

## **Dissertation Abstract: Legitimacy in Non-State Polities**

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My thesis explores the concept of legitimacy in non-state polities, under which I understand in particular governance in failed and fragile states. I argue that traditional theories of political legitimacy are not applicable in these contexts because they are implicitly based on the structural preconditions of the modern nation-state. Ideal typically speaking, these preconditions include a common understanding of governance functions, a defined set of actors and institutions which are obligated to perform these functions, a clearly framed and stable political community and finally an established separation between the public and the private sphere. The crucial question of my thesis is how political power can be justified where these preconditions are lacking.

To address this question, I propose a two-dimensional concept of legitimacy. In addition to a vertical dimension, which is concerned with substantial and procedural criteria of governance (the *what* and the *how*), a horizontal dimension of legitimacy will be introduced to answer *who* is entitled to be included into governance structures. This second dimension turns out to be crucial since substantial and procedural criteria of legitimacy are only evaluable if it is undisputed whose interests count and to whom procedures have to be justified. I develop an answer to the question of the societal scope of legitimacy that is based on—but hopefully goes beyond—the well established “all-affected argument”. The basic idea is to link a theory of legitimacy with a theory of societal integration, which is able to concretize the respects in which individuals are affected by political power. This modification of the affectedness argument is necessary, because otherwise its implication would create a distinct political community for every single act of authority. By contrast, integration theories allow us to take the integrity of political communities into account, which is both morally required and functional necessary.