Political Acceptance as an Alternative or Complement to Political Legitimacy: Concept, Measurement and Implications

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Abstract

In this brief paper we introduce a rigorous definition of political acceptance that we offer as an alternative or complement to the long standing concept of political legitimacy relied upon in political science. It has four important features: it is a positive not a normative concept; it is an encompassing concept; it is capable of direct measurement with survey data; and it has a stock or reservoir of goodwill feature that allows differentiation between political acceptance of a system and of a regime. The first three features represent a conceptual improvement over the concept of political legitimacy. The fourth feature is analogous to one possessed by political legitimacy that is useful for empirical analyses. We develop two questions that make feasible direct measurement of these concepts for acceptance and two versions of political legitimacy a la Lipset with survey data on individuals. These questions are implemented with survey data from 36 countries as part of the Rule of Law Index surveys developed by the World Justice Project. We establish an empirical pattern where political acceptance of a system is consistent with its being a buffer for political acceptance of a regime in each of the very diverse 36 countries in our data. We compare empirically political acceptance to two versions of political legitimacy a la Lipset. We find that political acceptance outperforms both measures of legitimacy in many countries either as an alternative or a complement to either measure of legitimacy a la Lipset in explaining acts of civil disobedience. We relate the concept to the vast literature on political legitimacy in the introduction and summarize in brief concluding remarks.

Introduction

Our main contribution in this paper is the introduction of the concept of political acceptance as a generalization of the concept of political legitimacy. By political acceptance we mean the willingness of the governed to endure the exercise of power by those who govern them for whatever reason, regardless of its morality or of the reason why the exercise of power by the political authority is accepted. If one wants to reduce it to a particular version of political legitimacy one needs to specify the particular reason underlying its acceptance, which can range from tradition or religion to implicit social contracts or free and fair elections and includes Diamond's (2008) 'moral title' to rule.

For instance, political acceptance reduces to the standard concept of political legitimacy in Lipset's seminal paper (1959) whenever one believes that the political institutions characterizing a regime are "… the most appropriate for the benefit of society." Lipset's concept is the most widely used version of political legitimacy in the political science literature, according to Dogan (2002). The concept of political legitimacy, however, predates Lipset by a few decades or centuries, depending on whether one wants to go back to Weber (1864-1920) or Locke (1632-1704) and it has various other interpretations, e.g., Peter (2010). Economists usually avoid this concept, perhaps because of its normative connotation, and political scientists in the rational choice tradition seem unsure of what to do with it, perhaps because of its consequent ambiguity. Arguably the most important consequence of this distinction between acceptance and legitimacy is that it provides a rigorous basis for **direct measurement.** Namely, it allows the direct measurement of political acceptance as a positive concept in surveys without requiring the specification of reasons for the acceptance. We show how this can be done without

imposing explicit or implicit assumptions about norms that capture the people's will on every respondent.

Dogan's (2002) discussion of political legitimacy is particularly apt in this context as he identifies direct measurement to be the main problem with any study of political legitimacy. To wit, he asserts (p.120) "Opinion polls attempting to measure a state's legitimacy often measure things related to legitimacy without measuring legitimacy directly." For instance, Gilley (2006) defines the concept as "…a state is more legitimate the more is treated by its citizens as rightfully holding and exercising political power." It then relies on adding up 9 indicators of either possible consequences or causes of legitimacy. For example, among the latter are World Values Survey questions on confidence in police and on evaluation of current political systems and among the former is voter turnout. Similarly, Seligson (2002) measures it "…by a scale of diffuse support attempting to tap into confidence in the key institutions of government". The latter end up defined in terms of five items based on survey questions about specific aspects of these key institutions such as courts' fairness, pride in, respect for and support of the political system and trust in the police.

More recent contributions in the political science literature have usually focused on the legitimacy of specific institutions or organizations, for example there is an extensive literature on the Supreme Court's legitimacy and its measurement. Modern literature has focused on procedure, e.g., Gibson (1989) and Tyler and Rasinski (1991) and more recently on ideology, e.g., Bartels and Johnston (2013) and Bassok (2013). We do not address specific institutions but the political system as a whole or in relation to a particular regime. An insightful exception to the focus on specific institutions is the work of Rothstein (2011, Ch. 4) who notes (p.79) four distinct views on how political legitimacy arises in the political science literature: 1) tradition, 2)

the leaders' personal appeal, 3) the government's production of goods and services and 4) belief in the fairness of the procedural mechanism for selecting leaders. He claims to have nothing to say about the first two views and emphasizes that the fourth one by itself is incapable of conferring political legitimacy in a democracy when defined in terms of a fair electoral process. The rest of the book relates aspects of the third view to what he calls the quality of government.

While focusing on a restricted set of sources of political legitimacy is suitable in Rothstein's context, it is not in ours. If the aim is to measure a concept across political systems, it makes no sense to eliminate any of the four views identified by Rothstein. Our definition of political acceptance captures its generation by all four of these sources or combinations that Rothstein identifies as sources of political legitimacy. Perhaps more importantly, it includes other sources of acceptance such as fear, inertia, indifference and self-interest that are normally excluded from consideration in the political legitimacy literature.

In the next section of the paper we present our definition of political acceptance and identify carefully its four main features. One of them, borrowed from the political legitimacy literature, leads to a distinction between acceptance of a political system and of a political regime. This distinction suggests a buffer relationship between these two concepts that is testable. In Section 2 we turn to the actual measurement of these two concepts in terms of the questions constructed and their actual implementation as part of the ongoing surveys associated with the Rule of Law Index of the World Justice Project. We present descriptive statistics on these questions for each of the 36 countries where we gathered the individual responses.

A robust empirical pattern is identified in section 3. Namely, a relation between political acceptance of the system as a buffer for political acceptance of the regime in the context of a cross-section of individuals. Convincing evidence of its existence is provided in each of the 36

countries. In section 4 we compare political acceptance to two measures of political legitimacy a la Lipset. Succinctly put, political acceptance dominates either measure of political legitimacy in explaining acts of civil disobedience in a substantial number of countries either by itself or with either measure of legitimacy as a complement while the reverse is not the case. Brief concluding remarks summarize our results.

1. Political Acceptance: Definition and Principal Features.

Our general definition of political acceptance is the following: **political acceptance** is the willingness of the governed to endure the exercise of power by those who govern them for whatever reason.

Political acceptance is a positive concept that does not necessarily entail any normative implication about the justification for the acceptance. This is an essential feature because it clearly differentiates political acceptance from political legitimacy. Normative definitions of political legitimacy imply political acceptance, while differing on the justifications for the acceptance. For instance, in his survey Peter (2010, p.2) notes that "…the normative concept of political legitimacy refers to some benchmark of acceptability or justification of political power or authority and—possibly—obligation." Thus political acceptance encompasses these definitions without requiring specification of the benchmark or justification for acceptance. Moreover, it also includes Weber's (1964) descriptive view of legitimacy which is interpreted by Peter (2010, p.2) as acceptance due to beliefs or faith in regards to the political legitimacy of a regime whether its source is tradition, charisma or legality.

A second feature of our definition at the conceptual level is that it encompasses motives for acceptance either absent, neglected or perhaps controversial in the literature on political

legitimacy. A prominent example is fear for one's life. That is, this fear with the associated perceptions of potential repression leads to widespread acceptance of corrupt regimes in Africa, e.g., Padró i Miquel's (2007). One would not want to categorize this political acceptance as political legitimacy in the sense of any "moral title to rule", e.g., Diamond (2008). Moreover, fear is not the only reason included in acceptance that would be absent, neglected or controversial in the legitimacy literature.

One can think of situations in which individuals accept the exercise of power by those who govern them without any attractive justification. These situations include laziness or inertia, which can be reasons for acceptance by some or many without endowing the resulting system outcomes or regimes with legitimacy. Similarly, even indifference in terms of a belief, accurate or inaccurate, that those who govern do not make a difference to one's life for practical purposes can generate acceptance without endowing the resulting system outcomes with legitimacy. Our definition of acceptance encompasses these other reasons. Furthermore, it does so without engaging in discussions of whether acceptance includes an obligation to obey. Finally, one might include as a motivation for political acceptance direct self-interest considerations. For instance, in this view a system or regime is accepted by an individual if it improves his/her well-being as perceived the individual. Our definition encompasses all these rationales.

Perhaps most importantly, a third feature of our new concept is that it provides a rigorous yet simple basis for **direct measurement.** Dogan (2002) argues that lack of direct measurement is a fundamental flaw of attempts at measurement of political legitimacy. Arguably this is due to the need for identifying a reason for acceptance in the case of political legitimacy. In contrast, political acceptance can be measured directly through surveys, which we demonstrate in this paper, and even experiments, which we do not pursue here. This possibility arises because it is a

positive, encompassing concept that, in contrast to political legitimacy, does not require specification of any particular reason for acceptance.

For instance, in Lipset's (1959) seminal paper political legitimacy is defined as the belief that political institutions characterizing a government are "…the most appropriate for the benefit of society." If one tried to measure political legitimacy a la Lipset directly, one would need to specify this reason for the belief in one form or another in a survey question. Moreover, after arriving at any particular wording of the reason one would have to consider whether or not the wording differentiated this view of political legitimacy from others suggested in the literature.

A fourth feature of our definition of political acceptance is most easily seen through a similar one shared by political legitimacy. In the jargon of economists this feature would be described by saying that political acceptance behaves as a stock variable that can be measured at a point in time; in the jargon of political scientists this feature would be described by saying that political acceptance behaves or operates as a reservoir of goodwill. Indeed, this characterization as a reservoir of goodwill is the one applied to political legitimacy in the political science literature, e.g., Gibson (2004, Ch.8). One important implication for empirical analysis follows from this feature of acceptance as a stock or reservoir of goodwill. If a variable is a stock variable, it means that it can appreciate or depreciate through certain means over time. If a variable is a reservoir of goodwill it means that the reservoir can be augmented or depleted in various ways.

One substantial way in which a stock or reservoir feature can be expanded or contracted has been identified in the political legitimacy literature. It does so by making a distinction between diffuse support for a system and specific support for a regime or administration, e.g., Easton (1965) and Gibson et al (2003). We borrow from this literature by viewing political

acceptance of or diffuse support for a system as a distinct entity or concept than political acceptance of or specific support for a regime or administration. Furthermore, we also stress the relation between these two concepts by noting that regime performance affects its own political acceptance but it also affects the political acceptance of the system over the long term. Similarly, political acceptance of the system provides a buffer for poor performance by regimes and its consequences in terms of political acceptance, especially in the short-term.

2. The Measurement of Political Acceptance.

We use data from the general population polls of the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index to measure political acceptance. The polls have been conducted by the World Justice Project in more than 90 countries and contain the perceptions and experiences of ordinary people concerning their dealings with the government, the police, and the courts as well as the extent of corruption and the magnitude of common crimes to which the general public is exposed. These polls have been carried in three waves on probability samples of 1,000 respondents drawn from the three largest cities in each country. They have been conducted by professional polling organizations using face-to-face, telephone, and online interviews. We use data from the third wave, which was the first to include questions on political acceptance. It generated political acceptance data for a sample of 36 countries. It was carried out in 2012.

Our basic measures of political acceptance come from two questions aimed at capturing the two different aspects of the concept identified in the previous section: Namely, diffuse support and specific support. The answers to these questions are provided on a scale of 1-7, ranging from a score of 1 for not at all agreeing with the

statement to a score of 7 for agreeing with the statement a lot. The first question, which aims to capture the general level of acceptance of the political system in the country by the respondent, is worded as follows: *"To what extent do you accept the authority of (COUNTRY) government institutions to act in matters of public policy?"* The next question probes respondents about the general level of acceptance of the current political regime in the country. It is worded identically as above except that the words *"(COUNTRY) government institutions"* are replaced by *"the CURRENT administration"*.

In the first two columns of Table 1 we show, for each country, the mean and standard deviation of the responses to each of these questions aimed at measuring political acceptance after converting the 1 to 7 scale onto a 0-1 scale. Not surprisingly, the main feature that emerges out of this table is heterogeneity across countries. Heterogeneity is observed in its simplest form by looking at the levels of the means across countries. For political acceptance of the system (government institutions) they range from a low of .30 for Madagascar to a high of .86 for Uzbekistan; for political acceptance of the regime (current administration) they range from a low of .29 for Madagascar to a high of .78 for Uzbekistan.

With a bit more effort one can also see heterogeneity across countries in terms of the relationship between the answers to the system and regime questions. For instance, in 17 (16) countries the average level of political acceptance is higher (lower) for the regime than for the system and in 3 countries they are equal. Incidentally, the response rates for each country to each of these two questions are extremely high. They are above 80% for all countries with respect to both questions. They are above 91% for 33 of 36 countries for both questions. Mongolia, Nepal and Pakistan are the exceptions in both cases.

3. An Empirical Pattern Expected in Political Acceptance Measures.

Heterogeneity across countries is the typical characteristic that emerges from our discussion of country means in the previous section. Yet our analysis in Section 1 leads us to expect homogeneity with respect to the relationship between the two political acceptance measures for every country. While the first three features of political acceptance discussed in Section 1 generate no prediction about the relationship between the two political acceptance measures, the fourth and last feature does. The stock or reservoir aspect of political acceptance of the system suggests an empirical pattern in which political acceptance of the regime this year can increase or decrease political acceptance of the system next year. This pattern, however, requires either time series or panel data to be ascertained. On the other hand the stock or reservoir feature of political acceptance of the system allowing for a buffer relationship between political acceptance of the system and of the regime generates a pattern that can be investigated within a cross-section of individuals.

In this section we use simple regression as a tool to establish that a pattern in which political acceptance of the system acts as a buffer for political acceptance of the regime holds in every single country in our data base. By focusing on each country we are controlling for heterogeneity across countries with respect to political system and political regime as well as for any other characteristic that varies across countries but remains the same across individuals within a country. If political acceptance of the system is a stock variable or reservoir of goodwill that serves as a buffer for political acceptance of the regime in the short-term, one would expect political acceptance of the

system to be positively associated with political acceptance of the regime or current administration representing the system. Furthermore, one would also expect that a one unit increase in diffuse support or political acceptance of the system by an individual would lead at most to a one unit increase in specific support or political acceptance of the regime by that same individual.

Columns 3 and 4 of Table 1 report the results of this regression for each of our 36 countries. For any one country, column 3 reports the regression coefficient and associated standard error for a simple regression using political acceptance of the system as the explanatory variable and political acceptance of the regime as the dependent variable. Column 4 reports the associated R^2. Not surprisingly the coefficient is positive, and statistically different from both zero and unity at the 0.1% level (p=.001) in each of the 36 cases. Therefore, the following pattern is established. For every country in Table 1, a higher level of acceptance of the system by an individual is positively associated with a higher level of acceptance of the regime by this individual; but a unit increase in system acceptance generates less than a unit increase in regime acceptance, which is consistent with political acceptance of the system playing the role of a buffer for political acceptance of the regime.

A closer look at these results in columns 3 and 4 of Table 1 reveals, in addition, two interesting differences that characterize the nature of the heterogeneity across countries. First, a one unit increase in system acceptance has a different impact on regime acceptance in different countries. It ranges from a minimum of .4 units in Egypt to a maximum of .9 units in Macedonia. Second, the ability of individual responses about acceptance of the system to explain individual responses about acceptance of the regime

varies dramatically across countries, although it is relatively high in each country for a cross-section of individuals. The R^2 in column 2 ranges from a low of .19 for Egypt to a high of .83 for Slovenia; yet, in half of the countries it is above .50. While heterogeneity across countries in the way political systems act as buffers for political regimes is not surprising, the homogeneity of a pattern where a buffer exists within every country is remarkable.

4. Acceptance and Legitimacy: Alternatives & Complements.

Political acceptance and political legitimacy share two features as concepts: namely the stock or reservoir feature and the capacity for direct measurement once the reason for legitimacy is specified. Hence, in this section we compare political acceptance to political legitimacy a la Lipset by contrasting the results of using political acceptance of the system to explain political acceptance of the regime in the previous section with the results of using political legitimacy of the system a la Lipset to explain political legitimacy of the regime a la Lipset. We implemented the direct measurement of political legitimacy a la Lipset with two sets of questions: set L1, "To what extent the government institutions of (COUNTRY) are the most appropriate for the country's circumstances?" and "To what extent the policies of the CURRENT administration are the most appropriate for the country's circumstances?"; set L2, "To what extent the government institutions of (COUNTRY) provide for the greatest wellbeing for the greatest number of people? and "To what extent the policies of the CURRENT administration provide for the greatest wellbeing for the greatest number of people?".

In Appendix Table 1 we present the results of a simple regression for each concept of political legitimacy a la Lipset comparable to the ones presented in columns 3 and 4 of Table 1 for political acceptance. One point that emerges clearly from this table is that the reason given for acceptance under different concepts of legitimacy matters. While the two concepts have the same positive sign and are statistically significant at the 0.1 % level in 35 of 36 countries, they differ substantially in the ability to explain the role of the system as a buffer for the regime. In 19 countries L1 explains this role better than L2; in 15 countries the opposite is the case; and only in two countries do both measures explain this role equally well.

One practical potential use of all these measures is to explain individual behavior in the political arena. Hence, we compared political acceptance and political legitimacy in terms of their capacity to explain the willingness of citizens to engage in an act of civil disobedience. One would expect that the greater the acceptance of the system the lower the citizens' willingness to engage in protest actions, especially when acceptance of the system is driven by negative considerations such as fear of repression or indifference. On the other hand, the greater the legitimacy of the system the more likely are citizens willing to engage in protest actions that don't explicitly question the system such as an act of civil disobedience. In sum we used an individual's evaluation of his/her degree of acceptance and degree of legitimacy of the system to explain his/her willingness to engage in an act of civil disobedience.

Table 2 presents the results of these regressions using the acceptance measure and each measure of political legitimacy. Columns 1 -3 present the results of a regression using L1 as the legitimacy measure and columns 4-6 present the corresponding ones for a

regression using L2. Interestingly, in five countries we find that both acceptance and either measure of political legitimacy have the expected sign (negative and positive, respectively) and each coefficient is statistically significant at the 0.1 % level. These countries are Canada, Finland, Portugal, Singapore and the United States. In these five countries the explanatory power of these regressions is relatively high, e.g., .13, .06, .16, .07 and .05, respectively, when using L2 and the results are similar for L1. In these five countries acceptance and legitimacy act as complements in providing an attractive explanation of acts of civil disobedience. All five of these societies have well developed political systems with basic guarantees for citizens' rights to protest.

In ten additional countries we find that acceptance has the expected negative sign and the coefficient is statistically significant at the 1 % level while either measure of legitimacy has a statistically insignificant coefficient at the 5% level. These countries are Belarus, Denmark, Egypt, Malawi, Mexico, Moldova, Pakistan, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In these ten countries acceptance provides an explanation of this individual behavior by itself without any help from the legitimacy measures. All these countries but Denmark have political systems where basic guarantees for citizens' rights to protest are subject to much higher levels of uncertainty than the previous ones. In any event in these fifteen countries political acceptance explains acts of civil disobedience when neither measure of political legitimacy can do so or does so in complementary fashion with acceptance.

For the remaining 20 countries the results are very mixed and difficult to summarize. In eight countries neither acceptance nor legitimacy explain acts of civil disobedience. In these countries there is often zero explanatory power. In the other 12

countries at best acceptance or one of the two measures of political legitimacy does explain acts of civil disobedience but with either low levels of significance for itself or one of the other two concepts and/ or a statistically significant 'wrong' expected sign for one of the three measures.

In columns 1-6 of Appendix Table 2 we present simple regressions using political acceptance of the system (columns 1 and 2) and political legitimacy of the system a la Lipset (columns 3 and 4 for L1 and 5 and 6 for L2) by an individual to explain an act of civil disobedience by the same individual. These regressions generate similar results to the ones presented in Table 2 with one very interesting exception. In the United States leaving out the legitimacy variable confounds the effects of the simple regression for political acceptance in such a way that it seems unable to contribute to the explanation of this individual behavior, which is a powerful illustration of complementarity between the two concepts.

Concluding Remarks

In this brief paper we show first that the acceptance concept generalizes the political legitimacy concepts relied upon in the political science literature. It has four desirable properties at the conceptual level. It is a positive, encompassing concept that is capable of direct measurement for both systems and regimes. Finally, it shares with political legitimacy the ability to operate as a stock variable or reservoir of good will.

Political legitimacy lacks the first two features. Its capacity for direct measurement requires additional effort. This additional effort arises due to the need for defining the reason for acceptance. More importantly, it introduces a fundamental

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ambiguity in the definition of legitimacy. Empirically political acceptance is capable of capturing the ability of the system to act as a buffer in 36 countries whereas either measure of political legitimacy can only do so in 35 countries.

We also considered the possibility of acceptance and political legitimacy acting as complements in the explanation of one particular act of individual behavior: acts of civil disobedience. We found that this complementarity exist and is quite strong in five countries for both measures of political legitimacy. We also found that acceptance helps explain this act of individual behavior better than legitimacy in ten countries and that the evidence is quite mixed for the rest of the countries in that none of the three measures stands out in this capacity.

In sum, the conceptual basis and empirical evidence presented here indicate that political acceptance is an attractive new measure to be considered as an alternative or a complement to political legitimacy in any of the many contexts where the latter is employed in the political science literature as well as in some where it has been avoided due to its limitations.

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Table 1: Acceptance measures

This table shows country scores and regressions results for our acceptance measures. The first two columns present the average level of acceptance in 36 countries (st. dev in brackets). Columns (3) and (4) show the OLS estimation results and the R squared of running a regression of our measure of acceptance of the authority of the regime (or current administration) on our measure of acceptance of the authority of the system (or government institutions). Each cell in column (3) shows the coefficient of a separate regression for each country. Robust standard errors are shown in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

	To what extent do you accept the authority of [COUNTRY]'s government institutions to act in matters of public policy?	To what extent do you accept the authority of the CURRENT administration to act in matters of public policy?	Linear regressions of "Accept the authority of the CURRENT administration to act in matters of public policy" on "Accept the authority of [COUNTRY]'s government institutions to act in matters of public policy"	R squared
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Belarus	0.54 [0.35]	0.55 [0.35]	0.79*** [0.02]	0.66
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.65 [0.26]	0.65 [0.27]	0.85*** [0.02]	0.69
Botswana	0.70 [0.25]	0.68 [0.26]	0.86*** [0.02]	0.69
Burkina Faso	0.44 [0.27]	0.48 [0.27]	0.66*** [0.03]	0.44
Canada	0.63 [0.24]	0.57 [0.25]	0.67*** [0.03]	0.41
Colombia	0.45 [0.29]	0.46 [0.29]	0.65*** [0.03]	0.41
Côte d'Ivoire	0.53 [0.29]	0.54 [0.30]	0.76*** [0.03]	0.52
Denmark	0.71 [0.26]	0.69 [0.26]	0.78*** [0.02]	0.57
Ecuador	0.52 [0.24]	0.59 [0.26]	0.53*** [0.03]	0.26
Egypt	0.51 [0.27]	0.59 [0.25]	0.40*** [0.03]	0.19
Finland	0.56 [0.25]	0.50 [0.27]	0.77*** [0.02]	0.52
Georgia	0.62 [0.29]	0.63 [0.29]	0.89*** [0.01]	0.78
Greece	0.48 [0.24]	0.49 [0.28]	0.66*** [0.03]	0.34
Hungary	0.53 [0.24]	0.51 [0.24]	0.89*** [0.01]	0.83
Macedonia, FYR	0.67 [0.34]	0.68 [0.34]	0.90*** [0.01]	0.76
Madagascar	0.30 [0.26]	0.29 [0.26]	0.61*** [0.03]	0.36
Malawi	0.51 [0.30]	0.51 [0.30]	0.57*** [0.03]	0.32
Mexico	0.51 [0.29]	0.55 [0.30]	0.62*** [0.03]	0.36
Moldova	0.59 [0.35]	0.55 [0.33]	0.82*** [0.01]	0.78
Mongolia	0.39 [0.24]	0.37 [0.24]	0.57*** [0.03]	0.34
Nepal	0.33 [0.26]	0.36 [0.29]	0.68*** [0.03]	0.40
Nicaragua	0.50 [0.30]	0.52 [0.29]	0.73*** [0.02]	0.57
Pakistan	0.51 [0.31]	0.55 [0.29]	0.69*** [0.02]	0.55
Panama	0.46 [0.24]	0.46 [0.26]	0.69*** [0.03]	0.42
Portugal	0.52 [0.26]	0.49 [0.26]	0.68*** [0.02]	0.46
Serbia	0.42 [0.29]	0.41 [0.28]	0.71*** [0.02]	0.54
Sierra Leone	0.61 [0.28]	0.62 [0.29]	0.59*** [0.03]	0.35
Singapore	0.62 [0.22]	0.60 [0.22]	0.81*** [0.02]	0.67
Slovenia	0.53 [0.24]	0.51 [0.24]	0.89*** [0.01]	0.83
Sri Lanka	0.59 [0.25]	0.60 [0.25]	0.87*** [0.01]	0.77
Tanzania	0.44 [0.26]	0.43 [0.25]	0.54*** [0.03]	0.32
United States	0.67 [0.24]	0.62 [0.27]	0.72*** [0.03]	0.39
Uruguay	0.63 [0.26]	0.65 [0.30]	0.63*** [0.03]	0.31
Uzbekistan	0.86 [0.21]	0.78 [0.19]	0.74*** [0.01]	0.66
Zambia	0.55 [0.29]	0.57 [0.31]	0.50*** [0.03]	0.22
Zimbabwe	0.41 [0.32]	0.40 [0.31]	0.69*** [0.02]	0.51

Table 2: Acceptance, legitimacy, and individual behavior

This table shows the estimation results and the R squared of running linear probability regressions of an indicator for carrying out acts of civil disobedience on our measure of acceptance of the authority of the system, and two measures of the legitimacy of the system (or government institutions). Each row represents a separate regression for each country. Columns (1) and (2) show the coefficients of the regressions using the question "The government institutions of [COUNTRY] are the most appropriate for the country's circumstances" as a proxy for legitimacy. Columns (4) and (5) show the coefficients of the regressions using the question "The government institutions of [COUNTRY] provide for the greatest well-being for the greatest number of people" as a proxy for legitimacy. Robust standard errors are shown in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

	Linear probability regressions of an indicator coded 1 if the individual carried out acts of civil disobedience on our measure of acceptance of the authority of the system and a measure for whether the government institutions of [COUNTRY] are the most appropriate for the country's circumstances.			Linear probability regressions of an indicator coded 1 if the individual carried out acts of civil disobedience on our measure of acceptance of the authority of the system and a measure for whether the government institutions of [COUNTRY] provide for the greatest well-being for the greatest number of people.		
	Acceptance	Legitimacy (L1)	R squared	Acceptance	Legitimacy (L2)	R squared
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Belarus	-0.14***	0.05	0.04	-0.15***	0.04	0.05
	[0.03]	[0.03]		[0.02]	[0.03]	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-0.02***	0.03***	0.01	-0.02***	-0.02***	0.01
	[0.01]	[0.01]		[0.01]	[0.01]	
Botswana	-0.03	-0.03	0.01	-0.03	-0.05**	0.02
	[0.03]	[0.03]		[0.03]	[0.02]	
Burkina Faso	-0.07*	-0.08*	0.01	-0.09**	-0.05	0.01
	[0.04]	[0.04]		[0.04]	[0.04]	
Canada	-0.45***	0.22***	0.11	-0.43***	0.30***	0.13
	[0.05]	[0.05]		[0.05]	[0.05]	
Colombia	-0.04	-0.07**	0.01	-0.04	-0.06**	0.01
	[0.03]	[0.03]		[0.02]	[0.03]	
Côte d'Ivoire	-0.01	0.07***	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.00
	[0.03]	[0.02]		[0.03]	[0.02]	
Denmark	-0.30***	0.07	0.06	-0.31***	0.08	0.06
	[0.05]	[0.05]		[0.05]	[0.05]	
Ecuador	0	-0.07**	0.01	0	-0.07**	0.01
	[0.02]	[0.03]		[0.02]	[0.03]	
Egypt	-0.09***	0.01	0.01	-0.09***	0.01	0.01
	[0.03]	[0.02]		[0.03]	[0.03]	
Finland	-0.37***	0.18***	0.07	-0.35***	0.12**	0.06
	[0.06]	[0.05]		[0.06]	[0.05]	
Georgia	-0.03	-0.04**	0.03	-0.04*	-0.04*	0.03
	[0.02]	[0.02]		[0.02]	[0.02]	
Greece	-0.01	0.03	0.00	-0.02	-0.03	0.00
	[0.04]	[0.04]		[0.04]	[0.04]	
Hungary	-0.03	0.01	0.01	-0.02	-0.01	0.01
	[0.02]	[0.01]		[0.01]	[0.01]	
Macedonia, FYR	-0.04**	-0.13***	0.07	-0.12***	0.01	0.05
	[0.02]	[0.03]		[0.03]	[0.03]	
Madagascar	-0.02	0.03	0.00	-0.02	-0.01	0.00
	[0.03]	[0.03]		[0.03]	[0.02]	
Malawi	-0.10**	-0.07	0.01	-0.12**	-0.01	0.01
	[0.05]	[0.04]		[0.05]	[0.05]	
Mexico	-0.09***	-0.04	0.01	-0.09**	-0.05	0.01
	[0.03]	[0.03]		[0.03]	[0.03]	
Moldova	-0.07***	0.00	0.02	-0.07***	0.03	0.02
	[0.02]	[0.02]		[0.02]	[0.02]	
Mongolia	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.00
	[0.02]	[0.02]		[0.02]	[0.01]	
Nepal	0.07	-0.01	0.00	0.03	0.04	0.00
	[0.04]	[0.04]		[0.04]	[0.04]	
Nicaragua	-0.05	0.07*	0.01	-0.05	0.08**	0.01
	[0.03]	[0.04]		[0.03]	[0.04]	
Pakistan	-0.03**	0.05**	0.01	-0.03**	0.00	0.00
	[0.01]	[0.02]		[0.01]	[0.02]	
Panama	0.08**	0.07***	0.01	0.08**	0.04	0.01
	[0.04]	[0.03]		[0.04]	[0.03]	
Portugal	-0.26***	0.35***	0.16	-0.27***	0.34***	0.16
	[0.04]	[0.04]		[0.04]	[0.04]	
Serbia	0.01	0.04	0.00	0.02	0.07	0.01
	[0.03]	[0.03]		[0.03]	[0.05]	
Sierra Leone	0.08*	-0.09	0.01	0.08	-0.13**	0.01
	[0.05]	[0.06]		[0.05]	[0.06]	
Singapore	-0.27***	0.26***	0.05	-0.30***	0.34***	0.07
	[0.06]	[0.06]		[0.06]	[0.05]	
Slovenia	-0.02	0.00	0.00	-0.02	-0.01	0.00
	[0.05]	[0.04]		[0.04]	[0.03]	
Sri Lanka	0.03**	-0.02	0.01	0.03*	0.00	0.00
	[0.02]	[0.02]		[0.01]	[0.01]	
Tanzania	-0.14***	0.04	0.01	-0.12**	0.02	0.01
	[0.05]	[0.05]		[0.05]	[0.05]	
United States	-0.14***	0.23***	0.03	-0.15***	0.27***	0.05
	[0.05]	[0.04]		[0.05]	[0.04]	
Uruguay	0	-0.05*	0.01	-0.01	-0.03	0.00
	[0.02]	[0.03]		[0.02]	[0.02]	
Uzbekistan	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-		-	-	
Zambia	-0.10**	-0.04	0.01	-0.09**	-0.06	0.01
	[0.04]	[0.04]		[0.04]	[0.05]	
Zimbabwe	-0.24***	0.01	0.04	-0.23***	-0.01	0.04
	[0.04]	[0.05]		[0.04]	[0.05]	

Appendix 1: Legitimacy measures

This table shows the OLS estimation results and the R squared of running a regression of two measures of legitimacy of the regime (or current administration) on the corresponding measures of legitimacy of the system (or government institutions). Each cell in columns (1) and (3) shows the coefficient of a separate regression for each country. Robust standard errors are shown in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

	Linear regressions of "The policies of the CURRENT administration are the most appropriate for the country's circumstances" on "The government institutions of [COUNTRY] are the most appropriate for the country's circumstances"		Linear regressions of "The policies of the CURRENT administration (or CURRENT government) provide for the greatest well-being for the greatest number of people" on "The government institutions of [COUNTRY] provide for the greatest well-being for the greatest number of people"	
	Coefficients	R squared	Coefficients	R squared
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Belarus	0.71*** [0.03]	0.44	0.50*** [0.04]	0.22
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.75*** [0.04]	0.44	0.81*** [0.03]	0.49
Botswana	0.79*** [0.02]	0.57	0.77*** [0.02]	0.59
Burkina Faso	0.74*** [0.02]	0.51	0.62*** [0.03]	0.41
Canada	0.71*** [0.03]	0.43	0.60*** [0.03]	0.38
Colombia	0.62*** [0.03]	0.35	0.52*** [0.03]	0.27
Côte d'Ivoire	0.74*** [0.02]	0.52	0.75*** [0.02]	0.52
Denmark	0.70*** [0.03]	0.37	0.72*** [0.03]	0.44
Ecuador	0.77*** [0.03]	0.53	0.71*** [0.03]	0.46
Egypt	0.78*** [0.02]	0.57	0.60*** [0.03]	0.40
Finland	0.77*** [0.03]	0.49	0.73*** [0.02]	0.53
Georgia	0.87*** [0.02]	0.69	0.85*** [0.02]	0.72
Greece	0.67*** [0.03]	0.41	0.68*** [0.03]	0.45
Hungary	0.92*** [0.01]	0.84	0.92*** [0.01]	0.84
Macedonia, FYR	0.89*** [0.02]	0.75	0.77*** [0.03]	0.57
Madagascar	0.55*** [0.04]	0.33	0.44*** [0.04]	0.21
Malawi	0.51*** [0.03]	0.28	0.52*** [0.03]	0.30
Mexico	0.64*** [0.03]	0.40	0.66*** [0.03]	0.43
Moldova	0.46*** [0.04]	0.15	0.51*** [0.04]	0.22
Mongolia	0.70*** [0.03]	0.52	0.68*** [0.03]	0.46
Nepal	0.65*** [0.03]	0.43	0.53*** [0.03]	0.35
Nicaragua	0.72*** [0.03]	0.49	0.75*** [0.02]	0.58
Pakistan	0.62*** [0.03]	0.38	0.41*** [0.03]	0.18
Panama	0.49*** [0.03]	0.24	0.48*** [0.03]	0.23
Portugal	0.77*** [0.03]	0.51	0.70*** [0.03]	0.47
Serbia	0.49*** [0.03]	0.27	0.37*** [0.03]	0.20
Sierra Leone	0.24*** [0.03]	0.06	0.22*** [0.03]	0.05
Singapore	0.83*** [0.02]	0.60	0.83*** [0.02]	0.63
Slovenia	0.62*** [0.04]	0.39	0.13*** [0.04]	0.02
Sri Lanka	0.76*** [0.03]	0.47	0.75*** [0.03]	0.46
Tanzania	0.23*** [0.03]	0.06	0.29*** [0.03]	0.09
United States	0.76*** [0.03]	0.50	0.75*** [0.02]	0.53
Uruguay	0.64*** [0.03]	0.39	0.63*** [0.03]	0.36
Uzbekistan	-0.10*** [0.03]	0.01	0.16*** [0.04]	0.03
Zambia	0.65*** [0.03]	0.37	0.69*** [0.03]	0.38
Zimbabwe	0.55*** [0.03]	0.29	0.52*** [0.03]	0.28

Appendix 2: Acceptance, legitimacy, and individual behavior

This table shows the estimation results and the R squared of running linear probability regressions of an indicator for carrying out acts of civil disobedience on our measure of acceptance of the authority of the system, and two measures of the legitimacy of the system (or government institutions). Each cell shows the coefficient of a separate regression for each country. Robust standard errors are shown in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

	Linear probability regressions of an indicator coded 1 if the individual carried out acts of civil disobedience on measures for acceptance of the authority of [COUNTRY]'s government institutions to act in matters of public policy		Linear probability regressions of an indicator coded 1 if the individual carried out acts of civil disobedience on measures for whether the government institutions of [COUNTRY] are the most appropriate for the country's circumstances		Linear probability regressions of an indicator coded 1 if the individual carried out acts of civil disobedience on measures for whether the government institutions of [COUNTRY] provide for the greatest well-being for the greatest number of people	
	Coefficients	R squared	Coefficients	R squared	Coefficients	R squared
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Belarus	-0.14*** [0.02]	0.05	0.00 [0.03]	0.00	0.04 [0.03]	0.00
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-0.02*** [0.01]	0.00	0.03*** [0.01]	0.00	-0.03*** [0.01]	0.00
Botswana	-0.07*** [0.02]	0.02	-0.05** [0.02]	0.01	-0.06*** [0.02]	0.02
Burkina Faso	-0.11*** [0.04]	0.01	-0.11*** [0.04]	0.01	-0.06 [0.04]	0.00
Canada	-0.43*** [0.06]	0.08	0.18*** [0.05]	0.01	0.29*** [0.05]	0.05
Colombia	-0.04* [0.02]	0.00	-0.07*** [0.03]	0.01	-0.06** [0.03]	0.01
Côte d'Ivoire	0.02 [0.02]	0.00	0.07*** [0.02]	0.01	0.02 [0.02]	0.00
Denmark	-0.29*** [0.05]	0.06	-0.01 [0.04]	0.00	-0.01 [0.05]	0.00
Ecuador	-0.01 [0.02]	0.00	-0.07** [0.03]	0.01	-0.08*** [0.03]	0.01
Egypt	-0.09*** [0.03]	0.01	-0.01 [0.02]	0.00	-0.01 [0.03]	0.00
Finland	-0.31*** [0.05]	0.05	0.05 [0.05]	0.00	0.02 [0.05]	0.00
Georgia	-0.06*** [0.02]	0.02	-0.05** [0.02]	0.02	-0.06*** [0.02]	0.02
Greece	-0.02 [0.04]	0.00	0.03 [0.04]	0.00	-0.03 [0.04]	0.00
Hungary	-0.02* [0.01]	0.01	-0.01 [0.01]	0.00	-0.02* [0.01]	0.01
Macedonia, FYR	-0.10*** [0.02]	0.04	-0.14*** [0.03]	0.06	-0.06** [0.03]	0.01
Madagascar	-0.01 [0.03]	0.00	0.03 [0.03]	0.00	-0.01 [0.03]	0.00
Malawi	-0.12*** [0.04]	0.01	-0.09** [0.04]	0.00	-0.03 [0.05]	0.00
Mexico	-0.10*** [0.03]	0.01	-0.05* [0.03]	0.00	-0.07** [0.03]	0.01
Moldova	-0.06*** [0.01]	0.02	-0.01 [0.02]	0.00	0.03 [0.02]	0.00
Mongolia	0.02 [0.02]	0.00	0.00 [0.01]	0.00	0.02 [0.01]	0.00
Nepal	0.06 [0.04]	0.00	0.00 [0.04]	0.00	0.05 [0.03]	0.00
Nicaragua	-0.03 [0.03]	0.00	0.06 [0.04]	0.00	0.07** [0.04]	0.01
Pakistan	-0.03** [0.01]	0.00	0.05*** [0.02]	0.01	0.02 [0.02]	0.00
Panama	0.08** [0.04]	0.01	0.06** [0.03]	0.00	0.03 [0.03]	0.00
Portugal	-0.23*** [0.04]	0.05	0.33*** [0.04]	0.10	0.31*** [0.05]	0.09
Serbia	0.03 [0.03]	0.00	0.04 [0.03]	0.00	0.08* [0.05]	0.01
Sierra Leone	0.08 [0.05]	0.00	-0.09 [0.06]	0.00	-0.13** [0.06]	0.01
Singapore	-0.16*** [0.05]	0.02	0.14*** [0.05]	0.01	0.22*** [0.05]	0.03
Slovenia	-0.02 [0.04]	0.00	0.00 [0.03]	0.00	-0.01 [0.03]	0.00
Sri Lanka	0.03** [0.01]	0.00	-0.01 [0.01]	0.00	0.01 [0.01]	0.00
Tanzania	-0.13*** [0.05]	0.01	0.03 [0.05]	0.00	0.03 [0.05]	0.00
United States	-0.05 [0.05]	0.00	0.18*** [0.04]	0.02	0.22*** [0.04]	0.04
Uruguay	-0.01 [0.02]	0.00	-0.05* [0.03]	0.01	-0.03 [0.02]	0.00
Uzbekistan	-	-	-	-	-	-
Zambia	-0.11*** [0.04]	0.01	-0.07* [0.04]	0.00	-0.09** [0.04]	0.01
Zimbabwe	-0.24*** [0.04]	0.04	-0.08* [0.05]	0.00	-0.09** [0.05]	0.00