

## **Procedure or Performance?**

### **Assessing citizen's attitudes towards legitimacy in Swedish and Norwegian local government**

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## **Abstract**

A common understanding prevails that political systems generate legitimacy by both democratic procedures and by performance in service production. With the increase of NPM-models in local services, some scholars argue that performance is becoming a more important source of legitimacy than conventional legitimacy originating from the procedural side of governance. The aim of the paper is to discuss and analyze the importance of, and relation between these sources of legitimacy. The paper examines three hypotheses: 1) the trade-off hypothesis, 2) the synergy hypothesis and 3) the independence hypothesis. Based on citizen surveys in Norway and Sweden, our analysis argues that the dimensions are synergetic.

Keywords: local government; legitimacy; public opinion, elderly care services, building and planning services

## **1. Introduction**

Political systems at all institutional levels generate legitimacy from their capacity to provide democratic governance and from the services they deliver (Easton 1965; Scharpf 1999; Gilley 2009; Rothstein 2009). Traditionally, the essential sources of democratic support and legitimacy have all been closely related to the input-side of the political system. Thus, the defining characteristics of democratic governance include typical input-related aspects such as freedom of speech and elective and accountable representative politicians. These democratic features of government reproduce popular support and legitimacy of the political system (Gilley 2006, 2009).

Today, we observe how the conventional model of representative democracy is challenged by changes in the organizational structure and modus operandi of the public sector (see for example Brewer 2007). Devolution, outsourcing, private companies delivering public services, and collaborative forms of governance such as networks and partnerships, increasingly displace political control and weaken the linkage between popular collective preferences and policy output. The linkage between the ‘demos’ and actual system output has been argued to have become more indirect, as elected politicians do not necessarily constitute

the core of the political system, as the logic of representative democracy stipulates (Crozier 2010). Thus, the conventional model of input-based democracy is challenged, partially by political reform driven by politicians, and partially by new modes of governance brought about as responses to increased social complexity.

Against this backdrop, this article will investigate to what extent, and within which contexts, political legitimacy generated at the output-side of the political system is more important for citizens than legitimacy originating in the input-side, as a consequence of this development. By disentangling the concept of democratic legitimacy, we investigate how local government is legitimized not only through procedural democracy and participation, but also through performance in terms of service delivery and decision-making. Understanding the sources of political legitimacy and how that legitimacy is related to the procedures and the performance of local government is essential to the academic understanding of contemporary democracy as well as to the depiction of popular participation and involvement in governance and public management reform. We conduct this study as a comparison between Norway and Sweden. The two countries are ideally suited for a ‘most similar systems’ research design (Przeworski 1987), given the similarities between the two countries’ local political systems and welfare state models.

More specifically, then, the article seeks to uncover the empirical relationship between procedural and performance-based legitimacy. To repeat the theoretical framework of the paper, while performance intuitively is a source of legitimacy, this very foundation of legitimacy has traditionally been regarded as a less important or as a supplementary source of legitimacy to the procedural dimension of legitimacy which is provided by the representative process and due process. With New Public Management reforms and the growing popularity of new modes of governance involving private sector actors or NGOs, conventional mechanisms sustaining procedural legitimacy have increasingly become more indirect, and

perhaps even less relevant than previously. This observation, which is well documented in the Scandinavian Power and Democracy studies (Østerud and Selle 2006; Goul Andersen 2006; Amnå 2006), further raises the question of to what extent performance-based legitimacy can compensate for the lack of legitimacy which originates in the input-side of the policy circle.

From a theoretical point of view, however, one can imagine three different forms of relationships between procedural and performance-based legitimacy. We label these relationships as trade-off, synergy or independence.

The research design is cross-national and cross-sectoral. The paper draws on surveys among representative samples of the population in Norway and Sweden towards two local government service sectors: elderly care and building and planning services. The reason for choosing these sectors for inquiry is that they represent different tasks for local government. Elderly care – and welfare services in general – has traditionally been regarded as a core responsibility for local governments in Norway and Sweden and represents a salient political issue. Building and planning policies, on the other hand, is less subject to political control as decisions and execution of these increasingly has been transferred to private actors and networks. Hence, the distance between those who shape and those who execute policies can be regarded as larger in the case of building and planning policies than for elderly care services, which we expect may create different attitudes towards legitimacy as far as citizens are concerned. The Norway-Sweden comparison taps into partially different institutional arrangements such as local autonomy, but also differences with regard to the extent of New Public Management reform. Moreover, Swedish municipalities are considerably bigger in population than Norwegian municipalities (population average in Sweden is 30200 to be compared with 11000 in the Norwegian case (Loughlin, Hendriks, and Lidström 2011). Furthermore, comparing elderly care services with the planning and building sector has a theoretical dimension as well. Care of the elderly has increasingly come to involve for-profit

organizations such as contractors, particularly in bigger municipalities, and to a greater extent in Sweden than in Norway. In both countries, this is one of the most cost- and labour-intensive service sectors. By contrast, planning and building is a complex sector in which the main role of the local authority is to ensure due process. Beyond that, planning is characterized by institutionalized negotiation where private actors and capital play important roles. Finally, these processes frequently take place within networks.

We expect these differences to produce different outcomes in terms of legitimacy patterns, cross-nationally and across the two service sectors. Our presumption is that output-based legitimacy will be more significant than input-based legitimacy for the case of elderly care services, whereas the opposite pattern will characterize citizens' attitudes in the planning and building sector. We further expect performance-based legitimacy to be comparatively more important in the Swedish local authorities due to the more extensive NPM-reforms which have been implemented there.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. The next section provides a review of the extensive theoretical literature which discusses the concept of legitimacy, its sources and the relationship between them. This section concludes with a presentation of three previously explained hypotheses. To continue, since legitimacy is a theoretical as well as a latent concept, measuring legitimacy is not an intuitive task. Section three presents and elaborates on a set of proxies based on survey items on how people evaluate different kind of means for influencing local politics. Section four presents our data analysis, and finally, we conclude the article with a brief summary of our major findings and a discussion about their implications.

## **2. On legitimacy**

According to Gilley (2006, 502) legitimacy "is an endorsement of the state by citizens at a moral or normative level." It is conceptually distinct from political support which can be

related either to the state or to the current government. The very core of legitimacy, understood as an individual quality,<sup>1</sup> is that citizens are willing to accept decisions and actions by the state even if they do not correspond with individual preferences or objectives (Beetham 1991).

Even if the phenomenon can be fairly delimited and defined, the literature and perspectives on legitimacy are manifold and complex. In an extensive analysis, Gilley (2009) distinguishes between five different schools, based on how they understand the processes which provide legitimacy. First, there is the point of view that sources of legitimacy are non-universal, and vary across time and space. Positioned in this ‘particularistic school’, any attempt to generalize about the sources of legitimacy would be fruitless. The remaining four schools share a belief to some extent of universalism in the sources of legitimacy, but these sources vary. In the ‘sociological school,’ the emphasis is on social and cultural conditions which give rise to positive sentiments about the state. These conditions can be related to deeper values such as religion, social trust, social capital, or a national feeling of ‘happiness,’ but also more action-oriented characteristics such as the level of political engagement and political interest are among the aforementioned sources.

Moving on to the ‘developmental school,’ legitimacy is regarded as originating in the organization, production and distribution of material well-being in a society. In this perspective, short- and medium-term fluctuations in economic growth can effect perceptions of legitimacy. To continue, the ‘democratic school’ represents the dominating strand of thoughts. The key source of legitimacy is the extent to which states uphold an extensive system of human rights, including civil, political, physical and social rights. Finally, Gilley identifies a ‘bureaucratic school,’ according to which legitimacy is derived from the strength, effectiveness and due procedures of state institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> Legitimacy has also been discussed from a system-level perspective, which is not discussed here.

The literature demonstrates various conceptions concerning how to interpret observed societal changes and how to understand the relative importance and the relationship between procedural and performance-based legitimacy. Hechter (2009) argues that the key determinant of the legitimacy of a state is the perceived fairness of the decision-making process rather than its provision of resources, opportunities, and outcomes. Guy Peters (2010), however, argues that there has been a shift from input-oriented forms of democracy (procedural) towards a form of democracy which is more tied to the outputs of policy-making (performance).

Legitimacy is integral to societal consent with the exercise of political power. In the spirit of liberal democratic theory, traditional models of democratic governance tie political power to elective offices and to democratic accountability (Pinto, Magalhães, and Sousa 2012; Dahl 1989). In this institutional arrangement, public bureaucracy and sub-national governments have the implementation of policy as their main responsibility. These roles which have been assigned to elected officials and political and administrative institutions are constitutional and normative; they define jurisdictions and institutional capabilities. While there is a profound normative stability in these arrangements, the empirical and analytical adequacy of this model is, however, a matter of empirical inquiry (Crozier 2010).

To continue, procedural legitimacy is derived from the legality of the public administration and due process (Rothstein and Teorell 2008). Citizens, in this perspective, have confidence in the public bureaucracy because it serves the goals of equal treatment in services and the public interest. Legitimacy related to performance is the result of the quality of services which are delivered; recipients support public services provided that they are satisfied with the quality of these.

The proliferation of collaborative governance arrangements such as public-private partnerships and networks has gradually transformed the *modus operandi* of government at

the same time as its traditional normative role in democratic governance has remained largely intact (Pierre 2009). Similarly, New Public Management reform with its emphasis on organizational efficiency and managerial autonomy has challenged the traditional model of political control and accountability (Peters and Pierre 2011). There has also been significant reform undertaken to empower public service clients vis-à-vis public service institutions, e.g. in the form of quasi-markets and customer-choice models of service delivery (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). All these developments are conducive to increasing performance-related legitimacy.

More importantly in the present context, NPM reform in many countries and service sectors has provided clients of public services with opportunities to select between competing service producers, thus opening up an arena for the articulation of popular preferences at the output-side of the political system. If we assume that increased client influence on services brings about more tailored services, then there are also reasons to suspect that this will increase performance-based legitimacy.

However, there are several important aspects of the relationship between service delivery and legitimacy of political institutions that must be taken into account. First, while NPM reform may enhance satisfaction with service delivery, it also raises the question of whose legitimacy—the private contractor or the public bureaucracy—will benefit from market-based public service delivery. Peters suggests that “as government loses control over functions considered to be public, it may lose the ability to effectively direct the society; it may lose the steering ability that constitutes the root of what we call government” (Peters 2008, 379). To put this slightly differently, if NPM reform leads to greater customer satisfaction with services that, to smaller or greater extent, are no longer delivered by the public sector, how will this affect the legitimacy of political or administrative institutions?



Secondly, and partly related to the previous comment, NPM reform and the customer-based model of service delivery has strengthened one type of accountability at the same time as it has weakened the more conventional form of accountability. As Brewer (2007, 555) argues, “the consumerist model is based on a narrow perspective of what constitutes public accountability. By placing too much attention on customer satisfaction, important values of fairness and due process, which are fundamental to good governance and the citizenship status of individuals in their societies, may be undermined.” Hence, while customer satisfaction might be a valid measure of performance-related legitimacy, it says very little about procedural legitimacy. Therefore, while NPM reform may strengthen performance-based legitimacy, we need to know to what degree it has an impact on the procedural legitimacy of the state. The bottom-line issue appears to be that while customer satisfaction and trust in service providers are not necessarily related to the public or private sector, procedural legitimacy remains critical to the public sector and cannot be transferred to for-profit organizations (Pesch 2008; Peters 2008).

Finally, we are unaware of the relationship between these two dimensions of legitimacy. It may be argued from a theoretical point of view that it is a negative relationship between them; bureaucracies which prioritize due process may not be very inclined to tailor services to individual preferences; hence the prospect of performance-based legitimacy would appear to be low. We can raise a similar argument that bureaucracies which emphasize quality and cost-efficiency in service delivery are likely to adopt managerial models of administration, and extensive managerial autonomy does not go very well with an organizational model which prioritizes due process (see Moore 1995).

Summing up, little is known about the relationship between the two dimensions of legitimacy. In the following argument, we attempt to empirically analyze and test the following three hypothesis concerning procedures and performance:

1. **Trade-off** (negative relationship): If there is a trade-off between the two dimensions of legitimacy, we should expect that citizens who value performance-based legitimacy will do so at the expense of their evaluations of procedural legitimacy, and vice versa. One possible backdrop for such a relationship can occur in a case when local government seeks to maximize participation or give priority to due democratic processes. In such a process, local governments are expected not to place issues such as responding to individual preferences and tailoring services to clients' needs very high on the agenda, which creates a situation where one dimension of legitimacy is enhanced at the expense of the other. On the other hand, if local governments seek to maximize effective problem solving and to tailor services, there is likely to be less attention on promoting citizen participation and traditional bureaucracy. To refer to the former hypothesis, such an argument has been raised in the discussion about the state of democracy in the EU, arguing that increasing procedural legitimacy in EU may impinge on its decision-making efficiency and its legitimacy following from performance (Lindgren and Persson 2010: 450). The trade-off model is a recognition of the fact that information and steering cannot flow both upwards and downwards in the local government organization at once, i.e. that local government cannot cater to empowered citizens/voters and customers at the same time. Strong political and bureaucratic control curtails the power of customers, just as empowering customers and managers is expected to equal less emphasis on the steering role of elected officials and the democratic process.

2. **Synergy** (positive relationship): A synergetic relationship implies that the two sources of legitimacy are mutually reinforcing. If this is the case, any reforms or changes aiming to increase performance-based legitimacy will also lead to an increase in procedural legitimacy, and vice versa. Synergy could be the outcome of a growing awareness in local government that all aspects of democracy which citizens respond to, must be promoted. By vitalizing the urban democratic discourse, we expect participation as well as involvement on the output-side

of the political system to increase. We would thus assume that synergy is the effect of a third and latent variable which affects both dimensions of legitimacy.

3. **Independence** (no relationship): A third possible outcome of our analysis is that the two sources are independent from each other, and that citizens perceive no relationship between the two. The argument behind this hypothesis presumes that input- and output-based legitimacy are different, however, not necessarily unrelated, phenomena, and that the actual sources of each dimension of legitimacy are different. Input-based legitimacy is derived from political representation and accountability, whereas output-based legitimacy is derived from customers' relations to public services. Citizens are expected to be able to be dissatisfied with their elected politicians, but still appreciate the services they receive, or vice versa.

We do not have a strong presumption about which hypothesis should receive the strongest support from the data. There is no reason to expect a uniform pattern across institutional levels, national contexts, or policy sectors. This study assumes that national context, evaluation of participation as well as qualities of policy sectors will influence the results.

### **3. Methods and data**

If the overall assumption about a change in the sources of legitimacy is rooted in an empirical world, we are aware that we encounter methodological challenges in our endeavours to measure these sources. While a review of the literature on political legitimacy culminates in a vast number of approaches to measure procedural legitimacy, the measurement of performance-based legitimacy has been subject to the attention of academics to a lesser extent. However, we may argue that there are conceptual difficulties with several suggested approaches to measure procedure-based legitimacy as well, which have to be taken into account when designing a research framework.

One plausible departure for measuring legitimacy is to ask citizens to which degree they experience that they trust the government and elected officials. Other meaningful proxies can be transparency of local politics, accountability of officials, whether local parties are able to tap into ordinary people's desires and needs, citizen's experiences of political alienation, and responsiveness of local politicians. Support can then be specified in subsequent survey items to measure perceptions of performance-based legitimacy as well; do people trust that local government will provide adequate services; how do they perceive the quality of the administration; and to which degree do they find that bureaucrats are responsive and accountable?

All these suggestions are examples of proxy variables, hence, variables which one can assume, by empirical evidence or theoretical reasoning, are able to express latent variables, such as the extent to which one finds a service to be legitimate. In this paper, we assume that there is a relationship between how people understand legitimacy and how they assess different kinds of means of influencing urban policies and services. We will therefore distinguish between procedure- and performance-related means of influence as proxy variables for procedural and performance-based legitimacy as. Procedural means of influence are related to the input-side of the policy process, and include voting in elections, personal contact with elected politicians, as well as expressing views via media or engage in demonstrations. These means all belong to traditional democratic channels and constitute conventional means of influencing decision-making processes, and following Hirschman's well-known categorization of means of citizen influence, they correspond to *voice* (Hirschman 1970). Performance-related means are more strongly related to the production of services or regulation by public authorities, and, in our survey, include actions such as choosing between services, contacting bureaucrats in leading positions and contacting people who work within the service of interest. These means express *voice* to some extent, but there

is also an element of *exit* involved in the action of choosing a service: a citizen may attempt to influence a service by choosing to exit a service s/he is not satisfied with and choose another option. What these means have in common is that they refer to the process of implementation of policies and services.

Naturally, our specification of proxy variables can be criticized. To begin with, our choice to apply measures of internal efficacy as tools to measure the legitimacy of local governments can be criticised on the conceptual level, and critics may argue that this single measure does not fully address the issue of the legitimacy of the system as a whole; it only allows us to say something about people's ability to influence policies and services. With this in mind, it is necessary to specify that we are aware that there are limitations to this measure, however, we presume that being able to influence a service is a precondition for the service, and the authorities which deliver it, to be regarded as legitimate. Referring to Easton's (1965) specification of *diffuse* and *specific* support, we posit that citizen's perception of internal efficacy is a necessity for diffuse support; hence, one will not support local government unless one believes that one can influence the services it delivers.

To measure these dimensions of influence, citizen surveys were conducted in Sweden and Norway. The two surveys contain identical questions in the two respective languages. The Norwegian citizen survey was conducted by *Responsanalyse* who distributed the survey by e-mail to respondents. The survey was sent to 29842 respondents as part of an omnibus, and 3014 responses were returned. The questions included background variables such as age, sex, and location, and the main body of the survey included questions about satisfaction with elderly care, building and planning policies and primary school services. The survey also asked respondents to rate the degree to which they believed they were able to influence local services through a selection of hypothetical measures. The Swedish citizen survey contained the same questions, but was part of a much larger survey conducted by the SOM-institute at

University of Gothenburg. The data set includes answers from 6289 respondents, however, some questions contain ample numbers of missing values. The two data sets were merged to a final dataset, and a dummy variable for country was created.

Table 1: Sources of data

	Citizen survey Sweden	Citizen survey Norway
Method	Survey by post/e-mail	Survey by e-mail
N	6289	3014
Collected when	Autumn 2012	Spring 2012

#### 4. Analysis

Table 2 reports how the informants evaluate different means when influencing local policies.

This was measured by asking each informants to indicate the importance of each means of influence on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very bad opportunities) to 5 (very good opportunities). The median value of 3 represents a neutral view (neither good nor bad).

Table 2: Average score on evaluation on whether elderly care and building and planning policies can be influenced through a selection of means. Scale 1-5, standard deviation in brackets.

		Citizens Norway/Sweden	
		<b>Elderly care</b>	<b>Building/ planning</b>

Procedure-related means of influence	Voting in local elections <sup>2</sup>	2.91 (1.08)	2.47 (1.16)
	Contacting a local politician	2.73 (1.05)	2.70 (1.11)
	Contacting the media	3.44 (1.05)	3.40 (1.04)
	Part. in a demonstration	2.65 (1.06)	2.76 (1.12)
	<b>Average</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>2.83</b>
Performance-related means of influence	Exit: Choosing service/ move away	3.11 (1.06)	2.54 (1.39)
	Contacting a bureaucrat	3.04 (1.07)	2.69 (1.09)
	Contacting people who work with the actual services	3.08 (1.08)	2.69 (1.10)
	<b>Average</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>2.64</b>
	<b>N (lowest)</b>	3583	3337

As can be seen from table 2, respondents have higher average scores on elderly care than on building and planning. Especially performance-based means of influence are lower for building and planning than for elderly care services. The single most highly evaluated mean of influence, independent of policy field, is to contact the media. Moreover, it is worth noting that the very conventional ‘input channels’ of voting and contacting politicians are not among the most highly rated means. Even if the differences are modest, the table shows that means related to the process of implementation, i.e. performance-based means, are regarded as more

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<sup>2</sup> The questions were phrased as follows: *Imagine that you or someone in your close family need help from the municipal elderly care and support services. How would you rate your possibilities to influence the services for the elderly through the following actions? /Imagine that you will become negatively affected by a building project which is being planned in your municipality. How would you rate your possibilities to influence the project through the following actions...?* a) Voting at the local elections, b) Contacting a local politician, c) Contacting administrative staff who work with elderly care services, d) Contacting people who work with elderly care services, e) Contacting the media, f) Participate in demonstrations, or write comments on the internet, g) (alt. for elderly care only) Actively choosing which services to receive/ (alt. for building and planning only) Moving away from the municipality.

important than the means related to procedure when it comes to elderly care services (except the media-variable), but the pattern is the opposite for building and planning policies, for which the respondents rate procedure-based means of influence higher.

The overall impression is that Norwegians and Swedes do not place high confidence in their own ability to influence policies in general. Respondents' values generally lie under the neutral value of 3, with the exception of contacting the media and the performance-based means of influencing elderly care policies. The reasons for this may be related to the general trend of decreasing political trust and experiences of low personal efficacy which were noted in the Power and Democracy studies which we referred to previously, however, our data only measure the ability to influence two selected policy areas through a limited selection of means, so we need to be careful when drawing such conclusions. Citizens may believe that they are more able to influence either other policy areas and/or through different means of influence than those which are specified in this study.

The next step in our analysis is to focus on the relationship between procedural and performance-based means of influence. In order to explore this relationship, we have chosen to define performance-based means of influence as the dependent variable, and procedural means as an independent variable. The relationship between the two dimensions of means of influence will then be explored in a regression analysis, along with a set of control variables and satisfaction with the respective services. Before presenting the regression models, we note that the measures of input- and output-based means of influenced are highly correlated: Pearson's  $r$  is 0.53 for elderly care and 0.63 for building and planning policies.

In order to obtain general measures for the two dimensions of legitimacy, we summarized the variables as shown in table 2 into additive indexes. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of the two indexes which are used in table 3 are 0.64 (procedure) and 0.72



(performance), and the coefficient for the indexes used in table 4 are 0.74 (procedure) and 0.53 (performance), indicating that survey responses on the items which form the indexes are internally consistent, possibly except from the latter figure, which signifies that responses vary to a greater extent than on the other indexes. A t-test which tests the differences between the mean values of the two indexes also reveals that the differences are significant at the 0.000 level, for both policy areas. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) between the input- and the output indexes is 0,53 for elderly care and 0,63 for building and planning services, which indicates that there is a relatively strong correlation between the two dimensions of legitimacy, for both policy areas. Table 3 presents the model for elderly care, which has been specified using forward stepwise regression in order to control for changes in the model statistics as we introduce more variables.

Table 3: Determinants for performance-based means of influence for **elderly care** (proxy for performance-based legitimacy)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	3.833****	2.414***	3.121***	2.999***
Procedural means of influence in elderly care	.455***	.393***	.392***	.395***
Satisfaction with elderly care		.655***	.675***	.686***
Sex (Female = 1)			-	-
Age			-.014***	-.015***
Education			-	-
Country (S=1)				.296**
N	2397	2397	2397	2397
Adj. R2	0.28	0.35	0.36	0.36

Note: \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001. Method: forward stepwise regression. Variables excluded from parameters, due to sig > 0.05 are marked with a -.

The first model displays a simple bivariate regression model with performance-based means of influence as the dependent variable and the equivalent index for procedure-based means as the independent variable. The result demonstrates that there is a clear and positive relationship between the two. This effect is statistically significant and relatively strong; a one-unit increase in the evaluation of procedural means results in almost half a unit increase in the evaluation of performance-based means. Procedure-based means of influence alone explains 28 percent of the overall variance on performance-based means of influence, which contributes to our impression that there is a strong relationship between the two indexes.

In the second model, we introduced satisfaction with elderly care as a control variable, for two reasons. First of all, we wish to explore whether introducing this variable can increase the explanatory effect of the model, and secondly, we expect that there should be a relationship between evaluations of how well elderly care services function and the ability to influence the service. This is a further indication of how respondents evaluate the overall legitimacy of the service. The analysis in model 2 reveals that there is a significant and positive relationship between satisfaction and the evaluation of performance-based means. It is worth noting that the introduction of satisfaction decreases the effect of procedural means introduced in the first model with approximately half a unit, while the  $R^2$  in model 2 is markedly higher with .07 percent.

In model 3, we wish to test whether personal characteristics such as sex, age and education can explain people's evaluation of performance-based means of influence. The results reveal that sex and education do not have significant effects and hence are excluded from the model, however, age makes a slight difference. The higher the age, the lower respondents value performance-based means of influence, but only to a very small degree. Focusing on procedural means of influence, it is worth mentioning that the introduction of personal

characteristics does not decrease the effect procedural means have on performance-based means in model 2, and the overall explanatory effect of the model only increases marginally.

In our fourth model, we have introduced country as a dummy-variable. The effects of the previously introduced variables remain largely unchanged, as well as the  $R^2$ . However, a country effect is visible; Swedes' evaluations on whether they can influence elderly care services via performance-based means is a third of a unit higher than that of Norwegians. This will be more thoroughly discussed after we have presented the equivalent results for building and planning policies.

Proceeding to building and planning, table 4 presents regression estimates of the impact of procedural means of influence on performance-based means in the context of building and planning policies.

Table 4: Determinants for performance-based means of influence in **building and planning** (proxy for performance-based legitimacy)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	2.716***	2.392***	3.002***	3.120***
Procedural means of influence in building/planning	.464***	.451***	.453***	.444***
Satisfaction with building/planning		.153***	.162***	.180***
Sex (Female = 1)			-0.260**	-0.250**
Age			-.010***	-.010***
Education			-	-
Country (S=1)				-.352***
N	2352	2352	2352	2352

Adj. R2	0.38	0.38	0.39	0.39
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Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Method: forward stepwise regression. Variables excluded from parameters, due to  $\text{sig} > 0.05$  are marked with a -.

In the bivariate analysis in model 1, we observe that there is a significant and positive relationship between the respective indexes, and the  $R^2$  informs that procedure-based means of influence alone explains 38 percent of the variance on performance-based means, which is higher than for elderly care. The coefficient for procedural means is close to the corresponding coefficient in table 3; a one-unit increase in procedural means results in almost half a unit increase on the dependent variable.

Introducing satisfaction with building and planning policies in model 2, we note that the effect satisfaction with the service has on performance-based means is much weaker for building and planning than for elderly care, however, it is statistically significant. We also note that the  $R^2$  remains unchanged from the first model, which reveals that adding satisfaction to the model does not increase its explanatory effect on the dependent variable.

We note in the third model that the effects of these variables are only slightly different to the equivalent model for elderly care; education is also not significant for building and planning, and age has a weak and negative effect on the evaluation of performance-based means. Sex is significant in this model, but the effect is not very strong; women tend to have a little lower faith than men that they can influence policies via performance-based means. Moreover, the explanatory effect of the model only increases with .01.

In the fourth model, we find that while the effect of Sweden was positive in the case of elderly care services, it is negative for building and planning; Swedes are less likely than their Norwegian counterparts to believe that they can influence building and planning policies via

performance-based means of influence. These are interesting findings which will be addressed in the following paragraphs.

Summing up the analysis for elderly care and building and planning, satisfaction has the single strongest effect upon the evaluation of performance-based means of influence when it comes to elderly care, while the index for procedure-based means of influence is the variable with the single strongest effect for building and planning policies. Except for education, we note that personal characteristics only contribute a little to explaining the variance on the dependent variables. However, the most important finding to note in this respect is that there is a clear indication of a positive connection between the evaluation of procedural means of influencing policies and the equivalent evaluation of performance-based means, for both policy areas, as well as the effect of the Swedish dummy-variable which is positive for elderly care and negative for building and planning.

To begin with the effect of procedure-based means of influence, following the argument that these variables can be interpreted as proxies for legitimacy, as argued in the preceding section, this analysis finally suggests that the relationship between procedural and performance-based legitimacy is synergetic. If respondents' evaluations of procedure-based means of influence increase, so do their evaluations of performance-based means. If there was a negative effect of one variable on the other while other relevant variables were controlled for, we would have expected the relationship to resemble a trade-off: when preferring one dimension of legitimacy, it would have been at the expense of the other. If there was no significant relationship, we would have concluded that the relationship was independent; evaluations of one dimension of legitimacy have nothing to do with evaluations of the other. Hence, our results imply that the relationship between these two is synergetic and mutually enforcing. The reasons for this synergetic effect may simply be that people evaluate both dimensions of legitimacy as important and find that they complement each other. Following

this logic, we may argue that citizens do not necessarily distinguish between dimensions of legitimacy on the conceptual level.

However, the differences in country effect are well worth exploring; Swedes are more likely than Norwegians to believe they can influence elderly care policies than Norwegians, and less likely to consider that they can influence building and planning policies via performance-based means. Reasons for this may be associated with the contextual differences in implementation of services and municipal size between the countries. NPM-based principles have been implemented to a greater extent in Swedish than in Norwegian elderly care services; Swedes are exposed to user-choice and private contractors in elderly care to a greater extent than Norwegians, which may be the reasons that Swedes are more likely to believe that they can influence the service via performance-based means. However, for building and planning services, in both countries, decision-making often takes place within networks which are located outside the traditional political system, and citizens may perceive these networks as diffuse and/or difficult to access. It appears plausible that such networks will be perceived as more difficult to locate and access in large municipalities, and given that Swedish municipalities are much bigger than in Norway, this may apply to Swedes to a greater extent than to Norwegians.

## **5. Conclusion**

By understanding people's evaluation of different means of influence as a proxy for legitimacy, the above analysis has demonstrated that perceptions of legitimacy rooted in both procedure and performance of local government exists among citizens in the two Scandinavian countries. In average, performance-based legitimacy appears to be regarded as

more important for respondents in the case of elderly care, while procedural legitimacy is valued as more important in the case of building and planning policies.

The main aim of this paper was to provide an empirical test of the relationship between the two dimensions of legitimacy. In section 2, three hypotheses which can be argued to characterize the relationship between the two dimensions of legitimacy were defined, more specifically as trade-off, synergy and independence respectively. The analysis has demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between the two dimensions of legitimacy, which indicates that the relationship between these appears to be synergetic, or mutually reinforcing.

This observation is surprising to some extent, given common arguments in the theoretical literature about the democratic effects of NPM-reforms. Some of these arguments, referred to in the theoretical discussion above, should imply that the relationship is closer to a trade-off than synergetic. One possible explanation is that the synergy is an outcome of a growing awareness in local governments that all aspects of democracy must be promoted, and that traditional participation as well as involvement at the output-side has received attention among reformers and leaders and citizens alike.

#### **Acknowledgments**

The research project reported in the article has been funded by Norwegian Research councils program DEMOSREG (#209766).

## 6. References

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