-subjects. Participants received an instruction explaining that the story they are about to read is a hypothetical one and that they should imagine that they and their families are in the described situation before answering the questions. The procedural justice manipulation was inspired by the manipulation used by Tyler and Caine (1981, p. 650) in their study of endorsement of formal leaders where the City Councilmen made a voting decision either based on a meeting with his constituents or based on his own feelings. In the present experiment a governmental commission either organized a series of meetings with victims of the flooding during which they had a chance to talk about the damages they suffered and propose forms of help that the government could offer them or a governmental commission refused to meet with the victims. The manipulation of dependence on the help of the government referred to the loss the respondent and his family suffered because of the flooding: the respondent either suffered a marginal loss (the family lost only a car that they were using in the weekends) or the house and possessions of the family suffered damages and they had limited access to primary goods like food and other essentials. The manipulation of personal outcome referred to either reception of the governmental help or to its lack. The manipulation of distributive justice referred to whom the government offered their help—either providing the benefits to everybody who needed the help most or omitting certain groups. For reasons of keeping the vignettes internally consistent, the manipulation of distributive justice was slightly different across conditions of dependence and personal outcome. To illustrate how the text of the vignette was constructed, below is one of 16 versions of the vignette used to manipulate procedural justice (present), distributive justice (present), dependence (absent), positive outcome (present).

There was a flooding in your region. The water is gone now. The house and most possessions of your family did not suffer damages. Your family has access to primary goods like food and other essentials. However, your family lost a car that you used in the weekends. The government has enough available resources to offer help. A governmental commission came to your region to estimate the damages and write a report. Before writing the report, the commission held a series of meetings with victims of the flooding. The victims had an opportunity to talk about the damages they suffered and propose forms of help that the government could offer them. Everybody got a chance to present their point of view and the report guided the decision of the government. Then the government decided that every flood victim will receive a benefit in proportion to the losses they suffered. As a consequence, you will receive a benefit that will help you buy a car. Farmers from your region will receive

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4 Pre-tests with international and Dutch students at the University of Leiden (N = 87) and a pre-test with Russian students (N = 16) checked whether the manipulations worked as intended. Short (15 min) focus groups with the students who completed the questionnaire helped to improve the phrasing and coherence of the manipulations.
benefits to compensate for the destruction of their crop fields that were the only source of income for their families.

After reading the vignette, participants completed the following questions about perceived political legitimacy: 1) The government has the right to take this kind of decisions; 2) Decisions of this government should be respected; 3) I would trust this government; 4) I would like it, if in the future, this government made decisions on this type of issues that influence my life; 5) On the whole this government is legitimate; 6) I would be ready to protest against this decision of the government; 7) If this situation is representative of how the government acts, I would like this government to rule in my country. The following questions served as manipulation checks: 1) After the flooding, I was dependent on the government for help; 2) The way in which the government arrived at this decision was fair; 3) The decision of the government represented a fair distribution of help; 4) The decision of the government had a positive effect on my personal financial situation. For all questions participants indicated their answers on a 7-point scale from 1 = Fully disagree to 7 = Fully agree.

**Experiments**

**Netherlands**

The data collection took place at the University of Leiden in September and October 2014. In total, 399 vignette responses were collected from students. The number of participants included in the analysis was 380 (responses from participants who were over the age of 25, or non-Dutch were excluded from analysis). Of the 380 participants, 149 were female and 214 were male (17 did not specify their gender). The average age of participants was 19.17 (min = 16, max = 25).

Answers to the manipulation check questions showed that all four manipulations worked in the intended direction and that the differences between the perceptions of the two levels of each manipulation were significant. The results of the t-tests are reported in Table 1. The t-tests show that in different conditions participants perceived the stories presented to them differently and as intended.

Table 1. Manipulation checks: results of t-tests for effects of the manipulations on responses to the manipulation check questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manipulation check</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Absent</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>4.07 N=193</td>
<td>2.43 N=183</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>1.638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outcome</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>2.396</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I measured the dependent variable—perceived legitimacy—with seven questions (see Table 2). All seven items were highly correlated with each other. Principal axis factoring analysis showed that the items loaded highly on a single factor (one factor with Eigenvalue > 1) that explains 55% of variance. (For the factor analysis participants with missing data were excluded listwise; N = 357). Principal component analysis showed very similar results.

Table 2. Factor loadings of legitimacy items computed by principal axis factoring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Factor Load</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would trust this government</td>
<td>.819</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If this situation is representative of how the government acts, I would like this government to rule in my country</td>
<td>.781</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like it, if in the future, this government made decisions on this type of issues that influence my life.</td>
<td>.714</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions of this government should be respected.</td>
<td>.680</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be willing to protest against this decision of the government.</td>
<td>-.618</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the whole this government is legitimate.</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The government has the right to take this kind of decisions.</td>
<td>.587</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The internal consistency of these seven items was good, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .86$, indicating that the scale is reliable. I computed the dependent variable, perceived legitimacy, as the average score for these seven items.

To assess effects of the manipulations, perceived legitimacy scores were analysed with a factorial ANOVA including all interaction effects. The ANOVA showed seven significant effects, including four main effects and three interaction effects, see Table 3. On average procedural justice increased perceived legitimacy from 3.53 to 4.14, distributive justice from 3.41 to 4.26, and positive outcome from 3.67 to 4.00. These main effects were in the predicted direction. Dependence decreased perceived legitimacy from 3.97 to 3.70 to and the direction of the effect was opposite to the hypothesised one. There were significant two-way interactions of distributive justice $\times$ procedural justice and distributive justice $\times$ positive outcome. There was also a significant three-way interaction of procedural justice $\times$ dependence $\times$ positive outcome.

Table 3. Results of factorial ANOVA for perceived legitimacy (N = 379, adjusted $R^2 = .300$). Effects with $p > .05$ are not shown.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F Value</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>37.92</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>73.15</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outcome</td>
<td>10.57</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice × Distributive justice</td>
<td>8.96</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice × Positive outcome</td>
<td>25.57</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice × Dependence × Positive outcome</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 shows that positive outcome increased the positive effect of distributive justice on perceived legitimacy. Distributive justice had a very small effect on the positive evaluations of the government when outcome was negative. Figure 3 shows the interaction effect of procedural justice × distributive justice. The presence of distributive justice increased the positive effect of procedural justice on perceived legitimacy. In other words, the just distribution of help from the government increased the positive effect of giving the voice to the victims of the flood on their perceptions of legitimacy.

![Figure 2](image)

Figure 2. Mean perceived legitimacy scores to describe the distributive justice × positive outcome interaction. Error bars show standard errors.
Figure 3. Mean perceived legitimacy scores to describe the distributive justice × procedural justice interaction. Error bars show standard errors.

To interpret the three-way interaction of procedural justice × positive outcome × dependence, separate ANOVAs were computed for each level of procedural justice to compare the positive outcome × dependence interaction across conditions where procedural justice was absent versus conditions where procedural justice was present (see Figure 4). The graph on the left side of Figure 4 shows that when participants received positive outcome independence had a positive effect on perceived legitimacy. Negative outcome did not affect dependence’s influence on perceived legitimacy. The graph on the right side of Figure 4 shows the opposite pattern when procedural justice was present. Here negative outcome increased the positive effect of independence on perceived legitimacy. In other words, participants who received no help from the government while being independent scored the government higher on its legitimacy. Positive outcome had no influence on dependence.

Figure 4. Mean perceived legitimacy scores to describe the procedural justice × dependence × positive outcome interaction. Error bars show standard errors.

France
The data collection took place at the University of Lyon in November and December 2014. In total, 430 vignette responses were collected from students. The number of participants included in the analysis was 327 (responses from participants who completed the questionnaire inattentively, were over the age of 25, or non-French were excluded from analysis; the French sample consisted of 47 respondents that stated a different nationality than French). Of the 327 participants 203 were female and 116 were male (8 did not specify their gender). The average age of participants was 18.6 (min = 16, max = 25).

Answers to the manipulation check questions showed again that all four manipulations worked in the intended direction and that the differences between the perceptions of the two levels of each manipulation were significant. The results of the t-tests are reported in Table 4. The t-tests show that in different conditions participants perceived the stories presented to them differently and as intended.

Table 4. Manipulation checks: results of t-tests for effects of the manipulations on responses to the manipulation check questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manipulation check</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Absent</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>4.34 N=163</td>
<td>2.68 N=149</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>1.653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outcome</td>
<td>4.66 N=142</td>
<td>2.52 N=173</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>2.970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>4.34 N=159</td>
<td>2.80 N=148</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>4.81 N=155</td>
<td>3.83 N=157</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>1.169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I measured the dependent variable—perceived legitimacy—with seven questions (see Table 5). The answers were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (from 1—strongly disagree to 7—strongly agree). All seven items were highly correlated with each other. Principal axis factoring analysis showed that the items loaded highly on a single factor (one factor with Eigenvalue > 1) that explains 51 % of variance. (For the factor analysis participants with missing data were excluded listwise, therefore N = 287). Principal component analysis showed very similar results.

Table 5. Factor loadings of legitimacy items computed by principal axis factoring.
of issues that influence my life.
5 I would be willing to protest against this decision of the government. -.610
6 Decisions of this government should be respected. .556
7 The government has the right to take this kind of decisions. .542

The internal consistency of these seven items was good, Cronbach’s α = .832, indicating that the scale is reliable. I computed the dependent variable, perceived legitimacy, as the average score for these seven items.

To assess effects of the manipulations, perceived legitimacy scores were analysed with a factorial ANOVA including all interaction effects. The ANOVA showed two significant interaction effects and three significant main effects (Table 6). On average procedural justice increased perceived legitimacy from 3.93 to 4.32, distributive justice from 3.76 to 4.5, and positive outcome from 4.00 to 4.30.

Table 6. Factorial ANOVA for perceived legitimacy (N = 323, adjusted R² = .217). Effects with p > .05 are not shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor/Interaction</th>
<th>F (1, 307)</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>10.02</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>35.67</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outcome</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice × Distributive justice</td>
<td>14.64</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice × Positive outcome</td>
<td>23.54</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5 illustrates the interaction of distributive justice and procedural justice. The graphs show that distributive injustice did not affect the influence of procedural justice on perceived legitimacy. There was no large difference in the evaluation of the government between respondents who read a story in which the victims could voice their opinion and respondents who read the story where they could not voice their opinions while the distribution of help was unfair. Conversely, distributive justice resulted in a larger positive effect of procedural justice on the perceived legitimacy score.
Figure 5. Mean perceived legitimacy scores for to describe the procedural justice × distributive justice interaction. Error bars show standard errors.

Figure 6 illustrates the interaction of distributive justice and positive outcome. Like in the case of The Netherlands, positive outcome increased the positive effect of distributive justice on perceived legitimacy. Distributive justice had a very small effect on the positive evaluations of the government when outcome was negative.

Figure 6. Mean perceived legitimacy scores for to describe the distributive justice × positive outcome interaction. Error bars show standard errors.

Poland

The data collection took place at universities in Poznan and Krakow in May, June, and December 2014. In total, 462 vignette responses were collected from students. The number of participants included in the analysis was 437 (responses from participants who completed the questionnaire inattentively, were over the age of 25, or non-Polish were excluded from
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analysis). Of the 437 participants 268 were female and 150 were male (19 did not specify their gender). The average age of participants was 21.17 (min = 18, max = 25).

Answers to the manipulation check questions showed that all four manipulations worked in the intended direction and that the differences between the perceptions of the two levels of each manipulation were significant. The results of the t-tests are reported in Table 7. The t-tests show again that in different conditions participants perceived the stories presented to them differently and as intended.

Table 7. Manipulation checks: results of t-tests for effects of the manipulations on responses to the manipulation check questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manipulation check</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Absent</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>3.823 N=209</td>
<td>2.311 N=225</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>1.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outcome</td>
<td>4.911 N=214</td>
<td>1.941 N=221</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>2.970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>3.463 N=218</td>
<td>2.790 N=214</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>0.674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>4.958 N=214</td>
<td>3.789 N=218</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>1.169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I measured the dependent variable—perceived legitimacy—with seven questions (see Table 8). All seven items were highly correlated with each other. Principal axis factoring analysis showed that the items loaded highly on a single factor (one factor with Eigenvalue > 1) that explains 51% of variance. (For the factor analysis participants with missing data were excluded listwise, therefore N = 404). Principal component analysis showed very similar results.

Table 8. Factor loadings of legitimacy items computed by principal axis factoring.
The internal consistency of these seven items was good, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .84$, indicating that the scale is reliable. I computed the dependent variable, perceived legitimacy, as the average score for these seven items.

Figure 7 shows the mean perceived legitimacy scores for all 16 conditions. To assess effects of the manipulations, perceived legitimacy scores were analysed with a factorial ANOVA including all interaction effects. The ANOVA showed seven significant effects, including three main effects and four interaction effects, see Table 9. The main effects were in predicted directions. On average procedural justice increased perceived legitimacy from 3.39 to 3.96, distributive justice from 3.32 to 4.03, and positive outcome from 3.38 to 3.97. The main effect of dependence was not significant. Both two-way interactions of distributive justice × positive outcome and dependence × positive outcome were qualified by the higher-order interactions. There was a significant three-way interaction of procedural justice × dependence × positive outcome, which was qualified by a significant interaction including all four factors: procedural justice × distributive justice × dependence × positive outcome.

Figure 7. Mean perceived legitimacy for all 16 conditions. Error bars show standard errors of the mean.

Table 9. Factorial ANOVA for perceived legitimacy (N = 437, adjusted $R^2 = .221$). Effects with $p > .05$ are not shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor/Interaction</th>
<th>$F (1, 421)$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>29.88</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>44.70</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outcome</td>
<td>32.20</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice × Positive outcome</td>
<td>10.10</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To test the H4 (Dependence on the authorities increases perceived legitimacy of the authorities), I compared the impact of dependence across 8 combinations of other factors. Figure 7 shows that dependence had no consistent impact on perceived legitimacy. In conditions with procedural justice and distributive justice, dependence increased perceived legitimacy when outcomes were positive, but decreased perceived legitimacy when outcomes were negative (see from the right side of Figure 7: distributive justice + procedural justice, distributive justice + procedural injustice, distributive injustice + procedural justice).

However, when both distributive justice and procedural justice were absent (most left graph in Figure 7: distributive injustice + procedural injustice), then dependence decreased perceived legitimacy when outcomes were positive, and increased perceived legitimacy when outcomes were negative.

To interpret the four-way interaction, I compared the outcome × distributive justice interaction across the four combinations of procedural justice and dependence (see Figure 8). The four-way interaction was presented in this way to make the test of H3 possible—the graphs show how the interaction of distributive justice × positive outcome plays out depending on the configurations of procedural justice and dependence.

Positive outcome resulted in a larger positive effect of distributive justice on perceived legitimacy in three of the graphs below (procedural injustice + dependence, procedural justice + independence and procedural justice + dependence). That is, in each of these graphs there was a relatively small effect of distributive justice when outcomes were negative. The only combination of factors where negative outcome was associated with a relatively large positive effect of distributive justice on perceived legitimacy was in the case of procedural injustice + independence, i.e., when respondents were independent from the help of the government and when they experienced fair procedures (the victims of the flood had an opportunity to express their opinions).
Ukraine

The data collection was conducted using Qualtrics online survey software. Participants of the survey were recruited from universities in Kiev and Mykolaiv (in the south of Ukraine) and completed the online survey between June and November 2014. In total, 930 people started completing the survey; the drop-out rate was 59%. The number of participants included in the analysis was 439 (responses from participants who were over the age of 25, or non-Ukrainian were excluded from analysis). Of the 439 participants 314 were female and 125 were male. The average age of participants was 19.8 (min = 16, max = 25).

Also in the case of Ukraine, answers to the manipulation check questions showed that all four manipulations worked in the intended direction and that the differences between the perceptions of the two levels of each manipulation were significant. The results of the t-tests are reported in Table 10. The t-tests show that in different conditions participants perceived the stories presented to them differently and as intended.

Table 10. Manipulation checks: results of t-tests for effects of the manipulations on responses to the manipulation check questions.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manipulation</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Absent</th>
<th>Cohen's $d$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>4.11 N=216</td>
<td>2.32 N=222</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>1.782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outcome</td>
<td>5.00 N=227</td>
<td>1.89 N=212</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>3.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>4.24 N=228</td>
<td>2.27 N=211</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>1.976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>4.87 N=217</td>
<td>3.95 N=217</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.916</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same as in other cases, I measured the dependent variable—perceived legitimacy—with seven questions (see Table 11) and again all seven items were highly correlated with each other. Principal axis factoring analysis showed that the items loaded highly on a single factor (one factor with Eigenvalue > 1) that explains 60 % of variance. (For the factor analysis participants with missing data were excluded listwise, therefore N = 434). Principal component analysis showed very similar results in the case of Ukraine too.

Table 11. Factor loadings of legitimacy items computed by principal axis factoring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>.583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The internal consistency of these seven items was good, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .89$, indicating that the scale is reliable. I computed the dependent variable, perceived legitimacy, as the average score for these seven items.

To assess effects of the manipulations, perceived legitimacy scores were again analysed with a factorial ANOVA including all interaction effects. The ANOVA showed seven significant effects, including four main effects and three interaction effects, see Table 12. The main effects of procedural justice, distributive justice, and outcome were in predicted directions. The main effect of the dependence was opposite to the hypothesised one; dependence had a negative effect on perceived legitimacy. On average procedural justice increased perceived legitimacy from 3.13 to 4.16, distributive justice from 3.04 to 4.25, and positive outcome from 3.33 to 3.96. The dependence decreased perceived legitimacy from...
3.78 to 3.50. There were three two-way significant interactions of procedural justice × distributive justice, distributive justice × positive outcome, and dependence × positive outcome.

Table 12. Factorial ANOVA for perceived legitimacy (N=439, adjusted \( R^2 = .433 \)). Effects with \( p > .05 \) are not shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor/Interaction</th>
<th>( F (1, 423) )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>96.39</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>130.74</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outcome</td>
<td>35.10</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice × Distributive Justice</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice × Positive outcome</td>
<td>27.45</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence × Positive outcome</td>
<td>20.44</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9 illustrates the interaction effect between procedural justice and distributive justice on perceived legitimacy score. When procedural justice was present (people had the opportunity to voice their opinions) the government scored higher on perceived legitimacy than when it was absent (people did not have the opportunity to voice their opinions). This effect was magnified in the presence of distributive justice. When distributive justice was present the positive effect of procedural justice on perceived legitimacy was larger than when distributive justice was absent.

Figure 9. The graph shows mean perceived legitimacy scores to describe the procedural justice × distributive justice interaction effect. Error bars show standard errors.

Positive outcome increased the positive effect of distributive justice on perceived legitimacy, whereas distributive justice had a very small effect on the positive evaluations of the government when outcome was negative (Figure 10).
Figure 10. The graph shows mean perceived legitimacy scores to describe the positive outcome × distributive justice interaction effect. Error bars show standard errors.

Figure 11 describes the interaction effect of outcome and dependence. Negative outcome decreased the positive effect of dependence on the government’s help on the perceived legitimacy score. In other words, if a person depended on the help from the government and did not get the help, they had less favourable view of this government than a person who did not depend on the help from the government.

To facilitate the comparison of the results from the four countries discussed above, Table 13 lists the significant main effects and the significant interaction effects according to rank order. The table shows that in all four samples distributive justice had the largest effect of significant effects.
Table 13. Rank order of the significant effect sizes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Netherlands</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>Ukraine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>Distributive justice * Positive outcome</td>
<td>Positive outcome</td>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Distributive justice * Positive outcome</td>
<td>Distributive justice * Procedural justice</td>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>Positive outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Positive outcome</td>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>Distributive justice * Positive outcome</td>
<td>Distributive justice * Positive outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Distributive justice * Procedural justice</td>
<td>Positive outcome</td>
<td>Procedural justice * Dependence * Positive outcome</td>
<td>Dependence * Positive outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>Procedural justice * Distributive justice * Dependence * Outcome</td>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>Dependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Procedural justice * Dependence * Positive outcome</td>
<td>Dependence * Positive outcome</td>
<td>Distributive justice * Procedural justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion: Comparison

Scholars from various disciplines are interested in the evaluation mechanisms used by people to assess authorities. Political psychology and political science both investigate two competing explanations behind granting legitimacy and support to political authorities, namely the rational choice model of citizen’s behaviour and the normative common-good oriented model. In this article I tested how previously identified factors influence perceived legitimacy of respondents whose political socialization into different political regimes has shaped their assessment schemes.

Manipulation checks showed that the factors were manipulated as intended in all four countries and the scale used to measure perceived legitimacy served as a reliable measure in all four countries. This allows for testing the comparative hypotheses.

The H1 (*Procedural justice understood as having a say/voice has a larger effect on perceptions of legitimacy among democratic citizens than among citizens socialized in mixed regimes*) was not supported. Procedural justice had a significant main effect in each country included in the analysis. It had the second largest effect size in the Netherlands and in Ukraine. It also interacted with distributive justice in the Netherlands, France, and Ukraine,
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whereas in Poland it had an effect in a four-way interaction with distributive justice, dependence and positive outcome.

In all three countries where the procedural justice × distributive justice interaction was significant—The Netherlands, France and Ukraine—procedural justice increased the positive effect of distributive justice on perceived legitimacy. This means that having a voice before the decision was made enhanced the positive effect of fair distribution of help both in old democratic regimes and in a mixed state in crisis, which Ukraine was at the time of data collection. In general, these results showed that participants socialized in old democracies, as well as in post-communist mixed regime of Ukraine all find having a voice in the decision-making process important.

The H2 (Distributive justice has a larger effect on perceptions of legitimacy among citizens socialized in post-communist regimes than among citizens socialized in old democracies) was not supported either. Distributive justice had the largest positive effect on perceived legitimacy in all four countries. Considerations of fairness of the distribution of help were of concern to participants regardless of the country in which they were socialized. This can be explained with the increasing role of the state as the agent of the distribution of wealth—the welfare state—in old European democracies, by the demand addressed at the state to narrow the gap between the winners and the losers of transition in Poland, and by the general disappointment with the functioning of wealth distribution in Ukraine, where the oligarchic system based on patronage and nepotism excluded many citizens from the access to goods and services.

The H3 (Negative outcome decreases the positive influence of distributive justice on perceived legitimacy in post-communist countries and old democracies) was supported. In general, in positive outcome conditions, distributive justice had a larger positive effect on perceived legitimacy. This interaction was found in the Netherlands, France, and Ukraine. In Poland, this interaction of distributive justice × positive outcome was qualified by a four-way interaction. However, also in the case of Poland in three out of four combinations of factors, the interaction of distributive justice × positive outcome showed that the positive outcome resulted in a larger positive effect of distributive justice on the evaluations of the government. In other words, in all four countries there was a relatively small effect of distributive justice when outcomes were negative.
The H4 (Dependence on the authorities increases perceived legitimacy of the authorities) was not supported either. Dependence had no effect on legitimacy in the French sample. Dependence had a significant main effect in the Dutch and Ukrainian samples. In the Polish sample it was a factor present in three interactions (Dependence × Positive outcome, Procedural justice × Dependence × Positive outcome, and Procedural justice × Distributive justice × Dependence × Positive outcome). In the Dutch sample dependence interacted with procedural justice and positive outcome. Contrary to the hypothesis, the main effects of dependence showed that being dependent on the government’s help decreased perceived legitimacy both in The Netherlands and in Ukraine. This pattern was not reversed as part of the three-way interaction: In The Netherlands, dependence either had no effect on perceived legitimacy or reduced legitimacy. This effect is thus opposite to the hypothesis. In Poland, the effect of dependence was not consistent and in four out of eight conditions it decreased the perceived legitimacy whereas in the other four conditions it increased perceived legitimacy. Hence, the hypothesis was generally not supported.

I did not find support for the H5 (The most important motives driving citizens’ relations with authorities in mixed regimes are of instrumental nature). As mentioned above, distributive justice had the largest effect in all four countries showing that although personal outcome matters, fair distribution of help was considered more important when evaluating legitimacy of governments. The results show that personal outcome has important effects—it showed significant main effect in all four countries and interacted with other factors as well. Positive outcome resulted in a larger positive effect of distributive justice on perceived legitimacy in all four countries. However, the results do not show that positive outcome was more important than the other factors for the perceived legitimacy of the government in the Ukrainian sample.

Conclusion

The results of the vignette experiments showed that the effects of socialization on the perceptions of legitimacy were not strong. The hypotheses assuming differences in the importance of the tested factors across the selected countries were refuted. The results do not imply that socialization does not matter at all in how authorities are evaluated, but they show that the particular factors tested in these studies, i.e. distributive justice, procedural justice, outcome, and dependence did not show different patterns in these four countries and that
participants perceived their importance similarly across countries. When thinking about a hypothetical government of their country, participants socialized in old democracies, a post-communist new democracy, and a mixed post-communist regime did not differ on how important distributive justice or personal outcomes were for their evaluations of legitimacy. Also, they all found a chance to express their voice in the decision making a factor enhancing perceived legitimacy.

The two ways in which citizens are expected to evaluate political authorities were not mutually exclusive. The results supported the image of a community-interested, justice-oriented citizen who grants legitimacy to authorities because they take care of the common good (distributive justice) and listen to the people’s opinions (procedural justice). The results also showed that the image of a self-interested, personal gain-oriented citizen cannot be rejected. Participants did care about their personal outcome—receiving help from the government generally resulted in a more favourable evaluation of the authorities. This means that both normative and rational-choice motives contributed to the evaluation of the government. Perhaps the most important and consistent result of this study is that independent from where the participants of the experiment were socialized, they all were more satisfied with the government when they received a positive outcome and the distribution of help was fair.
References


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