

Determinants of State Legitimacy: An Empirical Study of 177 Countries

Ahmad Idrees Rahmani
Pardee RAND Graduate School

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Abstract

There is a popular belief that states cannot maintain authority unless they are legitimate. In this paper we will empirically examine the relationship between state's legitimacy and a number of popular determinants including those suggested by the current literature, using a panel dataset of 177 countries covering 2005 – 2009. Albeit the common belief that provision of political goods and services is the primary determinant of state's political legitimacy, the cross-country analysis suggests that fractionalization of political elites matters more. Given that legitimacy is the most important prerequisite of maintaining authority, the findings of this study could have considerable policy implication for the current process of state building operations in countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and possibility, Iran and Pakistan. Towards the end, findings from this study are used to explain certain trends in each of those countries. The analysis suggests that investment in state's service delivery capacity might be helpful for a number of good reasons, but not necessarily improving state's political legitimacy. Additional measures are necessary to tackle fractionalization of political elites to improve legitimacy of states.

Introduction

The concept of legitimacy was invented to help account for social order in large societies. As such, the concept, if not the term, has an ancient lineage (Zelditch, 2001). According to Weber, in the history of mankind there were no rulers who would only rely on material and affective premises of their authority. Elites of power always sought to stimulate and cultivate popular belief in their legitimacy. Political legitimacy of the state, therefore, has become a major subject of interest for political scientists in recent years. One of the reasons why it is more compelling issue today is the growing number of fragile and failing states that are facing the threat of state collapse due to systematic erosion of state's political legitimacy.

After the recent US/international attempts to change regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan and the subsequent emergence of growing insurgencies, scholars have become even more interested in researching the concept of political legitimacy and the underlying determinants of it. "Many terrorists value the perception of popular or theological legitimacy for their actions," said Stephen J. Hadley, Mr. Bush's national security adviser. "By encouraging debate about the moral legitimacy of using weapons of mass destruction, we can try to affect the strategic calculus of the terrorists" (Schmitt & Shanker, 2008).

Some scholars such as Robert Rotberg, considers service delivery as the core function of states. "Nation-states exist to provide a decentralized method of delivering political (public) goods to persons living within designated parameters (borders). Having replaced the monarchs of old, modern states focus and answer the concerns and demands of citizenries." He particularly emphasizes on provision of security, judiciary, health and education as the most critical political goods that citizens of a country expects its state to provide them. "There is a hierarchy of political goods. None is as critical as the supply of security, especially human security."

Given the complexity and importance of the concept of political legitimacy, some scholars conclude that there are sets of complex political, socio and economic factors that form people's belief towards state's legitimacy (Michael Hechter, 2009), thus recommend more theoretical and qualitative methods of study to tackle the problem. A few scholars have also used empirical methods to determine causes of state legitimacy (Bruce Gilley, 2006). However, the number of empirical studies towards the subject matter has been considerably very limited thus far.

Nevertheless, they all agree that popular regime support is critical to democratic legitimacy and stability in emerging democracies (Easton 1965). Several studies empirically demonstrate that political institutions systematically affect citizens' political support in both established and emerging democracies (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Norris 1999; Cho and Bratton 2006).

In this study we have used a panel dataset of about 177 countries over five years of repetition to explore key determinants of states' political legitimacy. The dataset is

developed by the Fund for Peace and Foreign Policy Magazine to track trajectories of state failure and alerting international community when alarming trends are observed. The data however provides in-depth information about those variables that are commonly associated with legitimacy of states. The overall attempt in this study is to see if same conclusions could be reached using new datasets and methodology. Or do we find new significant explanatory variables that might have different policy implications.

Description of Dataset & Measurement of Indicators:

For the purpose of this research we have used a number of datasets including the failed states indicators of Fund for Peace (FFP) and Foreign Policy (FP), corruption perception indicators of Transparency International (TI), and World Bank's World Development Indicators (WDI). The main limitation of using this dataset is its five-year repetition (2005 – 2009), which is provided for 177 countries only¹.

We have also controlled for other important key variables using WDI and TI data. It is important to note that FFPs' indicators for each year are produced during the proceeding years. Therefore, when merging the dataset with WDI and TI datasets, we have adjusted for the difference. For example, data points from 2005 of FFP are paired with 2004 of other datasets. Both WDI and TI datasets have previously been used and thus do not require further explanation. But it might be helpful if we briefly discuss FFP's dataset since it has not been used as widely as the other datasets. For more technical information about the dataset, however, the readers are encouraged to contact FFP's methodologists².

Fund for Peace in collaboration with Foreign Policy have developed a conflict analysis tool called Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST), which is basically a method for monitoring the level of internal conflict in a country and a basis for the annual Failed States Index produced by both institutions. The indices provide a comparative profile of the risk and vulnerability to violent internal conflict globally. CAST identifies twelve societal indicators that appear frequently in fragile states. These twelve conflict risk indicators are used to measure the condition of a state at any given moment by enumerating them between 0 and 10. The indicators provide a snapshot in time that can be measured against other snapshots in a time series to determine whether the conditions are getting better or worse. They are divided into social, economic, and political/military categories as follows:

- Social Indicators:
 - 1. Mounting demographic pressure, which measures:
 - Pressures deriving from high population density relative to food supply and other life-sustaining resources.

¹ It is important to note that in 2005 the data was produced for 76 countries, in 2006 for 146 countries, and for all 177 countries subsequently.

² For detailed information about Fund for Peace's methodology and dataset please refer to their website at www.fundforpeace.org

- Pressures deriving from group settlement patterns that affect the freedom to participate in common forms of human and physical activity, including economic productivity, travel, social interaction, religious worship, etc.
 - Pressures deriving from group settlement patterns and physical settings, including border disputes, ownership or occupancy of land, access to transportation outlets, control of religious or historical sites, and proximity to environmental hazards.
 - Pressures from skewed population distributions, such as a "youth or age bulge," or sharply divergent rates of population growth among competing communal groups.
2. Massive movement of refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs):
 - Forced uprooting of large communities as a result of random or targeted violence and/or repression, causing food shortages, disease, lack of clean water, land competition, and turmoil that can spiral into larger humanitarian and security problems, both within and between countries.
 3. Legacy of vengeance-seeking group grievances or group paranoia, which takes into account:
 - History of aggrieved communal groups citing injustices of the past, sometimes going back centuries.
 - Pattern of atrocities committed with impunity against communal groups.
 - Specific groups singled out by state authorities, or by dominant groups, for persecution or repression.
 - Institutionalized political exclusion.
 - Public scapegoating of groups believed to have acquired wealth, status or power as evidenced in the emergence of "hate" radio, pamphleteering, and stereotypical or nationalistic political rhetoric.
 4. Chronic and sustained human flight including:
 - "Brain drain" of professionals, intellectuals and political dissidents fearing persecution or repression.
 - Voluntary emigration of "the middle class", particularly economically productive segments of the population, such as entrepreneurs, businesspeople, artisans and traders, due to economic deterioration.
 - Growth of exile communities.
 - Economic Indicators:
 5. Uneven economic development along group lines, taking into account:
 - Group-based inequality, or perceived inequality, in education and economic status.
 - Group-based impoverishment as measured by poverty levels, infant mortality rates, educational levels, etc.
 - Rise of communal nationalism based on real or perceived group inequalities.
 6. Sharp and/or severe economic decline, which include:

- A pattern of progressive economic decline of the society as a whole as measured by per capita income, GNP, debt, child mortality rates, poverty levels, business failures, etc.
 - Sudden drop in commodity prices, trade revenue, or foreign investment.
 - Collapse or devaluation of the national currency.
 - Extreme social hardship imposed by economic austerity programs.
 - Growth of hidden economies, including the drug trade, smuggling, and capital flight.
 - Increase in levels of corruption and illicit transactions among the general populace.
- Political/Military Indicators:
7. De-legitimization of the state, taking into account:
 - Widespread loss of popular confidence in state institutions and processes, e.g., widely boycotted or contested elections, mass public demonstrations, sustained civil disobedience, inability of the state to collect taxes, resistance to military conscription, rise of armed insurgencies
 - Resistance of ruling elites to transparency, accountability and political representation.
 - Massive and endemic corruption or profiteering by ruling elites.
 - Growth of crime syndicates linked to ruling elites.
 8. Progressive deterioration of public services including:
 - Disappearance of basic state functions that serve the people, including failure to protect citizens from terrorism and violence and to provide essential services, such as health, education, sanitation, public transportation, etc.
 - State apparatus narrows to those agencies that serve the ruling elites, such as security agencies, presidential staff, the central bank, the diplomatic service, customs and collection agencies, etc.
 9. Suspension of the rule of law and widespread violation of human rights, taking into account:
 - Emergence of authoritarian, dictatorial or military rule in which constitutional and democratic institutions and processes are suspended or manipulated.
 - Outbreak of politically inspired (as opposed to criminal) violence against innocent civilians.
 - Rising number of political prisoners or dissidents who are denied due process consistent with international norms and practices.
 - Widespread abuse of legal, political and social rights, including those of individuals, groups and institutions (e.g. harassment of the press, politicization of the judiciary, internal use of military for political ends, public repression of political opponents).
 10. Security apparatus operating as a “state within a state”, which would include:
 - Emergence of elite or praetorian guards that operate with impunity.

- Emergence of state-sponsored or state-supported “private militias” that terrorize political opponents, suspected “enemies,” or civilians seen to be sympathetic to the opposition.
- Emergence of an “army within an army” that serves the interests of the dominant military or political clique.

11. Rise of factionalized political elites, taking into account:

- Fragmentation of ruling elites and state institutions along ethnic, class, clan, racial or religious lines.
- Use of nationalistic political rhetoric by ruling elites, often in terms of communal irredentism (e.g., a “greater Serbia”) or of communal solidarity (e.g., ethnic “cleansing” or defending “the faith”).

12. Intervention of other states or external political actors:

- Military or paramilitary engagement in the internal affairs of the state at risk by outside armies, states, identity groups, or entities that affect the internal balance of power, or resolution of the conflict.

The above 12 indicators are enumerated between 0 and 10 based on a systematic five-step evaluation and scoring process:

- Step one is to determine the baseline using previous year’s scores in combination with systematic review of key quantitative factors from databases by organizations such as WHO, World Bank, UNHCR, UNDP etc. Each of these factors is associated with one or more of the CAST indicators. These quantitative factors may not exist for some indices such as factionalized elite groups.
- In step two they conduct content analysis, scanning approximately 30,000 articles per country per year, to establish the rank order of intensity of each indicator in each country. By combining the baseline rank with the event-driven content analysis rank, preliminary scores for each country are created.
- In step three, independent of, and parallel to steps one and two, subject matter experts trained in the CAST framework offer a qualitative judgment on whether each country indicator got better or worse from the previous year to the year of interest as a hypothesis.
- In step four, the vector of change as proposed by the analysts is then compared to the vector of change as determined by the algorithm. If they are the same, then the score is accepted. If the vectors are different, then a check is undertaken to determine the reason for the discrepancy. Sometimes when the analyst miss important events in a sub-region of a particular country the content analysis will pick it up. Sometimes the software generates false positives because of lexical idiosyncrasies or filtering issues. This reconciliation process allows examination of the scores with a high degree of confidence, country by country, indicator by indicator.
- In step five, the reconciled scores are reviewed by an internal group, which challenges the scores through evidence-based questions in peer review sessions, indicator by indicator for each country. Those scores are finally reviewed by the senior experts of the organization, who conduct final independent oversight.

Triangulation of the analysis in this fashion through several layers of internal checks avoids groupthink, and fills in any gaps that may occur in any methodology. A list of indicators for a few exemplary states are provided in the Annex-II of this paper so the readers get a grasp of how these indices follow the development of each country.

Methodology

Country fixed effect regression with controlling for the time effect is the core analytical methodology for this study. The outcome variable of interest is de-legitimization of state and the explanatory variables are the remaining eleven indicators of FFP as well as some socio-economic variables of WDI and TI's corruption indices. In a seven-step analysis, we will initially establish basic relationship between state legitimacy and its key determinants, and then will try to explore dimensionality of the effect. To do that we will try to test the following hypothesis:

If A, B and C are the determinants of X in the time period T, then it has to be the case that A, B and C happen first and then cause some change in the outcome variable of interest, X. If this is true, then it should not be the case that A, B and C at time T+1, while controlling for A, B, and C at time T, have significant effect on X at time T. If the data support such a hypothesis, we could conclude that there is a one-dimensional effect, which could have even more significant policy implication.

Analysis & Discussions:

Before we start our systematic regression analysis of our data, we would like to have a very quick look at the summary statistics and distribution of our dataset. The most important statistics that we might refer to again is the mean of de-legitimization of state (2.41) and the mean of fractionalization of political elites (2.54). Table one below presents a full list of summary of statistics:

Table – 1: Summary of statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
FFP's Failed States Indices					
De-legitimization of State (Dependent Variable)	753	6.66	2.41	0.90	10.00
Demographic Pressure	753	6.61	1.99	1.00	9.80
Existence of Refugees & IDPs	753	5.22	2.33	0.90	9.90
Existence of Group Grievances	753	6.00	1.96	1.00	10.00
Human Flight	753	5.76	2.10	1.00	10.00
Uneven Development	753	7.05	1.83	1.90	9.70
Economic Decline	753	5.64	2.11	0.50	10.00
Deterioration of Public Services	753	5.87	2.34	1.00	10.00
External Intervention	753	5.80	2.21	0.90	10.00
Violation of Human Rights	753	6.18	2.23	1.20	10.00
Existence of State within State	753	5.79	2.51	0.90	10.00
Factionalized Political Elites	753	6.28	2.54	0.70	10.00

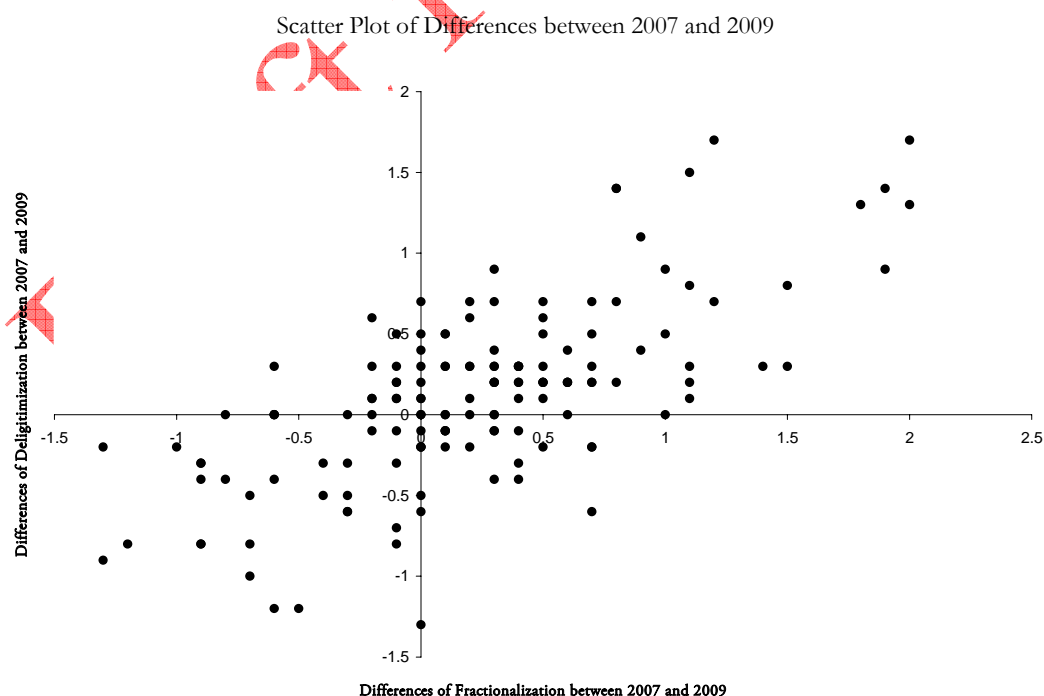
WDI & TI Indices and Variables					
Transparency index	823	3.99	2.11	1.00	9.70
Armed force personal as % of total labor force	885	1.52	1.52	0.00	13.25
Life expectancy	885	67.56	8.83	42.07	82.51
Health expenditure as % of total government expenditures	885	10.76	3.46	0.90	29.80
Aid per capita in current US Dollars	885	61.37	80.76	(40.36)	1,035.32
Current account balance	885	(2.55)	10.36	(46.30)	50.74
GDP per capita growth rate	885	3.99	3.97	(9.18)	34.24
School enrollment	885	88.70	10.56	30.86	99.97
Trade as % of GDP	885	93.27	45.74	0.31	456.65

A number of additional variables were controlled for in the analysis, which did not have significant effect and thus are not reported here for simplicity purposes.

For WDI indicators we had some missing data, which are imputed by replacing them with the average of all values for that variable. We did not impute missing data of FFP indicators to prevent any further complication in our interpretation of the results. In the mean time, a summary of correlation analysis is presented in the Annex-I of this paper reader's further understanding of the underlying structure of the data.

Results & Policy Implication:

Before discussing our regression results, it might be helpful to visualize the relationship between change in fractionalization and state legitimacy by having a look at the scatter plot of two-year change in fractionalization versus that of state legitimacy. This relationship is further reflected in the table of correlation analysis presented in the Annex-I of the paper.



Next we are going to estimate the following model to explore the determinants of state legitimacy:

$$SL_{it} = \beta_0 + \sum_{it} \beta_{it} X_{it} + \sum_{it} \gamma_{it} Z_{it} + \lambda_i D_i + \eta_t D_t + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Where X_i represents the twelve indicators of FFP, and Z_i a number of control variables from WDI and TI datasets. D_i and D_t are dummy variables for fixed country effect and time effect respectively.

Regressions are estimated in seven different models with different specifications (column I through VII in the results table below). The first three models are simple OLS regressions, while the rest of them are fixed effect analyses. Details of specification for each model are defined by the Yes-No rows below the results. In all models we notice that apart from human rights violations and existence of state within state, fractionalization of political elites is the most significant determinant of state's legitimacy.

Table-3: Relationship between state legitimacy and fractionalization of political elite groups

De-legitimization of State	(I)	(II)	(III)	(IV)	(V)	(VI)	(VII)
Demographic pressure	0.0316 (0.0346)	0.0272 (0.0343)	0.0173 (0.0360)	0.0248 (0.0585)	0.0205 (0.0548)	0.0392 (0.0581)	0.0221 (0.0650)
Refugees & IDPs	-0.0411* (0.0187)	-0.0436* (0.0185)	0.0021 (0.0188)	0.0348 (0.0352)	0.0164 (0.0332)	0.0280 (0.0359)	0.0115 (0.0404)
Group grievance	-0.1075*** (0.0279)	-0.0984*** (0.0286)	-0.0619* (0.0280)	-0.0703 (0.0545)	0.0144 (0.0551)	-0.0094 (0.0557)	-0.0144 (0.0662)
Human flight	0.1089*** (0.0217)	0.1090*** (0.0216)	0.0954*** (0.0228)	0.0592 (0.0387)	0.0683 (0.0359)	0.0716 (0.0365)	0.0965* (0.0405)
Uneven development	0.0920*** (0.0268)	0.0860** (0.0273)	0.0536 (0.0286)	0.1193 (0.0632)	0.0429 (0.0675)	0.0219 (0.0719)	0.0309 (0.0868)
Economic decline	-0.0075 (0.0231)	-0.0073 (0.0234)	-0.0492* (0.0244)	-0.0195 (0.0402)	-0.0020 (0.0394)	0.0092 (0.0422)	0.0204 (0.0431)
Public services	0.0366 (0.0313)	0.0433 (0.0319)	-0.0076 (0.0348)	0.0442 (0.0518)	0.0557 (0.0498)	0.0443 (0.0498)	0.0597 (0.0509)
External intervention	0.0926*** (0.0263)	0.0944*** (0.0264)	0.0720** (0.0250)	0.0378 (0.0402)	0.0556 (0.0437)	0.0614 (0.0478)	0.0618 (0.0591)
Human rights	0.3625*** (0.0384)	0.3627*** (0.0384)	0.3341*** (0.0402)	0.1528* (0.0626)	0.1341* (0.0620)	0.1373* (0.0658)	0.0928 (0.0720)
State within state	0.0985** (0.0302)	0.0987** (0.0301)	0.0806* (0.0318)	0.1067* (0.0431)	0.1102** (0.0410)	0.1090* (0.0424)	0.0593 (0.0464)
Fractionalized elites	0.3946*** (0.0308)	0.3866*** (0.0311)	0.3164*** (0.0309)	0.4304*** (0.0477)	0.3911*** (0.0484)	0.3613*** (0.0498)	0.3364*** (0.0598)

Future human rights						0.1603 (0.1087)	
Future state within state						0.0575 (0.0809)	
Future fractionalized elites						-0.0691 (0.0749)	
Fixed effect	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time effect	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-economic controls	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Reverse dimensionality test	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
N	753	753	721	753	753	721	550
R ²	0.9077	0.9080	0.9214	0.5595	0.5720	0.5912	0.6218

Note: this table reports result of fixed effect regression of state legitimacy on fractionalization of political elite groups as well as a number of other failed state indices and control variables. Each table column represents a separate regression where state failure indices are the left-hand side variables and controls are included as specified in the bottom rows of the table. All specifications include a full set of year and country fixed effects. Column I, II, and III are OLS regressions include the set of state failure indicators. Column IV, V, VI are FE regressions representing state failure indicators while controlling for additional political, and socio economic variables. Column VII regression includes future variables of mostly significant explanatory variables while controlling for their current values. Standard errors clustered on country are reported in parenthesis. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

One might argue that the reverse causality might be an issue, meaning de-legitimization of state, for example, could lead to fractionalization of political elites. To account for such reversal effects, we have added future fractionalization of political elites, future violation of human rights, and future existence of state-within-state together with today's determinants of de-legitimization. The results are quite interesting as fractionalization is the only determinant of state legitimacy that does not suffer from a reversal effects.

Our findings suggest that a one-standard-deviation change in the degree of fractionalization amongst political elites changes legitimacy of state by 0.8 units³. This effect size is roughly equal to the improvement of Colombian's state legitimacy between 2006 and 2008 (0.8), and/or erosion of state legitimacy in Afghanistan between 2006 and 2008 (0.9), in Pakistan between 2006 and 2009 (0.6), or in Iraq between 2006 and 2007 (0.9). This is quite considerable effect size not only because we have controlled for every other variable suggested by the prior literature, but also because we have controlled for the dimensionality of the effect.

The findings also suggest that violation of human rights and existence of state within state are significant determinants, but the reversal effect analysis suggested that they were probably significant because of a two-way effect, meaning de-legitimization of the state could also lead to more violation of human rights and emergence of state within state. Such a two-way effect was not true for fractionalization of political elites.

The policy implication of the findings is important for the overall design of state building programs internationally. The current emphasis of state building efforts, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, is centered on the idea of increasing state's capacity to deliver political goods and services. This dataset suggests that effect of public services on state

³ FFP considers 0.2-unit change as significant.

legitimacy is not significant. Alternatively, people's adherence of the legitimacy of the state is more impacted by the degree of political cohesiveness/inclusiveness of the political elites of the country rather than state's ability to provide proper public goods and services.

At least in the case of Afghanistan, where I am coming from, these findings seem to be intuitive. Both during the communist regime and the last eight years of the current administration, the states did provide lots of public services. Particularly, the communist regime had huge emphasis on provision of public services to the communities. However, the highly fractionalized political elite groups of the society continued to remain significant in both eras. The level of state legitimacy in either period was quite low.

If this is true, perhaps more investment is necessary to improve political processes and institutions through which divergent political interests of the ruling class are reconciled in a more systematic way. Not surprisingly, right after the expiration of the Bonn Accord such an emphasis faded away in Afghanistan drastically, and that is exactly when the Afghan insurgency blow became tangible. Since then, more resources are being allocated on rebuilding of state's capacity for service delivery, but legitimacy of the state continues to decline. In the mean time, the level of fractionalization amongst political elites is steadily arising. Based on our findings, these trends make sense.

The key question is what channel fractionalization impacts state's legitimacy through? Based on existing theories, legitimacy is mainly a set of beliefs amongst citizens of a country about the rightfulness of state's authority. A group of people feeling politically and economically alienated is likely to express lower levels of support for the political system. Lower levels of support undermine democratic legitimacy, and may result in the collapse of fledgling democratic regimes (Wonbin Cho, 2007).

The key channel is probably through these sets of beliefs that are certainly affected by the confrontation of political elites over conflicting interests. As people notice that interactions of ruling class do not follow a set of rules and regulations outlined by a social contract, they lose faith in their leadership. Particularly, as more and more political actors challenge the authority of the state through insurgency, protests, or simply boycotting state's policy decisions, no matter how effectively state provides public services, people change their belief about state's legitimacy, and side with the fraction of elites who best represent their personal/communal interest.

It could also be through the very basic concept of state as an institution, where all citizens of the country, particularly, the ruling class agree on concentration of power in one institution. When they fail to converge their diverse interest, some of them who are in the power tend to push for their own interest, which inevitable causes the rest to boycott their decisions. This process observed by the general public, makes them change their beliefs about the rightfulness of their authority and thus legitimacy of the state.

Case Studies

Recent trends of Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan could be used to test the findings of this study. Particularly, to see if some counter intuitive developments such as the rise of legitimacy of certain insurgent movements are explainable by the results of this study. In the case of Afghanistan, Taliban provided very little political goods and services to the Afghan communities⁴. The Sunni insurgents of Iraq similarly provided very little public services to their communities. The same is true for the Tahrik-e-Taliban of Pakistan, who provides almost zero public services to their communities. Still in the period of 2003 through 2009 these insurgents gained more political legitimacy while all of the three states lost some of their political legitimacies. In the mean time, if we compare the degree of fractionalization amongst insurgents versus those of the political elites of each country, we notice that all else equal, they were politically less fractionalized than the political groups they were apposing.

Iran is and even more interesting case to review. The Islamic Republic of Iran provided the same level of political goods and services through out the period of 2005 to 2009, however, right after the recent election as the political elites of the country became more fractionalized the system started to lose its legitimacy quite rapidly. This is an interesting case because almost no other major factors changed in the same period of time. If the finding of this study is correct, the Islamic Republic will not be able to restore legitimacy without being able to reconcile political differences amongst opposing elite groups through a systematic reconciliation process. Not surprisingly this is on top of the Iranian government's agenda at the moment. Most of the leaders of green movement are being released from the prison as I am writing these words, and the supreme leader is sending more and more signals of reconciliation.

The case of Pakistan is also interesting because it keeps jumping back and forth between low and high levels of legitimacy. Each time the fractionalized political parties get to power, the state starts to lose its legitimacy and when it gets to a certain low level the army intervenes and presents a more cohesive political leadership with very low level of fractionalization amongst their leadership elites. An incident that happened as a natural break through was the removal of chief justice by the military president, Pervez Musharraf. This was the first time that a significant political fractionalization amongst the army emerged and caused loss of legitimacy to an otherwise popularly supported army backed government. The return of the chief justice to his post is another significant move that our model would predict.

In the case of Iraq it was quite obvious through out this period of time. The severe fractionalized political elites (Sunis, Shias, Kurds, etc.) prevented improvement of state legitimacy until political reconciliation started to take place around 2008. When they reached some sort of political consensus, legitimacy of state improved and trends reversed to some extend. When the political negotiation process stalled, the waves of insurgency (measured by the number of attacks) came back.

⁴ One might argue that Taliban provide security which is the most critical political good, but still their provision of political goods in contrast with the government is not very much considerable.

It is important to note that our model is basically a cross-country analysis, while the above-mentioned cases, to some extent, also include within country comparison. While it is interesting that one can still notice the relationship between fractionalization and state legitimacy, it is far from a full-fledged causal conclusion. Given the limitation of our dataset and complicity of the concept, the results of this study could only suggest a more in-depth second round analysis of the issue. There could very well be a confounding variable that affects fractionalization of political elites and state legitimacy at the same time. There could also be some other countries where these findings do not explain their trajectories.

It might be more plausible to use a different dataset and different methodology to see if the significance of elite fractionalization still remains outstanding, but the challenge would be finding of such a dataset and/or good proxy indicators for each of the variables of interest⁵.

Conclusion

Contrary to the popular existing belief that provision of political goods and services would improve state's political legitimacy, a panel data analysis of 177 countries over the period of 2005 and 2009 suggests that provision of public services is not a significant determinant of state's political legitimacy. Instead, fractionalization of political elite groups of a country is suggested as the most significant determinant of state legitimacy, which is rarely emphasized on in the policy circles. By controlling for a number of other determinants of state legitimacy suggested by prior literature, we found that violation of human rights and existence of state within state were also significant determinants of state legitimacy. However, controlling for the reversal effect, both of those determinants lose their significance.

Review of a few cases such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan suggests that the findings of the model do explain some aspects of the major trends in each of those countries, but further analysis is certainly required to assert that these trends follow the same cause-effect trajectories that are suggested by the model. Given the shortage of our dataset (only five years of repetition), and complicity of these concepts, what our study could suggest is that there is some relationship between fractionalization of political elites and state's political legitimacy that have significant policy implication for the process of state building around the world. It might also serve as a good reason for a more sophisticated analysis of the determinants of state legitimacy, particularly the impact of political fractionalization on state's political legitimacy through some natural experimentation.

⁵ The author will continue to expand the analysis through different means in the months ahead.

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Annex-I: Summary of Correlation Analysis.

	deligitati-n	demopr-e	refugee-s	group-g-e	humanf-t	uneven-p	econom-e	public-s	extern-n	human-rs	securi-s	fracti-e	Transp-y	armedf-l	lifeex-y	health-r	aidper-a	CAbala-e	GDPper-h	school-t	tradeo-p
deligitati-n	1.0000																				
demopressure	0.8114	1.0000																			
refugeesidps	0.6932	0.6945	1.0000																		
groupgriev-e	0.7663	0.7160	0.7380	1.0000																	
humanflight	0.7210	0.7269	0.5760	0.6101	1.0000																
unevendevlp	0.7976	0.8002	0.6700	0.7550	0.7261	1.0000															
econanricde-e	0.6643	0.7435	0.5392	0.5663	0.6681	0.5865	1.0000														
publicserv-s	0.7819	0.8686	0.6189	0.6605	0.7247	0.7319	0.8063	1.0000													
externalin-n	0.7530	0.7324	0.6694	0.7051	0.6622	0.6161	0.7333	0.7437	1.0000												
humanrights	0.9133	0.8081	0.6912	0.7637	0.6538	0.7749	0.6334	0.7729	0.6885	1.0000											
securityap-s	0.8770	0.7845	0.7154	0.7980	0.6872	0.7839	0.6562	0.7768	0.7561	0.8660	1.0000										
fractionli-e	0.9125	0.7559	0.7108	0.8191	0.6451	0.7736	0.6053	0.7051	0.7307	0.8797	0.8657	1.0000									
Transparency	-0.8650	-0.8147	-0.6114	-0.6934	-0.7464	-0.7803	-0.7267	-0.8353	-0.7198	-0.8258	-0.8147	-0.7910	1.0000								
armedforce-l	0.1133	0.0101	0.1360	0.0808	-0.0326	-0.0330	-0.0382	-0.0481	0.1008	0.1155	0.0833	0.1363	0.0053	1.0000							
lifeexpect-y	-0.5047	-0.6473	-0.4320	-0.3880	-0.4848	-0.4859	-0.6011	-0.6773	-0.5006	-0.4925	-0.4861	-0.4289	0.5432	0.1328	1.0000						
healthexpr-r	-0.3268	-0.2560	-0.2569	-0.2545	-0.2676	-0.2830	-0.1629	-0.2703	-0.2202	-0.3258	-0.3329	-0.3355	0.3197	-0.2307	0.1774	1.0000					
aidpercapita	0.0171	0.0791	0.0621	0.0305	0.0660	0.0454	0.0435	0.0514	0.0639	0.0230	0.0329	0.0240	-0.0303	-0.0264	-0.0323	-0.0179	1.0000				
CAbalance	-0.0469	-0.0902	-0.0923	-0.0437	-0.1756	-0.0645	-0.2784	-0.1432	-0.1849	0.0214	-0.0538	-0.0215	0.1186	0.1022	0.0753	-0.0720	-0.0212	1.0000			
GDPpercapi-h	0.0428	0.0245	0.0346	0.0406	0.0493	0.0409	0.0494	0.0480	0.0527	0.0142	0.0223	0.0405	-0.0281	0.0468	-0.0127	0.0220	-0.1358	-0.0273	1.0000		
schoolenro-t	-0.2658	-0.3498	-0.2599	-0.2012	-0.2137	-0.2080	-0.3826	-0.3716	-0.3037	-0.2479	-0.2733	-0.2461	0.2852	-0.0692	0.4582	0.1623	0.0236	0.0636	-0.0258	1.0000	
tradeofgdp	-0.1396	-0.2567	-0.2776	-0.2502	-0.2332	-0.2799	-0.1699	-0.2144	-0.1470	-0.1858	-0.2344	-0.1620	0.2458	0.1603	0.1440	-0.0209	-0.0241	0.0527	0.0558	0.1012	1.0000

Annex-II: Table of indicators for some exemplary countries.

Country	Year	Delegitimation of the State	Democratic Pressure	Refugees/IDPs	Group Grievance	Human Flight	Uneven Development	Economic Decline	Public Services	External Intervention	Human Rights	Security Apparatus	Factionalized Elites
Afghanistan	2006	8.3	7.9	9.6	9.1	7	8	7.5	8	10	8.2	8.2	8
	2007	8.8	8.5	8.9	9.1	7	8	8.3	8	10	8.2	9	8.5
	2008	9.2	9.1	8.9	9.5	7	8.1	8.5	8.3	10	8.4	9.6	8.8
	2009	9.8	9.3	8.9	9.6	7.2	8.4	8.3	8.9	10	8.8	9.9	9.1
China	2006	8.5	8.5	5.1	8	6.6	9.2	4.5	7.3	2.3	9	5.5	8
	2007	8.5	8.7	5.1	8	6.5	9	4	6.5	3.1	9	5.3	7.5
	2008	8.3	8.8	5.1	7.8	6.3	9	4	6.6	3.3	8.9	5.2	7
	2009	8.5	9	6.8	7.9	6.1	9.2	4.5	7.2	3.3	8.9	6	7.2
Colombia	2006	8.7	7	9.1	7.4	8.5	8.5	3.2	6.5	7.1	7.6	9	9.2
	2007	8.2	6.8	9.5	7.4	8.4	8.4	3.8	6	7	7.4	8.3	8.5
	2008	7.9	6.8	9.2	7.4	8.4	8.4	3.8	6	7.6	7.2	8	8.3
	2009	7.9	6.9	9.2	7.2	8.5	8.5	4.3	6	8	7.2	7.5	8
Iran	2006	8.1	6.5	8.7	6.9	5	7.5	3	6.1	6.3	9.1	8	8.8
	2007	7.8	6.2	8.6	7.1	5	7.2	3.3	5.7	6	8.7	8.3	8.9
	2008	8	6.5	8.7	7.3	5	7.4	4.3	5.8	6.5	8.7	8.5	9
	2009	8.3	6.5	8.5	7.6	6.8	7.4	5.5	6	6.8	8.9	8.6	9.1
Iraq	2006	8.5	8.9	8.3	9.8	9.1	8.7	8.2	8.3	10	9.7	9.8	9.7
	2007	9.4	9	9	10	9.5	8.5	8	8.5	10	9.7	10	9.8
	2008	9.4	9	9	9.8	9.3	8.5	7.8	8.5	10	9.6	9.9	9.8
	2009	9	8.7	8.9	9.7	9.1	8.6	7.6	8.4	10	9.3	9.7	9.6
Nigeria	2006	9	8	5.9	9.1	8.5	9	5.4	8.3	5.9	7.1	9.2	9
	2007	9.1	8.2	5.6	9.5	8.5	9.1	5.4	8.7	5.7	7.1	9.2	9.5
	2008	8.9	8.2	5.1	9.4	8.2	9.2	5.9	8.7	6.1	7.5	9.2	9.3
	2009	9.2	8.5	5.3	9.7	8.3	9.5	6.6	9	6.1	8.6	9.4	9.6
Pakistan	2006	8.5	9.3	9.3	8.6	8.1	8.9	7	7.5	9.2	8.5	9.1	9.1
	2007	8.7	8.2	8.5	9	8.1	8.5	5.8	7.1	8.5	8.7	9.5	9.5
	2008	9.5	8	8.6	9.5	8.1	8.8	6.2	7.1	9.1	9.5	9.6	9.8
	2009	9.1	8.3	8.6	9.6	8.3	8.8	6.4	7.5	9.5	8.9	9.5	9.6
Russia	2006	8.2	8	7.2	8	7	8	3.7	6.9	4.5	9.1	7.5	9
	2007	7.6	7.5	5.9	7.7	6.5	8.2	3.9	6.2	3.9	8.5	6.8	8.5
	2008	7.9	7	5.4	7.5	6.5	7.9	3.7	5.9	4.2	8.7	7	8
	2009	8	7	5.9	7.5	6.2	8.1	4.6	5.7	4.6	8.3	6.9	8
Sudan	2006	9.5	9.6	9.7	9.7	9.1	9.2	7.5	9.5	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.1
	2007	10	9.2	9.8	10	9	9.1	7.7	9.5	9.8	10	9.9	9.7
	2008	10	9	9.6	10	8.8	9.3	7.3	9.5	9.9	9.9	9.8	9.9
	2009	9.8	9	9.8	9.9	9	9.6	7	9.5	9.8	9.8	9.7	9.5
United Kingdom	2006	2.5	3.5	3.9	5	2	5	1	1.8	2	2	2.5	3
	2007	2.2	3.4	4	4.2	2	4.7	1.4	1.8	2.1	2.6	3	2.7
	2008	2	3	3	4.5	2	4.5	1.7	1.8	2.1	2.6	3	2.7
	2009	1.8	3.2	2.8	4.3	1.9	4.7	2.5	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.9
United States	2006	2.5	5	6	3	1	6	1.5	1	1	5	1	1.5
	2007	2.8	3.5	5.5	3.2	1	5.8	1.8	1.4	1	4.6	1.3	1.7
	2008	3	3.5	4	3.2	1	5.5	2.3	1.8	1	4.2	1.3	2
	2009	3	3.1	3.7	3.3	1	5.3	2.9	2.3	1.5	4	1.4	2.5