

Since political theory took its “deliberative turn” [dryzek2000deliberative] in the 1990s, political science has increasingly turned towards empirically examining deliberation. There have been numerous studies about its requirements and consequences. This paper is concerned with the latter. Deliberative theory along with empirical science has developed manifold assumptions about the effects of deliberation, including transformation of preferences, epistemic quality, consensus and accommodation, as well as side-effects on civic virtues like political trust [cf. bachtiger2013empirische pp. 164-165]. Given the current decline of confidence in governments and political institutions in many democracies across the world [cf. foa2016democratic], deliberation could be seen as a process to arrive at legitimate decisions in societies of increasing complexity [see for example habermas1994three pp. 7-8; warren2015can p. 562]. In order to examine this legitimacy claim, this paper seeks to investigate whether deliberation increases citizens perception of regime legitimacy, which is conceptualized and operationalized as regime support. This study differs from previous ones in the following terms: it is the first to examine the effects of deliberation on regime support in a cross-national framework across a large dataset of 316,938 respondents from 119 countries across all continents. Moreover, the analysis is not restricted to democratic regimes, but also includes non-democracies.¹ In order to account for the variety of regime types, we draw from the literature on so called *authoritarian deliberation*, a recent theoretical development that conceptualizes deliberation outside of democratic contexts [see he2014deliberative; he2011authoritarian; he2010giving].

The main research question of this thesis states as follows: *What role does Deliberation play for regime legitimacy across the world?* The following section reviews relevant literature on deliberation and derives assumptions to be tested empirically (Section ??). The next section presents the research design of this study and discusses issues critical to the analysis - especially the validity of the Deliberative Component Index as well as a possible bias in self-reported regime support. Following this, bivariate relationships are examined and the results of the estimated multilevel models are presented and interpreted in regard to their implications for the theoretical assumptions (Section ??). In the end, the findings of the analysis will be summarized and the conclusion gives an answer to the research question along with a discussion of implications for further research (Section ??).

¹For the purposes of this paper we consequently refer to political systems as non-democratic in accordance with the Polity IV project classification of autocracies and anocracies.