Does Legitimacy Matter
for Intrastate Armed Conflict?

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PhD Dissertation

Politica

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Almost six years ago, I took the train from Copenhagen to Aarhus to meet with two researchers at the Department of Political Science, Morten Valbjørn and Jørgen Møller. We were discussing my potential PhD project. Later the same day, I had a meeting with the former PhD coordinator, Peter Munk Christiansen. I told him that I would love to become a PhD student at the department. However, I wanted him to know that I was pregnant. His answer was something like this: "No problem, most of our PhDs have children during the PhD process. Some of them even manage to have two." From that moment, I knew that I was in the right place. Excellent research, interesting courses, brilliant teaching and room for parenthood. That was a dream scenario. My husband and I decided to move to Aarhus and I have never regretted that decision. I have enjoyed every course, presentation and workshop at the department – and eventually my husband and I broke the record and had three wonderful kids during my time as a PhD student.

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Preface

This document provides a summary of the PhD dissertation *Does legitimacy matter for intrastate armed conflict?* The dissertation was written at the Department of Political Science, Aarhus University under the supervision of Professor Jørgen Møller and Associate Professor Morten Valbjørn. The dissertation consists of this summary and four single-authored papers:

- **Paper 1.** Møller, Fenja Søndergaard (2017), "Blue blood or true blood: Why are levels of intrastate armed conflict so low in Middle Eastern monarchies?", *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, online first
- **Paper 2.** Møller, Fenja Søndergaard (2019), "How do sources of traditional legitimacy constrain popular uprisings? The case of the Kingdom of Swaziland", *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, forthcoming
- **Paper 3.** Møller, Fenja Søndergaard (2018), "Performance legitimacy and conflict in African provinces", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* online first
- **Paper 4.** Møller, Fenja Søndergaard, "How to avoid escalation of nonviolent protests: Exploring political liberalization in autocracies", *under review*

The dissertation summary reviews the conflict literature, presents the theoretical concepts and discusses the overall ideas. Moreover, it briefly outlines the main findings of the four individual papers. For details about the specific methods and data, the reader should explore the individual papers.

Chapter 1:
Introduction

The strongest is never strong enough to be always the master,
unless he transforms strength into right, and obedience into duty
(Rousseau, 1762: 6)

Every year in September, the citizens of Swaziland celebrate the royal family with the so-called *Umlanhga* or Reed Dance ceremony. This is a ritual where thousands of unmarried girls dance, and the King of Swaziland has the opportunity to choose a new wife. Although the King, Mswati III, is sometimes criticized for his extravagant lifestyle, the people of Swaziland are generally proud of their royal leader. His supreme position has never really been challenged, and Swaziland has not once experienced intrastate armed conflict.[1] This is surprising considering the level of poverty, low growth rates and inequality (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; International Monetary Fund, 2015; Pettersson & Eck, 2018; Sihlongonyane, 2003). Swaziland is remarkably peaceful compared to other African countries. For instance, the most similar case, Lesotho, experienced intrastate armed conflict in 1998 (Banks & Wilson, 2015; Melander, Pettersson, & Themner, 2016; Raleigh, Linke, Hegre, & Karlsen, 2010).

Likewise, Middle Eastern monarchies such as Jordan and Morocco are surprisingly peaceful despite limited economic resources and ethnic diversity (Cederman, Gleditsch, & Buhaug, 2013; Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013; Pettersson & Eck, 2018). Protests take place but they rarely develop into regular armed conflicts and often concern lower-level issues than the future of the King (see Paper 1 and Paper 2). In contrast, ongoing civil wars dominate the Middle Eastern republics such as Yemen and Syria. Several civil wars have taken place in Yemen since the reunification in 1990, and about 4 million people are currently displaced (Melander et al., 2016; UNHCR, 2019). Around 6 million people have fled from the civil war in Syria and millions more are internally displaced (UNHCR, 2018). The Alawis control powerful positions, but the motives for rebellion seem to differ from ethnic or religious grievances. Both Sun-

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[1] I use the terms "conflict", "armed conflict", "armed fight", "rebellion" and "intrastate armed conflict" interchangeably. "Civil war" reflects high-intensity armed conflict (>1000 battle related deaths). "Protest" and "uprising" refer to lower levels of conflict such as non-violent dissent.

nis and Shias are fighting for regime change, and slogans during the Arab uprisings emphasized freedom.[2] Moreover, the regime possessed wide-ranging repressive resources that increased the cost of fighting and thereby made greed a less important motive for dissent (Anderson, 2011; Bhardwaj, 2012; Hinnebusch, 2012; Hudson, 2014; Juan & Bank, 2013; Mucha, 2013).[3]

What explains the absence of intrastate armed conflict in cases such as Swaziland and Jordan? Why are republics such as Yemen and Syria apparently more conflict prone than absolute monarchies? This dissertation argues that the level of legitimacy plays a key role. I claim that even autocratic rulers seek legitimacy, and the ability to establish legitimate rule affects the likelihood of armed conflict. Traditions such as inherited power transfer possibly increase the level of legitimacy and thereby contribute to peace in absolute monarchies.

The concept of legitimacy is insufficiently researched in relation to conflict and this project therefore investigates legitimacy and its effects on the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict. The overall research question of the dissertation is:

Does legitimacy matter for intrastate armed conflict?

Studying the effects of legitimacy requires an explanation of the concept itself and clarification of empirical measurement. This leads to the following three sub-questions:

a. *What is legitimacy?*
b. *How is it possible to measure different dimensions of legitimacy?*
c. *How are different dimensions of legitimacy related to intrastate armed conflict?*

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[2] For instance, Mucha (2013) argues that when the Syrian regime reacted with severe repression and denied responsibility for human rights violations, it eroded the government's legitimacy and pushed moderates into counterinsurgency. Hinnebusch (2012) proposes that denial of democratic reforms and the repressive response to the protesters decreased legitimacy and initiated violence. Other factors such as fiscal deficits, spillover effects and demographic growth played a role but were not the triggering factors. Together with neighboring republics, the Syrian regime struggled to establish a solid foundation of legitimacy that could justify the autocratic rule (Hinnebusch, 2012; Hudson, 2014; Mucha, 2013).

[3] The *Uppsala Conflict Data Program* (*UCDP*) has recorded 285 intrastate armed conflicts in 157 different locations since World War II (Pettersson & Eck, 2018).

1.1 The research gap

Legitimacy has been extensively discussed in some of the most iconic works of political science. In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau discusses how to organize political communities. He claims that "force does not create right, and that we are obliged to obey only legitimate powers" (Rousseau, 1762: 7). According to Rousseau, the people should be directly involved in lawmaking to establish legitimate rule. Weber has also connected legitimacy to the state. In *Politics as a Vocation*, he defines the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory" (Weber, 1919: 1). Weber further argues that dominators must possess legitimacy to stay in power, and he describes different types of legitimate rule (Weber, 1919). Habermas argues that the modern welfare state is facing a legitimacy crisis; citizens' demands and expectations increasingly remain unfulfilled and this erodes their belief in society and its administration. Moreover, freedom rights are essential for legitimacy across cultural contexts (Habermas, 1975, 1985a, 1985b). Although the understanding of legitimacy varies, these three classic scholars agree that legitimacy is important and relevant for a well-functioning state. Thus, legitimacy is not a new phenomenon in political science.

Contemporary studies of democratization and autocratic stability also highlight the relevance of legitimacy. For instance, von Haldenwang (2017) explores the concept of legitimacy in relation to different regime types. Gerschewski (2013) emphasizes legitimacy, along with repression and co-optation, as one of the three stabilizing pillars in authoritarian regimes. Other studies look at different legitimation strategies in autocratic regimes (Dukalskis & Gerschewski, 2017; von Soest & Grauvogel, 2015, 2017) and identify how different types of autocracies vary in their ability to foster procedural legitimacy and performance legitimacy (Cassani, 2017). Hudson (1977, 2014) explores the search for legitimacy in the Middle East, and recently, Gerschewski (2018) justifies the concept of legitimacy across regime types and proposes approaches to measuring legitimacy in autocracies.

Thus, classic scholars and current studies agree upon the importance of legitimacy in relation to stability. This is obviously important for conflict research as legitimacy may constrain intrastate violence. The relevance of legitimacy is occasionally acknowledged among civil war researchers (Collier & Sambanis, 2005b; Wimmer, 2013), but the concept is not directly studied. Conflict scholars have explored motives of rebellion such as greed and grievance (Gurr, 1970; Collier, 2000), opportunities and feasibility such as costs of recruitment (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Collier, Hoeffler, & Rohner, 2009;

Ross, 2012) and state capacity (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Hendrix, 2011). Researchers have also investigated conflict in relation to regime types (Fjelde, 2010; Gurses & Mason, 2010; Hegre, 2014) and causes of different war types (Sambanis, 2001; Buhaug, 2006). More recently, conflicts have been studied on the group level (Buhaug et al., 2014; Wimmer, 2013) and more fine-grained subnational levels (Buhaug et al., 2011; Wig & Tollefsen, 2016). However, the concept of legitimacy plays a limited role. Legitimacy is mostly related to democratic regimes (Hegre, 2014) and equal representation of ethnic groups (Wimmer, 2013), and alternative sources of legitimacy are not explored. Overall, the concept is not thoroughly discussed or empirically investigated in relation to intrastate armed conflict (see Chapter 2). The aim of the dissertation is to fill this research gap.

1.2 The structure of the dissertation summary

The dissertation summary proceeds as followed. Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature and relates it to the concept of legitimacy. Chapter 3 presents the main theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions of the dissertation. Chapter 4 clarifies the understanding of legitimacy. Legitimacy is defined as *the people's perceptions of the rulers as rightfully holding power*. This implies an empirical understanding of legitimacy. Moreover, actual levels of legitimacy are distinguished from legitimacy claims and legitimacy sources. Chapter 5 presents the multidimensional character of legitimacy and introduces the different dimensions. Legitimacy generally consists of two dimensions connected to representation and performance (material and immaterial). Chapter 6 describes different forms of measurement on different levels, including challenges with measurement in autocratic regimes. Chapter 7 relates legitimacy to intrastate armed conflict and outlines general effects and expected causal relationships. Chapter 8 examines traditional legitimacy in monarchies based on Paper 1 and Paper 2, which show that sources of traditional legitimacy decrease the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict and popular uprisings. Chapter 9 explores the effect of performance legitimacy in African provinces and presents the main findings from Paper 3. High levels of performance legitimacy decrease the expected number of violent conflict events the following year. The second part of Chapter 9 concerns sources of immaterial performance legitimacy in the form of liberalization. It is based on Paper 4, which shows that liberalization hinders conflict escalation since it decreases motives for changing tactics and intensifying the fight. Chapter 10 summarizes the main findings, discusses policy implications and presents suggestions for future research.

Overall, the dissertation finds that the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict is lower in regimes with either solid legitimacy sources or high levels of actual legitimacy. Figure 1 illustrates the different papers in relation to the concept of legitimacy and intrastate armed conflict.

Figure 1. The four papers and the main variables
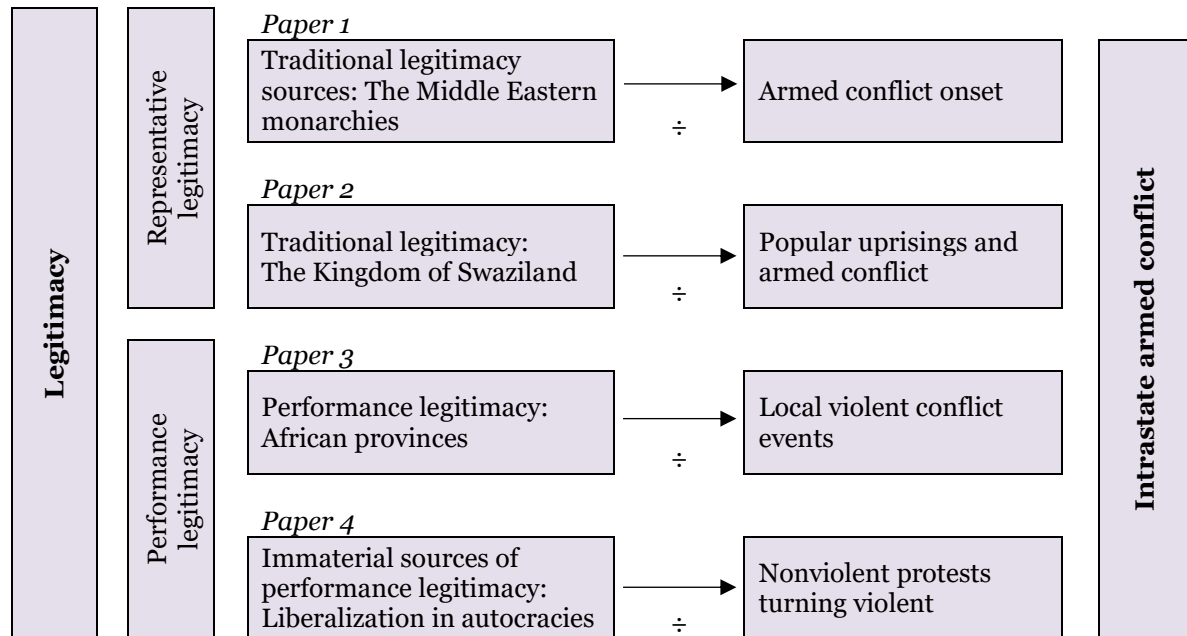
Chapter 2:
The conflict literature and legitimacy

The widespread and devastating character of intrastate armed conflict has led to extensive and wide-ranging conflict research.[4] However, very few conflict scholars are dedicated to directly studying effects of legitimacy. The next pages outline the conflict literature and how it relates to legitimacy.

2.1 Motives: Greed and grievance

One of the classic conflict studies that has inspired contemporary research is Gurr's Why Men Rebel (Gurr, 1970). Gurr argues that discrepancy between men's value expectations and value capability results in relative deprivation. Intensive and widespread deprivation increases the potential for collective violence (Gurr, 2016: 24), mainly because frustration triggers aggression. Gurr focuses on the individual's motives but also briefly discusses the legitimacy of the political system: "The intensity and scope of normative justifications for political violence vary strongly and inversely with the intensity and scope of regime legitimacy" (Gurr, 2016: 185). Moreover, "the legitimacy of governments is a major determinant of whether people's anger is directed against authorities or channeled into other kinds of action. This argument has been verified in many subsequent studies: legitimate governments are seldom targets of rebellion" (Gurr, 2016: xiii). Hence, legitimacy is unarguably important for intrastate violence, but Gurr does not explore the concept empirically.

Inspired by Gurr's theory of social deprivation, some conflict scholars have explored motivational factors connected to grievance of individuals. Bodea & Elbadawi argue that factors associated with grievance such as ethnic, religious and linguistic fractionalization significantly increase the probability of civil war. Civil war is more likely in diverse societies combined with discriminatory policies than in homogenous states with the same policies (Bodea & Elbadawi, 2007). In contrast, the greed-argument assumes that rebels mainly act based

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[4] Intrastate conflicts are remarkably damaging and cause tremendous suffering. "Families may be divided, friendships are destroyed and local communities are shattered. Thus, socially and psychologically, they are more devastating than many interstate wars" (Wallensteen, 2007: 122). Moreover, civil wars often affect neighboring countries as refugees and insecurity along border crossings may contribute to regional instability and resource scarcity. Additionally, even distant countries may be affected by intrastate conflicts, for instance via military missions, increasing oil prices or piracy (Brown, 1996; Gleditsch, 2007; Murphy, 2013).

on rational cost-benefit assessments, which means that civil wars are expected in countries with high revenues of rebellion and low opportunity costs. Collier argues that objective grievances connected to inequality, political repression and ethnic or religious fractionalizations "provide no explanatory power in predicting rebellion ... By contrast, economic characteristics – dependence on primary commodity exports, low average incomes, slow growth, and large diasporas – are all significant and powerful predictors of civil war" (Collier, 2000: 21). Motives of greed and grievance are thus measured with objective state-level indicators such as ethnic fractionalization, natural resources or GDP per capita (Bodea & Elbadawi, 2007; Collier, 2000; Dixon, 2009). The concept of legitimacy is not discussed or even mentioned in these studies.

2.2 Opportunities and feasibility

Following the greed-arguments, a number of scholars emphasize the importance of opportunities. They criticize the grievance approach and argue that grievance is too widespread to account for rare events such as civil war. Even if grievance varies, this does not explain civil war as strongly as factors related to opportunity and feasibility (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Collier et al., 2009; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Ross, 2012).

Collier & Hoeffler (2004) argue that opportunity is both sufficient and necessary for civil war. If opportunities are present, rebel leaders relate the fight to a motive (greed or grievance). Since it is difficult to measure subjective grievance, Collier & Hoeffler apply more objective indicators such as ethnic fractionalization and the Gini coefficient to test their theoretical expectation. They conclude that opportunity indicators such as low costs of recruitment are better predictors than grievance indicators. This conclusion is supported by Collier et al. (2009), who highlighted that rebels are sometimes motivated by greed and sometimes by grievance. Motives may also vary among the rebels or change during the fight. The important aspect is opportunities. "Thus, where rebellion is feasible, it will occur without any special inducements in terms of motivation" (Collier et al., 2009: 23).

Feasibility is also explored in relation to state capacity (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Hendrix, 2011). Fearon & Laitin show that indicators that reflect state weakness and favor insurgency increase the likelihood of civil war onset, for example GDP per capita, large population, oil income and anocracies. In contrast, factors connected to grievance, such as ethnic or religious fractionalization, and democracy are not significantly related to civil war onset. Civil war mostly happens in peripheral areas of weak states with rough terrain.

None of these studies mention legitimacy, but Collier and Hoeffler's model is evaluated in relation to a number of case studies (Collier & Sambanis,

2005a, 2005b). The conclusion is that "Several of our case studies (e.g., Burundi, Nigeria, Indonesia) suggest that the lack of government legitimacy and loss of control over the military and police (especially in periods of transition) undermine the government's ability to provide credible guarantees that satisfy the demands of minority groups" (Collier & Sambanis, 2005a: 319). Moreover, "Government *credibility* and *legitimacy* are crucial components of democratic regimes that cannot easily be coded in quantitative studies. But they are important dimensions that differentiate new (and unstable) democracies from old (and stable) ones" (Collier & Sambanis, 2005b: 310). In sum, legitimacy is acknowledged as an important aspect that is difficult to include in quantitative models.[5]

2.3 Regime types

A number of prominent conflict studies explore regime types. Hegre et al. (2001) investigate both the level of democracy and regime changes and find that anocracies (in the middle of the spectrum) are war-prone regimes because they are partly open and lack well-developed skills of both repression and co-optation. Regime change is particularly dangerous if the regime ends up in the middle of the autocracy-democracy scale. Lastly, strong autocracies are not more likely to experience conflict than strong democracies. Legitimacy is mentioned in relation to change: "The loss of legitimacy by the regime induces dissatisfied groups to struggle against it" (Hegre et al., 2001: 34). Yet, this argument is not further discussed or explored.

Likewise, Hegre (2014) outlines theoretical explanations for the relationship between regime type and intrastate armed conflict. Norms and institutions in democracies invite conflicts to be solved in a peaceful manner through negotiation and compromise, and democratic institutions help to accommodate commitment problems. On the other side of the spectrum, autocracies are more peaceful than anocracies because they are able to suppress potential

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[5] In relation to studies that focus on opportunities, a number of scholars specifically investigate the effect of natural resources (Basedau & Richter, 2014; Bodea, 2012; Ross, 2006, 2012). Ross (2006) develops new data and finds that the likelihood of civil war is greater in countries that have natural resources. The relationship between oil and conflict is further explored in *The Oil Curse* (Ross, 2012), where Ross concludes that the positive effect of oil on civil war is greatest in poor countries. Basedau & Richter (2014) argue that oil causes conflict if the state is highly dependent on oil or has problematic relationships to oil-rich regions. Democratic institutions and abundance of oil moderate these effects. However, legitimacy is not directly explored or discussed.

rebels or buy support. The combination of weak repressive capacity and partial openness is dangerous as it provides opportunities for mobilization for regime change. Legitimacy is briefly mentioned in relation to elections: "Most actors prefer to secure power by means of electoral victory since it bolsters the legitimacy of their rule" (Hegre, 2014: 7). In addition, repression is seen as a more legitimate tool in autocracies: "Both democracies and non-democracies use military force to counter illegitimate armed opposition, but autocracies may make much more extensive use of repression without losing legitimacy – using violence to silence opponents, censorship, arbitrary imprisonment without trial, etc." (Hegre, 2014: 5). The understanding of legitimacy and alternative legitimacy sources in autocracies are not explored.

The variation among autocracies and their relation to intrastate armed conflict are studied by Fjelde (2010). She disaggregates the autocratic regime category and argues that co-option and coercive capacity affect the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict and that both co-option and coercive capacity covary with regime type. For instance, single-party regimes have strong abilities in relation to marginalizing and eliminating the opposition, and military regimes have well-developed repressive skills. Fjelde concludes that military regimes and multi-party regimes are more likely to experience intrastate armed conflict. Legitimacy is briefly mentioned in relation to elections (Fjelde, 2010: 213) but not systematically connected to regime types.[6]

2.4 War types

Another group of scholars focuses on the dependent variable and causes of different war types. In a study of ethnic wars and non-ethnic wars, Sambanis (2001) finds that causes differ and that ethnic wars are a result of political grievance more than economic opportunity. Buhaug (2006) divides the concept of civil war into two alternative sub-types: governmental civil wars concern the political system or the government; territorial conflicts concern demands for secession or autonomy. He concludes that the conflict type depends on the strength of the rebel group relative to the state. When the state is strong, rebels are likely to fight for secession. When the state is weak, rebels tend to

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[6] In line with Fjelde (2010), Gurses & Mason (2010) study autocratic regimes types and conclude that personalist regimes are most prone to conflict. The argument is related to state-society relations. Conflict is expected in states where parts of the population do not accept the legitimacy of the state. "Single party regimes do possess a high degree of legitimacy because of the system of bargaining between the state and representatives of major organized (corporatist) sectors of society" (Gurses & Mason, 2010: 150). Alternative sources of legitimacy in autocracies are not explored.

engage in governmental civil war (Buhaug, 2006: 691-706). Buhaug also mentions the importance of legitimacy: "Regular and fair elections, unbiased public goods delivery, explicit protection of minority groups, and well-functioning local authorities raise the opportunity costs and imply that it is virtually unthinkable for any group of society to claim a legitimate *casus belli* against the regime and generate massive public support" (Buhaug, 2006: 696). Legitimacy is thus related to both elections and performance, but the concept is not further defined or empirically explored.

2.5 Horizontal grievance

Gurr (1993) has developed the theory of relative deprivation in relation to mobilization of communal groups. Some conflict researchers have argued that contemporary approaches should involve group-based motivation (Buhaug et al., 2014; Cederman et al., 2013), and this has given rise to data and analyses on the group level. The concept of inequality is divided into (i) horizontal inequality (between politically relevant groups) and (ii) vertical inequality (the distribution of goods in the total population) (Stewart, 2016).

Buhaug et al. (2014) have constructed new variables that measure economic inequality and political discrimination connected to groups, which are both factors that increase the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict. In their study of inequalities on the group level, Cederman et al. (2013) conclude that both political (access to state power) and economical group inequalities increase the likelihood that a group is engaged in civil war. Legitimacy is not mentioned as a motive but is indirectly a part of the argument. According to Deiwiks, Cederman, & Gleditsch (2012), the French Revolution introduced the principle of nationalism, i.e. that "political legitimacy depends on self-determination in the name of the nation. Indeed, where ethnic groups are exposed to alien rule, fundamental norms of political legitimacy are violated" (Deiwiks et al., 2012: 295).

Legitimacy connected to modern state formation is also the core of Wimmer's book *Waves of War*: "The book aims to show that political power and legitimacy need to move center stage in all three areas of scholarship that it addresses: on nation building and ethnic politics, on nation-state formation, and on war" (Wimmer, 2013: 5). Dynastic regimes and empires changed into states where nationalism became the new principle of legitimacy. According to Wimmer, ethnic discrimination violates the principle of equal representation. This generates motives, fosters mobilization, and thereby increases the

danger of intrastate armed conflict.[7] Wimmer does not discuss alternative sources of legitimacy such as tradition and performance.

2.6 Subnational factors

In line with the shift from state level to group level, the conflict literature is increasingly focusing on subnational factors based on georeferenced data. Buhaug et al. (2011) have explored whether income variation within countries affected conflict outbreak between 1991 and 2000. The authors conclude that areas with absolute poverty experience more conflict onsets, and local income matters more than national income. Fjelde & Østby also focus on economy and conflict and find that regions with strong vertical and horizontal economic inequalities are significantly more exposed to violent communal conflicts. Moreover, they relate intergroup grievance to exclusionary legitimacy and argue that "political elites in control of the government often seek legitimacy by favoring co-ethnics in the distribution of state patronage and provision of collective goods" (Fjelde & Østby, 2014: 743).[8]

Wig & Tollefsen study the effect of local institutional quality on conflict and conclude that districts with "high-quality local government institutions are less like to experience violence in an internal conflict than poorly governed districts" (Wig & Tollefsen, 2016: 30). The measurement of institutional quality on the district level is based on attitudinal data from the Afrobarometer (Afrobarometer, 2015). The questions involve trust, corruption, performance etc. This measurement is related to actual levels of legitimacy (see Chapter 6), but the concept of legitimacy is not mentioned in the article.

Linke, Schutte, & Buhaug link perceptions to violent conflict events and investigate whether political violence on a subnational level is related to local

[7] This is in line with Holsti's argument concerning intrastate conflicts in the modern states: "We can understand contemporary wars best if we explore the birth of states and how they have come to be governed. The problem of legitimacy is acute. The Rwandas, Sri Lankas, and Somalias of today and tomorrow – and there will be many tomorrow – are caused fundamentally by a lack of political legitimacy between rulers and the communities over whom they rule" (Holsti, 1996: xi).

[8] Other studies investigate contextual factors on subnational levels. Buhaug & Rød (2006) identify a link between territorial conflict and sparsely populated regions near state borders, far from the capital. Governmental conflict is associated with densely populated regions, near diamond fields, and close to the capital city. Fjelde & von Uexkull (2012) relate rainfall to communal conflict (i.e., intrastate conflict in which the state is not involved) and show that negative deviations in rainfall increase the risk of communal conflict. None of these studies mentions or explores the effect of legitimacy.

attitudes (Linke et al., 2015: 26). The independent variable of interest is a question concerning violence approval from the Afrobarometer round 3 (Afrobarometer, 2015). The authors include legitimacy indirectly as positive attitudes reflect "where violence is widely viewed as a legitimate means of political expression" (Linke et al., 2015: 30). Approval of violence as a legitimate approach makes it easier to fight.

2.7 Summary

In sum, the conflict literature has studied numerous causes on different levels and in relation to different conflicts types. Table 1 outlines the key studies and their relation to legitimacy, which is indirectly present in several studies. Gurr (2016) argues that legitimate governments rarely experience rebellion. Legitimacy is also connected to peace in democracies and autocratic single-party regimes (Collier & Sambanis, 2005b; Gurses & Mason, 2010). Legitimacy is even mentioned in relation to performance and argued to constrain opportunities for mass-mobilization (Buhaug, 2006; Linke et al., 2015a). In addition, studies concerning horizontal inequalities link nationalism and equal representation of ethnic groups to legitimacy (Cederman et al., 2013; Fjelde & Østby, 2014; Wimmer, 2013). Lastly, legitimacy is indirectly connected to studies concerning perceptions (Wig & Tollefsen, 2016) as the indicators reflect some aspects of legitimacy (see Chapter 6).

Thus, several conflict studies acknowledge the importance of the concept. However, legitimacy tends to be connected to democratic rule, and alternative sources of legitimacy in autocracies are not explored. Moreover, legitimacy is not directly defined or discussed in relation to intrastate armed conflict, and potential effects are largely overlooked. Although the word "legitimacy" is often mentioned, it does not directly enter the empirical analyses. The challenges connected to defining, conceptualizing and measuring the concept of legitimacy is possibly the main reason. The recent conflict literature is characterized by economic approaches with focus on "hard" measurable variables (Cramer, 2002; Sambanis, 2004a; Wimmer, 2013) and "softer" factors, which are typically more difficult to measure, are overlooked. I argue that the challenges of measuring legitimacy should not stop researchers from trying (Gerschewski, 2018). Highlighting legitimacy on the conflict agenda is an important task and contributes to the conflict literature in at least three ways. These contributions are described in the following chapter.

Table 1. Overview of the conflict literature and the role of legitimacy

Category	Key factors	Main arguments	Examples of indicators	Key references	The role of legitimacy
Motives: greed versus grievance	Vertical grievance	The individual's discontent with its social situation triggers conflict. Frustration triggers aggression.	Gini coefficient, ethnic and religious fractionalization	(Gurr, 1970; Bodea & Elbadawi, 2007)	Legitimacy is theoretically related to absence of rebellion, but not empirically explored.
	Greed	Low opportunity costs of fighting and high price of winning such as natural resources invite warlords and their followers to rebel.	GDP, oil, growth, proportion of young men, population size, terrain, former colony	(Collier, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004)	Legitimacy is neither discussed nor empirically explored in relation to greed.
	Recruitment and financial opportunities	Rebels are sometimes motivated by greed and sometimes by grievance. The important aspect is the opportunities.	GDP, oil, growth, proportion of young men, population size, terrain, former colony, oil	(Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Collier et al., 2009; Ross, 2012)	Legitimacy is mentioned in the evaluation of the CH-model as a crucial aspect that is difficult to code. Legitimacy is mostly connected to democracies.
Opportunity and feasibility	State capacity	To understand civil war onset, one needs to understand the conditions that favor insurgency such as rough terrain, instability, large populations and poverty.	GDP, oil, anocracy, population size, mountains, new state, regime instability	(Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Hendrix, 2010, 2011)	Legitimacy is not directly explored or even mentioned in relation to state weakness.

Regime type	Repression and co-optation	The abilities to repress and co-opt affect the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict and co-vary with different autocratic regime types.	Polity data, regime change, monarchy, military regimes, one-party regimes, multi-party regime, personalist regime	(Fjelde, 2010; Gurses & Mason, 2010; Hegre, 2014; Hegre et al., 2001)	Legitimacy is briefly mentioned in relation to elections. Repression is seen as a more legitimate tool in autocracies. The understanding of legitimacy or how autocratic regimes are able to use alternative sources of legitimacy is not explored.
Disaggregating the dependent variable	War types	Different war types have different causes. When the state is strong, rebels are likely to fight for secession. When the state is weak, rebels tend to fight for overthrowing the regime.	Ethnic and non-ethnic war types, territorial/separatist civil war, governmental civil war	(Sambanis, 2001; Buhaug, 2006)	Legitimacy is related to both elections and performance, which limits the chances of intrastate armed conflict. However, the concept is not defined or explored.
	Horizontal inequality (group level)	It is important to study grievance on the group level. Restricted access to power makes a group more likely to fight the government, and groups that are poorer than the country average fight more wars than groups that are closer to the average.	Ethnic exclusion, ethnic polarization, group-based economic inequality, group-based political inequality	(Buhaug et al., 2014; Cederman et al., 2013; Gurr, 1993; Wimmer, 2013)	Nationalism in the form of equal representation is argued to be an obvious source of political legitimacy. Alternative sources of legitimacy are not discussed.
Changing level of analysis	Subnational variables	Intrastate conflicts often unfold within limited geographical areas, and key predictors vary inside countries. Thus, we must look at the subnational level to capture the causes of subnational rebellion.	Gross cell product, local institutional quality, violence approval	(Buhaug et al., 2011; Fjelde & Østby, 2014; Wig & Tollefsen, 2016; Linke et al., 2015)	Subnational use of attitudinal data is related to actual levels of legitimacy. Violence approval is argued to legitimize armed fight.

Chapter 3:
Main contributions

Emphasizing the importance of legitimacy in relation to conflict is the overall contribution of the dissertation.⁹ More specifically, it contributes to existing conflict studies in three ways: theoretically, methodologically and empirically.

3.1 The theoretical contribution

Legitimacy is connected to conflict studies that focus on motives such as greed and grievance. Greed concerns self-interest and rational cost-benefit calculations with the purpose of personal gain. In contrast, legitimacy concerns rightness and is therefore related to grievance.

In their thorough discussion of grievance, Cederman et al. (2013) emphasize that grievance is not just about being deprived, disappointed, frustrated or dissatisfied. For instance, horizontal inequality (political and economic) needs to be identified, compared and evaluated as *unjust* before it leads to grievance. Moreover, Cederman et al. see grievance as a reaction to unjust treatment: "a real grievance, regarded as the basis for complaint or redress, rests upon the claim that an injustice has been inflicted upon undeserving victims" (Williams in Cederman et al., 2013: 40). Thus, a factor such as horizontal inequality is only relevant to intrastate armed conflict insofar as it is perceived as unjust and thereby causes grievance.

This is exactly what the concept of legitimacy highlights. If horizontal inequality is justified, it does not cause grievance and thereby does not increase the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict. Individuals, sub-state groups or even the mass-population may be discriminated but still perceive their rulers as legitimate. For instance, absolute monarchies legitimize the supremacy of a dynasty with references to tradition (see Paper 1 and Paper 2).¹⁰ Thus, equal

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⁹ In addition, the dissertation contributes to legitimacy studies, for instance, by dividing legitimacy into two dimensions concerning representation and performance. Moreover, I distinguish between legitimacy sources, claims and actual levels. I find these distinctions helpful for studies concerning legitimacy.

¹⁰ The caste system in India also exemplifies how discrimination is sometimes legitimized. The system has roots that go more than two thousand years back. It consisted of four primary castes. People outside the caste system were lowest in the hierarchy and denoted "the untouchables". Untouchables were considered as impure and contaminating to caste-members. Moreover, marriage across castes was forbidden. People were born into the hierarchy and the way to move up the ladder was through

representation is not always the source of legitimacy. In other words, the question is not whether we see discrimination (group-based, mass-based or individual) but whether this discrimination is perceived as unjust (illegitimate). This is mentioned by Cederman et al. (2013) but not directly taken into consideration in the analyses.

For grievance to be relevant in relation to intrastate armed conflict, the state has to be blamed. Cederman et al. (2013) have argued that grievance is relevant for intrastate armed conflict when the state is seen as the sponsor or protector of the injustice. The concept of legitimacy by definition concerns the rulers. Thus, the level of legitimacy tells us whether we would expect the type of grievances that are relevant for the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict.

In addition, existing studies of grievance generally overlook alternative ways to justify the rule than equal representation. The absence/presence of grievance is caused by a large number of factors. Legitimacy involves both different forms of representation (what the ruler is or represents) and performance (what the ruler does) and thus adds alternative causes of grievance to the existing studies. Moreover, this highlights the multiple ways to avoid grievance and how one aspect of legitimacy could compensate for another. Weak representation might not result in overall grievances if the government is able to compensate with high levels on other dimensions.

In sum, legitimacy develops theories of grievance in three ways. First, legitimacy highlights the relevance of injustice. Second, it emphasizes the role of the rulers. Third, it adds alternative explanations for absence/presence of grievance.

3.2 The methodologically contribution

The dissertation shows that it is possible to study dimensions of legitimacy with quantitative methods in relation to intrastate armed conflict. The overall concept of legitimacy is difficult to capture, but it is possible to break it down and investigate specific aspects from different angles. I measure legitimacy both directly and indirectly.

First, I measure legitimacy indirectly via *legitimacy sources*. In Paper 1, this measurement is based on regime type data. I argue that monarchies on average are more legitimate than non-democratic republics, all else being

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reincarnation (Singh, 2018). Although the power of the system is shrinking, it is still correlated with socioeconomic status and social relationships such as marriage (Srinivasan, Dunham, Hicks, & Barner, 2016). Despite some mobility, the system is still present in India. Cotterill et al. (2014) argue that the belief in Karma legitimizes the Indian caste system.

equal, because they have an extra source of legitimacy. Monarchical rulers have the opportunity to rely on ceremonies and custom when power is transferred and consolidated. This is not, to the same degree, possible in non-democratic republics, which are left with alternative legitimacy sources such as ideology or religion. I qualify this argument in Paper 2 with a case study of monarchical rule. In Paper 4, I argue that liberalizations in autocracies as a response to nonviolent protests contribute to the rulers' legitimacy. This makes the change in tactics from nonviolent to violent both irrational and difficult.

Second, I attempt to measure *actual levels of legitimacy*. In Paper 2, I use data from the Afrobarometer to explore trust in Swaziland compared with other countries. In Paper 3, I geocode the provinces in the Afrobarometer and merge these data with georeferenced conflict events from the ACLED dataset. This allows me to quantitatively study how attitudes concerning presidential performance (performance legitimacy) affect the occurrence of conflict. Moreover, Paper 3 shows that objective indicators of performance such as GDP per capita differ from perceptions of presidential performance.

The use of survey data is currently in the periphery of quantitative conflict studies. Existing studies have a tendency to use indicators that measure motives indirectly (Collier et al., 2009; Dixon, 2009; Fearon & Laitin, 2003), although perceptions are argued to also have an impact (Linke et al., 2015). Gurr even claims that, "It was the perceptions of aggrieved populations in the Middle East that changed in early 2011, not their objective situations" (Gurr, 2016: xv). This is not captured by the Gini coefficient or the demographic power of the largest group that is subject to active discrimination.

Overall, the dissertation contributes to the existing literature with concrete studies of legitimacy in relation to conflict and thereby highlights the relevance of attitudinal data. The details concerning measurement of legitimacy are outlined in Chapter 6.

3.3 The empirical contribution

States with opportunities and grievance (e.g., in the form of poverty and discrimination) sometimes avoid intrastate violence, and even states with strong coercive capacity occasionally experience conflict. Bringing legitimacy to the conflict agenda clarifies some of these cases of puzzling peace and conflict. In particular, the dissertation contributes to explaining three types of empirical cases.

First, the dissertation deepens the understanding of peace in states with high levels of fractionalization and discrimination. Monarchies by definition

favor the royal family over other sub-state groups. Nonetheless, most monarchies have a nonviolent past. Despite the Arab uprisings, no intrastate armed conflict has occurred in an Arab monarchy since 1979. Jordan has one of the highest discrimination scores worldwide (Cederman et al., 2013), mainly because of discrimination against Jordanians of Palestinian origin and the favorable position of the Hashimite dynasty. Nonetheless, King Abdullah II maintained his powerful position during the Arab uprisings without substantial protests from either Jordanians of Palestinian origin or East Bank Jordanians, and his legitimacy was never really in danger (Hudson, 2014; Tobin, 2012). Likewise, monarchies such as Saudi Arabia and Morocco managed to avoid substantial protests during the Arab uprisings in 2011 despite highly exclusionary politics (Cederman et al., 2013; Lucas, 2014). This contrasts the neighboring republics where several civil wars have taken place in modern times (Melander et al., 2016). I show that a focus on traditional legitimacy helps explain peace and conflict in such cases. The traditional rule makes it possible to possess legitimacy despite the intrinsic discrimination connected to royal supremacy (see Paper 1 and Paper 2).

Second, the dissertation contributes to clarifying peace and conflict in cases where objective performance indicators (e.g. GDP per capita) differ from perceived performance (performance legitimacy). Based on several existing civil war studies, we would expect more conflicts in poor provinces (Buhaug et al., 2011; Dixon, 2009). Yet, African provinces with high levels of GDP per capita are not systematically more peaceful than provinces with low levels (Hegre et al., 2009). For example, parts of Madagascar experienced violent clashes in 2009 (Ploch & Cook, 2012). The number of conflict events increased dramatically in the province of Antananarivo whereas the remaining provinces stayed almost conflict free (Raleigh et al., 2010). This was surprising given the high gross province product compared to the rest of the country. However, the level of performance legitimacy decreased drastically prior to the conflicts. This suggests that performance legitimacy deepens our understanding of conflicts in wealthy provinces (see Paper 3).

Third, the dissertation contributes to explaining why nonviolent protests sometimes remain nonviolent and sometimes escalate. Conflict studies have normally understood repression as a stabilizing tool (Davenport, 2007; Fjelde, 2010). However, we see numerous nonviolent protests that end peacefully without being repressed. For instance, pro-democracy protests emerged in Tanzania in the 1980s and early 1990s, and the government introduced multiparty system in 1992. The protests never developed into violent clashes. After the introduction of the multi-party system, regime-critical activities decreased and radical demands for political change faded away. In reality, the introduction of a multi-party system did not actually change much, but the reforms

provided the government with legitimacy (Cranenburgh, 2011; Jeffery, 2017). This shows how immaterial legitimacy sources in the form of liberalization contribute to peaceful development of nonviolent protests (see Paper 4).

Overall, I do not reject the importance of existing studies but argue that legitimacy must also be a part of the civil war literature. Legitimacy pushes researchers to include alternative causes of grievance measured in new ways, and this deepens our understanding of intrastate armed conflict. First step is to clarify the understanding and measurement of legitimacy. This is the topic in the following chapters.

Chapter 4:
The understanding of legitimacy

The concept of legitimacy is complex and hard to define. According to Marquez, the social sciences "would be better off abandoning the coarse concept of legitimacy for more precise accounts of the operation of these mechanisms in particular contexts" (Marquez, 2015: 1). The problems mainly derive from conceptual disagreement and problematic measurement. Legitimacy tends to be a residual concept that mixes different explanations, and, as mentioned, conflict scholars occasionally refer to the concept without directly discussing or defining it.

This dissertation aims to meet this critique by explicitly discussing the definition of the concept, including the subjects and objects of legitimacy. Moreover, the concept is divided into different modes (sources, claims and actual levels) and sub-dimensions (representative and performance) that guide the measurement. I argue that legitimacy is indeed a useful concept if we break it down and clarify how we use and understand it. The concept of legitimacy forces conflict researchers to include alternative variables and perspectives that are not directly covered by existing concepts. It zooms in on the people's perceptions and highlights how *unjust* grievances related to the rulers are relevant for intrastate armed conflict. Related concepts such as "political support" or "trust" cannot replace "legitimacy".[11]

The following sections discuss the definition of legitimacy, clarify the object/subject and the empirical/normative character of the concept, explain the differences between legitimacy and related concepts and, finally, outline the distinction between legitimacy sources, claims and actual levels.

4.1 The definition of legitimacy

Etymologically, legitimacy means "the quality of being legal" (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2019), and legitimate means "accordant with law or with established legal forms and requirements" (Merriam-Webster, 2019). Law is still central, but the concept has developed far beyond its original focus on legality (Lamb, 2014). When the meaning of legitimacy is explored, a good starting point is Weber's empirical understanding. Unlike most classic scholars, e.g., Machiavelli (Lamb, 2014), Weber explicitly uses the word "legiti-

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[11] Studies show that even closely related concepts often produce different results (Casper & Tufis, 2003; Møller & Skaaning, 2011).

macy" in his discussion of when and why men obey. He emphasizes that legitimacy is more than legality – it is a matter of belief – and he mentions three ideal-types of the legitimate relationship (traditional, charismatic, and legal) (Weber, 1919). Weber's empirical approach has inspired numerous of studies, and Gerschewski (2013) even refers to the "Weberian tradition" of legitimacy *belief*.

Several scholars have followed in the Weberian tradition and work explicitly with legitimacy. Lipset (1959, 1981) develops Weber's understanding and argues that the effectiveness of the political system is closely related to legitimacy. In line with this approach, Easton (1975) presents two types of support: diffuse support involving trust and legitimacy and specific support, which is more output-oriented and related to Lipset's effectiveness.

Linz (1978) understands legitimate institutions as the best available and therefore the right ones, and Barker (in Holsti, 1996: 87) argues that legitimacy is different from fear and self-interest. Beetham (2013) claims that established rules are not enough but have to be normatively validated and confirmed with acts of consent. Gilley (2009) argues that a state is legitimate when the political power is perceived as rightful. Moreover, Gilley specifies a focus on the citizens' opinions in relation to Beetham's three dimensions of legal validity, normative justifiability and expressed consent. Lamb (2014) describes legitimacy as worthiness of support and connects it to a moral reason to obey, and Gerschewski (2018) highlights the relational character of the concept. Table 2 lists the specific definitions.

I define legitimacy as *the people's perception of the rulers as rightfully holding power*. This definition is line with Weber's empirical understanding and implies a focus on the relation between the people and the rulers. This is important as I apply the concept across regime types (democratic and non-democratic) and relate it to conflicts that involve the people (or subsets of the people) and the rulers. Moreover, I focus on legitimacy as different from legitimation, which is the process of producing legitimacy, because I am interested in effects of legitimacy rather than how it is generated. The implication of this definition is further discussed below.

Table 2. Selected definitions of legitimacy

Definitions	References
Legitimacy belief (Legitimitätsglaube). "in asking for the 'legitimations' of this obedience, one meets with these three 'pure' types: 'traditional,' 'charismatic,' and 'legal.'"	(Weber, 1919: 2)
"Legitimacy involves the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper ones for the society."	(Lipset, 1959: 86)
"Legitimacy I have previously defined as the conviction 'That it is right and proper … to accept and obey the authorities and to abide by the requirements of the regime. It reflects the fact in some vague or explicit way [a person] sees these objects as conforming to his own moral principles, his own sense of what is right and proper in the political sphere.'"	(Easton, 1975: 451)
Legitimacy is "the belief that in spite of shortcomings and failures, the existing political institutions are better than any others that might be established, and that they therefore can demand obedience."	(Linz, 1978: 6)
Legitimacy is defined as "the belief in the rightfulness of a state, in its authority to issue commands, so that those commands are obeyed not simply out of fear or self-interests, but because they are believed in some sense to have moral authority."	(Barker in Holsti, 1996: 87)
"a state, meaning the institutions and ideologies of a political system, is more legitimate the more that it holds and exercises political power with legality, justification, and consent from the standpoint of all of its citizens."	(Gilley, 2009: 11) (Gilley, 2006, 2012)
"Power can be said to be legitimate where it does not breach established rules; where its acquisition and exercise are normatively validated in terms of socially accepted beliefs about rightful authorization and due performance; and where it is confirmed through appropriate acts of recognition and acknowledgement."	(Beetham, 2013 xiv)
"[L]egitimation will be defined here as the process of gaining support which is based on an empirical, Weberian tradition of 'legitimacy belief.'"	(Gerschewski, 2013: 18)
"To claim that something is legitimate is to give a moral or normative reason ("it is right") to obey, support, accept, imitate, comply with, or refrain from opposing it with some bounded range of activity or experience."	(Lamb, 2014: 15)
"We can define it in the following way: Legitimacy is a relational concept between the ruler and the ruled in which the ruled sees the entitlement claims of the ruler as being justified, and follows them based on a perceived obligation to obey."	(Gerschewski, 2018: 655)

4.2 Object and subject

The relational character of the legitimacy concept stresses clarification of the object and subject.[12] Potential objects of legitimacy include governments, nation-states, organizations etc. Weber (1919) talks about legitimacy of the political and social order. Lipset (1959, 1981) and Norris (2011) mainly refer to political institutions in the democratic political system. Easton (1975) separates regime from authorities and argues that these are different objects of support. Gilley (2009) refers to the state understood as the basic institutional and ideological structures of a political community.[13]

My definition of legitimacy refers to *the rulers* as the objects of legitimacy, i.e. the political power holders. First, I focus on the head of state. In democracies, this is the Prime Minister or President; in autocracies, it is the dictator, e.g. the monarch. Second, I look at political rulers closely connected to the head of state. In democracies, this involves the government; in dictatorships, it depends on the type of rule (monarchy, one-party regime, military regime etc.); in monarchies, the royal family is explored (for instance the King and Queen in Swaziland). I primarily focus on the head of state as he or she directs the main political decisions and normally is the most significant figure. Likewise, the head of state – together with the government – is usually responsible for law and order and has a monopoly of violence. Since intrastate armed conflicts concern the rulers, the head of state (and, second, the government) is the most relevant object of legitimacy in relation to intrastate conflict events.

The subject, according to my definition, is the people. More specifically, I focus on all citizens as the referent objects that offer or withhold legitimacy from the head of state. This understanding is inspired by Gilley (2009), who assigns equal weight to all survey respondents. My aim is not to identify the most important actors or elites, although I am aware that certain personalities and groups may have a bigger say than others. It is close to impossible to identify and weight all powerful players, and Gilley argues that "if we are to choose a single set of citizens as the most relevant subjects of state legitimacy, the best

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[12] Far from all researchers explicitly describe the subjects. For instance, Lipset (1959, 1981) leaves it to the reader to uncover whether it is a person, a group or society as a whole (Lamb, 2014).

[13] Most definitions relate the object to political institutions, leaders or the regime as a whole. However, international institutions or organizations such as the EU are sometimes also objects of legitimacy (Hurd, 2002; Risse, 2006; Vergne, 2011). Hurd (1999) talks about legitimacy of the international system, and Clark (2007) studies legitimacy of the international society. These studies are related to the English School (see Bull, 2012; Watson, 2006).

one would be *all citizens*" (Gilley, 2009: 9). In Paper 3, the subjects of legitimacy are not all citizens in the state but all citizens in a province. The reason is that intrastate armed conflict is a subnational phenomenon that – on a lower scale – might be poorly explained with country averages. I discuss legitimacy in relation to the majority and minority (scope and reach) in Chapter 7. In sum, my understanding of legitimacy is in line with most other studies that focus on the relation between the citizens and the national political power holders (Schlumberger, 2010).

4.3 Normative or empirical?

The understandings of legitimacy are normally divided into normative and empirical perspectives (sometimes denoted prescriptive and descriptive).

According to the normative perspective, we can agree upon what is right across cultural contexts. In other words, this "view holds that some objective notion of what is right, justifiable or 'legitimate' exists and, if only we search hard enough, can be found out" (Schlumberger, 2010: 235). Normative perspectives use the concept of legitimacy to distinguish tyrannical rule from right and just rule, and often democracy is associated with legitimacy (Dukalskis & Gerschewski, 2017; Gerschewski, 2018). Rousseau (1762) for instance says that man is born free, force cannot be justified and the people must be involved in the lawmaking. This idea challenges non-democratic regimes, e.g. the idea of a supreme monarch. Likewise, Habermas (1975, 1985b, 1985a) argues that freedom rights are important for legitimacy across cultural contexts.

The empirical perspective rejects universal standards of legitimate rule. Weber removes the normative essence of legitimacy with his emphasis on citizens' beliefs (Weber, 1919). This pushes focus away from the researcher's criteria towards the citizen's subjective confidence. From this point of view, legitimacy differs across time and space, which has made the concept applicable in different regime types. Several studies (Gerschewski, 2018; Schlumberger, 2010; von Soest & Grauvogel, 2017) follow Weber's understanding and use the concept in autocratic contexts.[14]

I primarily understand legitimacy from an empirical bottom-up perspective and I reject a fixed set of criteria that define legitimate rule. For instance,

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[14] Weatherford (1992) distinguishes between macro and micro level. The macro level is the normative approach. First, the researcher identifies the object under study. Second, the normative criteria for its legitimacy are set. Third, the researcher evaluates whether the studied object meets these criteria (Lamb, 2014). Weatherford (1992) describes the more empirical approach as the micro-level and bottom-up perspective where the citizens evaluate.

I argue that both democracies and autocracies are able to establish legitimate rule to some extent.

However, I argue that some degree of freedom is indeed important for legitimacy. Purely perception-based approaches are criticized for "emptying the concept of legitimacy of any objective reference or moral content" (Beetham, 2013: 9). Beetham argues that the concept of legitimacy loses its relevance if it is purely based on belief. I partly accommodate this criticism with a sub-dimension of legitimacy concerning civil liberty, which adds a touch of normativity to the understanding of legitimacy. However, actual legitimacy levels are still formed by the people's perception and not via a universal freedom-threshold – and this sub-dimension alone is not sufficient for a high level of legitimacy. Moreover, I acknowledge than in some, probably rare, instances, general freedom rights are not preferable. I therefore only associate the increase in freedom rights with legitimacy empirically where we see protests. In these cases, at least freedom of speech is desired. Lastly, a completely empirical measurement of legitimacy is hardly possible as researchers make decisions about dimensions, survey questions, their weight etc. In this dissertation, the overall approach to measurement of legitimacy is empirical, but it has normative elements.

4.4 Legitimacy and related concepts

Several concepts are closely related to or partially overlap the concept legitimacy. Explanations of related concepts and their borders contribute to the clarification of the legitimacy concept itself (Gerschewski, 2018). First, I distinguish between legitimacy and grievance. Second, I differentiate legitimacy from political support, trust and consent.

4.4.1 Legitimacy and grievance

Legitimacy is related to the concept of grievance in a number of ways. Legitimacy is defined as the people's perception of the ruler as rightfully holding power. Grievance is defined as feelings of complaint or resentment, as against an unjust or unfair act. Both legitimacy and grievance imply an evaluation of something as unjust. However, legitimacy concerns unjust *rule*, whereas grievance does not necessarily concern the rulers. In that sense, the concept of grievance is broader as it concerns more objects and acts. For grievance to be relevant for state-based armed conflict, it has to be connected to the ruler and involve more than the subject's own situation.

Moreover, legitimacy often emerges before grievance (if we look at grievance connected to the rulers). Legitimacy reflects perceptions, whereas grievance is a deeper feeling. Lack of legitimacy induces grievance, whereas high

levels of legitimacy are expected to reduce grievance. In other words, legitimacy tells us whether to expect grievances that are relevant for the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict.

Lastly, legitimacy implies other causes of grievance than the existing studies normally focus on, i.e. alternative forms of representation rather than equal representation of ethnic groups. This implies different indicators of legitimacy such as perceptions concerning representation (e.g. based on religion, tradition, election) and performance (e.g. based on wealth and liberties). These cover more situations than narrow and objective indicators such as access to power or economic inequality. Table 3 summarizes the concepts of legitimacy and grievance.

Table 3. The differences between legitimacy and grievance

Aspect	Legitimacy	Grievance
Understanding	The people's perception of the rulers as rightfully holding power	Feelings of complaint or resentment, as against an unjust or unfair act
Primary object	Rulers, head of state, government	Individual relative to other individuals, sub-state groups relative to other sub-state groups
Primary subject	Citizens	Individuals, sub-state groups
What is unjust?	The rule by the head of state	Own situation relative to others
Primary indicators	Attitudinal data concerning both representation and performance	Discrimination in the form of access to power and wealth (vertical and horizontal) Ethnic fractionalization

4.4.2 Political support, trust and consent

Legitimacy is frequently related to political support, trust and consent (see Table 2), and I focus on these three concepts in the following section.

Political support is often equated with legitimacy. Cassani argues that "a political regime is legitimate when people support it" (Cassani, 2017: 250). According to Easton (1975), support consists of diffuse support (trust and legitimacy) and specific support. Norris also links support to legitimacy. She measures support with survey data in democracies and argues that "Where orientations are positive, citizens accept the legitimacy of their state to govern within its territorial boundaries" (Norris, 2011: 20). Support has also been used in non-democratic settings because it does not have the same association to democracy as legitimacy does (Gerschewski, 2018). However, support and

legitimacy are not completely overlapping concepts. First, support covers more than legitimacy. Unlike legitimacy, it may be based on fear or greed and can therefore be bought or forced. A legitimate power-relationship cannot be based on cost-benefit calculations alone; it has to somehow reflect the collective order in which the objects are embedded.[15] We see cases of support without legitimacy, for instance anti-regime believers who favor the head of state based on utilitarian cost-benefit analyses (Gerschewski, 2018; Lamb, 2014; von Haldenwang, 2017). Thus, legitimacy "is a particular type of political support that is grounded in common good or shared moral evaluations" (Gilley, 2009: 5). I argue that there are also cases of legitimacy without political support. For instance, in consolidated democracies, the opposition accepts the head of state as the legitimate ruler although they do not support him or her. In Lamb's words, "to support something or someone is to help them stay where they are or get where they want to go" (Lamb, 2014: 15).

Trust is also closely connected to legitimacy in several studies. For instance, trust is often used as an indicator of legitimacy because existing survey data regularly include questions about trust (Gilley, 2009; Hutchison & Johnson, 2011; Levi, Sacks, & Tyler, 2009). Easton argues that trust and legitimacy are two separate concepts that together form diffuse support: "We can expect them [trust and legitimacy] to vary independently of one another even though it is very likely that those who consider a system legitimate will also have considerable confidence in it. Nonetheless, people may lose their trust in the ability of authorities to run the country yet not be prepared to deny the authorities in general the moral right to rule and to expect obedience to outputs" (Easton, 1975: 453).[16] Thus, we would expect legitimacy where we find trust. A head of state is rarely trusted without being perceived as legitimate. However, legitimacy exists without trust. Like love and loyalty, trust is more personal than support or legitimacy. Although we sometimes find legitimacy without trust, it is almost a pure subset of legitimacy (Gerschewski, 2018; Hutchison & Johnson, 2011; Norris, 2011). "Trust in government and confidence in institutions signifies the degree of legitimacy ascribed to the state by the individual" (Hutchison & Johnson, 2011: 738).

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[15] This also differentiates legitimacy from the greed-oriented explanations of intrastate armed conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

[16] Easton defines trust as follows: "Trust may be defined in Gamson's terms as 'the probability … that the political system (or some part of it) will produce preferred outcomes even if left untended.' In other words, it is the probability of getting preferred outcomes without the group doing anything to bring them about" (Easton, 1975: 447).

Lastly, several scholars link legitimacy to *consent* (Beetham, 1993, 2013; Gilley, 2013). I understand behavioral aspects (e.g., voting behavior or violent protests) as consequences of the legitimacy level. Consent might be an indicator of legitimacy, but it is not a part of the concept itself. Consent might not even be a good indicator of legitimacy if people do not have an opportunity to act – or fear the consequences of the acts. If this dissertation concludes that legitimacy is directly linked to intrastate armed conflict, this could be an indicator. However, minor acts (e.g., not voting) have numerous causes that are not necessarily connected to legitimacy.

Figure 2 illustrates that support and legitimacy overlap conceptually when support is not based on greed or fear,[17] and that legitimacy sometimes exists without support. Trust is normally only found in legitimate relationships and therefore primarily inside the legitimacy circle. Moreover, legitimacy is related to grievance and therefore affects the likelihood of dissent.

Figure 2. Legitimacy and related concepts

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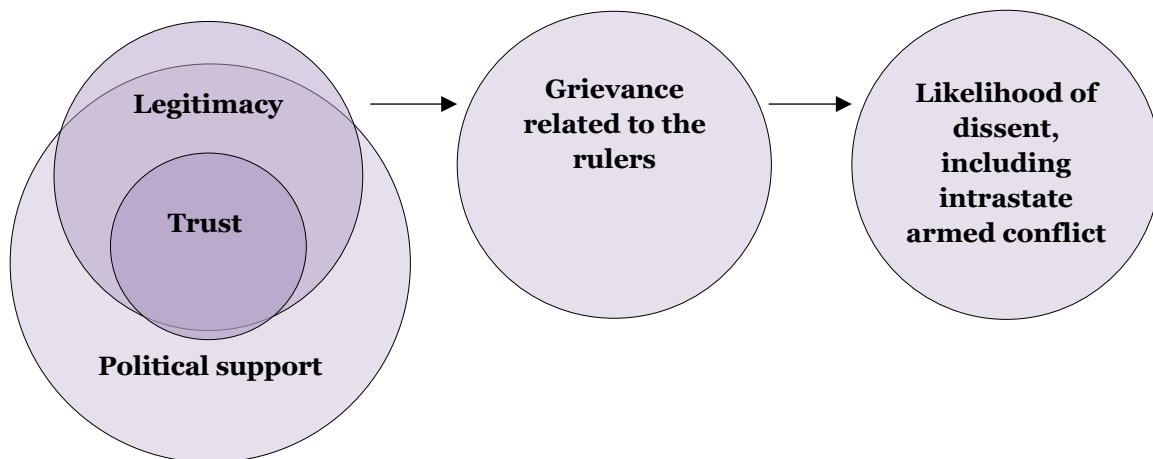
[17] Repression is also linked to legitimacy but it is not the opposite of legitimacy. Repression is both more physical (e.g. torture, killings) and more normative. Yet, repression of First Amendment-type rights (freedom of association, freedom of speech etc.) overlaps conceptually with immaterial performance legitimacy (see Chapter 5). Repression is sometimes combined with alternative legitimacy strategies (this is the case in Swaziland). In addition, legitimacy and repression are closely interlinked as they could compensate for each other. Dogan (2002) claims that repression is the direct alternative to legitimacy, and when the degree of legitimacy decreases, the level of repression is expected to increase (Josua, 2017; Lamb, 2014).

4.5 Modes of legitimacy: sources, claims and actual levels

I divide legitimacy into three modes: sources, claims and actual levels. The understanding of each mode is outlined in this section.

Legitimacy sources are defined as the underlying abilities to generate legitimacy, and there are countless possible sources. Weber (1919) has described three types of legitimate rule that rely on three different sources. First, he talks about traditional authority. He connects this "ancient recognition" to the patriarch and patrimonial head of state, such as a king. Second, Weber mentions the charismatic authority. He calls it an extraordinary and personal gift of grace and relates it to the heroic warlord, the great demagogue or the confident party leader.[18] Third, legal-rational authority is based on the belief in the validity of rationally created rules. Weber connects this type of legitimate relationship to the modern state.

Several studies have added sources to Weber's three types of legitimate rule. Schlumberger (2010) mentions religion, tradition, ideology and material legitimacy as the obvious sources of legitimacy. Sedgwick (2010) argues that autocratic regimes may obtain legitimacy through charisma, religion, tradition or ideology. Grauvogel & von Soest (2014, 2017) present six types of claims of legitimacy in autocratic regimes that rely on different sources: 1) ideology including nationalism and religion, 2) foundational myth, 3) personalism, e.g. charisma, 4) international engagement, 5) procedural mechanisms, e.g. elections and 6) performance, e.g. provision of welfare and security. Lamb (2014) mentions law, tradition, leadership, effective governance and consent as foundations of legitimate rule. Josua (2017) explores five strategies of legitimation concerning tradition, identity (e.g. nationalism), materials, personality and political structure (selection in accordance with the norms). Dukalskis & Gerschewski (2017) study mechanisms of legitimation concerning ideologies, stability, performance and elections. Gilley also mentions sources of legitimacy: "For the individual citizen, they are how effective (governance), how inclusive and respectful (democracy/rights), and how generous (development) are the states to which the individual belongs" (Gilley, 2009: 44). Beetham (2013) connects different sources to specific regimes types such as

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[18] Cuba under Fidel Castro (Hoffmann, 2009) and Venezuela under Hugo Chávez primarily relied on charismatic legitimacy in combination with ideology (Merolla & Zechmeister, 2011). Charismatic authority, however, is based on the individual, which makes it vulnerable to the death of the leader etc. Weber (1919; 1922) has argued that charismatic authority tends to transform into tradition, legality or new forms of charisma. Charismatic dominance is therefore perceived as unstable.

heredity/the past in monarchies, technical expertise in technocracies and competitive elections in liberal democracies. Among the many sources, the dissertation mainly focuses on tradition, performance and civil liberty (see Chapter 6).

Legitimacy claims are the sources that rulers refer to and rely on when they try to justify their rule. In other words, "Legitimacy claims are attempts by the authorities to convince citizens about the right to rule ... authorities can formulate these claims drawing on different sources of legitimacy ... " (Mazepus, 2017: 308). Schlumberger (2010) studies how regimes in the Middle East refer to various sources. He argues that religion is less important in today's Middle East – except in Saudi Arabia – and that tradition and rent are dominant sources. Moreover, the Arab-socialist ideology has lost momentum, but rulers increasingly refer to Arab nationalism. In their studies of how non-democracies claim legitimacy, Grauvogel & von Soest (2014, 2017) find that different types of autocracies present different claims. They show that rulers often combine several sources. Closed autocracies have a tendency to rely more on identity-based claims but also elections and provision of goods are used as strategies. Moreover, they argue that ideology is less important after the cold war. Dogan shows that traditional and charismatic legitimacy claims are limited and mostly present in autocratic regimes (Dogan, 2002: 118). Holbig (2013) has found that ideology is not completely absent as it is used in today's China. This claim is, however, combined with economic performance and nationalism (Gerschewski, 2018).

Actual legitimacy levels are the specific perceptions (e.g., measured with survey results or interviews). Solid sources and claims might lead to high levels of legitimacy, and it is likely that availability of sources affects the levels of legitimacy (e.g. oil and high GDP per capita lead to positive perceptions of government performance). The actual level of legitimacy, however, consists of specific perceptions, and not their sources or underlying reasons. According to von Haldenwang (2017), legitimacy is a process of demand and supply, which can both change and affect legitimacy. I argue that the attitudes are positive exactly when demands from citizens and claims from the government are aligned. In this situation, we have high levels of legitimacy. Citizens acknowledge or reject the rulers' claims depending on the congruence between claims and expectations (Mazepus, 2017: 308). If citizens have low expectations, it is easier to generate legitimacy. This is why we may find high levels of performance legitimacy in places with low GDP.

Legitimacy is understood as a continuous concept that is never completely absent or completely unchallenged. Legitimacy is not a matter of kind (legitimacy or no legitimacy), but a matter of degree (more or less legitimacy) (Gil-

ley, 2009). This approach reflects the probabilistic understanding of the relationship between legitimacy and intrastate armed conflict. Since the concept of legitimacy is continuous, I measure degrees of legitimacy. High levels of actual legitimacy imply that attitudes are both *widespread* and *profound* (e.g. the masses fully believe that the king is the rightful ruler). The aggregated legitimacy score based on representative survey data is affected by both the share in the negative categories and the depth of the negativity. The next two chapters present how these modes are measured along different sub-dimensions.

Chapter 5:
Sub-components of legitimacy and their sources

I understand legitimacy as a multidimensional concept and therefore break it down to measure and study sub-components. Most scholars acknowledge and follow this tactic (Weatherford, 1992: 149), but the number and characteristics of the dimensions vary greatly (von Haldenwang, 2017). The next sections outline the different dimensions in legitimacy studies and the approach in this dissertation.

5.1 Breaking down a multidimensional concept

Inspired by Easton (1955) and his political system analysis, Scharpf (1997) distinguishes between *input legitimacy* and *output legitimacy* and claims that input legitimacy concerns people and their demands, preferences and interests based on equal representation. Risse defines input legitimacy as "the participatory quality of the decision-making process leading to laws and rules. Those who have to comply with the rules ought to have an input in rule-making process" (Risse, 2006: 185). Output legitimacy concerns the desired quality of the system. Output is linked to effectiveness, achieving goals and solving problems. Scharpf (1997) argues that autocracies lack input legitimacy and try to compensate with output. Schmidt (2013) adds *throughput legitimacy*, which concerns the efficacy, accountability, transparency and fairness of the governance processes. Hindermann (2018) and Mazepus (2017) use the distinction between input, throughput and output when they measure legitimacy. I find this distinction useful for empirical studies, but it is mainly applicable in democratic countries or in relation to democratic values. The participatory quality is not directly transferable to autocracies so I broaden the input-dimension to include other types of representation besides direct involvement of the people. I denote this dimension "representative legitimacy".[19]

Easton (1975), one of the most cited legitimacy scholars, distinguishes between specific and diffuse support. *Specific support* is output oriented and concerns attitudes towards the authorities in relation to implementation. "The

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[19] Representative legitimacy is denoted "input legitimacy" in Paper 1. This is changed to "representative legitimacy" in the dissertation summary, as input legitimacy is often narrowly understood in relation to the policy-making processes in democracies (Risse, 2006; Scharpf, 1997, 1999; Schmidt, 2013).

uniqueness of specific support lies in its relationship to the satisfactions that the members of a system feel they obtain from the perceived outputs and performance of the political authorities" (Easton, 1975: 437). *Diffuse support* concerns more abstract feelings such as patriotism, love of country, loyalty etc. This type of support is more durable and basic than specific support as it underpins the regime. Legitimacy is sometimes associated directly with diffuse support, although Easton distinguishes between two types of diffuse support: legitimacy and trust. In line with Easton, Lipset (1959, 1981) connects effectiveness to legitimacy.[20] Sedgwick (2010) divides internal legitimacy into output legitimacy (economic and non-economic) and descriptive legitimacy (traditional, religious, ideological, charismatic). Inspired by these studies, I see performance legitimacy as an independent dimension of legitimacy. Diffuse support and descriptive legitimacy are related to the dimension I denote "representative legitimacy" (see next section).

Beetham introduces other central dimensions. First, *legal validity* refers to rule of law, i.e. that power "is acquired and exercised in accordance with the rules" (Beetham, 1993: 489). Second, *normative justifiability* means that the rules are justified in terms of shared beliefs. The rules and laws are accepted by the involved population and perceived as right for both the rulers and the ruled. Third, *expressed consent* means that the people obey the rules. Several studies follow this understanding of legitimacy and let the measurement follow these three dimensions (Gilley, 2006, 2009; Power & Cyr, 2009).[21] This dissertation does not see consent as a dimension of legitimacy. Consent or dissent is a consequence of the level of legitimacy (see section 4.4.2). Nonetheless, legality is indirectly a part of the concept. The level of legitimacy is believed to decrease if the head of state does not obey the rules – as long as the people support the rules (Beetham's second dimension). However, the understanding of legitimacy here focuses more on the head of state than on the rules as such.

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[20] Several contemporary studies include performance as a dimension of legitimacy (Grauvogel & von Soest, 2014; Hindermann, 2018; Hutchison & Johnson, 2011; Levi, Sacks, & Tyler, 2009; Sedgwick, 2010; Weatherford, 1992). Norris (2011) also includes performance in her measurement of political support in democracies. She operates with five components of support: belonging to the political community, support for general regime principles, evaluation of the overall performance of the regime, confidence in the state institutions and trust in the elected officeholders. Support varies from specific (approval of incumbents) to diffuse and deep feelings (support for the nation-state).

[21] Levi et al. (2009) divide the concept into value-based legitimacy (the sense of obligation and willingness to obey) and behavioral legitimacy (compliance).

Holsti divides the concept of legitimacy into vertical and horizontal. *Vertical legitimacy* concerns authority and loyalty to the state idea and the state institutions. *Horizontal legitimacy* concerns the definition and the political role of sub-state communities. Horizontal legitimacy is constituted by attitudes and practices between groups within the states. The degree of horizontal legitimacy is low if 1) any sub-state group is excluded from seeking political power and 2) any sub-state group is excluded from enjoying benefits (Holsti, 1996: 82-98). The distinction between vertical and horizontal is not incorporated in the conceptual understanding of legitimacy in this dissertation. However, the studies indirectly involve horizontal legitimacy in relation to horizontal discrimination.

A final distinction concerns *international legitimacy* versus *internal legitimacy*. Sedgwick (2010) describes international legitimacy as the right to rule in the eyes of external powers. Grauvogel & von Soest (2014) argue that regimes sometimes make claims that refer to international powers. Although this dimension concerns international relations, it might also affect citizens' perceptions internally. However, the national character of intrastate armed conflict makes it less relevant than the other dimensions. I therefore stick to simplicity and do not incorporate it in the understanding of legitimacy in this dissertation.

Overall, I distinguish between *representative legitimacy* and *performance legitimacy*. Representative legitimacy ensures that the concept is applicable in autocracies. The process-oriented and participatory dimensions are largely normative, and I would not be able to identify legitimacy outside of democratic countries if I include these dimensions in a narrow sense. Performance legitimacy concerns material as well as and non-material output. This dimension is applicable across regime types and embraces the sub-dimensions concerning effectiveness and specific support. Table 4 lists the different distinctions in the literature and their relevance for my understanding. The dimensions are further described in the following sections.

Table 4. Dimensions of legitimacy

Example of dimensions	Key references	In this dissertation
Input, output and throughput legitimacy	(Easton, 1955; Scharpf, 1999; Schmidt, 2013)	Input and throughput legitimacy are not directly applicable across regime types. Input legitimacy is therefore broadened and denoted representative legitimacy. This dimension covers representation – sometimes without participation of the people. Output legitimacy is a part of the performance dimension.
Legitimacy and effectiveness Diffuse support and specific support	(Lipset, 1959) (Easton, 1975)	I include performance legitimacy directly as a dimension, which is closely related to specific support and effectiveness. Diffuse support is related to the dimension of representative legitimacy.
Legal validity, normative justifiability, expressed consent	(Beetham, 2013; Gilley, 2009)	The legitimacy scores indirectly reflect legal validity and normative justifiability. However, focus is on the head of state rather than the specific rules. Consent/dissent is seen as a consequence rather than a part of the concept.
Vertical and horizontal legitimacy	(Holsti, 1996)	The distinction mainly concerns the referent object. The dissertation primarily focuses on vertical legitimacy (the head of state versus the citizens) but involves horizontal legitimacy in the form of horizontal discrimination.
Internal and external legitimacy	(Sedgwick, 2010; von Soest & Grauvogel, 2017)	I choose not to include external legitimacy in this dissertation due to the national character of intrastate armed conflict.

5.2 Representative legitimacy

Representative legitimacy concerns *what the ruler is or represents*. It is intrinsic in the sense that it is directly connected to rulers and not their actions. Representative legitimacy therefore relates to Easton's concept of diffuse support understood as "evaluations of what an object is or represents – to the general meaning it has for a person – not of what it does" (Easton, 1975: 444). Representative legitimacy is particularly important in relation to power transfer because it usually takes place before performance legitimacy is established. Mazepus (2017) argues that representative legitimacy is the reason people designate others to act on their behalf. Although the dimension is important for power transfer, leaders are able to draw on their representative legitimacy continuously during their rule.

Democracies have a strong source of representative legitimacy because they frequently hold free and fair elections. Democratic leaders justify their power position with references to electoral results. A democratic leader is the legitimate head of state because the majority of the voters chooses her/him. This form of representative legitimacy corresponds to the traditional description of input legitimacy as participation in the decision-making process leading to laws and rules in democracies. This ensures a link between political decisions and citizens' preferences (Scharpf, 1997, 1999; Schmidt, 2013).

However, representative legitimacy is not limited to democratic regimes. Leaders in authoritarian regimes rely on alternative sources to justify their rule. In these regimes, representative legitimacy does not equal participation by the people but comes from other sources. In Jordan, King Abdullah II succeeded his father with reference to the family tree, the Hashimite dynasty, which claims to be the male descendants of the Prophet's daughter Fatima (Hudson, 1977; Moss, 2014; Mufti, 1999; Tobin, 2012).[22]

Although autocratic regimes have alternatives to democratic elections, Cassani argues that they are generally disadvantaged compared to democracies, and after the cold war, ideology tends to be a weaker source of legitimacy than elections (Cassani, 2017). Nonetheless, I argue that monarchs have a strong ability to legitimize their rule with traditions (see Paper 1 and Paper 2). In sum, representative legitimacy can be based on various sources such as election results, ideology, religion or tradition. The level and sources may change during the ruling period, but they all relate to what the ruler is or represents.

5.3 Performance legitimacy

Performance legitimacy concerns *what the ruler does*. This dimension is output-oriented and connected to acts by the head of state after power transfer has taken place. Performance legitimacy is closely related to Easton's (1975) concept of specific support and is divided into *material* and *immaterial* sub-dimensions (inspired by Sedgwick, 2010).

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[22] References to tradition do not necessarily imply conservative and static rule. For example, the Swazi kingdom uses traditions in a flexible manner (MacMillan, 1985). Moreover, traditions can be new inventions. The point is not the age of the ceremonies or dynasties, but the framing. Traditional legitimacy involves rear views with references to history in contrast to the forward-looking framing in modern republics.

5.3.1 Material performance legitimacy

Material performance legitimacy consists of perceptions related to material output such as handling the economy and public service delivery. This source of legitimacy is not directly connected to regime type as both democratic and autocratic regimes may have strong sources of performance legitimacy. Cassani argues that throughout history, kings have prioritized keeping the people satisfied: "authoritarian leaders have historically assigned to social welfare as a way to gain support from the masses" (Cassani, 2017: 352).

Material performance legitimacy is often associated with objective indicators such as growth and GDP (Cassani, 2017; Hindermann, 2018). In this dissertation, performance legitimacy is based on perceptions. Sometimes actual performance legitimacy correlates with high levels of GDP, but this is not always the case. Objective performance indicators such as economic wealth occasionally differ from actual perceptions of performance (see Paper 3). Very few conflict studies concern performance legitimacy understood as the perceptions of performance.

5.3.2 Immaterial performance legitimacy

Immaterial performance is more diffuse than material performance and in this way related to representative legitimacy. However, it still concerns the ruler's behavior after power transfer. It is connected to actions, not representation. More specifically, immaterial performance legitimacy reflects perceptions in relation to increases in civil liberty.

Immaterial performance legitimacy is inspired by Habermas, who argues that freedom rights are essential for legitimacy across cultural contexts, and one of the most essential rights is freedom of speech (Habermas, 1985b, 1985a).[23] I am aware that this adds a normative element to the concept of legitimacy. Several scholars follow the Weberian tradition of "legitimacy belief" but still have elements of normativity. Lipset (1959, 1981) primarily discusses

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[23] Language and discussion are central elements in Habermas' theory of communicative action. Through language, we move towards common understanding as conversations and discussions embrace communicative reason. Habermas believes that we reach agreement if we discuss long enough (the force of the better argument). However, this demands a free conversation based on true arguments and information. Habermas introduces the ideal speech situation as the way we should endeavor to organize society, and the most reasonable and best argument will win (Habermas, 1985a, 1985b). The ideal speech situation demands freedom of discussion, meaning that people are free to discuss political issues in private and public places without state interference. Without freedom of speech, the reason of language is limited.

legitimacy of the democratic regime type and mentioned free press in connection with legitimacy. Lamb emphasizes different criteria for legitimacy: Rules must be predictable, justifiable and reflect some ideas about fairness, and people should be treated respectfully with human dignity. Lastly, he has argued that rules should be accessible – there must be some assurance that the people have a voice (Lamb, 2014). These criteria have normative elements. It is not entirely possible to empty the concept of legitimacy completely as long as researchers exclude dimensions, choose indicators and weight opinions (see section 4.3).

I see freedom rights as sources of immaterial performance legitimacy across regime types and cultural contexts in the modern world. I argue that it is very difficult to boost legitimacy with restrictions on freedom rights – also in cases where they are argued to protect tradition, religion etc. In these instances, the reference to alternative sources is an attempt to legitimize the restriction of freedom rights – the restrictions are not producing legitimacy in themselves. In other words, tradition, religion etc. are the sources of legitimacy that excuse the limited freedom rights. Despite the normative elements, this sub-dimension is not limited to democratic regimes and does not demand participation. Moreover, I do not speak of discrimination of groups but *general* freedom.

In situations where general freedom is undesirable, freedom rights are not sources of immaterial performance legitimacy. However, these cases are rare after the worldwide abolition of slavery. Nonetheless, in Paper 4 freedom rights are only associated with legitimacy in instances where we see nonviolent protests. I hope that this approach avoids cases where the people are not supporting general freedom rights.

Lastly, the overall understanding of legitimacy is still based on the people's perceptions of freedom – not on my personal evaluation. When demands for freedom are low, even low levels of freedom rights might result in high levels of legitimacy. Moreover, immaterial performance is only one sub-dimension of the overall concept of legitimacy. Repressive regimes are able to compensate low levels of freedom rights with high levels of material performance or representation.
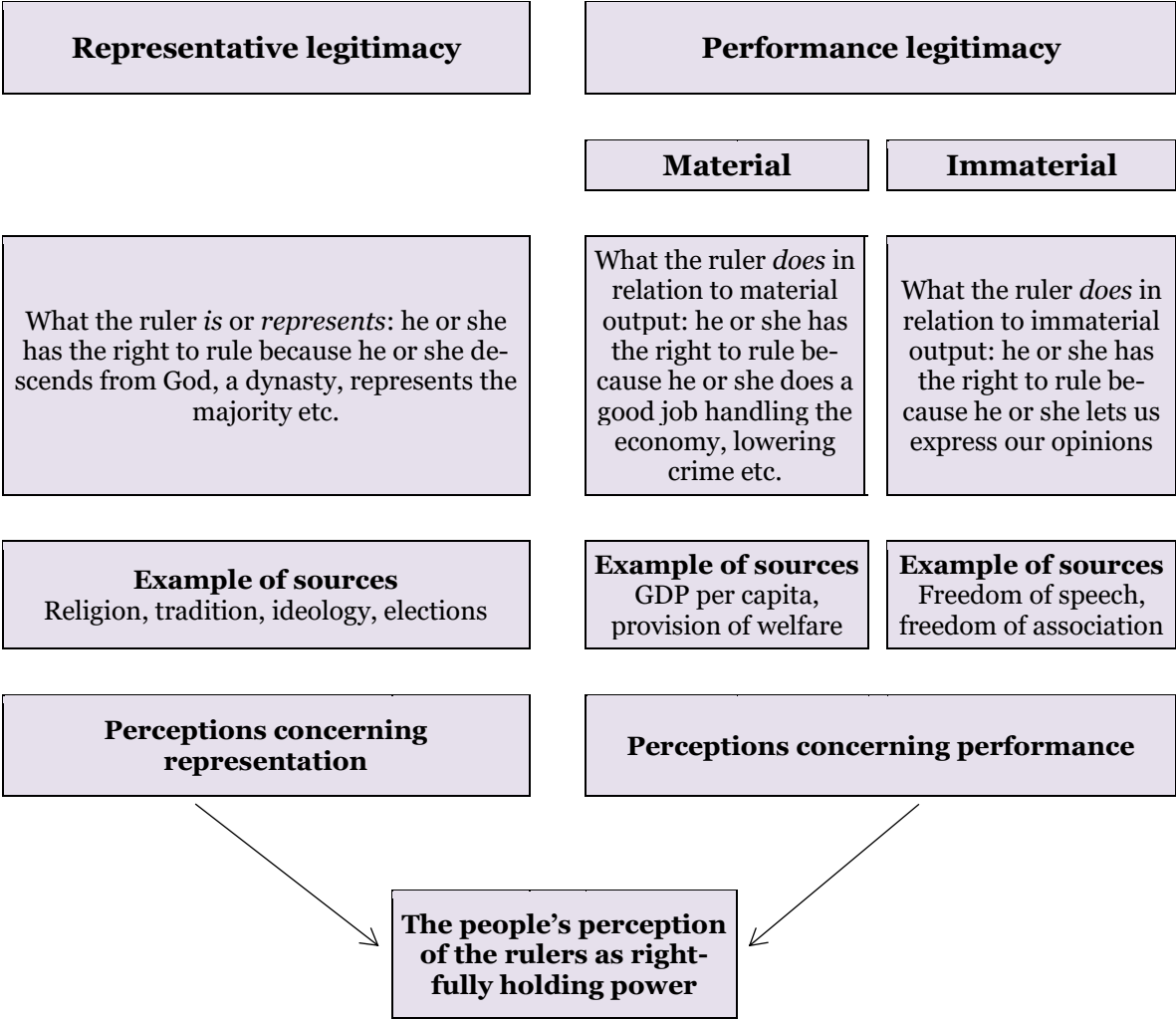
5.4 Summary

In sum, legitimacy is understood as a multidimensional concept, which is formed by the people's perceptions of the government as rightfully holding power in relation to representation and performance. Together, the sub-dimensions form the level of legitimacy with equal weight. Figure 3 illustrates the dimensions of legitimacy and their possible sources. The two dimensions

are not directly correlated, but they partly compensate each other. This means that high levels of performance legitimacy would help members to accept low levels of representative legitimacy (or vice versa). Moreover, an increase in one dimension may increase the other dimension (Cassani, 2017; Easton, 1975).

The four papers cover different sub-dimensions. Paper 1 and Paper 2 explore the effects of representative legitimacy based on traditional legitimacy sources. Paper 3 studies performance legitimacy in African provinces with an emphasis on material performance. Lastly, Paper 4 concerns immaterial performance legitimacy in relation to nonviolent protests (see Figure 1).[24]

Figure 3. Dimensions of legitimacy and possible sources

Representative legitimacy	Performance legitimacy	
	Material	**Immaterial**
What the ruler *is* or *represents*: he or she has the right to rule because he or she descends from God, a dynasty, represents the majority etc.	What the ruler *does* in relation to material output: he or she has the right to rule because he or she does a good job handling the economy, lowering crime etc.	What the ruler *does* in relation to immaterial output: he or she has the right to rule because he or she lets us express our opinions
Example of sources Religion, tradition, ideology, elections	**Example of sources** GDP per capita, provision of welfare	**Example of sources** Freedom of speech, freedom of association
Perceptions concerning representation	**Perceptions concerning performance**	

The people's perception of the rulers as rightfully holding power

[24] Lamb (2014) argues that the concept of legitimacy should be clarified in relation to at least three questions: 1) Legitimacy of what? 2) Legitimacy according to whom? 3) Legitimacy by what criteria? First, the "what" in this dissertation is the head of state. Second, the "whom" is the citizens. Third, the criteria relate to representation and performance (immaterial and material).

Chapter 6:
Measurement of legitimacy

The previous chapters have clarified the conceptual understanding of legitimacy, but how do we measure legitimacy empirically? Recently, von Haldenwang (2017) has argued that it is difficult to find valid and reliable indicators. We lack data and need do to more empirical work (Carter, 2011). The complexity of the concept makes it difficult to measure, but this "is neither a valid objection nor an insuperable obstacle to its measurement" (Gilley, 2006: 500). Moreover, some researchers manage to break down the concept and measure different dimensions of legitimacy (Gilley, 2013; Hindermann, 2018; Levi et al., 2009; Power & Cyr, 2009; Sedgwick, 2010; von Soest & Grauvogel, 2017). This chapter outlines measurement in existing studies and in this dissertation and discusses some challenges related to survey data and endogeneity.

6.1 Existing approaches to measurement

One way to distinguish between different approaches to the measurement of legitimacy is top-down versus bottom-up. The top-down perspective is on the system level and mainly refers to institutional aspects. The bottom-up perspective refers to public opinion such as political involvement and optimism about the political system (Weatherford, 1992). This distinction is similar to Hindermann's (2018) macro and micro perspectives, which differentiate between evaluations by researchers (e.g. expert surveys) and evaluations by citizens. Likewise, Sedgwick (2010) measures legitimacy in Egypt from above (focus on structures and processes) and from below (focus on public opinion). He used data from the World Bank, protest data and data collected during fieldwork.

In their study of how non-democratic regimes claim legitimacy, Grauvogel & von Soest (2014) use expert surveys when they measured claims to legitimacy in autocratic regimes. They construct the Regime Legitimation Expert Survey, which covers 98 closed autocracies from 1991-2010. They are aware that claims do not always reflect actual levels but find claims important since they may enhance elite cohesion, determine who can criticize the regime or affect perceptions (Grauvogel & von Soest, 2014; von Soest & Grauvogel, 2017).

Several legitimacy studies use approaches that focus more directly on the people. According to Gerschewski (2018), we mainly see two types of measurement: 1) Survey research and 2) behavioral indicators. Gerschewski mentions different data sources such as surveys, official speeches, newspapers, fieldwork and expert surveys. He argues that it is difficult to measure legitimacy with behavioral indicators such as protest and violence because repression may prevent action.

In line with Gerschewski, Hindermann (2018) differentiates between attitudinal approaches and behavioral approaches. The attitudinal approach is based on public opinion and normally involves survey data such as the World Values Survey or local barometers. For instance, Merolla & Zechmeister (2011) use the AmericasBarometer to quantify and investigate Hugo Chávez's charismatic legitimacy. The behavioral approach generally involves voting behavior or conflict indicators. Rahmani (2010) measures de-legitimization (loss of confidence in the government) based on variables such as contested elections, public demonstrations, corruption and increasing crime rates. In addition, Hindermann (2018) adds a discourse-analytic approach, which looks at the legitimizing process and how the dominant discourses construct attitudes. Data sources involve newspapers, speeches etc. Hindermann argues that it is common to construct indexes based on theory (e.g., formative index) or correlations (e.g., reflexive index), and he constructs indexes reflecting input, output and throughput legitimacy based on different statistical results.

Several approaches mix attitudes and behavior to measure legitimacy. Gilley (2006) uses nine items from the Worlds Values Survey and Center for Systemic Peace to measure views of legality, views of moral justification and acts of consent. First, he uses items that reflect confidence in the justice system and perceived respect for human rights. Second, he includes confidence in civil service and an overall assessment of how democratically the country is being governed. Third, he includes behavioral indicators such as tax payment and voter turnout. The justification index counts twice as much as the other two dimensions. In this way, Gilley combines the micro and macro levels – because the attitudinal data (micro level) is selected and weighted by his own criteria for legitimacy (macro level). Following this approach, Power & Cyr (2009) use the Latin Barometer to measure legitimacy in 17 Latin American countries based in 25 items that combined reflect Beetham's three dimensions.[25]

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[25] Norris (2011) measures political support in democracies based on World Values Survey. She has a more correlation-based approach that results in five dimensions. This approach is not directly transferable to autocratic regimes as, e.g. national identities based on national pride and patriotism are not as detached from the head of

Levi et al. (2009) also mix the attitudinal and behavioral approaches to study behavioral legitimacy as a cause of value-based legitimacy. Value-based legitimacy is the trustworthiness of the government and courts and is measured indirectly with questions from the Afrobarometer concerning material performance (has the respondent gone without food), administrative competence (prosecution of crimes) and procedural justice (fair treatment of own ethnic group). Behavioral legitimacy concerns the willingness to obey the tax authorities, the courts and the police. The conclusion is that value-based legitimacy affects behavioural legitimacy. Carter (2011) used a similar approach when he measured legitimacy with survey data from the Afrobarometer concerning the courts, police and tax authorities. If these institutions have the right to make people obey it reflects legitimacy. However, it is unclear whether this is a consequence or an indicator of legitimacy.

According to von Haldenwang (2017), measurement of legitimacy can be organized into four categories. First, claims are reflected by social symbols and civil rights. Second, attitudes and opinions involve survey data such as confidence in leaders, views on human rights and trust in political authorities. Third, performance includes factors such as public service delivery, security and public order. Fourth, behavior refers to acts such as protests or electoral behavior. Moreover, he argues that researchers should include both the demand side (attitudes and behavior) and the supply side (claims and performance).

6.2 Measurement in this dissertation

I argue that it is fruitful to organize existing measurements into categories that follow the modes of legitimacy presented in section 4.5. Moreover, I include behavior to give an overview of present measurement – although it is not a part of the legitimacy concept in this dissertation. Thus, I differentiate between four approaches to measurement concerning 1) sources, 2) claims, 3) actual levels and 4) behavior.

These are related to von Haldenwang's (2017) categorization but adjusted for a number of reasons. Sources of legitimacy are understood as the opportunities to legitimize the rule and include presence of ideology, tradition, religion, welfare etc. Thus, von Haldenwang's performance dimension concerns sources and does not reflect actual levels of performance legitimacy measured with *perceptions*. The distinction in this dissertation also emphasizes that claims are different from the actual levels of legitimacy. For instance, in his

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state in dictatorships as in democracies. Nonetheless, it inspires measurement of legitimacy across regime types (Hindermann, 2018).

study of legitimacy claims, Josua (2017) measures different legitimization strategies in Algeria during the Arab uprisings based on semi-structured interviews and secondary resources. He argues that the claims did not reflect the actual levels as many of the strategies failed. Legitimacy claims only result in actual legitimacy when the citizens accept them. Lastly, behavior is not limited to objective datasets concerning protests or voting. It is also possible to measure former participation or willingness to act with survey data. Table 5 lists my four approaches to measurement, including potential indicators and data sources.[26]

This dissertation uses different approaches to measure legitimacy and it measures sources, claims and actual levels. In *Paper 1*, legitimacy is explored via sources. The monarchical regime type is used as a proxy for high legitimacy levels on average – compared with non-democratic republics. Monarchies have access to traditional legitimacy, understood as ceremonial power transfer and consolidation based on custom. In other words, monarchs have an opportunity to validate rule with tradition, symbols and ceremonies (Hudson, 1977; Schlumberger, 2010). I argue that even shortly after coming into existence, monarchies have a legitimacy advantage over republics because monarchs have the opportunity to refer to dynastic supremacy and stage themselves as god-like figures. Overall, monarchs have the opportunity to justify their rule through traditional legitimacy in combination with other sources, whereas leaders in authoritarian republics mainly have access to alternative sources such as ideology or religion. Monarchies thus have a legitimacy advantage compared with non-democratic republics. Legitimacy levels are not always higher in monarchies, and legitimacy levels vary across time and monarchies. However, the general advantage makes Middle Eastern monarchies more legitimate than republics on average.

In *Paper 2*, I qualify this argument and explore different modes of legitimacy. The Kingdom of Swaziland is a monarchy and therefore has a special opportunity to rely on traditional legitimacy. Legitimacy claims are explored in the constitution and speeches, and actual levels of legitimacy are indicated by survey data from the Afrobarometer. These surveys include questions

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[26] When I measure sources of legitimacy, I apply some of the indicators that are already a part of the conflict literature. Since the understanding of legitimacy concerns the people's perception, I prefer to use survey data – for example directly measure attitudes towards Middle Eastern monarchs. Nonetheless, the legitimacy concept still guides the statistical models, control variables etc. I recommend that future researchers collects more data concerning actual levels of legitimacy and I encourage exiting research projects such as the Afrobarometer to include more questions concerning legitimacy (see section 10.3).

about the King and Queen (unlike the Arab Barometer). I use a question concerning trust: "How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?" Although this is not directly the same as legitimacy, we expect legitimacy where we find trust (see section 4.4.2). The study also explores the willingness to protest or use violence in Swaziland compared to other countries. All this is combined with evidence from academic articles and newspaper articles.

Paper 3 mainly relies on survey data from the Afrobaromenter round 2-5. The main question is; "Do you approve or disapprove of the way the following people have performed their jobs over the past twelve months, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: President/Prime Minister". Another survey question reads: "Now let's speak about the present government of this country. How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: Managing the economy?" The first question concerns performance legitimacy in general, whereas the latter question concerns material output. To capture perceptions about the collective order instead of more personal cost-benefit calculations, I avoid questions about private economy and own job situation.

Paper 4 investigates a source of immaterial performance legitimacy, namely *liberalization*. This variable reflects changes in the civil liberties index from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset, which is based on expert evaluations. Civil liberty is "the absence of physical violence committed by government agents and the absence of constraints of private liberties and political liberties by the government" (Coppedge et al., 2017). The index consists of the private civil liberties index, the physical violence index and the political civil liberties index (Coppedge et al., 2017). The index score from the year before protest begins is subtracted from the score in the year when protest ends or turns violent. Thus, a negative change mirrors restrictions on civil liberties, whereas an increase reflects liberalization. This does not reflect the actual level of legitimacy, but it indicates to what extent the government tries to legitimize its rule with immaterial performance.

In sum, the different papers measure different aspects and sub-components with both quantitative and qualitative data. This is done on a national level in Paper 1, Paper 2 and Paper 4. Paper 3 measures legitimacy on the provincial level. Table 5 summarizes the measurement.[27]

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[27] Legitimacy is not static but constantly changes (von Haldenwang, 2017). Although I agree that legitimacy changes, I also find it possible to "freeze" the level of legitimacy for analytical purposes.

Table 5. Approaches to measurement of legitimacy

Mode	Examples of indicators	Examples of data sources	In this dissertation
Legitimacy sources Contextual factors, opportunities to legitimize the regime	*Representative* Monarchical regime type, elections *Performance* Material: GDP per capita, growth Immaterial: Civil liberties index	Geddes et al. (2014) V-Dem (2017)	Paper 1 and Paper 2 measure sources of traditional legitimacy based on monarchical regime type data Paper 4 measures sources of immaterial performance legitimacy based on the civil liberties index from V-Dem
Legitimacy claims What the rulers refer to	*Representative* Citations such as the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland Act, 2005: "*iNgwenyama* is the traditional head of the Swazi State and is chosen by virtues of the rank and character of his mother in accordance with Swazi law and custom. ... The *Ndlovukazi* (Queen Mother) is traditionally the mother of the *iNgwenyama* and the symbolic Grandmother of the Nation." *Performance* Questions to experts such as "To what extent does the regime refer to its performance/development (such as economic growth or reduction of poverty) in order to enhance its legitimacy?"	Grauvogel & von Soest (2014), speeches from the head of state, official documents, elite interviews	Paper 2 measures claims to legitimacy based on the constitution, speeches, newspapers, academic articles, NGO reports etc.

Actual levels of legitimacy Attitudes and opinions of the citizens	Questions concerning trust such as "How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? President/Prime Minister" *Representative (suggestion)* How much do you agree with the following statements: The President/Prime Minister has the right to rule because he descends from God belongs to a royal family defends the true ideology is elected by the majority of the population has the right personal characteristics *Performance* Questions to citizens such as: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way the following people have performed their jobs over the past twelve months, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: President/Prime Minister/King"	World Values Survey, Afrobaromenter, Arab Barometer, Latinobarometro, AmericasBarometer, interviews with citizens	Paper 2 measures legitimacy based on questions concerning trust from the Afrobarometer Paper 3 measures performance legitimacy and material performance legitimacy based on questions from the Afrobarometer
Behavior Compliance, consent	Popular uprisings, intrastate armed conflict, weighted conflict index Questions concerning willingness to obey the rulers or former participation in protest activity	Navco 2.0, ACLED, UCDP/PRIO, Banks & Wilson data, Afrobaromenter	This approach is not used in the dissertation. Behavior is perceived as a consequence of legitimacy rather than a part of the concept. Thus, the data sources are used in relation to the dependent variable.

6.2.1 Challenges related to survey data

Survey data is useful for measuring opinions among large numbers of citizens across time and space, which is particularly relevant in terms of understanding legitimacy connected to people's perceptions. However, survey data also involves a number of challenges.

Conceptual validity is under pressure when data is compared across countries because it is likely that one question is understood differently in different contexts (Møller & Skaaning, 2012). If this variation is not stochastic, it biases the results. Based on survey data from five countries, Mazepus (2017) finds that citizens use similar criteria for evaluating legitimacy. He shows that, independently of regime type, throughput and input legitimacy are more important than output legitimacy. In other words, citizens value access to decision-making more than provision of welfare. However, Mazepus only studied the Netherlands, France, Poland, Ukraine and Russia, and the results would probably be different if he had included African countries. To accommodate this criticism, I focus on specific dimensions, study case examples and control for various contextual factors across the four papers.[28]

It should also be noted that legitimacy is not a normative concept – it does not have to be based on the same criteria across countries. Therefore, I also advise against using questions with a clear normative bias such as "How democratically is your country being governed today?" from the World Values Survey and recommend more neutral questions detached from democratic values.[29]

One of the most notable critiques of survey data concerns the reliability and validity of data from autocratic regimes, which should not be treated like data from democracies (Goode & Ahram, 2016). Dictators try to affect answers in different ways. First, repression may affect the willingness to give critical answers because respondents fear sanctions. This could cause self-censorship and a considerable loss of data. Second, censorship, surveillance and monitored internet access foster ignorance and uncertainty among the citizens.

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[28] Aggregating data from the individual level to the country level also implies the danger of ecological fallacy (Møller & Skaaning, 2012). I therefore study legitimacy on different levels and try to get closer to the causal mechanism in Paper 2.

[29] It might also generate bias if normative questions are asked prior to the included questions. This is related to the challenges of framing effects. As a part of the robustness checks in Paper 3, I therefore use different questions to cover the same phenomenon. However, I do not use an aggregated index since this method bundles information and tends to mix different causal mechanisms (Marquez, 2015; Munck & Verkuilen, 2002).

Third, propaganda could give a false impression of leaders and their performance. Generally, autocratic survey data is limited across time and access is constrained. In addition, the validity and integrity are questionable and there are ethical issues since researchers have to balance their need for knowledge with the informants' security. I am very aware of these issues and therefore abstain from using the more constrained barometers such as the Arab Barometer (Goode & Ahram, 2016; Schlumberger, 2010). I mainly rely on the Afrobarometer, which has been praised for its extensive coverage and high data quality (Gervais, Tremblay, Batse, Mulyampiti, & Yelles, 2006). In addition, I involve other types of data sources across the papers.

Another critique of the measurement concerns related concepts. How do we know that we measure legitimacy and not concepts such as political support, which, as mentioned, may be based on fear or greed? The careful use of survey data from autocratic contexts is chosen to minimize answers based on fear. Moreover, the general character of the questions and the control variables (that for instance reflect economic situations) limits the possibility that we measure greed instead of legitimacy.

Another challenge concerns generalizability. Paper 3 uses data from the Afrobarometer. The sample of countries is not random and it is therefore hard to generalize to other African countries (Hutchison & Johnson, 2011; Wig & Tollefsen, 2016). Likewise, Paper 1 focuses on the Middle East in the primary models, which makes it even more important to include the relevant controls and be cautious with general conclusions. I therefore try different samples to extend the conclusion from Paper 1 to other regions, and I include a number of controls across the different papers and models.

Lastly, none of the larger survey projects specifically investigates the level of legitimacy. The number of suitable items is therefore limited and only available for a small number of countries and years. Paper 3 is an attempt to merge datasets that can be used when legitimacy is quantitatively studied in relation to intrastate armed conflict.

6.2.2 Endogeneity

One of the major challenges to the study of legitimacy and intrastate armed conflict is endogeneity. Several studies argue that intrastate armed conflict also affects legitimacy and sometimes is even a part of the concept. For instance, Gilley has argued that the low level of legitimacy of the ruling party in Uganda, NRM, was a consequence rather than a cause of the insurgency in Northern Uganda (Gilley, 2009: 158). In addition, von Soest & Grauvogel (2015) find that strategies of legitimacy were directly affected by civil wars and

mass protests. More generally, "Illegitimacy, then, can be both a cause and a consequence of state failure" (Lamb, 2014: 4).

I try to isolate the effect of legitimacy on intrastate armed conflict in different ways. In Paper 1, I lead the dependent variable, control for conflict in the previous year, and add decade dummies. In Paper 3, I also lead the dependent variable and control for conflict history. However, the best way to avoid endogeneity is to zoom in on specific cases. In Paper 2, I find that legitimacy constrains the onset of armed conflicts in Swaziland because it hinders mobilization and radicalization. In Paper 4, I explore how sources of immaterial legitimacy are also a way to prevent nonviolent protests from escalating. Nonetheless, the complexity of intrastate armed conflict makes it hard to fully distinguish causes from consequences; not only in relation to legitimacy, but also in relation to factors such as growth, GDP, discrimination and repression.

Chapter 7:
Legitimacy and expected effects on intrastate armed conflict

Overall, high levels of legitimacy are expected to decrease the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict. The following chapter qualifies this expectation. First, I specify the dependent variable. Next, I clarify why motives are indeed important for the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict. Lastly, I outline the overall effects of legitimacy and specify how legitimacy is related to intrastate armed conflict.

7.1 What kind of conflicts?

Sambanis (2004b) emphasizes that civil war scholars understand their dependent variable in many different ways. In Paper 1, I study conflict on a national level and I have a threshold of 25 battle-related deaths in the main models (Themnér and Wallensteen, 2014: 1). In Paper 2, the dependent variable reflects absence of popular uprisings on a national level, including intrastate armed conflicts. I argue that smaller protests are fairly normal but rarely evolve into mass-based rebellion, regime change or armed conflict. Paper 3 studies conflict events on a subnational level. The threshold for violence is lower, but the events are still political (excluding crimes). I further exclude the conflict events that are peaceful or one-sided in the main models. Unfortunately, the ACLED dataset does not directly differentiate between state-based conflicts and other types of conflicts. However, the state is involved directly (as an actor) or indirectly (as an object of frustration and/or failing to enforce monopoly of violence). Paper 4 explores nonviolent protests and whether they turn violent or not. The campaigns have so-called "maximalist" goals such as overthrowing the existing regime, expelling foreign occupations or achieving self-determination. Moreover, the NAVCO 2.0 only includes campaigns that "have at least 1,000 observed participants and a coherent organization linking tactics to one another over time" (Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013).

Thus, the level of analysis and the threshold of violence vary. However, all conflicts have a number of aspects in common. First, the conflicts concern contested incompatibility between two conflicting parties. This excludes physical state repression and one-sided violence. Moreover, I look at conflicts where the state is involved directly or indirectly since legitimacy concerns motives related to the rulers. Second, I am interested in violent conflict, although nonviolent protests are included as a possible step towards intrastate violence

in Paper 4. Third, the conflicts must have a political purpose or motivation. This excludes crimes such as murder and random accidents. In addition, I only study conflicts within a state. This eliminates conflicts between states or between a state and a foreign rebel group. I do not distinguish between ethnic and non-ethnic conflicts or governmental and territorial conflicts. Lastly, I look at occurrence and onset of intrastate armed conflict – not duration or peace negotiations. I do not study regime failure or regime change as these phenomena may have different causes and rationales.

7.2 Motives matter

Existing civil war scholars agree that both motives and opportunities are relevant in relation to intrastate armed conflict. Motives involve greed and grievance. Opportunities involve, for instance, poverty and limited coercive capacity (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Legitimacy is connected to the motive-oriented explanations of civil war onset. However, several scholars argue that motives are not important for explaining onset of intrastate armed conflict. Motives are simply too widespread to account for rare events like civil war, and when we control for opportunities, the effects of motives decline (Collier et al., 2009). I argue that motives indeed matter for at least three reasons.

First, motives may be widespread but they vary in scope and intensity. The more intense and prolonged a motive is, the more likely it will lead to violence (Gurr, 2016). Thus, in two situations with similar opportunities, we will find more intrastate armed conflict in cases with profound and widespread motives for rebellion – motives and opportunities are not either or-situations (Cederman et al., 2013; Gurr, 2016).

Following this notion, it does not make sense to refer to opportunities as pure sufficient or necessary causes. Opportunities do matter, but so do motives. This is supported by empirical examples. For instance, in Rwanda countless perpetrators did not have good access to weapons but had – or were manipulated into having – very strong motives and therefore made weapons out of everyday tools such as screwdrivers and machetes (Mamdani, 2014; Verwimp, 2006). Likewise, the Syrian civil war was not initiated by a substantial increase in opportunities. Inspired by the neighboring uprisings, the rebels had passionate motives for freedom and a strong belief in making it real (Gurr, 2016; Hinnebusch, 2012).

Lastly, the distinction between motives and opportunities is not even straightforward. For instance, motives affect opportunities. It is easier to recruit rebels if the rebel leaders have a large group of motivated people wherefrom they can recruit. Strong motives among the masses form such a base.

This is also why scholars such as Urdal (2006) study opportunities together with motives. [30]

7.3 Overall effects of legitimacy

Several studies argue that political regimes have to legitimize themselves to survive in the long run. Repression and coercion are not enough to ensure stability. Not all regimes are legitimate, but all regimes try to legitimize their rule (Gerschewski, 2018; von Haldenwang, 2017). Gilley (2006) argues that lack of legitimacy demands a lot of resources and makes a regime vulnerable to collapse, and Dogan (2009) emphasizes that severe repression in even the strongest autocracy is hardly enough to ensure peace and stability. Lamb (2014) claims that legitimacy decreases the likelihood of state failure, and Josua (2017) links legitimacy to stability across regime types. Following these studies, Dukalskis & Gerschewski argue that "A leader can gain access to power by using repression, but in the long run, all types of political regimes need to legitimate their rule. Key empirical questions thus become not *whether* but rather *how, to what extent,* and *with what effects* any given regime has been successful in producing legitimacy" (Dukalskis & Gerschewski, 2017: 252).

On the micro-level, a number of studies link the level of legitimacy to individuals' willingness to obey the rulers. Hurd (1999) argues that obedience is caused by three factors: fear of punishment (coercion), self-interest or legitimacy. High levels of legitimacy are argued to increase the likelihood that a citizen behaves according to established rules and expectations of the power holders (Beetham, 2013; Gerschewski, 2013; von Haldenwang, 2017). This is because legitimacy provides citizens with moral grounds for obedience, and it thereby constitutes the backbone of consent (Lamb, 2014). Levi et al. (2009) has found a link between value-based legitimacy and willingness to accept and obey the police, courts and tax authorities. Legitimacy is a reason to obey, and lack of legitimacy generates unwillingness comply and triggers opposition (Gilley, 2009; Lamb, 2014).[31] Likewise, this study argues that high levels of

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[30] Urdal (2006) argues that youth bulges increase the likelihood of political violence. He connected the theoretical explanations to both motives and opportunities.

[31] The connection between legitimacy and behavior is also mentioned in Norris' study of political support: "The concept of 'system support' is understood in this study to reflect orientations toward the nation-state, its agencies, and actors. Where orientations are positive, citizens accept the legitimacy of their state to govern within its territorial boundaries. They do not challenge the basic constitutional structure and rules of the game or authority of officeholders" (Norris, 2011: 20).

legitimacy increase motives for obedience and therefore decrease the likelihood of violent political conflicts.

7.4 The likelihood of intrastate armed conflict

The level of legitimacy is expected to affect the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict directly or indirectly.

First, high levels of legitimacy directly affect motives for rebellion. Feelings of grievance are weaker (scope and/or intensity) when the government is perceived as rightfully holding power. This limits motives for rebellion among the citizens and thereby constrains the *initiation* of intrastate armed conflict. In other words, legitimacy prevents the causal mechanism from even beginning to unfold. Cederman et al. (2013) describe how horizontal discrimination leads to grievance through four steps: 1) group identification, 2) intergroup comparison, 3) evaluation of injustice, 4) framing and blaming (see Figure 4). Lack of legitimacy implies evaluation of injustice and the blaming of the state (as argued in section 3.1) and thus wedges in between horizontal inequality and grievance – covering step 3 and 4. It is therefore closer to grievance and it more precisely captures the situations where grievance is relevant for intrastate armed conflict. The reason is that legitimacy creates a moral obligation to obey – even in cases of discrimination. This kind of motivation is different – and perhaps even more important – than personal greed based on rational cost-benefit calculations or grievance based on discrimination. For instance, Paper 1 shows that horizontal discrimination is sometimes justified with traditional legitimacy sources. Thus, we see fewer attempts to fight the leaders in repressive monarchies than in repressive republics.

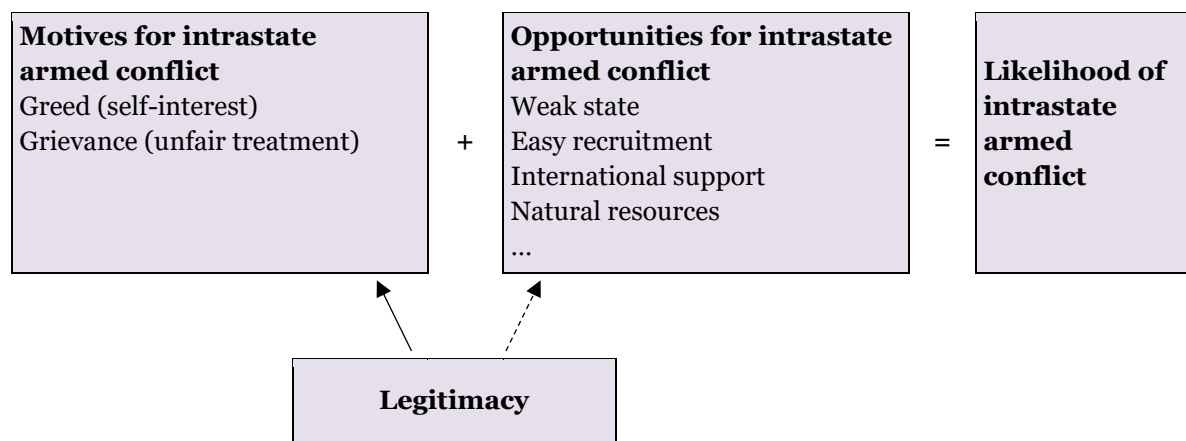**Figure 4. The causal links between horizontal inequalities and civil war**
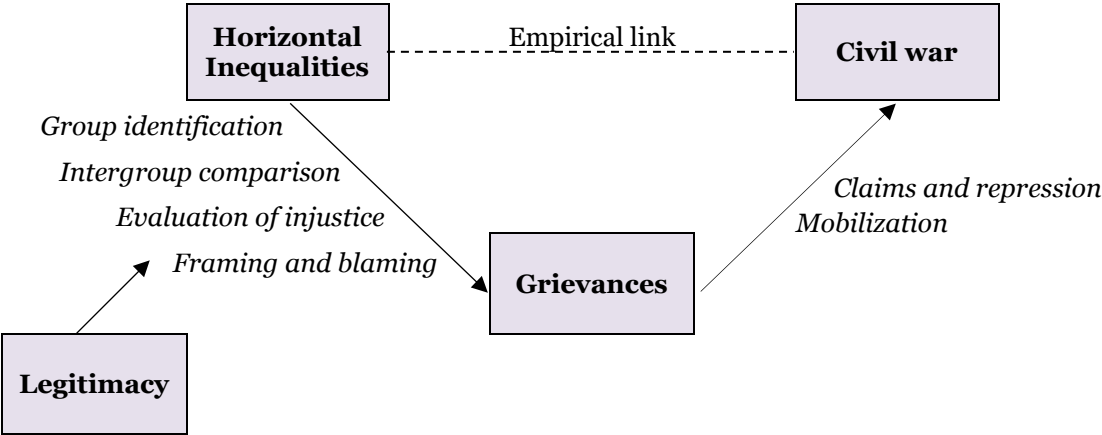
Second, high levels of legitimacy affect the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict indirectly as it limits the opportunities. This is relevant in cases where a
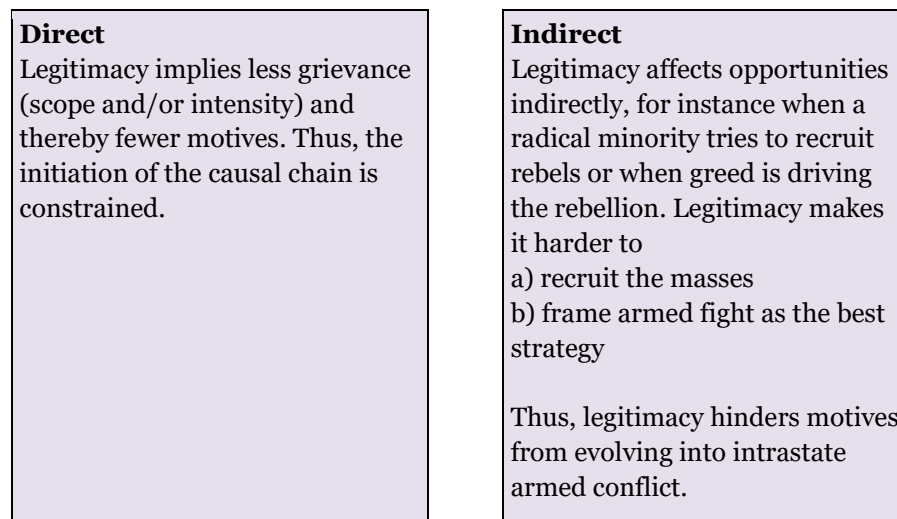
radical minority tries to recruit rebels or where greed is driving the rebellion. Cederman et al. (2013) emphasize two steps leading from grievance to civil war: 1) mobilization and 2) claims and repression. In connection with these steps, legitimacy makes it harder to recruit among the masses. For instance, Paper 2 shows that the opposition in Swaziland had a hard time mobilizing the broader population. In addition, legitimacy constrains the opportunities and rationale for using violent tactics. Paper 4 shows that nonviolent protests rarely escalate when the government liberalizes and attempts to improve the immaterial legitimacy dimension. Thus, legitimacy constrains the causal mechanism from fully unfolding.

Figure 5 summarizes that the overall likelihood of intrastate armed conflict is constituted by motives and opportunities. Strong motives combined with strong opportunities result in a high likelihood of conflict. Legitimacy directly decreases motives since it implies less grievance. Moreover, legitimacy makes it harder to recruit the masses or change from nonviolent to violent tactics. In sum, this decreases the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict.

Figure 5. Motives, opportunities and legitimacy

Motives for intrastate armed conflict		Opportunities for intrastate armed conflict		Likelihood of intrastate armed conflict
Greed (self-interest) Grievance (unfair treatment)	+	Weak state Easy recruitment International support Natural resources …	=	

Legitimacy

The effects of legitimacy:

Direct	Indirect
Legitimacy implies less grievance (scope and/or intensity) and thereby fewer motives. Thus, the initiation of the causal chain is constrained.	Legitimacy affects opportunities indirectly, for instance when a radical minority tries to recruit rebels or when greed is driving the rebellion. Legitimacy makes it harder to a) recruit the masses b) frame armed fight as the best strategy Thus, legitimacy hinders motives from evolving into intrastate armed conflict.

Note that the relationship between legitimacy and absence of intrastate armed conflict is probabilistic. Legitimacy does not always hinder intrastate armed conflict. For instance, some conflicts are primarily driven by greed or more personal grievance. The textbook example of conflict driven by greed is the civil war in Sierra Leone 1991-2003. Here, natural resources in the form of diamonds were argued to motivate and enable the civil war onset. The question of legitimacy was not very central to the rebel leaders (Alie, 2006; Keen, 2005). States with low levels of legitimacy also sometimes avoid intrastate armed conflict. For instance, Zimbabwe's President Mugabe had low levels of legitimacy on several dimensions (Afrobarometer, 2015) but managed to avoid substantial intrastate armed conflict in Zimbabwe during his three decade-long term as president (Melander et al., 2016). Severe repression of the opposition may create stability, but I argue that this is dangerous and difficult in the long run. Military strength and pure coercion are rarely sufficient to ensure long-term peace, and autocratic power holders thus seek legitimacy to stabilize their rule. I do not reject the importance of opportunities or horizontal inequalities. However, legitimacy is *also* important for intrastate peace and conflict. On average, the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict is lower in states with some legitimacy on different dimensions.

7.4.1 Masses and minorities

The measurement of legitimacy reflects intensity and scope (or the strength/depth and width/reach). When legitimacy scores are aggregated to the national level, a situation with widespread and medium intensity equals a situation with high intensity and limited scope. Gilley (2009) argues that the country averages of legitimacy are too broad measures in relation to conflicts that only involve a minority. Citizens of a state do not belong to one homogeneous group, and national scores cannot capture strong motives among small minorities. Is national legitimacy relevant if even a small group is enough to spark violence?

I argue that even if it only takes a limited number of citizens to rebel, these groups have a hard time in regimes with high levels of legitimacy among the remaining parts of the population. They have a limited base to recruit from, and it is difficult to justify their armed fight as a fruitful strategy internally and externally. Paper 2 shows how the radical opposition is constrained and limited in terms of mobilizing and intensifying the fight against the King of Swaziland.

Following this argument, I propose that intrastate armed conflict requires some form of support. Protest may be possible, but violent resistance against the state is more resource demanding. Thus, we might find minor clashes, but

intrastate armed conflict with regular resistance against the state is difficult for small minorities. This is also why I do not include coups or minor conflict incidences on the national level and focus on instances with a minimum of 25 battle-related deaths. As Gilley argues, the national legitimacy score is mostly relevant in relation to larger conflicts: "As one moves to this more 'majoritarian' concept of conflict, it is by no surprise that the 'majoritarian' concept of legitimacy takes on greater importance" (Gilley, 2009: 163).

Moreover, this discussion is related to the possibility of elite-driven conflicts. For instance, Svolik (2008) has studied elites and masses in relation to regime breakdown. Intrastate violence could be elite driven and thereby not depend very much on mass mobilization. However, in contrast to coups, it requires some degree of support from the broader population – in particular in repressive regimes. At least, the likelihood of intrastate violence is believed to be smaller *on average* in regimes with limited opportunities for mass-based rebel recruitment.

Yet, I embrace subnational levels in the empirical analyses. Paper 1 includes horizontal discrimination based on the group level, and Paper 2 explores smaller opposition groups in Swaziland. Paper 3 studies provinces and directly accounts for the fact that intrastate armed conflict often unfolds within limited geographical areas and by nature concerns intrastate incompatibilities. On the provincial level, I include less severe armed conflicts because the explanatory power of a subnational legitimacy indicator covers smaller conflicts than national indicators. Paper 4 studies the national level of civil liberty but only in relation to specific protests that might be sparked by minorities.

Chapter 8:
Effects of traditional legitimacy

This chapter outlines the key findings in Paper 1 and Paper 2, which explore traditional legitimacy, i.e. a specific source of representative legitimacy connected to absolute monarchies.

8.1 Middle Eastern monarchies (Paper 1)

Inspired by Middle Eastern case studies, Paper 1 argues that traditional legitimacy sources contribute to peace in Middle Eastern monarchies. The monarchies are believed to be better equipped with opportunities for legitimate rule than the regional republics and are therefore supposed to have higher levels of representative legitimacy than non-democratic republics on average. This lowers the probability of intrastate armed conflict. The main expectation is that Middle Eastern monarchies are more peaceful than non-democratic republics, all else being equal. This argument is tested with time-series cross sectional data covering 19 Middle Eastern countries from 1947 (or independence) to 2009. The dependent variable is intrastate armed conflict onset, and the main independent variable is monarchy/non-democratic republic based on data from Geddes et al. (2014). The controls are divided into three categories concerning co-optation (e.g. the number of political parties), coercive capacity (e.g. military expenditure) and instability (e.g. regime duration).

The empirical results confirm the expected relationship between monarchy and armed conflict onset. Middle Eastern monarchies are generally more peaceful than the regional non-democratic republics. Factors such as oil income, GDP per capita, US aid and discrimination are insufficient explanations for the differences between monarchies and non-democratic republics. Although six monarchies experienced armed conflict in their early years, they are less war-prone on average. More specifically, the average predicted probability of intrastate armed conflict is 2.01% for monarchies and 6.30% for republics. Thus, the likelihood of armed conflict is three times higher in republics than in monarchies, ceteris paribus (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Probabilities of armed conflict onset (95% confidence interval)
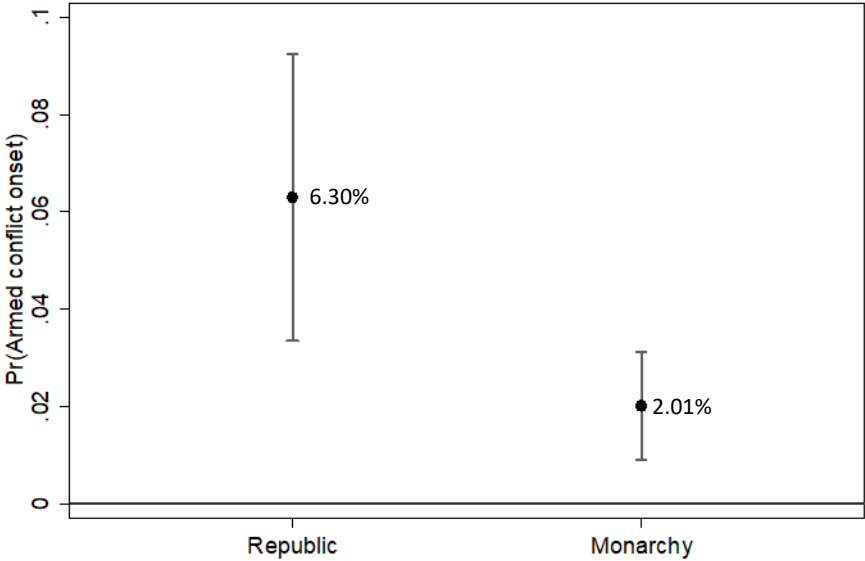
In addition to the direct effects, traditional legitimacy is expected to moderate the conflict-generating effects of horizontal discrimination. This form of discrimination concerns sub-state communities such as ethnic groups or religious factions. Traditional legitimacy is believed to reduce demands for equal representation and thereby neutralize the effect of horizontal discrimination on armed conflict. The empirical results support this expectation. Figure 7 shows how the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict onset changes as discrimination increases (95% confidence interval). The probability increases in the republics, but this is not the case for the monarchies. In the royal regimes, the effect is negative and close to zero. More specifically, when the discrimination level is 0.5 on a scale from 0 to 1, the predicted probability of armed conflict is 11.28% in republics and 0.52% monarchies.

Figure 7. Discrimination and probabilities of armed conflict onset (95% confidence interval)
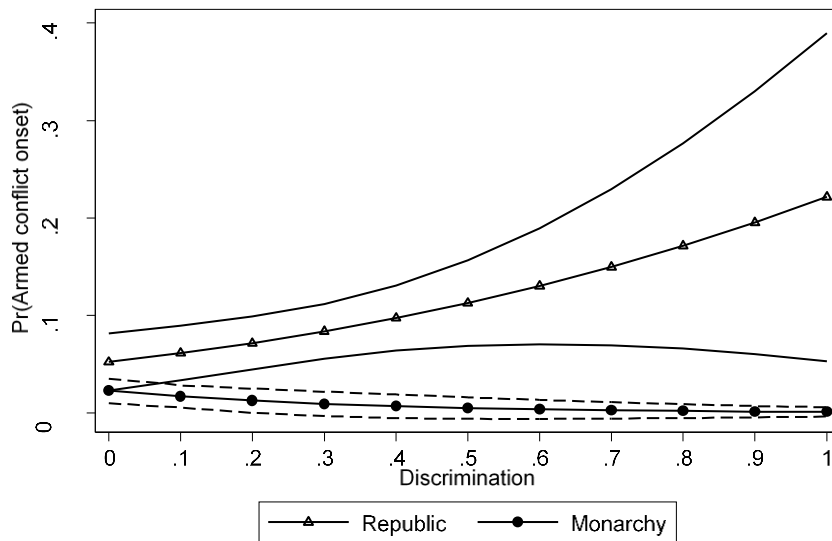
In sum, the study finds that monarchies are more peaceful than republics, all else being equal. Moreover, horizontal discrimination increases the risk of armed conflict onset in republics, but discrimination does not affect the likelihood of conflict in monarchies. Overall, these findings suggest that traditional legitimacy in monarchies affects the likelihood of armed conflict onset directly and moderates the effect of discrimination.

8.2 The Kingdom of Swaziland (Paper 2)

Research rarely considers *how* legitimacy constrains rebellion and helps the royal family stay in power. Do royal leaders use traditions strategically, and does it result in more positive attitudes among the citizens? Paper 2 explores the causal links between sources of traditional legitimacy and absence of popular uprisings, including violent conflicts. This is done with a case study of the Kingdom of Swaziland, where the cause and the outcome are clearly present. This type of study allows us to move closer to the mechanisms between traditional legitimacy and peace. The findings indicate that sources of traditional legitimacy are linked to absence of armed conflict through four factors.

First, the royal family actively uses traditions as a preventive tool. In 1986, Mswati III took over power after his father, Sobhuza II, using direct references to the House of Dlamini. Moreover, the royal elite has continuously used traditions to consolidate power. The clearest example is the so-called *tinkhundla* centers, which were installed with references to ancient Swazi traditions and control who can become involved in the political system. Another example is the

yearly *incwala* ceremony where the King and the Queen are worshipped through traditional dances and songs.

Second, the claims are successful in the sense that actual levels of legitimacy seem higher in Swaziland than in other African countries. The Afrobarometer indicates that the Swazi people trust the King more than citizens in other African countries trust their head of state (see Figure 8). More specifically, 70% of the respondents trust the King or Queen Mother "Somewhat" or "A lot" in round 5, and the share is almost 80% in round 6. This is more than the in other African countries (about 60% for both rounds) and Lesotho (about 50% for both rounds).

Figure 8. Trust in Swaziland and other African countries
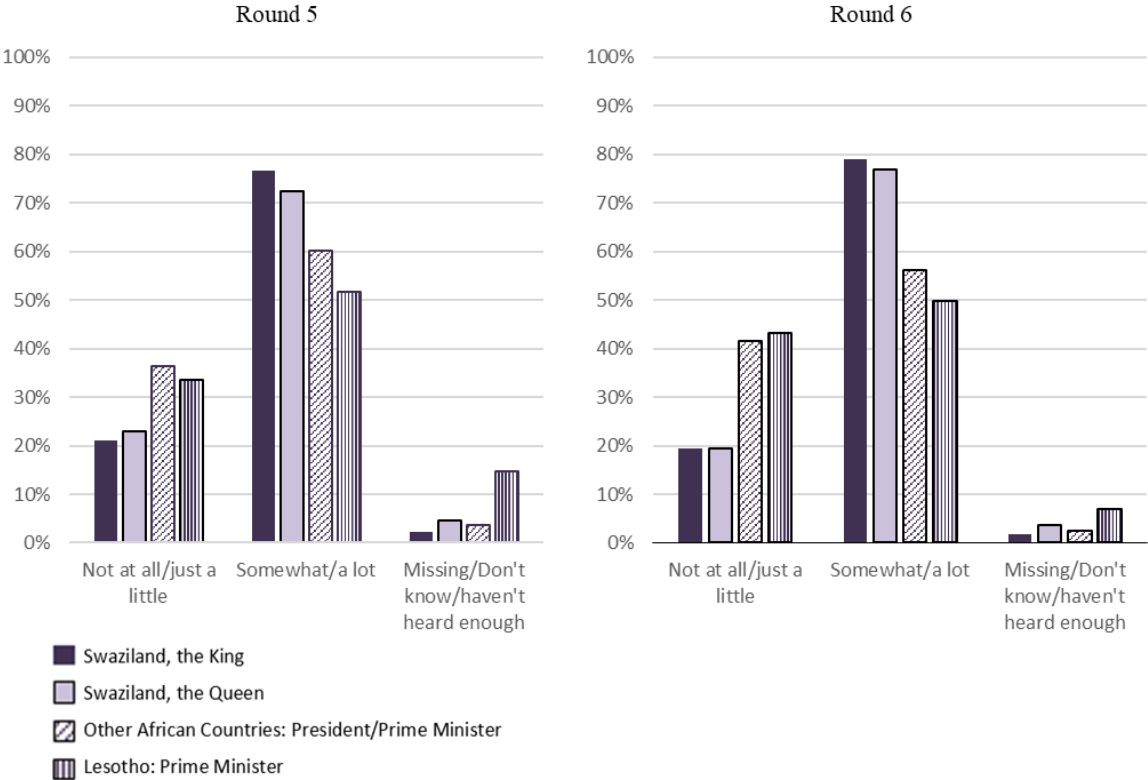
Third, the positive attitudes make it difficult for radical opposition members to mobilize the broader population against the monarchy. Mass-mobilization in Swaziland often fails, and when the opposition manages to organize protests, they rarely concern the future of the king. The proportion of people who used force or violence for a political cause – or would do this if they had the chance – is smaller in Swaziland (7.58%) than in the other African countries (9.71%) or Lesotho (12.23%). People who are willing to use violence for a political cause also score low on the trust scale, which indicates a link between trust and obedience. This constrains the opportunities for the radical opposition to fight the regime with arms.

Fourth, the royal family also uses traditions to hinder that protests escalate into popular uprisings or political violence. In both 2008 and 2018, people protested against the King's extravagant lifestyle, and in both cases, the King scaled up ceremonies such as the annual Reed Dance and the celebration of the nation's independence. Repressive acts such as rubber bullets and arrests were used, but the King also used the ceremonies to prevent people from joining and intensifying demonstrations.

The insufficient character of repression and co-optation is also supported from a comparative perspective. Swaziland and Lesotho are similar in relation to almost all conventional conflict predictors such as physical repression, fractionalization, population size, GDP per capita etc. The two countries, however, vary in relation to regime types and thus sources of traditional legitimacy. Lesotho experienced intrastate armed conflict in 1998. According to a most similar system design, this indicates an effect of traditional legitimacy sources on limited popular uprisings. It does not imply that repression or co-optation is generally irrelevant. However, these factors alone cannot explain the absence or presence of popular uprisings and intrastate armed conflict.

Chapter 9:
Effects of performance legitimacy

This chapter explores the effects of performance legitimacy based on results from Paper 3 and Paper 4. First, it focuses on performance legitimacy in general, including economic performance. Second, it outlines results concerning sources of immaterial performance in the form of increasing civil liberties.

9.1 Performance legitimacy in African provinces (Paper 3)

Existing conflict studies tend to neglect the effect of performance legitimacy, understood as the people's evaluations of presidential performance. Paper 3 explores whether subnational variation in performance legitimacy predicts conflict occurrence. It focuses on citizens' concrete perceptions rather than objective factors such as GDP per capita and economic inequality.

The main expectation is that high levels of performance legitimacy in a year decrease the likelihood of conflict events in the following year. First, citizens who approve presidential performance have fewer motives for joining rebellions. Second, higher levels of performance legitimacy are believed to indirectly affect opportunities for armed conflict since legitimacy constrains mobilization of government resistance (see Chapter 7).

The measurement of performance legitimacy is based on data from the Afrobarometer rounds 2–5 (collected from 2002 to 2013) covering 34 countries and 376 provinces (first-order administrative units). These data are merged with georeferenced ACLED data and the PRIO-GRID. In total, the dataset includes 905 observations reflecting the provinces in different years. I control for factors such as population size, gross province product and regime type.

Figure 9 illustrates some of the results from Paper 3. More specifically, the map shows the levels of performance legitimacy based on survey results from the Afrobarometer round 5 (2011-2013) intersected with violent conflict events from the ACLED in 2014.[32] Darker shades indicate high levels of performance legitimacy. The map shows that performance legitimacy varies within and across countries. The conflict events are spread throughout the continent, but Nigeria, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and South Africa experienced a

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[32] This map is based on data from Paper 3, but the maps in the paper include conflicts from more years than 2014.

very high number of conflict events in 2014. Moreover, conflicts seem to cluster inside the "lighter" provinces, which suggests that conflicts are more likely to occur in provinces with low levels of performance legitimacy. This is also the conclusion based on the statistical models that include control variables. Across models, I generally find a statistical negative relationship between performance legitimacy and violent conflict events. Overall, these results emphasize the importance of performance legitimacy measured with survey data.

Figure 9. Performance legitimacy and violent conflicts in geocoded provinces
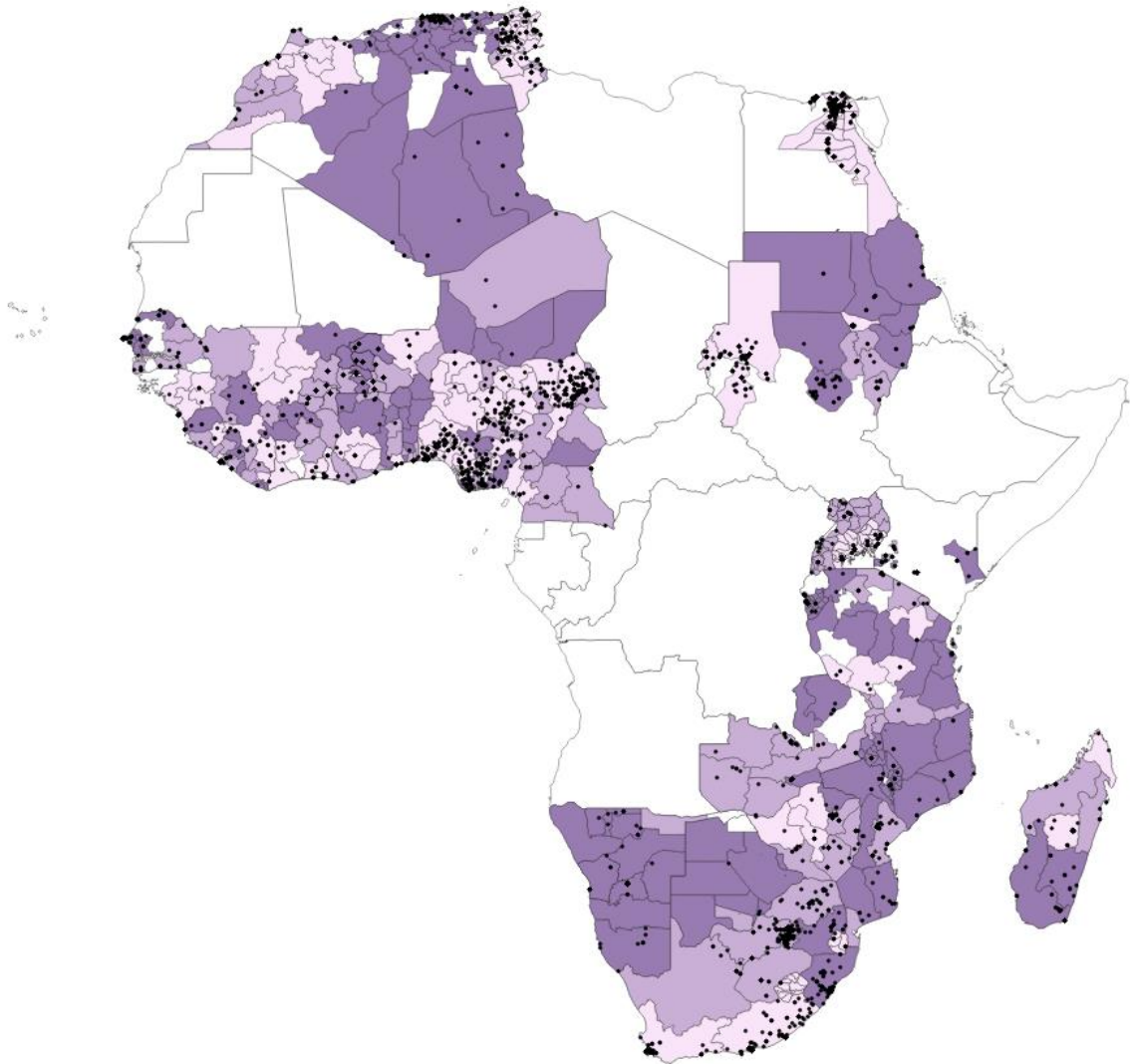
9.2 Immaterial sources of performance legitimacy (Paper 4)

Some nonviolent protests remain nonviolent whereas others escalate into intrastate violence or even full-scale civil war. Studies have shown that state repression sometimes stabilizes autocracies and sometimes fuels conflicts. Moreover, repression is perceived as the obvious choice in the case of regime-critical protests. Paper 4 shifts focus from repression to legitimacy, more specifically sources of immaterial performance legitimacy in the form of liberalization. Liberalization as a response to nonviolent protests in autocracies is largely overlooked.

The main expectation is that autocratic governments often liberalize when faced with nonviolent protests, and liberalization (not repression) hinders protest escalation. Liberalization eases the anger and frustration that sometimes spark violent and limits the rational motives for changing tactics and joining the rebel movement. Liberalization may improve the conditions for collective action, but this is less important in the context of nonviolent campaigns where protesters have already overcome coordination problems, and preemptive effects of repression have failed.

Paper 4 is based on the NAVCO 2.0 dataset. I include all major nonviolent protests – the so-called campaigns – in autocracies between 1945 and 2006. In total, 95 nonviolent protests with varying goals are included. The dependent variable reflects a change in primary method of resistance from nonviolent to violent at some point during the campaign years. The main independent variable, liberalization, reflects changes in the civil liberties index from the V-Dem dataset and thus measures sources of immaterial performance legitimacy. I control for factors such as population size, oil income, ethnic fractionalization, GDP per capita and regime type. In addition, I add campaign characteristics (e.g., size, outcome, duration and violent history).

The findings support the expectations. First, autocracies predominantly liberalize when faced with nonviolent protests. Civil liberties decreased in relation to 21 protests and increased in relation to 73 protest. For instance, a multi-party system was introduced in Tanzania in 1992 after pro-democracy protests in the 1980s and early 1990s. The greatest liberalization took place in Czechoslovakia (the Velvet Revolution).

Second, liberalization rather than repression prevents protest escalation. The probability of protest escalation decreases as liberalization increases (see Figure 10). Empirical cases support this result. For example, protest activity in Czechoslovakia in 1989 decreased when the prime minister ended censorship and abolished the constitutional guarantee of the communist party's

leading role. In contrast, the military in Algeria dissolved the parliament, cancelled the planned election, and arrested prominent opposition members in 1992, which induced a change in the Islamic Salvation Front's tactics from nonviolent to violent. Overall, de-escalation and escalation of nonviolent protests are a result of the government's willingness to liberalize and thereby improve the sources of legitimacy.

Figure 10. Liberalization and protest escalation (95% confidence interval)
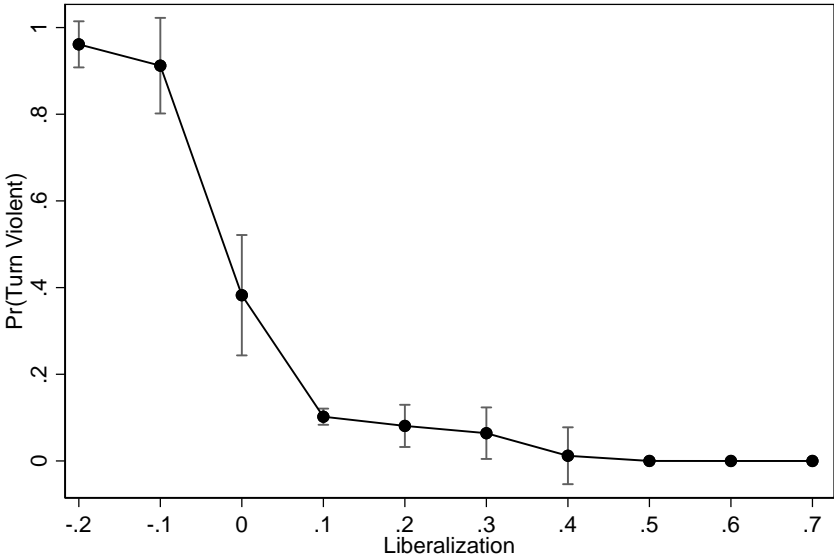
Chapter 10: Conclusion

The conclusion summarizes the main findings of the dissertation, discusses policy implications and presents suggestions for future research.

10.1 Main findings

Does legitimacy matter for intrastate armed conflict? This is the overall research question of the dissertation that leads to three sub-questions concerning 1) conceptual clarification, 2) empirical measurement and 3) the causal relationship between legitimacy and conflict. The key findings in relation to each sub-question are briefly outlined below.

First, the dissertation explores the concept of legitimacy. Legitimacy is defined as the people's perceptions of rulers as rightfully holding power. Thus, the object of legitimacy is the head of state and the subjects are the citizens. Legitimacy overlaps related concepts such as trust and political support. However, it is broader than trust and narrower than political support. It is also different from grievance as it directly concerns just and fair rule.

I divide legitimacy into three modes: sources, claims and actual levels. Legitimacy sources are the underlying abilities to generate legitimacy such as economic wealth or elections. Legitimacy claims are the sources that rulers refer to and rely on when they try to justify their rule. Actual legitimacy levels are the specific perceptions.

The concept of legitimacy consists of two sub-dimensions. Representative legitimacy concerns what the ruler is or represents. Performance legitimacy concerns what the ruler does in relation to material output (e.g. handles the economy) and immaterial output (e.g. freedom rights). This understanding is primarily empirical but has normative elements in relation to immaterial output, although it is still based on the people's perceptions.

Second, the project investigates approaches to measurement. I find it useful to distinguish between measurement of sources, claims, actual levels and behavior. Measurement of sources includes widely used indicators such as provision of welfare, traditional rule or freedom rights. Claims can be identified via data material such as official documents, speeches, expert surveys or national media. Actual levels of legitimacy are preferably measured with survey data or interviews. Behavior involves factors such as voting, protests and violent clashes.

I measure legitimacy sources in Paper 1 based on regime type data. This approach is qualified in Paper 2 where the Afrobarometer, national media and academic articles are used to evaluate levels of legitimacy. Both papers focus on representative legitimacy (and control for sources of performance legitimacy). Paper 2 also involves claims to legitimacy in speeches and the constitution. In Paper 3, I measure actual legitimacy levels more directly with survey results from the Afrobarometer merged with geocoded conflict events. I focus on performance legitimacy – mostly the material sub-dimension. In Paper 4, I use change in civil liberties (based on expert surveys from V-Dem) to measure immaterial legitimacy sources in relation to nonviolent protests.

Third, the dissertation shows how different dimensions of legitimacy are related to intrastate armed conflict. Paper 1 finds that the probability of armed conflict in Middle Eastern monarchies is lower than in the regional republics, all else being equal. Moreover, the monarchical regime type moderates the conflict-generating effects of discrimination, which suggests that traditional sources of legitimacy decrease the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict. Paper 2 shows how the King of Swaziland uses traditions and ceremonies to prevent and dampen conflicts. Legitimacy levels are seemingly higher in Swaziland than in other African countries, and this limits the opposition actors in mobilizing and intensifying fights against the King. Paper 3 explores local levels of performance legitimacy and finds that conflicts are more likely in provinces with low levels of performance legitimacy and that objective indicators of economic performance differ from perceptions of performance. Lastly, Paper 4 explores liberalization as a response to nonviolent protests in autocracies and finds that liberalization rather than repression prevents protest escalation. In a context of nonviolent protests, solid sources of immaterial legitimacy are more preventive than repression.

In sum, the findings suggest that legitimacy indeed matters for intrastate armed conflict. Table 6 summarizes the main findings of the four papers. I do not reject the importance of other types of motives (such as greed) or coercive capacity (such as military equipment). However, I argue that legitimacy is also important and possible to study. The concept of legitimacy must therefore be included more directly in the conflict studies.

Table 6. Overview of main findings related to the four papers

Paper	Main expectations	Dependent variable	Independent variable	Main method	Main findings
Paper 1	Traditional legitimacy sources in Middle Eastern monarchies affect the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict directly and moderate the effect of horizontal discrimination	Intrastate armed conflict data from UCDP/PRIO	Monarchies versus non-democratic republics	Logit models with interaction terms	Middle Eastern monarchies are more peaceful than republics, all else being equal. Discrimination only increases the likelihood of conflict in non-democratic republics – not in monarchies
Paper 2	Traditional legitimacy sources are causally linked to absence of intrastate armed conflict in Swaziland	Popular uprisings from NAVCO, intrastate armed conflict data from UCDP/PRIO, conflict events from ACLED, Banks & Wilson conflict index	Monarchy, reference to traditions and ceremonies, perceptions concerning trust and violence from the Afrobarometer	Theory-testing congruence method	The King of Swaziland uses traditions and ceremonies to prevent and dampen conflicts. The people in Swaziland trust their King more than people in other African countries thrust their head of state. This makes it hard for the opposition to mobilize or intensify fights directly against the King
Paper 3	High levels of performance legitimacy decrease the likelihood of conflict events in African provinces	Local violent conflict events from ACLED	Perceptions concerning performance from the Afrobarometer	Multilevel Poisson models	Performance legitimacy in in provinces across 34 African countries significantly decreases the expected number of violent conflict events in the year after the survey year
Paper 4	Liberalization as a response to nonviolent protests decreases the likelihood of the protests turning violent, all else being equal	Nonviolent protests turning violent from NAVCO	Liberalization based on the civil liberties index from V-Dem	Logit models combined with illustrative cases	Autocratic governments liberalize more than they repress when they are faced with nonviolent protests. Liberalization hinders escalation of nonviolent protests

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10.2 Policy implications

This dissertation has at least two overall implications for politicians and practitioners. *First,* it has consequences for the prevention of intrastate armed conflict. It shows that perceptions concerning legitimacy are valuable predictors of intrastate armed conflict in addition to more objective indicators. The latter have a tendency to dominate statistical models. I recommend that measurement of actual legitimacy is included directly in early warning systems understood as "systematic procedures set up to provide regular forecasts for conflict related events" (Hegre et al., 2017: 114).[33] Direct use of indicators concerning legitimacy could improve our ability to forecast violent conflicts and thereby prevent conflict initiation. In addition, legitimacy is relevant for preventing conflict escalation. In relation to nonviolent protests, legitimacy sources in the form of liberalization hinders violent development. If national, regional or international actors want to avoid intrastate violence, they should push for small steps of liberalization inside the frame of autocratic institutions – even if the regime ends up in the middle of the autocracy-democracy spectrum. However, this requires that actors on different levels pay attention to protests *before* they evolve and turn violent.

Second, the findings have implications for democratization attempts in autocratic regimes. It is possible for autocratic rulers to enjoy high levels of legitimacy in the sense that the citizens believe that they rightfully hold power. Democratizing attempts should acknowledge this. For instance, in relation to the monarchical regimes, I suggest that the traditional rule is integrated as a part of the democracy process instead of being challenged from the outside. The persistent character of monarchies and the popularity among the citizens have to be considered. This demands slow changes within the institutional setup rather than radical outside interventions. This argument is proposed by Kirby (2000), who even entitled his paper *Want democracy? Get a King*. Although liberalization in monarchies does not always represent a move towards democracy (Lucas, 2004), it tells that monarchs are willing to reform. In addition, today's constitutional monarchies show that monarchy and democracy are not mutually exclusive regime types. Monarchical institutions could function as stabilizing pillars on which democratic norms and rules slowly evolve. At least this pragmatic approach seems more peaceful in the long term than erosion of the regime from the outside.

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[33] See Hegre et al. (2017) for an overview of early warning and forecasting in peace research.

10.3 Suggestions for future conflict research

I have several proposals for research concerning conflict and legitimacy. Given the constrained time and resources connected to this dissertation, at least five areas need more attention in the future.

1. **More direct measurement:** It is difficult to measure legitimacy, and this dissertation only covers parts of the concept. More studies that attempt to measure legitimacy directly are desirable. Like Gerschewski (2018), I encourage survey researchers to think more about questions concerning legitimacy. For instance, the direct measurement would be markedly strengthened if the World Values Survey or the regional barometers included more items concerning the right to rule. This would allow researcher to study alternative dimensions of legitimacy, including its causes and consequences.

2. **Trace causal mechanisms:** As mentioned, endogeneity is a major challenge to causal studies of legitimacy. Alternative approaches such as more in-depth case studies of specific protests, interviews with former rebels or survey experiments will increase the ability to make causal claims concerning legitimacy and conflict.

3. **Alternative subjects and objects:** In this dissertation, I do not differentiate between elites and ordinary citizens. However, it might be relevant and possible for future research to weight the subjects according to their status and power. Likewise, objects on other levels than the national and provincial level would contribute to the analyses (e.g. group-level or micro-level). This might clarify how widespread or deep legitimacy needs to be to have an effect. Lastly, it would be interesting to explore legitimacy connected to rebels. Hafez has, for instance, mentioned legitimacy as a possible resource in relation to Islamic rebel leaders (Hafez, 2003: 19).

4. **Include different conflict types:** In this dissertation, I look at conflicts with varying intensity, but I do not explore whether separatist/territorial and governmental conflicts are affected in different ways. Buhaug (2006) argues that different conflict types have different causes. Thus, division of the dependent variable could nuance the results.

5. **Explore external legitimacy:** The main reason for focusing on the national aspects of legitimacy is that intrastate violence unfolds within states. However, external legitimacy might influence the level of internal legitimacy. Albrecht & Schlumberger operate with external legitimacy understood as "the extent to which political regimes are considered legitimate by the leading external powers, that is, Western governments and international organization" (Albrecht & Schlumberger, 2004: 376). Future studies

would contribute to this dissertation with the inclusion of external legitimacy.

In 1762, Rousseau argued that the strongest is never strong enough to always be the master, and we are only obliged to obey legitimate powers. More than 250 years later, this inspired me to look closer at legitimacy and how it is related to intrastate armed violence. To this day, the concept of legitimacy has taken up very little space on the conflict agenda. I hope that this dissertation will inspire other scholars to run with the ball and deepen our understanding of legitimacy and intrastate armed conflict.

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Short summary

Classic political science research and recent studies of autocratic stability show that the concept of legitimacy is both important and relevant. Although conflict scholars generally acknowledge this, we lack studies of legitimacy in relation to intrastate armed conflict. While the word "legitimacy" is often mentioned, it rarely enters empirical conflict analyses. This dissertation contributes to the research agenda with studies concerning the effect of legitimacy on the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict.

First, the dissertation discusses the concept of legitimacy. Legitimacy denotes the people's perception of the rulers as rightfully holding power. This is primarily an empirical understanding of the concept. Moreover, legitimacy consist of two dimensions: representative legitimacy (what the ruler is or represents) and performance legitimacy (what the ruler does). This understanding of legitimacy makes the concept applicable in democracies as well as autocracies.

Second, the dissertation outlines different approaches to the measurement of legitimacy based on different data sources. The approaches are divided into four categories concerning sources, claims, actual levels and behavior. The empirical studies in the dissertation use data such the Afrobarometer, V-Dem and autocratic regime type data to measure different modes of legitimacy.

Third, the dissertation finds an empirical effect of legitimacy on intrastate armed conflict. Traditional legitimacy in monarchies decreases the likelihood of intrastate armed conflict, as monarchs have a special opportunity to rely on ceremonies and custom when power is transferred and consolidated. In addition, high levels of performance legitimacy in African provinces are shown to decrease the likelihood of conflict events the following year. Lastly, immaterial legitimacy in the form of liberalization prevents nonviolent protests from developing in a violent direction.

The overall contribution is threefold. The dissertation contributes theoretically to studies of discrimination and grievance with a focus on injustice and alternative causes of grievance directed at the rulers. Moreover, the study shows that legitimacy is possible to measure and study empirically in relation to conflict. Lastly, legitimacy contributes to explaining puzzling cases of peace and conflict, such as peace in today's absolute monarchies. In sum, future research should acknowledge legitimacy as an important factor in relation to peace and conflict.

Dansk resumé

Klassisk forskning inden for statskundskab og nyere studier af autokratisk regimestabilitet viser, at legitimitetsbegrebet er både vigtigt og relevant. Selv om konfliktforskere generelt anerkender dette, mangler vi konkrete studier af legitimitetsniveauers betydning for intrastatslig væbnet konflikt. Ordet "legitimitet" nævnes ofte, men det indgår sjældent i empiriske konfliktanalyser. Denne afhandling bidrager til forskningsdagsordenen med undersøgelser af legitimitetsniveauers betydning for intrastatslig væbnet konflikt.

For det første beskrives og diskuteres legitimitetsbegrebet. Legitimitet betegner folkets opfattelse af statsoverhovedet som retmæssig magthaver. Dette er primært en empirisk forståelse af legitimitet. Desuden består begrebet af to dimensioner: Repræsentativ legitimitet (hvad magthaveren er eller repræsenterer) og præstationslegitimitet (hvad magthaveren gør). Denne forståelse af legitimitet betyder, at konceptet er anvendeligt i både demokratier og autokratier.

For det andet beskriver afhandlingen forskellige metoder til måling af legitimitet baseret på forskellige datakilder. Tilgangene kan opdeles i fire kategorier vedrørende kilder, påstande, faktiske niveauer og handlinger. De empiriske studier i afhandlingen bruger data fra blandt andet Afrobarometeret, V-Dem og autokratisk regimetypedata til at måle legitimitet fra forskellige vinkler.

For det tredje finder afhandlingen en empirisk virkning af legitimitet på forekomsten af intrastatslige væbnede konflikter. Traditionel legitimitet i monarkier mindsker sandsynligheden for væbnet konflikt, da monarker har en særlig mulighed for at bruge ceremonier og traditioner, når magten overføres eller konsolideres. Afhandlingen viser desuden, at et højt niveau af præstationslegitimitet i afrikanske provinser reducerer sandsynligheden for konflikter det følgende år. Endelig viser resultaterne, at immateriel legitimitet i form af liberalisering forhindrer, at ikkevoldelige protester udvikler sig i en voldelig retning.

Det samlede bidrag er trefoldigt. Afhandlingen bidrager teoretisk til studier af diskrimination og forurettelse, da legitimitet sætter fokus på uretfærdighed og påpeger alternative årsager til forurettelse. Desuden viser artiklerne, at legitimitet er muligt at måle og studere empirisk i forhold til konflikt. Endelig bidrager legitimitet til at forklare tilfælde af fred og konflikt, der virker overraskende med afsæt i eksisterende borgerkrigsteorier. Samlet set bør fremtidig forskning derfor anerkende legitimitet som en vigtig faktor i forhold til fred og konflikt.