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## **Legitimacy Crises.**

# **A General Approach to explain Violations of Societal Shared Convictions in various Domains and its Impact on Emotion and Behavior**

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## **Abstract (English)**

The violation of societal shared convictions is a phenomenon which can occur in different situations of daily living. Previous research investigated this phenomenon in various domains (e.g., morality and competence) separately while neglecting the similarities. This dissertation's basic assumption is that violations of societal shared convictions in various domains lead to the same state, namely a legitimacy crisis, as the construct of legitimacy is closely related to social norms and values. A legitimacy crisis is an individual's perception that his or her actions or characteristics are not or less appropriate as they are discrepant to the societal shared convictions in the given situation.

Based on the general assumption that legitimacy crises go beyond existing theories on the violation of societal shared convictions, this work contributes to three general issues: First, it provides a theoretical integration into and continuation of overarching theoretical frameworks of legitimacy, discrepancy and threat. Second, it conducts an empirical examination of legitimacy crises throughout the two main domains of morality and competence, focusing especially on the mediating function of legitimacy crises between the discrepancy and subsequent consequences. Third, it contributes a theoretical development and empirical examination of emotional and behavioral consequences of legitimacy crises across the two main domains of morality and competence. To address these issues, this dissertation discusses the general meaning of legitimacy in the context of social and organizational psychology research and especially the different perspectives on legitimacy, thereby working out a deeper understanding of the self and legitimacy. Furthermore, this work demonstrates that experiencing legitimacy crises is threatening for one's self as it followed by specific emotional and behavioral reactions. To empirically investigate the theoretical considerations, nine studies in various domains with different methods (scenarios, recall, face-to-face interactions and field studies) were conducted.

The four studies in Chapter 4, four studies generally focus on the construct of legitimacy crises in the context of morality and competence, and examine the mediating function of a legitimacy crisis on the emotional and behavioral consequences. While participants in the first two studies worked on a scenario about a psychology intern in a hospital, participants in the last two studies dealt with unmoral behavior (in-basket exercise and a recall task about an unmoral behavior). Independent from the domain, all four studies of Chapter 4 provide evidence that legitimacy crises are judgments of a

perceived violation of societal shared convictions. The results show the expected mediating function of legitimacy crises between the perception of the violation of societal shared convictions and moral emotions (guilt and shame). Whereas feelings of guilt led to an increase of moral behavior, feelings of shame decreased moral behavior.

As an example for the moral domain, Chapter 5 takes a closer look on the role of bystanders in the context of social exclusion. Bystanders' inactions violate the social norms of inclusion and equality. Until now, research on social exclusion has focused primarily on targets and perpetrators, demonstrating that both experience social exclusion situations as threatening. This chapter wants to expand this knowledge and improve the understanding of the psychological processes of bystanders to potentially facilitate interventions for social exclusion situations. The results of three studies with varying methods (recall and face-to-face interaction paradigm) strengthen the general findings of Chapter 4. Bystanders who evaluate their inaction as less appropriate report more feelings of shame and guilt which lead to more social defense reactions compared to targets.

To extend the general findings on competence in Chapter 4, Chapter 6 exemplarily examines leaders who perceive that they are not able to meet the expectations of the leadership role in two field studies. The findings demonstrate that leaders, who perceived to be violating the societal expectations towards their role as leader, evaluated their actions as less appropriate thereby eliciting a higher extent of job insecurity that led to more silence behavior. Moreover, the results show that leader silence and follower silence are negatively related, especially when the leader is perceived as unjust. In line with the findings of Chapter 4 and 5, the construct of legitimacy crises is also a relevant mediator in the context of leadership.

In general, the theoretical considerations and the empirical findings of this dissertation demonstrate the important role of the construct of legitimacy crises in various domains and emphasize its mediating function between the violation of societal shared convictions and the subsequent emotional and behavioral reactions. The findings provide theoretical and practical implications. To understand the underlying process of discrepancies with normative standards, the Self-Standards Model and the construct of legitimacy crises provide an important theoretical framework, which works independent from the specific domain. Understanding legitimacy crises provides starting points for the development of interventions for people experiencing legitimacy crises.

## Abstract (German)

Die Verletzung von gesellschaftlich geteilten Überzeugungen ist ein Phänomen, welches in verschiedenen Situationen des täglichen Lebens auftreten kann. Die bisherige Forschung hat dieses Phänomen in unterschiedlichen Bereichen (bspw., Moral und Kompetenz) getrennt betrachtet und mögliche Gemeinsamkeiten vernachlässigt. Diese Dissertation geht davon aus, dass die Verletzung von gesellschaftlich geteilten Überzeugungen in unterschiedlichen Bereichen zu dem gleichen Zustand führt, einer Legitimitätskrise, da gerade das Konzept der Legitimität mit gesellschaftlichen Normen und Werten eng verknüpft ist. Eine Legitimitätskrise ist die Wahrnehmung eines Individuums, dass deren Handlungen oder Eigenschaften in Bezug zu gesellschaftlichen Überzeugungen in einer bestimmten Situation gar nicht oder wenig angemessen sind.

Ausgehend von der generellen Annahme, dass Legitimitätskrisen über bestehende Theorien im Rahmen der Verletzung von gesellschaftlichen Überzeugungen hinausgehen, trägt diese Arbeit zu drei generellen Punkten bei: Erstens, eine theoretische Integration und Weiterführung von übergreifenden theoretischen Rahmenmodellen in Bereichen Legitimität, Diskrepanzen und Bedrohungen. Zweitens, eine empirische Untersuchung von Legitimitätskrisen in den beiden zentralen Bereichen Moral und Kompetenz. Drittens, theoretische Entwicklung und empirische Untersuchung von emotionalen und behavioralen Konsequenzen von Legitimitätskrisen in den beiden Bereichen Moral und Kompetenz. Zur Erreichung dieser Punkte wird im Rahmen der Dissertation zunächst die generelle Bedeutung von Legitimität im Kontext sozial und organisationspsychologischer Forschung diskutiert, besonders die verschiedenen Perspektiven von Legitimität. Dies dient vor allem der Herausarbeitung eines tieferen Verständnisses von Selbst und Legitimität. Des Weiteren geht diese Arbeit näher darauf ein, dass Legitimitätskrisen bedrohlich für das eigene Selbst sind und wie Menschen auf der emotionalen und behavioralen Ebene damit umgehen. Zur empirischen Untersuchung dieser theoretischen Überlegungen wurden neun Studien in unterschiedlichen Bereichen mit verschiedenen Methoden (Szenarien, Erinnerung, direkte Interaktionen und Feldstudien) durchgeführt.

Kapitel 4 beschäftigt sich in vier Studien mit dem Konstrukt der Legitimitätskrise im Kontext von Moral und Kompetenz. Dabei wird auch die medierende Funktion auf emotionale und behaviorale Konsequenzen näher untersucht. Während die Teilnehmer in den ersten beiden Studien an einem Szenario über ein Praktikum in einem Krankenhaus arbeiten, beschäftigen sich die Teilnehmer der letzten

beiden Studien mit unmoralischen Verhaltensweisen (Postkorbübung und Erinnerungsaufgabe über unmoralisches Verhalten). Unabhängig vom Bereich legen alle vier Studien in Kapitel 4 nahe, dass Legitimitätskrisen Bewertungen einer wahrgenommenen Verletzung von gesellschaftlich geteilten Überzeugungen sind. Die Ergebnisse zeigen die medierende Funktion von Legitimitätskrisen zwischen der wahrgenommenen Verletzung gesellschaftlich geteilter Überzeugungen und moralischen Emotionen (Schuld und Scham). Während Gefühle von Schuld zu einem Anstieg von moralischem Verhalten führen, reduzieren Gefühle von Scham moralisches Verhalten.

Beispielhaft für den moralischen Bereich, beschäftigt sich Kapitel 5 näher mit der Rolle von Bystandern im Rahmen von Sozialem Ausschluss. Das Nichthandeln von Bystandern verletzt dabei soziale Normen von Inklusion und Gleichheit. Die bisherige Forschung hat sich hauptsächlich mit Opfern und Tätern auseinandergesetzt und zeigt, dass beide Situationen Sozialen Ausschlusses als bedrohlich empfinden. Dieses Kapitel möchte den bisherigen Wissensstand erweitern und die Erkenntnisse über die psychologischen Prozesse bei Bystandern verbessern um mögliche Interventionen daraus ableiten zu können. Die Ergebnisse von drei Studien mit ganz unterschiedlichen Methoden (Erinnerung und direkte Interaktion) stärken die Befunde aus Kapitel 4. Im Vergleich zu Opfern bewerten Bystander ihr Nichthandeln als weniger angemessen, berichten mehr Scham und Schuld, was wiederum zu mehr sozialen Verteidigungsreaktionen führt.

Kapitel 6 vertieft die generellen Erkenntnisse aus Kapitel 4 im Bereich Kompetenz, indem es sich im Rahmen von zwei Feldstudien exemplarisch mit Führungskräften beschäftigt, welche sich nicht in der Lage sehen, die an sie gestellten Anforderungen zu erfüllen. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Führungskräfte, die eine Verletzung von gesellschaftlich geteilten Überzeugungen an sich wahrnehmen, ihre Handlungen als weniger angemessen bewerten, was zu einem höheren Ausmaß an Jobunsicherheit führt, dass wiederum Schweigeverhalten erhöht. Außerdem zeigt sich, dass Schweigeverhalten von Führungskräften und Mitarbeitern in einem negativen Zusammenhang steht, vor allem wenn die Führungskraft als ungerecht wahrgenommen wird. Wie in Kapitel 4 und 5 zeigt sich auch hier, dass das Konstrukt der Legitimitätskrisen als relevanter Mediator im Rahmen von Führung angesehen werden kann.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass die theoretischen Überlegungen als auch empirischen Befunde dieser Dissertation zeigen, dass das Konstrukt der Legitimitätskrise in verschiedenen Bereichen eine wichtige Rolle spielt, vor allem die mediiierende Funktion zwischen Verletzung gesellschaftlich geteilter Überzeugungen und dem unmittelbar nachfolgenden emotionalen und behavioralen Reaktionen. Aus den Ergebnissen lassen sich theoretische und praktische Implikationen ableiten. Um die zugrundeliegenden Prozesse von Diskrepanzen besser verstehen zu können, bietet das Self-Standards Model und das Konstrukt der Legitimitätskrise ein geeignetes Rahmenmodell, welches unabhängig von dem jeweiligen Bereich funktioniert. Des Weiteren liefern diese Erkenntnisse Ansatzpunkte um Interventionen für Menschen entwickeln zu können, deren Legitimitätswahrnehmung in eine Krise geraten ist.



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Relevance of the Topic

We interact with other people, perceive and judge our own and other's behaviors, and make decisions based on these behaviors on a daily basis. Here, societal convictions, such as norms or values, serve us as guide for the assessment of what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. However, people sometimes find themselves in a position where their actions are contrary to the predominant societal convictions for this situation. To give examples, when a person has an extramarital affair he or she transgresses the moral value of fidelity. An individual that is in a leadership position and is not able to fulfill the executive functions (e.g., assign tasks, resolve conflicts or fight for the concerns of their department) violates the code of conduct concerning leadership behavior. People who witness a social exclusion situation as a bystander and do not interfere, although it may have been possible, violate the social norm of inclusion and equality. Most of the people who find themselves in situations like these experience them as unpleasant and threatening. Despite the fact that all three examples come from different domains (moral and competence domain), all three include a violation of societal shared convictions.

All examples have a strong societal relevance regarding the appropriateness of one's own behavior, which is closely related to the construct of legitimacy. The term legitimacy is derived from Latin "*legitimus*" and can be translated as "rightfulness". Modern approaches to legitimacy (e.g., Beetham, 1991; Weber, 1968) argue that social norms and values are fundamental for the perception of legitimacy as they guide the behavior of people in a society. Depending on the specific social norms and values of a society, the judgment of the appropriateness may vary and be subject to temporal change. When people find themselves in situations where their actions violate societal shared convictions, they perceive a legitimacy crisis.

As mentioned above, the violation of societal shared convictions threatens not only the self, but may also affect others. The scope of possible negative consequences can range from a small group of people to an entire team or organization. The current dissertation aims at providing a deeper insight into the consequences of people experiencing legitimacy crises to better understand what happens when people violate societal shared convictions with their action. These insights might provide rudiments to develop interventions for people their legitimacy perception get into crisis.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

The construct of legitimacy is an important subject in several disciplines, including political science (e.g., Beetham, 1991; Easton, 1965; Lipset, 1959), law (e.g., Buchanan, 2010; Schliesky, 2004), philosophy (e.g., Habermas, 1973), sociology (e.g., Johnson, Dowd, & Ridgeway, 2006; Weber, 1968), and psychology (e.g., Suddaby, Bitektine, & Haack, 2017; Tyler, 2006). In the field of psychology, legitimacy is usually defined as the “generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity [e.g., a person, group, organization] are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions” (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). Most of the existing research on legitimacy in social and organizational psychology focused on evaluations of external entities’ legitimacy, for example authorities, intergroup relations or political / legal systems (e.g., Anderson & Brion, 2014; Jost & Major, 2001; Suddaby et al., 2017; Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Lind, 1992) and has not attended individuals experiencing the legitimacy crises and the effects it has on them. One aim of this dissertation is to complement existing research by examining the processes that are involved in the perception of legitimacy within the self and take a closer look at the acting individual as both the evaluator and subject of the evaluation. This approach to legitimacy is essential to understand the reactions of those whose actions violate societal shared convictions, because the perception of legitimacy is closely related to them (e.g., Weber, 1968).

Violating societal shared convictions threatens the self and causes a legitimacy crisis. So far, research on legitimacy crises is limited to philosophical (Habermas, 1973) and theoretical considerations (Baumeister et al., 1985). Despite the similarities between the constructs, the violation of societal shared convictions in various domains like moral (e.g., Barkan, Ayal, Gino, & Ariely, 2012; Hall & Fincham, 2009) and competence experiences (e.g., De Hooge, Breugelmans, & Zeelenberg, 2008; Fast, Burris, & Bartel, 2014; Heilman & Alcott, 2001; Smith, Webster, Parrott, & Eyre, 2002) have predominantly been considered separately. The objective of the current dissertation is to deepen the understanding of legitimacy crises and their consequences, following four specific aims: First, a theoretical integration of legitimacy crises into an overarching theoretical framework. Second, an empirical examination of legitimacy crises throughout different domains. Third, theoretical development and empirical examination of the consequences of legitimacy crises across different domains. Fourth,



pointing out the mediating function of legitimacy crises between the perception and the emotional consequences.

The current work integrates the theoretical considerations and empirical findings on the violation of societal shared convictions, moral emotions, as well as threat and defense. Based on this, the dissertation contributes to the existing literature through three ways: First, it broadens the theoretical and empirical understanding of the violation of societal shared convictions in various domains, which lead to the same state, namely a legitimacy crisis. Second, it shows that legitimacy is also related to perception and evaluation of one's actions and characteristics. Third, it adds to the field of threat and defense, by showing that different threats lead to specific emotional and behavioral reactions.

### **1.3 Structure of the Dissertation**

The chapters 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 provide the theoretical foundation of this dissertation in general and the empirical investigations in chapter 4 through 6. Chapter 2.1 summarizes the existing research on the construct of legitimacy in social and organizational psychology. Chapter 2.2 discusses three perspectives on the construct of legitimacy in detail by attending to it as a multifaceted construct, therefore considering legitimacy as a property, as a process, and as a perception. This provides the theoretical basis for the integration of legitimacy crises in the legitimacy research. Chapter 2.3 gives a deeper insight into the construct of legitimacy crises and both their antecedents and consequences by introducing the general process model of threat and defense, research on the violation of societal shared convictions in various domains, and research on moral emotions. Subsequently, chapter 3 presents an overview of the research program of the dissertation.

Chapters 4 through 6 present the three empirical investigations with a total of nine studies. The four empirical studies in chapter 4 focus on the general relevance of the construct of legitimacy crises and the emotional as well as behavioral consequences in throughout various domains. To validate the general findings on the moral domain in chapter 4 and contribute a new approach to the field of social exclusion, chapter 5 investigates legitimacy crises as a relevant factor for bystanders. Chapter 6 then examines legitimacy crises in the specific competence domain of leadership and offers additional new insights about leader legitimacy in organizational contexts. Finally, chapter 7 summarizes all findings, derives theoretical and practical implications, and points out the strengths and limitations of the current dissertation.

## **2 Theoretical Background**

### **2.1 Legitimacy in Psychology**

With the work of French and Raven (1959) on the bases of social power, the construct of legitimacy became more important in the field of psychology. Most of the research in psychology dealing with aspects of legitimacy is located in social and organizational psychology, as legitimacy is often investigated in the context of power, a central phenomenon in these fields (e.g., Anderson & Brion, 2014; Tyler, 2006). The following sections summarize the most important theoretical considerations and empirical findings.

In social psychology, legitimacy is particularly relevant when reflecting the appropriateness of social systems, institutions, and authorities, which make demands to the involved and affected individuals (Kelman, 2001). When an authority (e.g., government or a president) is seen as legitimate, people perceive that they ought to obey, follow, or defer to certain decisions and rules. From the other perspective, someone that is seen as legitimate assumes “the right to do something” (Tyler, 2006) for him- or herself. In this context, one core finding is that authorities and institutions are perceived as more legitimate when they exercise their power through procedures which are perceived as fair by the affected individuals (e.g., Tyler, 2001; Tyler & Lind, 1992). However, a high extent of perceived legitimacy can also serve as a base for engaging in immoral actions like in military conflicts (Milgram, 1974), leading to negative consequences for the affected people.

Another important research area in social psychology, intergroup relations, investigates the relationship of legitimacy and status. The perception of current social arrangements (status differences) as either legitimate or not may guide the behavioral reactions of the involved people, even when it is unfavorable for the self (e.g., Major, 1994). On the one hand, low status group members protect the status quo and reflect negative actions from high status group members as less discriminatory when they view group differences as legitimate (Major & Schmader, 2001; Major et al., 2002). On the other hand, high status group members show less discriminatory behavior, when they perceive their high status as illegitimate (Turner, 1999), but more self-serving behavior when they perceive their status as legitimate (Bettencourt et al., 2001). The benefit of this system justification for the advantaged and disadvantaged is the reduction of unpleasant states, such as anxiety and uncertainty (Chen & Tyler, 2001).

The focus of organizational psychology on legitimacy is closely related to the issues of institutions and authority from the social psychology perspective. Organizations seek and foster legitimacy, as it enhances stability and comprehensibility of organizational activities and structures, and heightens the external perception of the organization as more trustworthy, meaningful, and predictable (Suchman, 1995). In a nutshell, a high extent of perceived legitimacy has a significant role in securing support for organizations (Tyler, 2006). Organizations viewed as legitimate are less affected by unsystematic variations in their stock prices (Bansal & Clelland, 2004), lead to positive investor behavior (Pollock & Rindova, 2003), and are generally more likely to survive (e.g., Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). The maintenance of legitimacy is, however, problematic, because the external observers are often heterogeneous and stability often entails inflexibility and institutionalization which may generate its own opposition (Suchman, 1995).

Anderson and Brion (2014) suggest that legitimacy is a potential moderator in the context of power, or rather the loss or maintenance of power. The perceived competence of leaders and the interpersonal relationship with their employees impacts the legitimacy of leaders and, consequently, their power. Hollander and Julian (1970) conducted several experiments to examine leader legitimacy. Their findings show that high-perceived legitimacy and group-orientated motivation of the leader heightens his or her acceptance, endorsement, and influence. Leaders who exercise their authority in a fair way are perceived as more legitimate, which improved the acceptance towards their decisions (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2001). Furthermore, when employees perceive the legitimacy of their leader as high, leaders are more effective in influencing their employees to engage in collective and individual goals, leading to the employees being more willing to follow organizational rules and become more committed to the organization (Tyler & Blader, 2005), which in turn maintains leader power. In contrast, leaders who obtained their power in a less legitimate way, may engage in either in antisocial behavior towards their employees (Raven, 2008) or less approach behavior (e.g., Lammers, Galinsky, Gordijn, & Otten, 2008). A low extent of perceived legitimacy also affects the reactions of the employees, as, powerless individuals in a less legitimate power hierarchy engage in approach-related behavior with the aim to overcome this unpleasant situation (Lammers et al., 2008). In the long-term, the reactions of both the leader and the employees may contribute to a power loss of the leader (Anderson & Brion, 2015).

In summary, legitimacy is important for the understanding of people's reaction to societal issues concerning social systems, institutions, and authorities. Institutions and authorities which exercise their power fairly will be perceived as more legitimate, even when it is unfavorable for the self. A perceived high legitimacy leads to mainly positive consequences, such as trust in decisions of institutions or authorities, obeying of rules, or engagement in collective and individual goals. However, negative consequences such as harming others or justifying oppression are also possible. Independently of the implications, legitimacy is an effective influence strategy and the understanding of the legitimacy as a construct varies in the existent research. To foster the understanding and integration of legitimacy research in general and especially of legitimacy crises in chapter 2.3, the next chapter provides an overview of three main perspectives on legitimacy.

## **2.2 Perspectives on Legitimacy**

The phenomenon of legitimacy differs and changes both across different fields of research and time. Therefore, theoretical clarity regarding this legitimacy is crucial, as the construct itself goes beyond norms or moral values (cf. Suddaby et al., 2017; Tyler, 2006; Zelditch, 2001). This chapter focuses on three main perspectives on legitimacy with three specific actors: Legitimacy as Property (2.2.1), Legitimacy as Process (2.2.2) and Legitimacy as Perception (2.2.3).

### **2.2.1 Legitimacy as Property**

The legitimacy-as-property perspective views legitimacy as an asset or resource which can be acquired, accumulated, lost, and restored from the external environment through an exchange process between an entity (e.g., organization) and various stakeholders. The entity "owns" or "posses" legitimacy evaluated by others (Suddaby et al., 2017). In line with consensus theory (Parsons, 1960) and the basic assumptions of contingency theories (e.g., Vroom & Yetton, 1973), legitimacy describes the congruence between societal shared convictions and the attributes of an entity. Applied to the arguments in chapter 2.1, this means that an organization or a leader is perceived as legitimate when its, her or his actions fit the current social values (e.g., fairness). There are two distinct conceptualizations of the relationship between extent of fit and legitimacy. One view suggests that legitimacy is not simply the opposite of illegitimacy, because an entity can be judged as legitimate and illegitimate at the same time based on the selected characteristics that constitute legitimacy. A second view understands

legitimacy as a bipolar continuum from high (legitimacy) to low (illegitimacy) which indicates that a poor (good) fit leads to illegitimacy (legitimacy) (Suddaby et al., 2017).

To quantify legitimacy from the legitimacy-as-property perspective, elements or characteristics that constitute legitimacy have to be measured. This poses problems, because the number of characteristics that define legitimacy are theoretically infinite and most of the research acquires only one or two specific characteristics while ignoring others. Content analytic techniques are commonly used as instruments of choice for the measurement of legitimacy within this perspective (Suddaby et al., 2017). For instance, Bansal and Clelland (2004) investigated legitimacy of organizations by using media reports (*Wall Street Journal*) which are commonly used as sources of information for fund managers, as they provide positive and negative information of organizations. Based on 658 articles, they analyzed the legitimacy of each organization via three categories: positive, neutral, or negative. Among others, they found that legitimacy is related to unsystematic risk (e.g., new negative information about an organizations liability). As a result, in order to gain legitimacy and, hence, positive consequences, organizations should try to minimize negative media reports and invest in impression management efforts. On a more abstract level, legitimacy, in the legitimacy-as-property perspective, is the outcome of contingency between the characteristics of an entity and the societal shared convictions, which facilitates positive consequences.

### 2.2.2 Legitimacy as Process

In contrast to the legitimacy-as-property perspective, this perspective focuses on the processes used to socially construct and maintain legitimacy. Research that see legitimacy as a process predominantly use the term “legitimation” or legitimizing (Suddaby et al., 2017). Here, legitimation is described as an “objectivation” of meaning through social interaction, such as face-to-face contact and language (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). A collective process, where societal shared convictions of a broader social framework explain and support the existence of an entity (e.g., authority, group, structure or social practice), which is part of this social framework (Berger, Ridgeway, Fisk, & Norman, 1998). This means that, in this perspective, legitimacy is not stable, but rather an ongoing process of social negotiation by various stakeholders in contrast to the legitimacy-as-property perspective which views it as the outcome itself. Furthermore, the elements and characteristics that construct legitimacy are in a state of flux. As a consequence, legitimacy is conceptualized as an unipolar continuum and at

some point in the process legitimacy is established, when a certain threshold is reached (Suddaby et al., 2017).

This collective process of meaning making analyzes legitimation or legitimizing in terms of change, events, or activities, and tends to produce stage models which aim at explaining the transition from one state to another. Suddaby and colleagues (2017) give an overview of three main processes by which legitimation occurs: (1) persuasion/translation/narration, (2) theorization, and (3) identification/categorization. Research on the first process identified five types of discursive legitimation strategies among others: normalization, rationalization, authorization, moralization, and “narrativization”. To give an example, at the moment electric vehicles are legitimized through reports of the government and commercials of vehicle manufacturer that focus on moralization (e.g., protection of the environment), authorization (e.g., ministry of transport), and rationalization (e.g., reduction of carbon dioxide emissions). However, theorization classifies existing norms or practices into generalized categories which can initiate change: problematize failings of an existing practice and simultaneously justify a solution. For instance, the opting out of the nuclear energy program in Germany in 2011 constituted a radical turning away of the lifetime extension from October 2010. Due to the nuclear reactor disaster in Fukushima 2011, the German Government suddenly emphasized the negative consequences of nuclear power and postulated the energy transformation with renewable energies as the solution. The third main process, identification and categorization, points out that the acceptance of organizations is higher when they differentiate themselves from the competitors, but are similar enough to an established reference group. Electronic vehicles are a good example where legitimacy work is necessary to show that electronic vehicles are an acceptable but different car on the market.

On a more abstract level, legitimation is “a structured set or sets of formal or emergent activities that describe how an actor acquires affiliation with an existing social order or category” (Suddaby et al., 2017, p. 462). Thus, there is no best way to achieve legitimacy, because the process underlies permanent configurations with the general social order. However, the legitimacy-as-process perspective overlooks the socio-cognitive aspect which imply that legitimacy depends on the observer (Suddaby et al., 2017).

### 2.2.3 Legitimacy as Perception

The legitimacy-as-perception perspective has its roots in the theory of social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and retains the understanding of legitimacy as a property in form of the assessment or judgment of the appropriateness of an entity, and as a process by focusing the attention on the processes of making judgments. In short, this perspective concentrates on the role of individual perceivers in the social construction process of legitimacy and their own judgements at the individual and collective level. While the individual level focuses on the perception of the appropriateness of an entity through an evaluator, the collective level presents an opinion shared by the majority of evaluators, which indicates a social approval or validity belief (Suddaby et al., 2017).

Drawing on cognitive psychology, Sherif and Hovland (1961) found that a judgment relevant to an attitude always involves a comparison of stimuli and a social reference scale (Suddaby et al., 2017). The origin of this judgment can be explained by social cognitive theory by Bandura (1991) and Heider's (1958) approach on social perception. People construct references regarding appropriate social behavior over the course of the socialization process and this process is influenced by diverse societal sources, such as direct intuition and the evaluation of one's own or others' conduct (Bandura, 1991). Regarding the legitimacy of others, people develop a sense of which types of behavior are appropriate in specific settings and which types are not. Thus, an entity's actions are perceived as appropriate only to the extent that they are perceived as consistent with the references (e.g., system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions) of a given social framework (Crandall & Beasley, 2001; Suchman, 1995). As an example for a legitimacy judgment on authorities, Bill Clinton's legitimacy as a husband and as a president of the United States was strained by his sexual affair with Monica Lewinsky, which derived from the perception that this behavior is contrary to the moral values in the social framework of the United States. A high perception of this discrepancy was related with the tendency to favor impeachment (Crandall, Beasley, Joslyn, & Silvia, 1999).

On a more abstract level, in the legitimacy-as-perception perspective, legitimacy is "a set of microlevel sociocognitive processes that lead to a formation of legitimacy judgment by individuals and a set of collective processes that lead to aggregation of individuals' judgments and emergence of a collective consensus judgment (validity) about legitimacy" (Suddaby et al., 2017, p. 468).

To summarize, this overview of perspectives on legitimacy demonstrates that legitimacy is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon with different assumptions and theoretical origins. Those who understand legitimacy as a property see the construct as a stable outcome on a continuum from positive (legitimate) to negative (illegitimate). In contrast, from a process perspective, legitimacy is growing from zero to a certain threshold at which legitimacy emerges. The legitimacy-as-perception perspective examines how the judgement of legitimacy about an entity is constructed (Suddaby et al., 2017). This overview serves as a theoretical foundation for the integration of legitimacy crises, which I explain in the next chapter.

## **2.3 Legitimacy Crisis**

### **2.3.1 Concept of Legitimacy Crisis**

The German philosopher Habermas (1973) first used the term legitimation crisis in the context of political systems in late capitalism. In his view, a social entity encounters a highly problematic situation when expectations (e.g., pre-election promise) cannot be fulfilled or satisfied resulting in withdrawal of legitimation as sanction. The need for legitimation of competitive parties increases the risk for a legitimation crisis, as competitors want to outdo each other, heightening the expectations of the population as a consequence. Baumeister, Shapiro and Tice (1985) applied Habermas' approach specifically to individuals and focused on the evaluation of one's self. They extended it in terms of a multiple defined self with different values and goals, leading to incompatible expectations in certain situations. This incompatibility makes it impossible for an individual to act perfectly consistent given the presence of various opposing expectations.

Based on the work of Habermas (1973), Baumeister et al. (1985), and the legitimacy definition of Suchman (1995), the current dissertation defines a legitimacy crisis as the perception of an individual that his or her actions or characteristics are not or less appropriate as they are discrepant to the societal shared convictions in a given situation. Contrary to Habermas and Baumeister et al., I use the term legitimacy instead of legitimation, because the focus lies on the perception instead of the process. As mentioned in chapter 2.2.3 on the legitimacy-as-perception perspective, people construct standards or references regarding the appropriateness of social behavior over the course of the socialization process (Bandura, 1991; Hoffmann, 1977; Silvia & Duval, 2001). Actions of an entity are perceived as legitimate or not depending on how much they fit the standards (e.g., system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions) of a



given social system (Crandall & Beasley, 2001; Suchman, 1995). The same might be true for judgments regarding one's own behavior. Referring to our example in the introduction (chapter 1.1) a leader who is not able to fulfill the executive functions (e.g., assign tasks, resolve conflicts or fight for the concerns of their department) of the leadership position violates the code of conduct concerning leadership behavior and thus induces a legitimacy crisis for himself or herself.

In contrast to the existing research on legitimacy, which concentrated on the evaluation of an entity through an external environment (chapter 2.1 and 2.2), the current work about the phenomenon of legitimacy crises focuses on the perception of one's own actions or characteristics in a broader social framework – viewing the individual both as evaluator and subject of evaluation. Legitimacy crises consist of three key elements: First, the evaluation of the appropriateness of actions or characteristics, second, the acting individual as both the evaluator and subject of the evaluation and third, a violation of societal shared convictions. In terms of the three main perspectives of legitimacy in chapter 2.3, legitimacy crises can be located best in the legitimacy-as-perception and legitimacy-as-property perspective. Based on the legitimacy-as-perception perspective, legitimacy crises draw attention mainly to what happens at the individual and his or her perception and evaluation. The evaluation, the property of appropriateness, of individuals involves a comparison of their actions or characteristics with societal shared convictions (social reference scale). For instance, a leader compares his or her actions and characteristics with the social expectations towards a leadership role. A perceived discrepancy elicits a legitimacy crisis. Moreover, as in the legitimacy-as-perception perspective, legitimacy crises refer to the social cognitive theory of Bandura (1991) and, hence, the construction of standards through socialization.

From a more general point of view, legitimacy crises can be integrated in the general process model of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014, see Figure 1) and therefore the research on discrepancies, which is an essential driving force of human behavior in many theories in social psychology (e.g., cognitive dissonance theory, Festinger, 1957; terror management theory, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986; meaning maintenance model, Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006; reactive approach-motivation model, McGregor, Nash, Mann, & Phills, 2010; security system model, Hart, Shaver, & Goldenberg, 2005).

The general process model of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014) proposes that all threats underlie the experience of a discrepancy, which can be either perceptual,

epistemic, or motivational in nature. In the case of legitimacy crises, the discrepancy exists between actions or characteristics of an individual and the societal shared convictions in a given situation. In general, a discrepancy activates the Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS; Gray & McNaughton, 2000), which is characterized by symptoms such as anxiety, hypervigilance, avoidance motivation, and inhibition of approach behavior. Its function is to resolve the discrepancy or switch to other goals, therefore avoiding potentially threatening stimuli as a proximal defense reaction. When there is no solution, the Behavioral Approach System (BAS) indirectly resolves the threat or is merely palliative leading to a distal defense reaction.

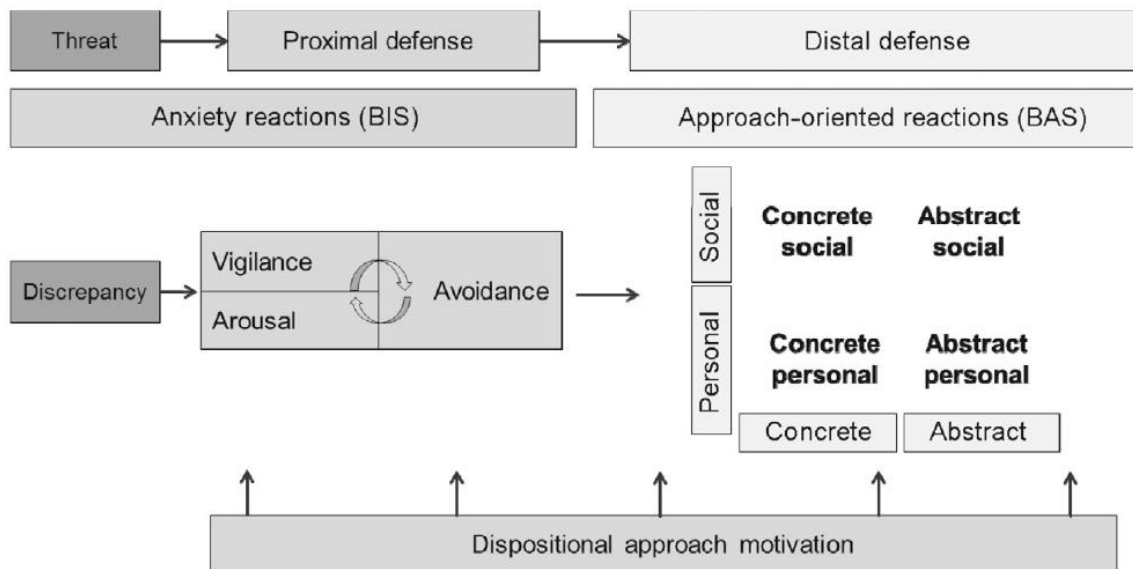


Figure 1. General model of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014, p. 230).

In chapter 2.3.3 (legitimacy crisis and its consequences), defense reactions in the context of legitimacy crisis will be explained more in detail.

Within the framework of discrepancy, the Self-standards Model (SSM) of Cognitive Dissonance (Stone & Cooper, 2001) provides a synthesis among different perspectives on self-discrepancies (e.g., Aronson, 1968; Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Higgins, 1987). The SSM takes up the issue of discrepancies between actual self-attributes and self-standards, especially normative self-standards. Self-attributes in the SSM represent an individual's permanent standing on dimensions like morality or competence. Normative standards in terms of the SSM signify actions or characteristics that are societally shared in greater social frameworks. As in the legitimacy-as-perception perspective, the SSM assumes that individuals perceive their actions and compare them to standards (personal or normative) which leads to an evaluation of one's actions. A discrepancy between both is related to negative arousal as in in the

general process model of threat and defense. Referred to legitimacy crises, the SSM describes their theoretical foundation as discrepancies between the self and societal shared convictions. However, the concept of legitimacy crises goes beyond the SSM, due to the combination of the perceived normative related self-discrepancy and the concept of legitimacy as a specific value of evaluation, which considers the societal relatedness. Moreover, the current work on legitimacy crises assumes that the impact of individual's self-attributes depends more on situational demands and are less permanent and stable as proposed by the SSM.

All in all, the current chapter demonstrates that the construct of legitimacy crises integrates well into the overarching frameworks of threat, self-discrepancies, and legitimacy perspectives. At first, a legitimacy crisis represents a threat to the self by experiencing a discrepancy between actions or characteristics of one's self and the societal shared convictions in a given situation. Second, a legitimacy crisis provides an interesting ongoing development of the Self-Standards Model. Finally, based on the approach of different perspectives on legitimacy, a legitimacy crisis is anchored in the legitimacy-as-perception and legitimacy-as-property perspective, because a legitimacy crisis draws attention mainly to what happens at the individual level in terms of perception and evaluation (the property of appropriateness). As mentioned before, there is a relationship between societal shared convictions and legitimacy crises. The next chapter (2.3.2) gives a deeper insight into this relationship by presenting previous research on the violation of societal shared convictions from various domains and explaining how insights into legitimacy crises may contribute to this research.

### **2.3.2 Legitimacy Crisis and Previous Research on Societal Shared Convictions**

The violation of societal shared convictions is not only a matter of morality. As the Self-Standards Model (Stone & Cooper, 2001) proposes, a discrepancy between self-attributes and normative standards can occur in domains of morality and, in the broadest sense, competence. Up to now, despite this similarity, the fields of moral (e.g., Barkan, Ayal, Gino, & Ariely, 2012; Hall & Fincham, 2009) and competence experiences (e.g., De Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2007; Fast, Burris, & Bartel, 2014; Heilman & Alcott, 2001; Hollander & Julian, 1970; Smith et al., 2002) have predominantly been considered separately. The present dissertation assumes that the state of a legitimacy crisis is the logical consequence of the violation of societal shared convictions in various domains. Moreover, a legitimacy crisis is a potential mediator between the perceived self-discrepancy and the emotional consequences, which will be

explained more in detail in chapter 2.3.3. In the following, this chapter summarizes previous research from the moral and competence domain that is related to the violation of societal shared convictions and hence to a legitimacy crisis.

Moral misconduct of one's self or other people occurs more often than we think. Research in social psychology shows that lying is a phenomenon of daily life (e.g., DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Weyer, & Epstein, 1996). Although most lies are of little consequences, serious lies are of great cognitive and emotional significance and may lead to deep breaches in trust. Barkan and colleagues (2012) investigated the consequences of immoral behavior on self-esteem. Participants who described an event where they behaved immorally (untruthful or disloyal) reported lower self-esteem than participants who described a negative event that happened to them. It can be assumed that the participants in the condition of immoral behavior experienced a legitimacy crisis, because their actions were discrepant to the moral values in our society, for example lying, which is also part of the Ten Commandments in Christian religion. In addition, legitimacy crises should mediate the effect of this self-discrepancy on self-esteem.

Another important example for moral misconduct is infidelity. Up to one-third of all men and women report having been unfaithful and infidelity is the leading cause of divorce (Drigotas & Barta, 2001; Hall & Fincham, 2009). Infidelity "represents a partner's violation of norms regulating the level of emotional or physical intimacy with people outside the relationship" (Drigotas & Barta, 2001, p. 177). Buunk and Bakker (2005) found that injunctive norms (what others think one should do) as well as descriptive norms (what others do or are willing to do) influence the willingness to engage in infidelity. This implies that the more others would disapprove extradyadic sex and the less others of one's reference group engage in extradyadic sex, the stronger the normative influence to not engage in extradyadic sex will be. Nevertheless, people do engage in infidelity. From a legitimacy perspective, people who perceive that their action is discrepant to the norm of fidelity or extradyadic sex should evaluate this self-discrepancy as less appropriate, thus causing a legitimacy crisis.

How people deal with their own harmful action? This last example for the domain of moral misconduct takes a closer look on people whose unjustified actions harm other people (e.g., aggressive behavior or social exclusion). Bastian et al. (2013) shows that people who recognize that their actions harm other people tend to self-dehumanize, which means that they perceive themselves as less human. As mentioned

above, it is crucial that the harmful action is discrepant to the current moral values; otherwise the action is viewed as appropriate. In the two examples before, this situation can be explained by the construct of legitimacy crises. The perception of one's action in relationship to the societal shared convictions is an important factor in the given situation. When there is a mismatch, people doing harm should evaluate their behavior as less appropriate, therefore experiencing a legitimacy crisis. Moreover, it can be assumed that the concept of legitimacy crisis mediates the effect of the perceived self-discrepancy on self-dehumanization.

Just as immoral actions, a lack of competence can also threaten the overarching need for self-integrity (De Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2007; Leary & Baumeister, 2000; Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Smith et al., 2002). Psychology students assigned to an academic threat condition (summarizing a confusing one-page passage about statistics in psychology) felt significantly worse compared to participants in the control condition, who wrote about the experience of dental pain (McGregor, Nash, Mann, & Phills, 2010). Similar results appear in the context of affirmative action and incompetence (e.g., Heilman & Alcott, 2001). Women were selected either because of their gender (beneficiary selection) or because of merit (preferential selection) for a half-hour teamwork study. The type of selection influenced the perception of one's self. Moreover, the women were told that men typically perform this task more often and it was manipulated whether they obtained information about their task ability or not. The findings show, amongst others, that women assigned to the beneficiaries condition (without information about their task ability) held more negative expectations of their competence, their beliefs of what others think of them, and negative affect, because this selection method is seen as a societal stigma. In the light of legitimacy crises, women in the beneficiary condition perceived a mismatch between their abilities and the societal expectations in this situation (typical task of men). Due to this self-discrepancy, women evaluated their characteristics and actions as less appropriate for this task, resulting in a legitimacy crisis.

In a broader sense, competence is related to power and, hence, leadership. If an individual's merit is essential for the assignment to a power position, being assigned to that position despite the assumption that others might be more competent constitutes a self-discrepancy, as the perception of one's own merit is not congruent with the norms for assignment. Therefore, individuals in such a situation show less approach behavior in contrast to more competent individuals in positions of power (Lammers et al., 2008).

In line with this finding, Hollander and Julian (1970) showed that participants in a leader position in a group discussion, perceived themselves a less competent and less supported by their group when they were appointed, in contrast to elected, to the leader position. Certainly, leaders who perceive a lack of competence can also show harmful behaviors (e.g., aggressive behavior or seek to minimize voice of their employees) towards their employees (Fast & Chen, 2009; Fast, Burris, & Bartel, 2014). Regardless of whether these leaders show more or less approach behavior, this situation threatens their self. From a legitimacy point of view, the low competence is discrepant to the societal shared convictions of a leader. When these leaders perceive this self-discrepancy, they should evaluate their leadership characteristics and leadership actions as less appropriate, thus experiencing a legitimacy crisis.

In summary, this overview of previous research on the violation of societal shared convictions in domains of morality and competence suggests that the concept of legitimacy crises is relevant in the evaluation of self-discrepancies in various domains. Legitimacy crises provide an interesting ongoing development of the Self-Standards Model (Stone & Cooper, 2001) for a more comprehensive understanding of the violating of societal shared convictions in various domains. Moreover, this dissertation assumes that a legitimacy crisis is a potential mediator between the perceived-self-discrepancy and subsequent emotional and behavioral consequences, which I explain more thoroughly in the next chapter.

### **2.3.3 Legitimacy Crises and their Emotional and Behavioral Consequences**

Referring to the general process model of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014), a legitimacy crisis, like any other threat, reduces the activity of the behavioral approach system and elicit anxious-related emotions by the activation of the behavioral inhibition system (BIS; Gray & McNaughton, 2000). Baumeister and colleagues (1985) inherently characterize this state in context of legitimacy crises as an “emotional paralysis” (p. 416) and note that, at the same time guilt can also be elicited. In addition to anxiety, different kinds of threats should elicit specific emotional states (e.g., anger, frustration, shame, guilt, or sadness; Hart 2014). Based on research on emotions in conjunction with the violation of societal shared convictions, guilt and shame should be predominantly elicited by a legitimacy crisis (Haidt, 2003; Rudolph, Schulz, & Tschakertschiew, 2013; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). The taxonomy of moral emotions from Rudolph and colleagues (2013) classifies shame and guilt as actor emotions with a negative hedonic quality. Both are evoked by self-reflection and (implicit or explicit) self-

evaluation and provide feedback on the social appropriateness of one's own action. Although feelings of guilt are more related to moral transgressions and shame is more related to achievement settings, situations often elicit both feelings (De Hooze, Breugelmans, & Zeelenberg, 2008; Tangney et al., 2007; Tracy & Robins, 2006).

Feelings of guilt predominantly occur in situations in which an individual perceives an own action as harm to another person (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). When people engage in lying, extradyadic sex, or harmful actions towards others, they violate societal shared convictions, which should be evaluated as less appropriate and hence elicit feelings of guilt. However, it is possible that people also experience guilt, when they attribute the cause for the bad performance as internal, unstable, and controllable (Tracy & Robins, 2006). As opposed to guilt, shame results rather from the (perceived) public exposure of a failure or defect, which an individual perceives as incompatible with their core self (De Hooze, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2007; Haidt, 2003; Smith, Webster, Parrott, & Eyre, 2002). Returning back to the study from chapter 2.3.2, psychology students assigned to an academic threat condition reported significantly more shame compared to participants in the control threat condition (McGregor et al., 2010). This shows that people who experience a legitimacy crisis report more feelings of shame compared to people in a societal-unrelated threat situation. In line with research on moral emotions (e.g., Haidt, 2003), shame should also be caused by an immoral action. In the study about infidelity by Hall and Ficham (2009), people who were unfaithful reported higher levels of shame compared to faithful people. In principle, a self-discrepancy between an individuals' characteristics or actions and societal shared convictions should elicit feelings of guilt and shame, mediated by the experience of a legitimacy crisis.

In general, people experiencing a threat want to reduce this unpleasant state by means of behavioral reactions. In context of the general process model of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014) the behavioral reactions are especially located in the area of distal defense reactions. A few minutes after threat induction, Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS) activity reduces by engaging in distal defense reactions, which are linked to an activation of the Behavioral Approach System (BAS). A distal defense reaction can be social or personal and concrete or abstract in nature. Examples are extreme alcohol use (concrete personal), affiliative behavior (concrete social), religious ideals (abstract concrete), and group identification (abstract social). Moreover, research on

moral emotions and threat shows that different emotional states lead to different behavioral reactions (Hart, 2014; Tangney et al., 2007).

Individuals predominantly experiencing guilt show more moral and reparative actions or action intentions (e.g., prosocial behavior) as they aim at reestablishing their self-integrity (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1994; Haidt, 2003; Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Tangney et al., 2007). To give an example, participants who recalled a moral transgression where they felt guilty, cooperated more in a subsequent dyadic social dilemma game than participants who recalled a personal experience where they felt ashamed (De Hooge et al., 2007). Similar results were found in the recall study about immoral actions (Barkan et al., 2012), mentioned in chapter 2.3.2. Participants who recalled an immoral action where they felt guilty show more moral behavior (e.g., presented themselves as more ethical) in contrast to the control condition. Individuals experiencing predominantly shame show fewer moral actions or action intentions (e.g., less cooperative behavior) in contrast to feelings of guilt, because individuals want to hide negative self-perceptions and restore a positive self-view (e.g., De Hooge et al., 2008; De Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2010; Haidt, 2003; Nelissen, Breugelmans, & Zeelenberg, 2013; Tangney et al., 2007). This only pertains to situations where there is no relationship between the shame inducing norm violation and the subsequent situation; otherwise, the people show more actions and action tendencies that are moral.

While the focus of this dissertation lies more on the consequences for the actor, it should be noted that as mentioned in chapter 2.1, people who violate societal shared convictions also influence people who are affected by these actions. To give an example, powerless individuals in a less legitimate power hierarchy engage more in approach-related behavior with the aim to overcome this unpleasant situation. Participants, who had been unjustly assigned to a powerless position, despite them being more competent compared to their powerful counterpart, reacted with more approach behavior (e.g., risk preferences) (Lammers et al., 2008). According to Habermas (1973). Politicians or political institutions who cannot satisfy the societal shared convictions, are sanctioned with a withdrawal of legitimation, for example more collective action (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008).

To sum up, this chapter introduced the concept of legitimacy crises and integrates it into the overarching frameworks of threat, self-discrepancies, and legitimacy perspectives. In general, it is a specific threat to the self – a self-discrepancy



between actual self-attributes and societal shared convictions. In relation to the three main perspectives on legitimacy, a legitimacy crisis is anchored in the legitimacy-as-perception and legitimacy-as-property perspective, because it draws attention mainly to what happens on the individual level in terms of perception and evaluation (the property of appropriateness). Basically, a legitimacy crisis consists of three key elements: the evaluation of the appropriateness of actions or characteristics, the acting individual as both the evaluator and subject of the evaluation, and a violation of societal shared convictions. Previous research on the violation of societal shared convictions in the domains of morality (e.g., infidelity) and competence (e.g., leadership) suggests that the concept of legitimacy crisis is important for a more comprehensive understanding of the violation of societal shared convictions in various domains. Finally, this chapter displays that the moral emotions of guilt and shame should predominantly be elicited by a legitimacy crisis. As a consequence, people want to reduce this unpleasant state and restore a positive self-view by means of distal defense reactions, which is in line with the general process model of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014).

## **2.4 Conclusions drawn from the Theoretical Background**

Whereas legitimacy played an important role in social and political philosophy over 2,000 years, legitimacy only gained importance for empirical psychology when French and Raven (1959) started their work on the bases of social power and the awaking interest on legitimacy in social psychology in the 1990s. Most of the research in psychology dealing with legitimacy is located in social and organizational psychology (e.g., system justification, ideological justification, leadership). Nevertheless, the construct of legitimacy is diffuse and used in different ways. The work of Suddaby and colleagues (2017) provides an actual approach with three perspectives to bring some theoretical clarity to this important construct: legitimacy as a property, legitimacy as a process and legitimacy as perception.

Until now, previous research on legitimacy focused on people evaluating the legitimacy of external entities such as authorities, intergroup relations or political/legal systems, by comparing their actions or characteristics with societal shared convictions. The same applies to the assessments of one's own behavior. The concept of legitimacy crises, threats to the self, takes up this point of view on legitimacy based on theoretical considerations of norms and the self (e.g., Bandura, 1991; Silvia & Duval, 2001; Hoffmann, 1977; Stone & Cooper, 2001; Weber, 1968). Moreover, a legitimacy crisis, the evaluation of the appropriateness of one's actions or characteristics, directs the

attention towards the perception of legitimacy to the self, the acting individual as both the evaluator and subject of the evaluation, and contributes to the previous research on the violation of societal shared convictions in various domains (morality and competence) by highlighting the connecting element between them.

Regarding the general process model of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014), research on moral emotions (e.g., Tangney et al., 2007) and the violation of societal shared convictions (Smith et al., 2002), legitimacy crises are predominantly related to the moral emotions of guilt and shame and compensatory reactions. This dissertation assumes that a legitimacy crisis is a potential mediator between the perception of the violation of societal shared convictions in various domains, and the emotional as well as behavioral consequences of an individual. To demonstrate this general assumption, the current work provides a deeper insight in the construct of legitimacy crisis in very different domains with a multi-modal approach. In chapter 3, 4, 5 and 6, I use the term “we”, because this research was done with other researches, which is one of the core characteristics of scientific work.

### **3 Overview of the Research Program**

Chapter 4 gives a first empirical insight into the construct of legitimacy crises. Although legitimacy crises have been examined from a theoretical and philosophical perspective, empirical research investigating the processes of legitimacy crises upon violations of societal shared convictions in moral and competence domains is still lacking. In Chapter 4, we aim at filling this gap. Specifically, we intend to demonstrate that the violation of societal shared convictions in various domains (moral or competence) leads to the same state, namely a legitimacy crisis. This is important to know, because previous research on the violation of societal shared convictions in various domains uses different theoretical approaches. Perhaps, the construct of legitimacy crises represents a comprehensive construct in the underlying process of the violation of societal shared convictions and hence facilitates a theoretical advancement of existing theories. Moreover, we want to show that this legitimacy crisis is a potential mediator for the effect of violated societal shared convictions on emotional and behavioral consequences in moral and competence situations. Thus, legitimacy crises provide a possible mediator for the relationship between self-discrepancies and emotional responses. This is interesting, because it allows a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of the violation of societal shared convictions and provide answers to the following questions: What happens during this process? Why do people experience such feelings? What are the consequences for the defense reactions? In general, this corresponds to three of the four research objectives outlined at the beginning of this dissertation. In chapter 4, we describe four studies that investigate the relevance of the construct of legitimacy crisis with various methods. The first two studies focus on competence and use a scenario-based design, where participants worked on a scenario about a psychology intern in a hospital. Afterwards, we examine the role of legitimacy crises in the moral domain where participants deal with an in-basket exercise (Study 3) as well as a recall task about an unethical behavior (Study 4).

As mentioned in the introduction, Chapter 5 takes a more specific view on the moral domain by vicariously examining the role of bystanders in the context of social exclusion. Being excluded by others threatens the fundamental human need for positive social relationships, which is related to serious physiological and psychological consequences for the target. Social exclusion often occurs in groups with three typical roles: targets, perpetrators, and bystanders. Until now, research on social exclusion has focused primarily on targets and perpetrators, demonstrating that both experience social

exclusion situations as threatening. We want to expand this knowledge, because bystanders are a vast group who participate in social exclusion situations. A better understanding of the psychological processes of bystanders could potentially facilitate interventions for social exclusion situations and generally improve the understanding of the social exclusion triangle. We present three studies using varying methods, which show that targets and also bystanders, due to the violation of societal norms (legitimacy crises, experience a social exclusion situation as threatening to the self. In Study 1 and 2, participants work on a recall task on social exclusion experiences where they were either a bystander or a target. Study 3 supports these effects using a face-to-face interaction paradigm, in which the actual experience of a social exclusion situation was manipulated.

In place of the competence domain, Chapter 6 examines legitimacy crises in the domain of leadership and offers additional new insights about leaders. At times, individuals doubt whether they have the skills or the "mettle" (i.e., confidence and optimism) to fulfill the leader role or they think their individual characteristics simply do not match the current role requirements. Moreover, this chapter takes a closer look on the consequences of legitimacy crises for other people, namely the employees. Drawing on conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), we propose that due to their willingness to protect their resources and to avoid additional resource loss, team members may compensate for their leader's silence by reducing their own tendency to withhold their views. We furthermore propose that such compensatory behavior is determined by followers' justice perceptions. We examine these issues in two organizations that went through considerable changes in the years prior to our study. In general, this chapter offers a deeper theoretical and empirical insight to the psychological processes and behavioral consequences of leaders who fail on the social convictions of leadership and the effects on their employees regarding silence.

Finally, Table 1 offers an overview across the three empirical chapters. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 examine three of the four research objectives (two, three and four), outlined at the beginning of this dissertation. Research objective one, the theoretical integration of legitimacy crisis in an overarching theoretical framework has already been achieved in chapter 2.

Table 1  
*Overview of the Research Program*

Chapter	Domain	No. Studies	Setting	Methods	Sample
4	Morality & competence	4	Lab / online	Scenario, In-basket exercise, Recall	Students
5	Morality – Bystander	3	Lab / online	Recall, Face-to-Face	Students
6	Competence – Leadership	2	Field	Employee Survey	Employees, Leaders

## 4 Legitimacy Crises in the Domains of Morality and Competence

This chapter has been submitted under Zill<sup>1</sup>, A., Denzler<sup>2</sup>, M., & Knoll<sup>1</sup>, M. (2017). *Is it appropriate to do this? Legitimacy crisis as a consequence of violating societal convictions and its impact on emotion and behavior.*

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### **Abstract**

Different threat phenomena, which have in common a violation of societal shared convictions (e.g., moral dissonance or incompetence), have been considered separately so far. The present paper proposes that a legitimacy crisis constitutes the underlying psychological process of these distinct phenomena. We investigated legitimacy crises and its affective and behavioral consequences with different methods (scenario, in-basket exercise and recall) in four studies. As predicted, legitimacy crises are a potential mediator between the perception of a violation of societal shared convictions and moral emotions. Moreover, in two studies we demonstrate that the behavioral reactions to this violation depend on the predominant moral emotion (shame or guilt).

*Keywords:* legitimacy crisis, societal shared convictions, threat, competence, moral dissonance

## 4.1 Introduction

Imagine you have an intimate relationship that goes well for some time. One day, you meet a new colleague at work, whom you find quite interesting. Eventually, you start having an affair with this person. Do you think it is appropriate to have this affair while being in a relationship? How do you feel? Another example, imagine you become the leader of a group and you are therefore confronted with a new situation. Certainly, you have an idea about how to behave in the leadership role. But what happens when you realize that you did not behave accordingly and that you are unable to fulfill the social role expectations of a leader (e.g., to resolve conflicts between employees or to cater to the different employees' needs)? Do you think it is appropriate to be in this position? How do you feel?

These are only two examples of self-discrepancies where individuals violate societal shared convictions. While the first situation transgresses the moral value of fidelity (*moral domain*), the second situation violates the code of conduct concerning leadership behavior (e.g., resolving conflict or defend the interests of your team) (*competence domain*). However, both types of experiences represent a discrepancy between one's self (actual self) and societal shared convictions (ought self). Up to now, despite of this similarity, the fields of moral (e.g., Barkan, Ayal, Gino, & Ariely, 2012; Hall & Fincham, 2009) and competence experiences (e.g., De Hooge, Breugelmans, & Zeelenberg, 2008; Fast, Burris, & Bartel, 2014; Heilman & Alcott, 2001; Smith, Webster, Parrott, & Eyre, 2002) have predominantly been considered separately. The present research seeks to contribute to the research areas of moral and competence experiences as well as to self-discrepancy situations (see Higgins, 1987) in two ways: First, we aim to demonstrate that the violation of societal shared convictions in various domains (moral or competence) leads to the same state, namely a legitimacy crisis (Baumeister, Shapiro, & Tice, 1985; Habermas, 1973). Second, we want to show that this legitimacy crisis is a potential mediator for the effect of violated societal shared convictions on emotional and behavioral consequences in moral and competence situations. Thus, legitimacy crises provide a possible mediator for the relationship between self-discrepancies and emotional responses.

Legitimacy is the “generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity [e.g., a person, group, organization] are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions” (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). Individuals acquire standards regarding appropriate social behavior over

the course of the socialization process (Bandura, 1991). If a person perceives or assumes that she is acting in an inappropriate way because her behavior violates societal shared convictions, she lacks legitimacy. The absence of legitimacy threatens the self and causes a legitimacy crisis (Baumeister et al., 1985; Habermas, 1973). In short, a legitimacy crisis is the *perceived* inappropriateness of one's own behavior in the context of societal shared convictions. Applied to the introductory examples above, one may experience a legitimacy crisis in both situations, because one perceives that the own behavior diverges from socially shared convictions (i.e., fidelity in a relationship or code of conduct in a leadership position). We posit that various violations of societal shared convictions lead to the perception of inappropriateness of one's own behavior (legitimacy crisis), eliciting specific emotional consequences that impact subsequent behavior, which will be described in the following.

So far, research on legitimacy crises is limited to philosophical (Habermas, 1973) and theoretical considerations (Baumeister et al., 1985). In the present research, we demonstrate in four studies the validity and the relevance of the construct of legitimacy crisis by investigating the phenomenon in a competence (Study 1 and 2) and a moral (Study 3 and 4) domain.

## 4.2 Legitimacy crises

As mentioned above, research on different phenomena (moral or competence) where individuals violate societal shared convictions have been considered separately so far. Research on role theory, as an example for the competence domain, suggests that individuals internalize the social convictions associated with their role (Katz & Kahn, 1978), which lead to a great pressure to meet these social expectations (Biddle, 1986). If individuals are not able to fulfill these social expectations, then they should perceive themselves as inappropriate in this role. A further research area in the context of societal shared convictions is moral dissonance (e.g., Barkan et al., 2012), as an example for the moral domain. Central to moral dissonance is the violation of moral values. Individuals, who disregard the values of what is generally considered as right or wrong in a society, should perceive their actions as inappropriate. Both examples include the violation of societal shared convictions. In our view, transgressions in moral and competence domains should elicit the same cognitive perception – a legitimacy crisis –, which will be explained in the following.

As described above, a legitimacy crisis occurs when an individual perceives or assumes that his or her actions diverge from a socially constructed system of norms,



values or definitions. Habermas (1973) first used the term legitimacy crisis in the context of political systems. In his view, a social entity encounters a highly problematic situation when expectations (e.g., pre-election promise) cannot be fulfilled or satisfied which is sanctioned with a withdrawal of legitimation. Baumeister and colleagues (1985) applied Habermas' approach specifically to individuals. They assumed that a legitimacy crisis constitutes a specific identity crisis, which is characterized by "the inability of a social entity to fulfill demands and expectations it has placed on itself" (Baumeister et al., 1985, p. 407). This discrepancy is caused by conflicts between socially accepted behavior and the individual actions of a person. Habermas and Baumeister et al. assume that a legitimacy crisis occurs when an individual is either incapable of fulfilling or is directly violating certain social standards. Referring to the leadership example above, the leader may perceive her behavior as inappropriate if she is not able to fulfill the prescribed leadership behavior.

Discrepancies are, in turn, an essential driving force of human behavior in many theories in social psychology (e.g., cognitive dissonance theory, Festinger, 1957; terror management theory, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986; reactive approach-motivation model, McGregor, Nash, Mann, & Phills, 2010; self-standards model of cognitive dissonance, Stone & Cooper, 2001). However, these various threats are assumed to affect different psychological needs (e.g., symbolic immortality, control, self-integrity or meaning), though all combine the experience of a discrepancy (Jonas et al., 2014). Following self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) and self-standards model of cognitive dissonance (Stone & Cooper, 2001), we assume that a legitimacy crisis is the consequence of a discrepancy between actual self and ought self, which means that one's own attributes or actions (actual self) are contrary to the normative standards in a specific situation (ought self) regardless of moral or competence context. Thus, a legitimacy crisis threatens the overarching need for self-integrity, as the sense that one is a good person, because the violation of societal shared convictions compromises the positive view one has placed on oneself (Leary & Baumeister, 2000; Sherman & Cohen, 2006).

Following Habermas (1973) and Baumeister et al. (1985), we assume that a legitimacy crisis is a kind of identity crisis caused by a discrepancy between attributes or actions of an individual and prescribed behavior which depends on societal shared convictions (cf., Higgins, 1987; Stone & Cooper, 2001). More precisely, the legitimacy crisis is the cognitive evaluation of the discrepancy between attributes or actions of an

individual and societal shared convictions (Hypothesis 1). In the following, we will look at the emotional and behavioral consequences of a legitimacy crisis.

### 4.3 Emotional response in moral and competence domains

Generally, all kind of threats reduce the activity of the behavioral approach system and elicit anxious-related emotions by the activation of the behavioral inhibition system (BIS) (Gray & McNaughton, 2000; Jonas et al., 2014). In addition to anxiety, different kinds of threats elicit specific emotional states (e.g., anger, frustration, shame, guilt or sadness; Hart 2014). As a consequence of a legitimacy crisis, we expect that guilt and shame primarily arise (Baumeister et al., 1985), because these are emotions which are linked to the violation of socially shared convictions (Haidt, 2003, Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). These emotions are evoked by self-reflection and self-evaluation and provide feedback on the social appropriateness of one's own action. Feelings of guilt predominantly occur in situations, in which an individual perceives an own action as harm to another person (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). Shame, however, results from the (perceived) public exposure of a failure or defect, which an individual perceives as incompatible with one's core self (De Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2007; Haidt, 2003; Smith et al., 2002).

Following from these lines of research, we assume that guilt and shame are the affective responses to a legitimacy crisis. In the domain of moral experiences, research shows that a violation of societal shared convictions (e.g., lying and cheating) is linked to feelings of guilt and shame (Haidt, 2003; Smith et al., 2002). A study on psychological distress and adultery showed that unfaithful people reported higher levels of guilt and shame compared to faithful people (Hall & Fincham, 2009).

In the domain of competence experiences, research shows that a violation of societal shared convictions (e.g., role behavior or performance standard) is also related to feelings of shame and guilt (e.g., De Hooge et al., 2008; De Hooge et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2002). Direct evidence for these affective consequences in an achievement situation is provided by Tracy and Robins (2006): Students worked on a scenario about an important exam and read that they did badly on the exam. Afterwards, participants were asked about the causes for this performance and their emotional reactions. They reported feelings of shame and guilt. Across both domains, a discrepancy between attributes or actions of an individual and societal shared convictions elicits moral emotions, which are mediated by legitimacy crisis (Hypothesis 2).

#### 4.4 Behavioral consequences in moral and competence domains

Individuals experiencing a threat strive for an effective solution. As mentioned above, different kinds of threats elicit different emotional states, which lead to different behavioral reactions (Hart, 2014). Although research demonstrates that shame and guilt occur in moral and nonmoral domains (competence) (e.g., Smith et al., 2002; Tracy & Robins, 2006), there is evidence that especially guilt influences subsequent behavior. In the moral domain, predominantly guilt leads to more moral and reparative actions or action intentions (e.g., confession, apologize, prosocial behavior), because individuals want to reestablish their self-integrity (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1994; Haidt, 2003; Tangney et al., 2007). To give a concrete example, people who recalled a moral transgression where they felt guilty showed more compensatory behaviors (e.g., they judged others more harshly and presented themselves as more ethical) in contrast to people in a control condition (Barkan et al., 2012; see also De Hooge et al., 2007). Thus, we assume that a discrepancy between attributes or actions of an individual and moral standards leads to more moral behavior, which is serially mediated by legitimacy crisis and feelings of guilt (Hypothesis 3).

In the domain of competence, people who experience feelings of shame show less moral actions or action intentions (e.g., less cooperative behavior or risky and otherwise problematic behaviors), because individuals want to hide negative self-perceptions and restore a positive self-view (e.g., De Hooge et al., 2008; De Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2010; Haidt, 2003; Nelissen, Breugelmans, & Zeelenberg, 2013; Tangney et al., 2007). To give an example, participants, who recalled a weak performance (e.g., giving a bad presentation or failing an exam) where they felt ashamed, cooperated less in the following social dilemma game than participants who recalled a moral transgression where they felt guilty (De Hooge et al., 2007). Thus, we assume that a discrepancy between attributes or actions of an individual and competence standards leads to less moral behavior, which is serially mediated by legitimacy crisis and shame (Hypothesis 4).

#### 4.5 Present Research

Although legitimacy crises have been examined from a theoretical and philosophical perspective (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1985; Habermas, 1973), empirical research investigating the processes of legitimacy crises upon violations of societal shared convictions is still lacking. The present research aims at filling this gap. In four studies, we aim to show that legitimacy crises are an overarching state for violations of

societal shared convictions in moral and competence domains and in addition to it is an important mediator for the affective and behavioral consequences. Study 1 and 2 focus on legitimacy crises in the competence domain, where participants work on a scenario-based design involving a Psychology internship in a mental ward. Afterwards, we investigate the role of legitimacy crises in the moral domain where participants deal with an in-basket exercise (Study 3) or work on a recall task about an unethical behavior (Study 4). As described before, we suggest that a violation of societal shared convictions in a moral or competence domain leads to a legitimacy crisis, which elicits self-conscious emotions of guilt and shame, which impact subsequent moral behavior.

#### 4.6 Study 1

The main aim of Study 1 was to investigate, whether a violation of societal shared convictions in a competence domain activates a legitimacy crisis (Hypothesis 1). In this scenario-based study, participants (Psychology students) – in either a low or high discrepancy condition – were confronted with the role of a Psychology intern on a mental ward and hence the social expectations on this role and their own competence in this field: Participants were asked to imagine that they unexpectedly had to conduct a psychiatric history interview on their own. In the low discrepancy condition, the internship had been running for three months and they had already conducted several psychiatric history interviews in this time on their own. In the high discrepancy condition, the internship had been running for two weeks and they had not conducted any psychiatric history interviews before. We hypothesize that participants in the high discrepancy condition (gap between role expectations and competence) show a stronger legitimacy crisis in contrast to participants in the low discrepancy condition.

##### 4.6.1 Method

*Participants.* 152 psychology undergraduate students (120 women;  $M_{age} = 21.6$ ,  $SD = 3.2$ ; seven participants provided no information about age and sex) participated in this study. The study was part of a greater research project about performance and cognition. The students received course credit for their participation. There were no gender or age differences in the reported results.

*Procedure and Materials.* The study was conducted in a laboratory. All participants were instructed to think about a scenario for at least three minutes and write down their thoughts and feelings about the situation. Before and after the scenario participants performed a lexical decision task to measure the accessibility of a legitimacy crisis. Participants should think about an internship on a mental ward in the

context of their psychology bachelor degree course, where they should undertake a psychiatric history interview alone at short notice. The discrepancy between competence and the societal convictions on their role in the psychiatric history interview was manipulated (between). In the low discrepancy condition, the internship had already lasted for three months and they had already conducted several interviews alone. In the high discrepancy condition, the internship had lasted for only two weeks and thus far, no first-interviews (only group sessions) had been conducted.

To measure the implicit extent of a legitimacy crisis, we used a lexical decision task (LDT) with 7 legitimacy-related (examples see below), 7 legitimacy-unrelated words (e.g., schreiben [write]) and 14 non-words (e.g., kleindselig). In order to test whether a high vs. low discrepancy increases the accessibility of legitimacy-related constructs, participants performed the same LDT twice – before and after the discrepancy manipulation. Moreover, we used two versions of the LDT (between-subjects) – positive connoted legitimacy words (e.g., angemessen [appropriate]) and negative connoted legitimacy words (e.g., unangemessen [inappropriate]) to control for a possible influence of valence of the construct. This means that either a low accessibility of positive connoted legitimacy words or a high accessibility of negative connoted legitimacy words correspond to a legitimacy crisis. In sum, we had 2 x 2 between-subjects design with four conditions: high discrepancy / legitimacy positive (N = 35), high discrepancy / legitimacy negative (N = 40), low discrepancy / legitimacy positive (N = 40) and low discrepancy / legitimacy negative (N = 37). After the second LDT, participants answered among others the following question “To which extent do you want to evaluate your first interview immediately afterwards?” on 7-point rating scale (1 = not at all and 7 = a lot). We used this question to measure withdrawal (indicator for avoidance) for BIS activation. The lower the withdrawal, the higher the BIS activation. Then, we additionally assessed the explicit extent of a legitimacy crisis with seven items measuring the perceived self-legitimacy regarding the takeover of the first interview (e.g., appropriate, proper). The rating was made on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree;  $\alpha = .94$ ).

#### 4.6.2 Results

Because outliers can have a great influence on the results (McClelland, 2000; Wilcox, 2003), we first, analyzed all variables for potential outliers, b. Our convention for an outlier was a value that is more than 1.5 interquartile ranges away from the first quartile (Tukey, 1977). We used the data without outliers for testing our hypotheses.

However, excluding many participants from the analyses necessarily impairs the power of the results. Therefore, in the next step, we analyzed our hypotheses again with all data, including outliers. Only if there was no difference in the results between the analyses without and with outliers, we report in the following analyses throughout the article the analyses with all data. If the outliers did influence the results, we report which outliers we excluded for which analysis and report the respective analysis without outliers.<sup>1</sup> In the Appendix A, we present all analyses with and without outliers. In addition, we provide the data and the material for all studies on Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/nyw9b/>). For all studies, the minimum sample size of 20 was determined prior to data collection following the recommendation of Simmons, Nelson and Simonsohn (2011). However, all obtained sample sizes exceed this minimum. Data collection in all studies lasted for a specific time period (from two weeks for Study 1 to four weeks for Study 3), which was set before the commencement of data collection. All studies were part of greater research projects, so we report all measures, manipulations, and exclusions which are relevant for the reported studies.

Mean reaction times of the LDT are presented in Table 2. First, we analyzed the speed of the LDT after excluding incorrect responses (8.5% averaged for both LDT versions) and natural logarithmic transformations of the reactions times to reduce skewness of the distribution (Fazio, 1990). Transformed values were used in all subsequent analyses. Moreover, we excluded ten participants (six low discrepancy and four high discrepancy) because their transformed reaction times were more than 1.5 interquartile ranges away from the first quartile and one person (high discrepancy condition) because the data for the LDT were not saved. To analyze the accessibility of legitimacy-related words, we used the difference score between log-transformed reaction times for T2 (after the manipulation) and log-transformed reaction times for T1 (before the manipulation) of the difference between legitimacy-related words and legitimacy-unrelated words. A 2 (condition: discrepancy high vs. low) x 2 (LDT version: legitimacy positive vs. negative) ANOVA on the mean reaction times was conducted, with condition and LDT version as a between-subjects factor. The analysis yielded a main effect for condition,  $F(1, 137) = 4.71, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .03$ , a main effect for LDT version,  $F(1, 137) = 10.7, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .07$  and no two-way interaction between

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<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer of a previous version of this manuscript, who pointed out this way of treating outliers.

condition and LDT version,  $F = 2.00, p = .16$ . As expected, participants assigned to the high discrepancy condition showed a larger difference score ( $T2 - T1$ ) for the difference of legitimacy-related and legitimacy unrelated words ( $M = .03, SD = .13$ ) than participants assigned to the low discrepancy condition ( $M = -.02, SD = .12$ ). Thus, participants in the high discrepancy condition showed a stronger increase in the accessibility of legitimacy-related words compared to the low discrepancy condition. As mentioned above, we found an effect for LDT version. Participants in the negative LDT version condition ( $M = .04, SD = .14$ ) showed a stronger increase in the accessibility of legitimacy-related words compared to the positive LDT version condition ( $M = -.03, SD = .11$ ).

Second, we analyzed the explicit extent of legitimacy crisis. A 2 (condition: discrepancy high vs. low) x 2 (LDT version: legitimacy positive vs. negative) ANOVA on perceived self-legitimacy was conducted, with condition and LDT version as a between-subjects factor. The analysis yielded a main effect for condition,  $F(1, 148) = 7.87, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$ , no main effect for LDT version,  $F = 1.70, p = .19$ , and no two-way interaction between condition and LDT version,  $F = .88, p = .35$ . As expected, participants assigned to the low discrepancy condition ( $M = 4.46, SD = 1.09$ ) perceived the takeover of the first interview as more legitimate than participants in the high discrepancy condition ( $M = 3.97, SD = 1.14$ ).

Finally, we analyzed the BIS activation with the withdrawal question (indicator for avoidance). We excluded ten participants (nine low discrepancy and one high discrepancy) for this analysis because their answer was more than 1.5 interquartile ranges away from the first quartile. A 2 (condition: discrepancy high vs. low) x 2 (LDT version: legitimacy positive vs. negative) ANOVA on the evaluation question was conducted, with condition and LDT version as a between-subjects factor. The analysis yielded a main effect for condition,  $F(1, 138) = 6.76, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$ , no main effect for LDT version,  $F = .26, p = .61$ , and no two-way interaction between condition and LDT version,  $F = .62, p = .43$ . Participants assigned to the low discrepancy condition ( $M = 6.24, SD = 1.04$ ) were more willing to analyze their first interview with their supervisor than participants in the high discrepancy condition ( $M = 5.68, SD = 1.42$ ).

Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations of the lexical decision task on T1 and T2 in Study 1*

Variables	Condition			
	LD & NL	HD & NL	LD & PL	HD & PL
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Mean reaction time – legitimacy words T1	712.96 (91.73)	748.12 (147.83)	662.85 (102.04)	684.11 (72.87)
Mean reaction time – legitimacy words T2	672.37 (86.79)	657.65 (110.52)	613.08 (88.53)	644.45 (78.00)
Mean reaction time – neutral words T1	666.60 (68.17)	667.79 (73.79)	684.22 (93.36)	683.56 (76.18)
Mean reaction time – neutral words T2	633.00 (65.38)	648.97 (84.79)	605.80 (64.07)	631.97 (79.93)

$N = 141$ . LD = low discrepancy, HD = high discrepancy, NL = negative legitimacy words & PL = positive legitimacy words.

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$ .



### 4.6.3 Discussion

As expected, we found that the violation of social shared convictions in a competence domain lead to a legitimacy crisis. Participants who thought about a scenario with a high discrepancy between competence and demands for a psychiatric history interview showed a higher accessibility of negative related legitimacy words and perceived themselves as less legitimate relative to participants in the low discrepancy condition. Moreover, participants in the high discrepancy condition showed a higher BIS activation (less willing to evaluate the psychiatric history interview) in contrast to the low discrepancy condition which is in line with research on negative experiences in performance situations (e.g., Nelissen et al., 2013). Furthermore, we found that only negative (and not positive) words related to legitimacy show a significant difference between low and high discrepancy.

## 4.7 Study 2

In Study 2, we used the same scenario like in Study 1 to test Hypotheses 2 and 4 regarding the emotional and behavioral consequences of a legitimacy crisis in a competence domain. In addition to replicating the results of Study 1, we hypothesize that participants in the high discrepancy condition, in contrast to participants in the low discrepancy condition, experience moral emotions, which are mediated by the legitimacy crisis (Hypothesis 2). Moreover, we assume that participants in the high discrepancy condition, in contrast to participants in the low discrepancy condition, show less moral behavior tendencies, which is serially mediated by legitimacy crisis and shame (Hypothesis 4).

### 4.7.1 Method

**Participants.** 96 psychology undergraduate students (76 women;  $M_{age} = 23.7$ ,  $SD = 4.5$ ) participated in this study. The students received course credit for their participation. There were no gender or age differences in the reported results.

**Procedure and Materials.** The study was conducted online and we used the same scenario like in Study 1. Like in Study 1, the difference between both conditions was the extent of discrepancy between competence and the societal convictions on their role in the psychiatric history interview. In the low discrepancy condition, the internship had already lasted for three months and several first interviews had already been conducted alone. Thus, here the requirements of the task to conduct an interview were met by the respective competence. In the high discrepancy condition, the internship had lasted for only two weeks and thus far, no first-interviews (only group sessions) had

been conducted. Thus here, the task is not met with the respective competence. After imagining the situation of conducting this psychiatric history interview for three minutes, participants completed five items assessing *perceived self-legitimacy* (e.g., “I find it appropriate to do the first interview, because this is accepted in our society.”). The rating was again made on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree;  $\alpha = .91$ ). Next, following McGregor et al. (2010) participants completed several emotion items (anxious, happy, uncertain, ashamed, guilty, nervous, tense, proud, anger, rage, agitated, sympathetic, sad, helpless, eased, and panic). As usually done in threat research (Jonas et al., 2014), a delay of a three minutes (free-thought delay) was included before measuring the subsequent behavioral reaction. Then, we asked participants to think about a moral dilemma (Barkan et al., 2012, study 2 - job interview), where a good friend called for advice whether to copy a password, which would reveal the questions for a job interview on the next day. Afterwards, participants completed the following three questions assessing moral behavior – the so-called ultra-honest self (Barkan et al., 2012): “How wrong is it to copy the password?”, “How likely would it be to engage in the described behavior if you were in the same situation?”, “How likely would it be to encourage your friend to copy the password?”. Participants answered these questions on a 9-point scale (1 = not at all, 9 = very much;  $\alpha = .75$ ). As manipulation checks, we asked participants afterwards, whether conducting the psychiatric interview violated societal shared convictions on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) and how they would judge their competence regarding the first interview on a 9-point scale (self-perceived competence; 1 = not at all competent, 9 = very competent).

#### 4.7.2 Results

All descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3. The procedure regarding outliers was the same as in Study 1. For that reason, we only excluded outliers on shame for the subsequent analyses. We excluded eleven participants for shame (six low discrepancy and five high discrepancy) because their answers were more than 1.5 interquartile ranges away from the first quartile. At first, we analyzed both manipulation check measures (violation of societal shared convictions and self-perceived competence). A t-test for independent means showed a significant difference between low and high discrepancy for the violation of societal shared convictions,  $t(94) = -3.10$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $d = .64$  and self-perceived competence,  $t(83.99) = 4.55$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = -.95$ .

Table 3

*Means, Standard Deviations and Inference Statistics of Study 2*

Variables	Low discrepancy (n = 52)	High discrepancy (n = 44)	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>CI 95%</i>
MC violation SSC	2.96 (1.86)	4.09 (1.68)	< .01	.64	[.22; 1.05]
Self-perceived competence	6.25 (1.64)	4.55 (1.97)	< .001	-.95	[-1.37; -.52]
Perceived self-legitimacy	4.72 (1.32)	3.70 (1.30)	< .001	-.78	[-1.19; -.36]
Feelings of guilt	1.94 (1.09)	1.77 (.91)	.42	-.17	[-.57; .23]
Feelings of shame	1.63 (.80)	1.56 (.72)	.69	-.09	[-.49; .31]
Ultra-honest self	5.42 (1.98)	5.23 (1.86)	.62	-.10	[-.50; .30]

*N* (shame) = 46 low discrepancy and 39 high discrepancy. MC = manipulation check. SSC = societal shared conviction

Participants in the high discrepancy condition reported a stronger violation of societal shared convictions ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ) and perceived themselves as less competent ( $M = 4.55$ ,  $SD = 1.97$ ) than participants in the low discrepancy condition (violation of societal shared convictions:  $M = 2.96$ ,  $SD = 1.86$ ; competence:  $M = 6.25$ ,  $SD = 1.64$ , respectively).

To test whether we replicate our finding from Study 1 (Hypothesis 1) that participants in the high discrepancy compared to the low discrepancy condition experience a stronger legitimacy crisis we analyzed the mean perceived self-legitimacy with an independent t-test. As expected participants in the high discrepancy condition perceived themselves as less legitimate to takeover of the first interview ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ) than participants in the low discrepancy condition ( $M = 4.72$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ),  $t(94) = 3.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = -.78$ .

To test Hypothesis 2 that perceived self-legitimacy mediates the observed effect of violation of social convictions on shame respectively guilt, we conducted a mediation model with 10,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval for shame and one for guilt simultaneously. Extent of perceived self-legitimacy mediated the effect of the violation of social shared convictions on guilt (indirect effect = .13, 95% CI [.044, .233]) but not for shame (indirect effect = .04, 95% CI [-.011, .115]) which partly confirmed our expectations. Participants who violated social convictions perceived themselves as less legitimate which elicited feelings of guilt.

To test Hypothesis 4 that perceived self-legitimacy and feelings of shame mediate the observed effect of violation of social convictions on moral behavior, we conducted a mediation model with 10,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval. For this analysis, we excluded the same participants for shame like before. Extent of perceived self-legitimacy and feelings of shame serially mediated the effect of the violation of social convictions on ultra-honest self-behavior which confirmed our expectation (indirect effect = -.04, 95% CI [-.135, -.007]) (shown in Figure 2). Participants who violated social shared convictions perceived themselves as less legitimate, which elicited feelings of shame, which led to less ultra-honest self-behaviors.

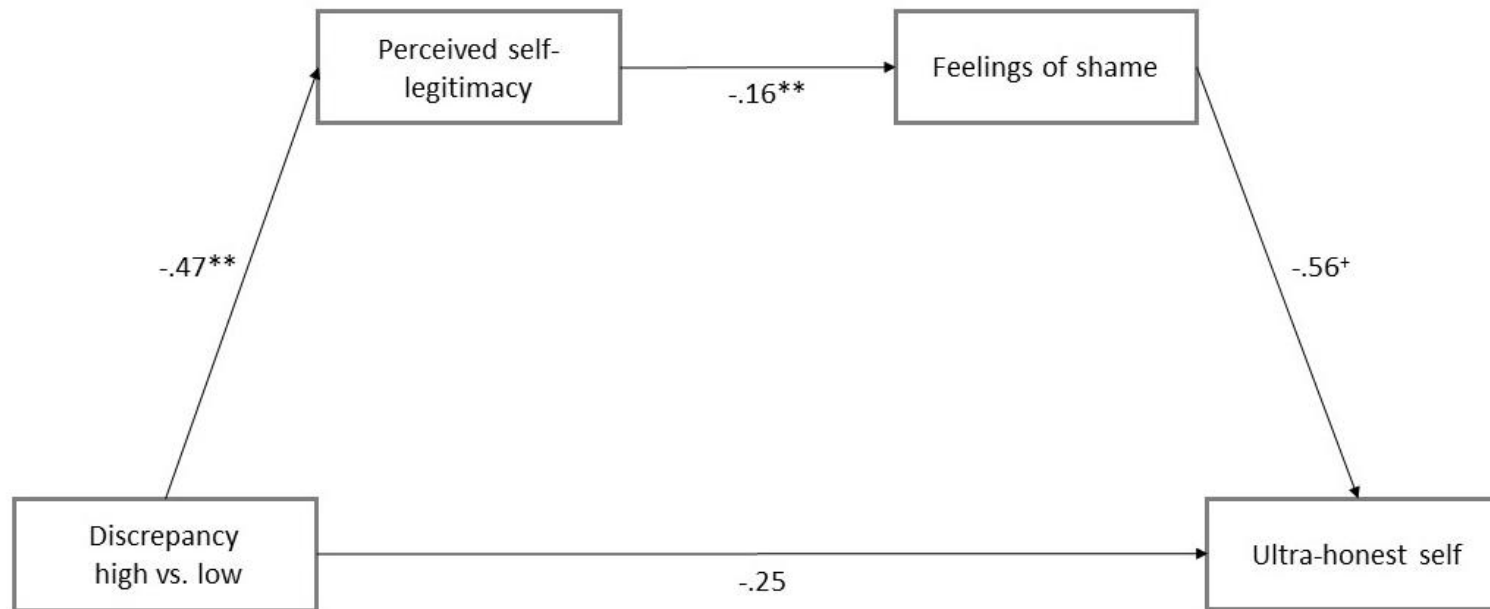


Figure 2. A serial mediation model of violation of social convictions on ultra-honest self-behavior via perceived self-legitimacy and feelings of shame.  $N = 85$ . Discrepancy low = -1 and discrepancy high = 1.  $^+p < .10$ ,  $*p < .05$ ,  $**p < .01$ . All coefficients are unstandardized.

### 4.7.3 Discussion

In sum, we replicated the result from Study 1 that the violation of social shared convictions in a competence domain leads to a legitimacy crisis (Hypothesis 1). Moreover, we found that participants who violated social shared convictions perceived themselves as less legitimate, which elicited feelings of guilt but not shame (Hypothesis 2), which can be explained by the overlap in variance between shame and guilt. Finally, we showed that participants in the high discrepancy condition (in contrast to low discrepancy) defended the threat through the violation of societal shared convictions with less moral behavior (ultra-honest self-behavior), which was mediated by legitimacy crisis and feelings of shame (Hypothesis 4).

## 4.8 Study 3

In this study, we broadened our scope of legitimacy crisis to the moral domain. The aim was to show that a legitimacy crisis plays the same decisive role in the moral domain like in the competence domain. Contrary to Study 1 and 2 where participants thought about a situation, in the present study, they performed a violation of societal shared convictions. Within the context of a greater research project on leadership and discrimination, we examined in an in-basket exercise how violations of moral values impact legitimacy crisis and emotional consequences. Participants in the high discrepancy condition received an instruction from the CEO that implied that foreign applicants should not be selected. Independent from their decision about hiring them or not, they violate moral values: either discriminating against foreign applicants or disregarding the instruction from the CEO. In line with the findings of Study 1 and 2, we hypothesize that participants in the high discrepancy condition, in contrast to participants in the low discrepancy condition, who received the instruction to select the best applicant, show a stronger legitimacy crisis (Hypothesis 1). Moreover, we assume that the violation of societal shared convictions elicits more moral emotions in the high discrepancy condition (compared to low discrepancy), which are mediated by legitimacy crisis (Hypothesis 2).

### 4.8.1 Method

*Participants.* 187 psychology students from a distance university in Germany (149 women;  $M_{age} = 32.1$ ,  $SD = 8.5$ ; one participant provided no information about his/her sex) participated in this study. In the study, participants adopted the role of a manager of a fast-food chain. The students received course credit for their participation. There were no age differences in the reported results.

*Procedure and Materials.* The study was conducted online. We used the in-basket exercise from Petersen and Dietz (2000; 2008). In this task, participants adopted the role of a leader of a German fast-food chain. At first, all participants received information about the company and their responsibilities. Then, they had to work on different company-related decisions (e.g., decide on a typical salary for a new employee). Next, participants were asked by the CEO to look at the applications of eight candidates (four native Germans and four foreign applicants) to suggest three of them for a job interview. They were instructed to pay attention to two crucial criteria: experience in the food industry and in sales. The participants received the candidates' CVs: Two German and two foreign applicants met both criteria; the other four candidates met only one of the two criteria. After that, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. The instruction of the CEO for the high discrepancy condition was as follows: "While reading the applications, I observed that there are many foreigners among the applicants. When selecting an applicant, it is important to keep in mind that our staff in the headquarters consists almost exclusively of Germans. In the past, homogeneity of the human resources team has contributed very strongly to good teamwork and company success. Because of this the new head of the human resources team must be a guarantor of a 'good chemistry' in that team." In the low discrepancy condition, the CEO statement merely included the hint to select the best candidates. Afterwards, participants had to select one out of the eight candidates. After the in-basket exercise, participants worked on questions about *perceived self-legitimacy* and *affect*. Participants completed three items assessing *perceived self-legitimacy* (e.g., "I always had the feeling that my leadership behavior is appropriate."). The rating was made on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree;  $\alpha = .87$ ). *Emotions* were similar measured like in Study 2 on a 7-point scale with single items for each emotion (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

#### 4.8.2 Results

All descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4. The procedure regarding outliers was the same as in Study 1. All outliers in this study had no effect on the results, so we included them into the analyses. At first, we analyzed Hypothesis 1. As expected participants in the high discrepancy condition perceived themselves as less legitimate ( $M = 3.49$ ,  $SD = .83$ ) than participants in the low discrepancy condition ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = .83$ ),  $t(185) = 2.42$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $d = -.35$ .

Table 4

*Means, Standard Deviations and Inference Statistics of Study 3*

Variables	Low discrepancy (n = 91/92)	High discrepancy (n = 95/96)	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>CI 95%</i>
Perceived self-legitimacy	3.78 (.83)	3.49 (.83)	.02	-.35	[-.64; -.07]
Feelings of guilt	2.20 (1.43)	2.33 (1.30)	.49	.10	[-.19; .38]
Feelings of shame	1.90 (1.17)	2.21 (1.20)	.08	.26	[-.03; .55]

*N* (perceived self-legitimacy) = 92 low discrepancy and 95 high discrepancy, *N* (shame) = 91 low discrepancy and 96 high discrepancy and *N* (guilt) = 92 low discrepancy and 96 high discrepancy.



In contrast to Study 1 and 2, we found a significant relationship,  $r(184) = -.16, p = .03$ , between perceived self-legitimacy and gender (1 = male and 2 = female), which implies that women generally perceive their reaction in the in-basket exercise as less legitimate than men. Because of this finding, we conducted a moderator analysis, with gender as moderator, for the observed effect of the instruction to discriminate foreign applicants or not on perceived self-legitimacy with 10,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval. We found a marginal significant interaction between condition and gender,  $t(182) = 1.89, p = .06, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.013, .588]$ . Only for men, the manipulation impacted perceived self-legitimacy (effect =  $-.37, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.636, -.097]$ ) but not for women (effect =  $-.08, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.212, .054]$ ). Only men in the high discrepancy condition perceived their leadership behavior as less legitimate than men in the low discrepancy condition. No such effect occurred for women.

To test Hypothesis 2 that perceived self-legitimacy mediates the observed effect of violation of social shared convictions on shame respectively guilt, we conducted a moderated mediation model with 10,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval for shame (controlled for guilt) and one for guilt (controlled for shame) and gender as moderator. Only for men, the extent of perceived self-legitimacy mediated as expected the effect of the instruction to (not) discriminate foreign applicants on guilt (indirect effect men =  $.16, 95\% \text{ CI } [.062, .302]$ ; indirect effect women =  $.04, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.021, .107]$ ) but not on shame (indirect effect men =  $.04, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.017, .147]$ ; indirect effect women =  $.01, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.005, .051]$ ). The indexes of moderated mediation for guilt is significant (index =  $-.13, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.275, -.020]$ ) but not for shame (index =  $-.03, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.145, .010]$ ). Male participants who were instructed to discriminate foreign applicants perceived their leadership behavior as less legitimate which elicited more shame or guilt in contrast to male participants who were instructed to select the best candidates'. In contrast, female participants generally perceived their leadership behavior as less legitimate independent from the instruction.

### 4.8.3 Discussion

In this Study, we investigated the role of a legitimacy crisis in a moral domain. The results converge with those obtained in a competence domain (Study 1 and 2). We found in this study that male participants who were instructed to discriminate foreign applicants experienced a stronger legitimacy crisis in contrast to male participants who were instructed to take the best candidates (Hypothesis 1). Moreover, we found that male participants who violated social shared convictions (discriminate or disregard the

instruction of the CEO) perceived themselves as less legitimate, which elicited feelings of guilt but no shame (Hypothesis 2), which can be explained by the overlap in variance between shame and guilt. In contrast to Study 1 and 2, the findings are restricted to men. We will come back to this issue in the general discussion.

#### 4.9 Study 4

In Study 4, we tested the link between legitimacy crises, the emotional consequence and behavioral tendencies in a moral domain (Hypothesis 1 and 3). We used a similar design like in Study 2. To this end, participants had to recall either a situation, in which societal shared convictions ("moral dissonance") or personal convictions ("personal dissonance") were violated (Barkan et al., 2012). Personal dissonance was included for exploratory reasons. We suggest that participants in the moral dissonance compared to the personal dissonance condition show a stronger legitimacy crisis, because moral dissonance is more related to societal shared convictions than the personal dissonance. A control condition ("worthy-conduct") was instructed to recall positive behavior. As mentioned above, individuals who experience guilt want to compensate their moral misconduct (e.g., Haidt, 2003; Tangney et al., 2007). One possibility is to dissociate the moral misconduct from the self by focusing on the behavior of others. To investigate this defense reaction, we used the same dilemma situation as in Study 2 (Barkan et al., 2012), where a good friend asks for advice whether to copy the password, which would reveal the questions for the job interview next day. We expect that a moral dissonant action leads to a legitimacy crisis, which elicits moral emotions, whereas only guilt leads to moral behavior (Hypothesis 1, 2 and 3).

##### 4.9.1 Method

*Participants.* 68 psychology undergraduate students (54 women;  $M_{age} = 22.6$ ,  $SD = 4.3$ ) participated in the study. The study was introduced as a study about personal situations and their relation to cognition and emotion. The students received course credit for their participation. There were no gender and age differences in the reported results.

*Procedure and Materials.* The study was conducted in a laboratory setting. All participants separately worked separately at computers throughout the session. They first engaged in a writing task with one of the three recall manipulations developed by Barkan et al. (2012, studies 1 and 5). In the "moral dissonance" condition (high discrepancy - moral) participants recalled an immoral action from their past, while in

the “personal dissonance” condition (high discrepancy - personal) participants recalled an action that contradicted an attitude or a value that is important to the participant. In the “worthy-conduct” condition participants recalled a situation where they helped other people (low discrepancy). In order to improve perspective taking, participants were asked to think and write about the situation for at least three minutes. After imagining the situation for three minutes, participants completed five items assessing *perceived self-legitimacy* (e.g., “My Behavior is appropriate, because this behavior is accepted in our society.”). The rating was made on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree;  $\alpha = .95$ ). Next, *affect* was measured like in Study 2 and 3. We used the same delay like in Study 2. Then, participants performed the same moral dilemma like in Study 2 (Barkan et al., 2012, study 2 - job interview) Participants answered these questions on a 9-point scale (1 = not at all, 9 = very much;  $\alpha = .83$ ). Finally, participants rated their behavior from the recall situation on one manipulation check item (“My behavior violated social convictions in this situation.”). The rating was made on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

#### 4.9.2 Results

All descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5. The procedure regarding outliers was the same as in Study 1. All outliers in this study had no effect on the results, so we included them into the analyses. As expected, participants differed between the three conditions on the manipulation check item,  $F(2, 65) = 54.96, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .60$ . Participants assigned to the high discrepancy - moral condition perceived their behavior as a stronger violation of social convictions ( $M = 5.35, SD = 1.19$ ) than participants assigned to high discrepancy - personal condition ( $M = 3.67, SD = 1.74$ ) or low discrepancy condition ( $M = 1.24, SD = .70$ ). All post-hoc comparisons were significant at the 1% level (Bonferroni).

As expected, we found a significant effect for legitimacy crisis,  $F(2, 65) = 80.92, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .71$  (Hypothesis 1). Participants assigned to the high discrepancy - moral condition perceived their behavior as less legitimate ( $M = 2.64, SD = 1.18$ ) than participants assigned to high discrepancy - personal condition ( $M = 3.86, SD = 1.24$ ) or low discrepancy condition ( $M = 6.65, SD = .61$ ). All post-hoc comparisons were significant at the 1% level (Bonferroni).

Table 5

*Means, Standard Deviations and Inference Statistics of Study 4*

Variables	Worthy conduct (n = 21)	Moral dissonance (n = 23)	Personal dissonance (n = 24)	<i>F</i>	$\eta_p^2$
MC violation SSC	1.24 (.70) <sup>ab</sup>	5.35 (1.19) <sup>c</sup>	3.67 (1.74)	54.96***	.63
Perceived self-legitimacy	6.65 (.61) <sup>ab</sup>	2.64 (1.18) <sup>c</sup>	3.86 (1.24)	80.92***	.71
Feelings of guilt	1.52 (.87) <sup>ab</sup>	5.30 (1.82)	5.38 (1.91)	40.02***	.55
Feelings of shame	1.52 (.81) <sup>ab</sup>	5.09 (1.91)	4.96 (1.78)	34.79***	.52
Ultra-honest self	6.60 (1.62)	5.59 (2.07)	5.47 (2.04)	2.25	.07

*N* = 68. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . All post-hoc comparisons were significant at the 1% level (Bonferroni). <sup>a</sup> significant difference between worthy conduct and moral dissonance. <sup>b</sup> significant difference between worthy conduct and personal dissonance. <sup>c</sup> significant difference between moral dissonance and personal dissonance.

To test Hypothesis 2, we conducted a mediation model with 10,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval for shame and guilt simultaneously. The extent of perceived self-legitimacy mediated the effect of violation of social convictions on guilt (indirect effect = 4.83, 95% CI [1.83, 7.54]) but not on shame (indirect effect = .52, 95% CI [-1.31, 3.18]). Participants who violated social convictions perceived themselves as less legitimate, which elicited feelings of guilt. We found no difference to the high discrepancy – personal condition.

Testing Hypothesis 3, we conducted a path model with 10,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval. All significant paths of the model are illustrated in Figure 3. We found that the extent of perceived self-legitimacy and feelings of guilt serially mediated the effect of the violation of social convictions on ultra-honest self-behavior which confirmed our expectation (indirect effect = 2.66, 95% CI [.810, 4.86]). Participants who violated social convictions perceived themselves as less legitimate, which elicited feelings of guilt that led to more ultra-honest self-behaviors (e.g., harsh judgement of others behavior). We found no difference to the high discrepancy – personal condition.

#### 4.9.3 Discussion

Overall, in line with the results of Study 1, 2 and 3, we found that the violation of social shared convictions in a moral domain lead to a legitimacy crisis. Participants who recalled a moral dissonant action perceived themselves as less legitimate relative to participants in the personal dissonance or worthy-conduct condition. Like in Study 2 and 3, we found that participants who violated social shared convictions perceived themselves as less legitimate, which elicited feelings of guilt but not shame (Hypothesis 2), which can be explained by the overlap in variance between shame and guilt. Moreover, the mediation analysis shows that the impact of the violation of social convictions on ultra-honest self-behavior is mediated by the extent of the legitimacy crisis and feelings of guilt which is in line with research on moral emotions and behavior (Tangney et al., 2007; Tracy & Robins, 2006). When actions of individuals violate societal shared convictions, they perceive their actions as inappropriate, which elicits feelings of guilt and shame. This threat to the self leads to the desire for compensation (e.g., Jordan, Mullen, & Murnighan, 2011; Monin & Miller, 2001). In our study, the threatened participants presented themselves as ultra-honest while they provided righteous advice to their good friend, reported that they would not be tempted to behave immorally and rated the behavior of their good friend as more inappropriate.

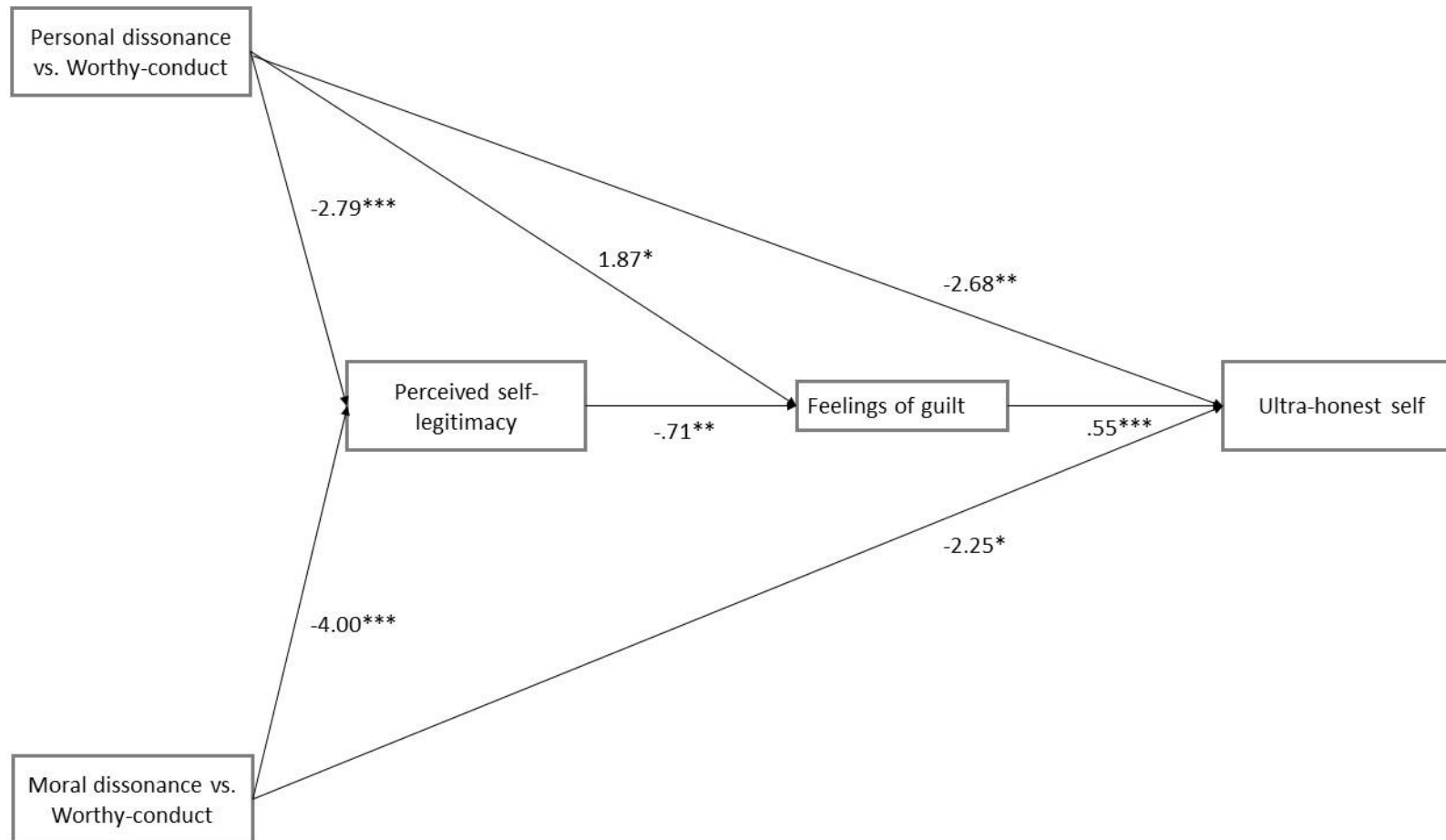


Figure 3. A path model of the relationship between manipulation, perceived self-legitimacy, affect and moral behavior (ultra-honest self). Moral dissonance and personal dissonance are coded (high discrepancy) = 1 and worthy conduct (low discrepancy) = 0.  $N = 68$ . Non-significant paths are not presented for reasons of clarity. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . All coefficients are unstandardized betas.

These results are in line with Barkan et al. (2012) and in addition provide evidence for the underlying process of this compensation effect. In addition to it, we found a significant but less strong difference between the high discrepancy – personal condition and low discrepancy condition on manipulation check and legitimacy crisis. An inspection of the responses to the recall manipulation showed that a majority of the participants in the high discrepancy – personal condition described situations, which are not independent from social impact (e.g., buying organic meat at the supermarket or fair-trade clothes at the fashion store).

#### 4.10 **General Discussion**

The present paper presents first empirical evidence for the philosophical (Habermas, 1973) and theoretical (Baumeister et al., 1985) phenomenon of legitimacy crises and its mediator function in different domains (competence and moral) where individuals violate societal shared convictions. Moreover, focusing on the acting individual as both the evaluator and target of the evaluation distinguishes our approach to legitimacy from research that has previously been done on legitimacy, which mostly focused on people evaluating the legitimacy of external entities such as authorities, intergroup relations, or political/legal systems (Jost & Major, 2001; Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Lind, 1992). Finally, it provides a deeper insight in the understanding for the emotional and behavioral reactions in such norm-violating situations. The results of the four studies support our hypotheses that legitimacy crises are the result of a discrepancy between attributes or actions of an individual and societal shared convictions and in addition to it a crucial mediator to explain the emotional and behavioral reactions in different domains of norm-violation.

In Study 1, we demonstrated that a high level of discrepancy concerning standards in a competence domain leads to an implicit and explicit legitimacy crisis. Moreover, we found that participants in the high discrepancy condition showed a higher BIS activation, which implies that the situation was perceived as threatening to the self. We replicated and extended the findings in Study 2 by showing that legitimacy crises mediated the relationship between the violation of societal shared convictions and feelings of guilt but not shame. Perhaps, this can be explained by the overlap of variance between both, because when analyzing shame and guilt in separate mediation models, both are significant. Study 2 also showed a serial mediation effect between the extent of discrepancy and moral behavior through legitimacy crisis and feelings of shame. As expected, participants who experienced a high discrepancy between their

action and the societal shared convictions in the psychiatric history interview, perceived their action as less legitimate which elicited feelings of shame that led to less moral behavior in an unrelated subsequent task. In order to show that legitimacy crisis is not specific for violations in a competence domain, we conducted Study 3 and 4 to show the relevance of the construct in a moral domain. Contrary to Study 1 and 2 where participants thought about a situation, in Study 3, they performed a violation of societal shared conviction in an in-basket exercise. The results of Study 3 suggest that a violation of societal conviction in moral domain leads to a legitimacy crisis, which mediates the relationship between the violation and feelings of guilt but not of shame (like in Study 2). Certainly, this effect was only significant for men. We will discuss this issue in the limitation section. In Study 4, we were able to confirm the general finding of Study 3. Moreover, we found a serial mediation effect between the extent of discrepancy and moral behavior through legitimacy crisis and feelings of guilt. As supposed, participants who experienced a high discrepancy between their action and the societal shared convictions, perceived their action as less legitimate which elicited feelings of guilt that led to more moral behavior in a subsequent task.

The present findings in the competence and moral domain indicate that a legitimacy crisis is a threat to the self-integrity of an individual, because its discrepancy concerning social standards compromises the sense that one is a good person. Furthermore, all studies show that a legitimacy crisis mediates the relationship between discrepancy and the emotional as well as behavioral consequences (e.g., Tangney et al., 2007). However, the construct of legitimacy crisis is not limited to the phenomena in the present article. We suggest that generally, situations in which an individual violates societal norms and values, could result in a legitimacy crisis.

In general, the present findings may help to understand related phenomena in the domains of moral transgressions and competence and provide starting points for preventive approaches. For example, bullying as a phenomenon of school and workplace deviant behavior (moral transgression) should cause a legitimacy crisis in perpetrators as well as in bystanders. In terms of legitimacy crises, the perpetrators violate a societal shared conviction (need to belong) and perceive their action subsequently as inappropriate. As a reaction to the experience of guilt, they want to reduce the negative consequences of their behavior with moral behavior (e.g., Bastian et al., 2013). Similar to perpetrators, bystanders also perceive themselves as responsible for their inaction of the unjustified social exclusion situation, which should lead to a



legitimacy crisis, feelings of guilt and moral behavior (Wesselmann, Wirth, Pryor, Reeder, & Williams, 2015; Obermann, 2011). These insights offer the opportunity to illustrate to people that being a bystander or perpetrator can also be harmful in a social exclusion situation (Zill & Denzler, submitted). This could support the aim of interventions to stress the importance of acting and helping others in a social exclusion situation or refrain to exclude other people.

In the context of competence deficits, the present findings provide a better understanding of the emotional and behavioral reactions. The results of Study 1 and 2 show that a discrepancy between one's competences and the expectations in a specific situation are threatening for the individual and lead to unfavorable behavior (e.g., withdrawal or less moral behavior). This implies that employees should be qualified for their tasks to avoid a poor output and negative emotional as well as behavioral reactions. In this regard, destructive leadership behavior might be such an unfavorable behavioral reaction of a leader. The nonconformity of the leaders competence to the role-based expectations of a leader is a stake to one's core self and causes a legitimacy crisis, which elicits predominantly feelings of shame (Fast et al., 2014; Tangney et al., 2007). Fast and Chen (2009) as well as Fast et al. (2014) provide some evidence that destructive leadership (e.g., voice aversion) behavior is a result of an inadequate fulfillment of role-based expectations. From an organizational point of view, it seems crucial to reduce legitimacy crises or utilize interventions to prevent new leaders from developing such crises.

#### **4.10.1 Limitations and Future Research**

Although the current research provides initial evidence on the importance of legitimacy crises, it has obviously some limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the question arises whether the extent of legitimacy crisis is influenced by individual and situational factors. Research on self-evaluations show that the more an individual internalized a norm or value, the stronger the discrepancy should be (Ford, Stevenson, Wienir, & Wait, 2002). Moreover, the dispositional preference for or against consistency influences the way individuals perceive and manage discrepancies. Individuals who are high in preference for consistency experience more aversive affective reactions after a discrepancy induction (e.g., Newby-Clark, McGregor, & Zanna, 2002). From a situational point of view, self-awareness might be a relevant construct (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). Individuals automatically compare their self against internalized societal norms when focusing their attention on the self. If self-

awareness is high, individuals show an increased intensity of negative emotions or their need for congruence with salient norms is heightened when there is a strong discrepancy between self and norms (for an overview see Carver, 2012). Altogether, future research on legitimacy crises should focus on self-awareness, the general role of norm orientation, as well as the extent to which specific norms or values are internalized.

Second, in all studies of the present paper, we consistently excluded outliers from our analyses, when they influenced the results. The detection of outliers is crucial, because outliers can sometimes dramatically affect statistical parameters (e.g., standard deviation) which lead to an under- or overestimation of an effect and at the end to a wrong decision about the acceptance or rejection of the alternative hypothesis (McClelland, 2000; Wilcox, 2003). For example, Blanton and colleagues (2009) reanalyzed data from two studies about the predictive validity of the implicit association test (IAT) and found that after excluding the outliers some of the effects were not significant anymore. Based on this finding, we are convinced about our decision to exclude outliers. We know that a decrease of the sample size reduces the power of the particular study, so we used all data, when the outliers did not influence the results to reduce this problem.

Third, in Study 3 we found a significant impact of gender on perceived self-legitimacy which showed that female participants perceived their leadership behavior as less legitimate in contrast to male participants independent from the manipulation. This did not occur in the other three studies. Women perceived their leadership behavior as less appropriate compared to men. One possible explanation seems the think-manager-think-male phenomenon (Schein, 1973) which suggests that leadership is more associated with male attributes than with female attributes. Moreover, people internalize the expectations on their work role and want to fulfill them (e.g., Biddle, 1986; Katz & Kahn, 1978). When women perceive a lack-of-fit between their individual characteristics and the standards for a leadership position, they assess their leadership skills as more deficient, especially in the context preferential selection (Heilman 1983; 2001). Future research should include gender as a moderator when examining legitimacy in leadership context.

#### 4.10.2 Conclusion

In summary, the present paper demonstrates in four studies the connective function of legitimacy crises. Independent of the domain, legitimacy crises are the consequence when people perceive a violation of societal shared convictions by

themselves. Subsequent, these legitimacy crises elicit moral emotions (shame and guilt) which lead to different defense reactions. Consequently, legitimacy crises represent a potential mediator in the general understanding of the violation of societal shared convictions.

## 5 Legitimacy Crises and Social Exclusion

This chapter has been submitted under Zill<sup>1</sup>, A., & Denzler<sup>2</sup>, M. (2017). *Witnessing social exclusion hurts: A threat to the self - cognitive, affective and behavioral consequences for bystander*.

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*Submitted to Self and Identity*

### **Abstract**

The present research aims at explaining the psychological processes of bystanders in social exclusion situations. Until now, research on social exclusion has focused primarily on targets and perpetrators, demonstrating that both experience social exclusion situations as threatening. We present three studies using varying methods, which show that targets and also bystanders – due to the violation of societal norms (“legitimacy crisis”) – experience a social exclusion situation as threatening to the self. We furthermore demonstrate that bystanders and targets differ in their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions to social exclusion. In Study 1 and 2, participants worked on a recall task on social exclusion experiences where they were either a bystander or a target. We found that bystanders, but not targets, experience a legitimacy crisis, which elicits moral emotions of guilt and shame. These evoke social defense reactions in order to compensate for the violation of societal shared convictions. Study 3 supports these effects using a face-to-face interaction paradigm, in which the actual experience of a social exclusion situation was established. Implications for research on social exclusion and threats are discussed.

*Keywords:* social exclusion, bystander, defense reaction, shame, guilt

## 5.1 Introduction

In the course of a lifetime, almost everyone experiences social exclusion situations as a bystander (e.g., ignoring of a classmate or not inviting a friend to a party). Although social exclusion<sup>2</sup> typically occurs in groups and includes three different roles (targets, perpetrators and bystanders; e.g., Chernyak & Zayas, 2010; Giacalone & Promislo, 2010; Wesselmann, Bagg, & Williams, 2009), previous research on social exclusion and its consequences has focused primarily on targets (cf. Williams, 2007; Williams & Nida, 2011) and only recently on perpetrators (e.g., Bastian et al., 2013; Legate, DeHaan, & Ryan, 2015; Nezelek, Wesselmann, Wheeler, & Williams, 2015; Wirth, Bernstein, & LeRoy, 2015; Van Tongeren, Root Luna, & VanOyen Witvliet, 2015). In line with the theoretical framework of Zadro and Gonsalkorale (2014), it is important to investigate, besides perpetrators, also bystanders in order to better understand the dynamics of social exclusion situations.

With respect to bystanders, the existing research focused mainly on how they can contribute to the prevention of or to the intervention in social exclusion situations (e.g., Branch, Ramsay, & Barker, 2013; Cowie, 2014) and not so much on the psychological processes that bystanders experience after a social exclusion situation. Past research on vicarious ostracism mainly investigates noninvolved witnessing of social exclusion (e.g., Masten, Eisenberger, Pfeifer, & Dapretto, 2010; Wesselmann et al., 2009; Wesselmann, Wirth, Pryor, Reeder, & Williams, 2013; Wesselmann, Williams, & Hales, 2013; Will, Crone, van den Bos, & Güroglu, 2013). Research up to this point has almost entirely neglected the psychological processes occurring on the bystander's side after a social exclusion situation, when they were directly involved in the social exclusion situation but did not intervene. There is only a little evidence from bullying research (Obermann, 2011; Werth, Nickerson, Aloe, & Swearer, 2015) on the reactions of bystanders after a bullying situation (e.g., feeling of guilt, social and emotional maladjustment). We want to expand this knowledge, because bystanders are a vast group who experience in social exclusion situations. A better understanding of the psychological processes of bystanders could potentially facilitate interventions for social exclusion situations and generally improve the understanding of the complete social exclusion triangle (bystander, perpetrator and target) (Zadro & Gonsalkorale, 2014).

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<sup>2</sup> Ostracism and rejection share many similarities with social exclusion. We do not want to differentiate between those constructs and therefore use social exclusion throughout the entire article, for situations that others might describe as „ostracism“ or „rejection“ (e.g., Williams, 2007).

Therefore, the present research seeks to firstly and mainly contribute to the research area of social exclusion. To this end, we seek to offer a deeper insight into the cognitive, emotional and behavioral consequences of social exclusion for bystanders after a social exclusion situation. We assume that bystanders – similar to targets – also experience a threat in social exclusion situations, which affects subsequent consequences after the situation (cognitive, emotional and behavioral). Second, we aim at informing the field of threat and defense (reaction) research, by showing that different threats (to the self for bystanders and targets) lead to specific reactions for dealing with the threat (so-called defense reactions). This link between specific threats and specific defense-reactions is yet unclear (Jonas et al., 2014; Hart, 2014).

Our theoretical approach to the impact of social exclusion on bystanders rests on three core assumptions (cognitive, emotional and behavioral). First, we assume that the experience of a legitimacy crisis (Baumeister, Shapiro, & Tice, 1985; Habermas, 1973), which is the perceived inappropriateness of one's own behavior on the basis of societal shared convictions (Bandura, 1991), mediates the relationship between the role in the social exclusion situation (target vs. bystander) and affective consequences. In the context of social exclusion, bystanders' inactions violate the social norms of inclusion and equality (Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno, 1991; Deutsch, 1975; Forsyth, 1995; Wesselmann et al., 2013). Second, drawing from research on moral emotions (e.g., Haidt, 2003; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007), we argue that the bystanders' inaction predominantly elicits moral emotions such as guilt and shame (self-conscious emotions), because bystanders contribute to social exclusion through their own inaction (e.g., Chernyak & Zayas, 2010; Tangney et al., 2007). Additionally, both emotions have been linked to the violation of socially shared convictions (Haidt, 2003), which is characteristic for bystanders in a social exclusion situation. Third, research on threat and defense (e.g., Hart, 2014; Jonas et al., 2014) has shown that being threatened motivates efforts of the threatened individuals to reduce this aversive situation by different defense reactions. Referring to research on moral emotions and defense reactions (e.g., Tangney et al., 2007), we propose that bystanders – due to their feelings of guilt and shame – show predominately social defense reactions (such as affiliation) after being involved in a social exclusion situation.

Summarizing, in the present research we present three studies that aim at demonstrating that bystanders also experience a social exclusion situation as threatening if they do not intervene. Furthermore, we give insight into how bystanders - in contrast

to targets - react after a social exclusion situation on the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral level.

## 5.2 Social Exclusion as a Threat to the Self – Cognitive

### Consequences for Bystanders

How does an individual react when (s)he witnesses a social exclusion situation? First, similar to the targets of social exclusion, observing social exclusion activates the so-called ostracism detection system (e.g., Wesselmann et al., 2009; Wesselmann et al., 2013), which is a quick and oversensitive system for detecting cues related to exclusion. It directs the attention to the context of the social exclusion, which in turn causes personal distress (Wesselmann et al., 2013).

Second, like targets, we assume that bystanders also experience the social exclusion situation as threatening to the self, which generally activates the behavioral inhibition system and then the behavioral approach system. Certainly, the reason for the threat differs between targets and bystanders. Targets suffer a violation of their fundamental need for relatedness, autonomy, self-esteem, and sense of meaningful existence (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Williams & Nida, 2011). For bystanders, research on perpetrators in social exclusion situations is informative (e.g., Bastian et al., 2013; Legate et al., 2015): Perpetrators experience a damage of their basic psychological need for relatedness, when they realize that their behavior caused unjustified harm to another person and thereby violates societal shared convictions. Generally, individuals acquire convictions regarding their own or others' appropriate social behavior over the course of the socialization process (see social cognitive theory, Bandura 1991). We assume that bystanders experience a lack of legitimacy, a so-called legitimacy crisis (Baumeister et al., 1985; Habermas, 1973), because they perceive their inaction, which harms another person, as a violation of societal shared convictions (Suchman, 1995).

## 5.3 Emotional Consequences and Social Exclusion

Generally, all kinds of threats (such as a social exclusion situation) reduce the activation of the behavioral approach system (BAS) and activate the behavioral inhibition system (BIS), which in turn leads to anxiety (Gray & McNaughton, 2000; Jonas et al., 2014). Therefore, we assume that bystanders, like targets, show a predominant BIS activation in a social exclusion situation.

Furthermore, different kinds of threats elicit different specific emotional reactions (Hart 2014): Research on targets of social exclusion shows that social

exclusion situations generally evoke an aversive emotional alarm (e.g., pain) (Baumeister, Brewer, Tice, & Twenge, 2007; Shilling & Brown, 2016), and that targets usually report feelings of anger and sadness (e.g., Williams, 2007). However, bystanders are likely to experience emotions such as guilt and shame (self-conscious emotions), because these emotions are linked to the violation of socially shared convictions (De Hooge, Breugelmans, & Zeelenberg, 2008; Haidt, 2003). Specifically, self-reflection and (implicit or explicit) self-evaluation evoke self-conscious emotions and provide feedback on the social appropriateness of one's own action (Tangney et al., 2007). Similarly, research on bystanders of social exclusion and school bullying (e.g., Gino, Gu, & Zhong, 2009; Obermann, 2011; Wesselmann et al., 2009; Wesselmann et al., 2013; Wesselmann, Wirth, Pryor, Reeder, & Williams, 2015; Will et al., 2013) shows that individuals who witness social exclusion or bullying experience general negative affect and moral emotions such as guilt and shame. Based on the relationship to the violation of socially shared convictions, we assume that a legitimacy crisis elicits these self-conscious emotions. In addition, the experience of a legitimacy crisis and the accompanying emotions causes specific behavioral reactions. Our assumptions on these behavioral consequences are described in the following.

#### **5.4 Behavioral Consequences of Witnessing Social Exclusion among Bystanders**

In general, when individuals, such as targets and bystanders in a social exclusion situation, experience a threat (which activates BIS), *proximal* and subsequently (after a short delay) *distal defense reactions* emerge (which activates BAS). Proximal defense reactions (e.g., high vigilance toward and memory of social information, Gardner, Pickett, & Brewer, 2000) involve the avoidance of potentially threatening stimuli. If a direct solution during BIS activation is not available (e.g., immediately interrupting the social exclusion process), individuals show distal defense reactions – e.g. seeking affiliation with other people – which reduce BIS activation and restore BAS activation (Jonas et al., 2014). As the main aim of the present study is to investigate bystanders' reactions after a social exclusion situation in which they did not intervene, we will focus on distal defense reactions (BAS). The general model of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014) postulates that distal defense reactions range from personal to social: The *personal pole* refers to idiosyncratic commitments (relatively independent of the social environment) and the *social pole* refers to social contexts (depending on others). However, the model provides no specific proposition regarding which kind of distal



defense reaction (BAS) an individual will show, because it focuses on the general behavioral reactions independent from the impact of specific emotions (Hart, 2014; Jonas et al., 2014). We aim to provide some propositions regarding the link between specific threat (role: target or bystander) and specific distal defense-reactions (personal or social):

Studies on targets' behaviors after social exclusion suggest that the behavioral reactions of targets depend on the probability of re-inclusion (Williams & Nida, 2011). If re-inclusion with other individuals appears likely, targets of social exclusion show more affiliative reactions - *a social defense reaction* (e.g. Maner, DeWall, Baumeister, & Schaller, 2007; Jonas et al., 2014). This social defense reaction fulfills the relatedness need. If, however, re-inclusion is not possible, targets show more aggressive and less prosocial behavior in order to satisfy their needs for autonomy and a meaningful existence - *a personal defense reaction* (Jonas et al., 2014; Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Bartels, 2007; Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001; Williams & Nida, 2011). This is, because when self-protection needs are prioritized by the social exclusion situation than personal defense reactions like aggression are more probable and effective than social defense reactions (cf. Shilling & Brown, 2016).

Regarding bystanders, we expect a social defense reaction (e.g., affiliative behavior) after a social exclusion situation (e.g., Masten et al., 2010; Wesselmann et al., 2013; Will et al., 2013) because bystanders want to reduce their guilty conscience through compensatory behavior. This is in line with research on perpetrators of social exclusion that shows that insufficient justification of social exclusion lead to compensatory behavior, when one is responsible for it (e.g., Bastian et al., 2013; Van Tongeren et al., 2015). Transferred to the role of bystanders, they also perceive themselves as responsible for their inaction of the unjustified social exclusion, which should lead to compensatory behavior. This assumption is supported by research on moral emotions, which shows that when individuals experience guilt or shame they show compensatory actions (e.g., prosocial behavior due to their prior violation of social standards (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Haidt, 2003; Tangney et al., 2007).

## 5.5 Present Research

In the following studies, we investigated the cognitive, emotional and behavioral consequences of bystanders after social exclusion situations. Based on past research on social exclusion (e.g., Gooley, Zadro, Williams, Svetieva, & Gonsalkorale, 2015; Zadro

& Gonsalkorale, 2014), we used a recall paradigm (Study 1 and 2) and a face-to-face interaction paradigm (Study 3) to test our main hypotheses with different methodological approaches. First, we expect that bystanders (compared to targets) predominantly experience guilt and shame whereas targets predominantly experience sadness and aggression-related emotions (Hypothesis 1). Second, we expect that, after threat induction, all participants show a threat response to the social exclusion situation (so-called BIS activation), because bystanders, as well as targets, experience the social exclusion situation as self-threatening (Hypothesis 2). Third, we hypothesize that the extent of the legitimacy crisis mediates the relationship between the extent of the violation of societal shared convictions by an individual (low vs. high) and the emotional reactions. The stronger the action of an individual violates societal shared convictions, the stronger is the perception of a legitimacy crisis, which elicits self-conscious emotions, such as guilt and shame (Hypothesis 3). Fourth, we hypothesize that bystanders predominantly show social defense reactions whereas targets are more likely to react with personal defense reactions (Hypothesis 4).

## 5.6 Study 1

In this study we asked participants to recall a situation in which they were either excluded by others or in which they witnessed a social exclusion situation (i.e. in which they were a bystander). Afterwards, participants had to recall their emotional reaction after the social exclusion situation. To capture the type of the distal defense reaction (personal vs. social), we first measured to what extent participants regarded their current private projects (e.g., finishing the bachelor thesis or a good relationship to friends / partner) as social or personal. Second, participants had to recall their behavioral reaction after the social exclusion situation and were asked to judge how personal or social their reaction was.

We assume that bystanders primarily recall experiencing guilt and shame after the social exclusion situation, whereas targets primarily recall sadness and aggression-related emotions (Hypothesis 1). Second, we assume that when recalling a social exclusion situation, both bystanders and targets show a threat response (BIS activation), because both experience the social exclusion situation as threatening for the self (Hypothesis 2). Third, we expect that a high extent of the violation of societal shared convictions is stronger related to feelings of shame and guilt, which is mediated by the extent of legitimacy crisis (Hypothesis 3). Bystanders perceive their inaction in the social exclusion situation as less legitimate compared to targets, because their inaction

violates societal shared convictions. Finally, we hypothesize that bystanders evaluate their current private projects and their behavioral reaction after the social exclusion situation as more social in contrast to targets of a social exclusion situation (Hypothesis 4).

### 5.6.1 Method

*Participants.* 86 students (68 women;  $M_{age} = 23.5$ ,  $SD = 4.3$ ) from a German university participated in the study. It was introduced as a study about the evaluation of personal projects and was part of a larger research project. The students received course credit for their participation. We checked whether participants followed the instructions. We report all manipulations, measures (in the paper or in the supplemental material), and data exclusions in this study.

*Procedure and Materials.* The study was conducted online. First, participants read the study information and approved the informed consent. Participants then engaged in a writing task in one of two recall conditions. In the bystander condition, participants had to recall a situation where they witnessed a non-justified social exclusion of another person, where they themselves did not interfere. In the target condition, participants had to recall a situation where they felt excluded by other people. In order to improve perspective taking, participants were asked to think and write about the situation for at least three minutes. After imagining the situation, participants completed two items assessing *perceived self-legitimacy* (“I would characterize my behavior in this situation as inappropriate, because I violated relevant norms and values in this situation.”; “My behavior in the described situation does not conform to the behavior which one would actually expect in such a situation.”). The rating was made on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree;  $\rho = .70$ ; both items reverse coded). Afterwards, participants completed several single-items measuring *affect* (uncertainty, pleasure, guilt, proud, anger, shame, enthusiasm, tension, nervousness, anxiety, rage, compassion, agitation, sadness, helplessness, ease, and panic; McGregor, Nash, Mann, & Phills, 2010). These items were also measured on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). For aggression-related feelings, we used an index consisting of anger and rage ( $\rho = .84$ ). Next the assessment of the defense reactions (social vs. personal) began: First, participants had two minutes to list all their current private projects. They then selected the four most important projects and rated each project on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely) on approach, idealism and avoidance, which corresponds to the procedure of McGregor and colleagues (2010 - for

more details) and measures approach motivation. This procedure entirely served the cover-story that we were interested in the private projects of the participants. Furthermore, participants were asked to judge the four most important projects on a 100-point scale from personal (0) to social (100) to capture the type of defense reaction (social vs. personal). In line with McGregor and colleagues, we averaged these four defense reaction judgments. Second, participants described (for two minutes) how they immediately reacted after the recalled situation was over and were asked to judge their *defense reaction* on a 100-point scale from personal (0) to social (100). Next, participants answered on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), whether their defense reaction was guided by the desire to reduce *guilty conscience*<sup>3</sup>. *BIS-BAS activation* was measured by an online line bisection task<sup>4</sup> (LBT; values can range from 0= left to 100=right hemispheric activation) with ten different long lines (e.g., Agroskin, Jonas, Klackl, & Prentice, 2016; Nash, McGregor, & Inzlicht, 2010; Naylor, Byrne, & Wallace, 2015) at four times: after the study instruction (Baseline), after recall task (t1), after the personal projects (t2), and after recall reaction (t3; averaged across all measurement points,  $\alpha = .73$ ). In the end, participants were asked several control questions (e.g., image the situation and motivation of the participants) and questions regarding demographic information and personality factors (e.g., general self-efficacy and locus of control) which were part of another study.<sup>5</sup>

### 5.6.2 Results

Descriptive and inference statistics are presented in Table 6. In line with Hypothesis 1, participants in the bystander condition reported more feelings of guilt and shame compared to targets, whereas participants in the target condition reported more aggression-related feelings and sadness compared to the bystanders. To test the mediation model (Hypothesis 3) that perceived self-legitimacy mediates the effect of violation of societal shared convictions on shame and guilt, we conducted a mediation model with 10,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval (guilt and shame simultaneously). We found a mediation effect for shame (indirect effect = .81, 95% CI

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<sup>3</sup> Additionally, at this part of the study participants were asked how much their defense reaction was guided by the desire to forget the situation/to solve the situation/to divert/to cover up the situation/to compensate their behavior. T-tests for these additional measurements are presented in the supplemental material.

<sup>4</sup> The line bisection task measures the relative cerebral hemisphericity. Participants have to decide the perceived midpoints of a number of horizontal lines with different lengths. Deviations to left or right reflect the relative primacy of right versus left visual fields and neural activity in the contralateral hemisphere. Activation of the right prefrontal cortex is associated with behavioral inhibition and activation of the left prefrontal cortex with behavioral activation.

<sup>5</sup> Details regarding control questions and personality factors are presented in the supplemental material.

[.31, 1.96]), but not for guilt (indirect effect = .11, 95% CI [-.71, .46]). Participants in the bystander condition, in contrast to participants in the target condition, perceived their behavior in the social exclusion situation as less legitimate ( $b = -1.44, p < .01$ ) which led to higher reports of shame ( $b = -.56, p < .001$ ), but not for guilt ( $b = -.08, p = .66$ ). This can be explained by a high overlap in variance of shame and guilt,  $r(86) = .60, p < .001$ . For the analyses of the personal projects, nine participants were excluded (four in the bystander condition and five in the target condition), because they did not report a sufficient number of projects (i.e., four, see procedure). As stated in Hypothesis 4, participants in the bystander condition evaluated their private projects<sup>6</sup> and their reaction to the social exclusion situation as more social as participants in the target condition. For the analyses of the BIS-BAS activation, two participants were excluded (both were in the bystander condition), because their line bisection scores for at least three measurement points were more than 1.5 interquartile ranges away from the first quartile. We analyzed the slope of the BIS-BAS activation with a repeated measure ANOVA with time as the within-subjects factor (baseline vs. t1 vs. t2 vs. t3). Contrary to our expectations (Hypothesis 2), we did not find a main effect,  $F(3, 249) = .30, p = .82, \eta_p^2 = .00$ . A planned contrast comparing the baseline measurement with the measurement after the threat induction was not significant,  $F(1, 83) = .91, p = .34, \eta_p^2 = .01$ . Thus, for the line bisection task, we found – contrary to our expectations – no threat response (BIS activation) to the social exclusion situation.<sup>7</sup>

### 5.6.3 Discussion

Overall, as expected, we found that participants who recalled being a bystander in an unjustified social exclusion situation showed threat reactions, which significantly differed from threat reactions of targets. In accordance with research on moral emotions and witnessing social exclusion, bystanders (compared to targets) reported more feelings of guilt and shame after witnessing a social exclusion, whereas targets reported more sadness and aggression-related emotions. The violation of societal shared convictions by bystanders elicited stronger feelings of shame and guilt, mediated by perceived self-legitimacy.

<sup>6</sup> We found no significant differences on approach, idealism and avoidance between bystanders and targets for the personal projects, which is in line with our theoretical assumptions, because both conditions represent a kind of threat.

<sup>7</sup> There was no difference between bystanders and targets.

Table 6

*Mean, Standard Deviations and inference statistics of Study 1*

Variables	Bystander (n = 37)	Target (n = 49)	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>CI 95%</i>
Perceived self-legitimacy	3.80 (1.69)	5.37 (1.26)	< .001	1.08	[.62; 1.53]
Feelings of guilt	4.73 (1.35)	2.76 (1.76)	< .001	-1.23	[-1.70; -.77]
Feelings of shame	4.16 (1.44)	3.20 (2.02)	.01	-.54	[-.97; -.10]
Feelings of sadness	3.41 (1.79)	5.24 (1.87)	< .001	1.00	[.55; 1.45]
Feelings of aggression	3.73 (1.70)	5.17 (1.35)	< .001	.95	[.50; 1.40]
Guilty conscience	3.59 (1.86)	2.31 (1.61)	< .01	-.74	[-1.19; -.30]
Defense reaction	63.30 (28.24)	43.10 (32.91)	< .01	-.65	[-1.09; -.21]
Defense reaction projects	35.93 (13.87)	29.45 (16.12)	.07	-.43	[-.88; .03]

Standard deviations are in parentheses.  $N = 86$  except for the defense reaction projects  $N = 77$

(bystander  $n = 33$  and target  $n = 44$ ). Defense reaction/defense reaction projects 0 = personal and 100 = social.

For all other variables we used a 7-point rating scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Bystanders perceived their behavior in the social exclusion situation as less legitimate compared to participants who recalled a situation where others excluded them, which led to higher reports of shame but not for guilt, which can be explained by the high overlap in variance between shame and guilt. Across both behavioral measures, private project task and the self-evaluated reactions after the social exclusion situation, we found that bystanders show significantly more social defense reactions whereas targets show more personal defense reactions. A minor constraint of this study is that against our expectations, we did not find an activation of the BIS on the line bisection task for targets and bystanders. This result will be addressed in the general discussion.

## 5.7 Study 2

The first aim of Study 2 was to replicate the main findings of Study 1. Second, additionally to our main hypotheses, we wanted to test the further mediation hypothesis that bystanders, in contrast to targets, show more social defense reactions after the social exclusion situation, which is mediated, in serial, by perceived legitimacy, feelings of guilt as well as shame, and guilty conscience. We assume that bystanders, in contrast to targets, perceive their actions as less legitimate, which elicits feelings of guilt and shame that increases guilty conscience, which leads to a social defense reaction. To test this mediation hypothesis without any contextual distractions, we only focused on the evaluation of the recall situation and omitted the private project task from Study 1.

### 5.7.1 Method

*Participants.* 186 students (149 women;  $M_{age} = 23.1$ ,  $SD = 3.4$ ) from two German universities participated in the study. The study was introduced as a study about dealing with difficult situations. The students received course credit or 5€ (approximately 6\$) for their participation. Like in Study 1, we checked whether participants followed the instructions. Four participants had to be excluded because they did not follow the instructions of the recall situation or participated twice (one bystander and three targets). We report all manipulations, measures (in the paper or in the supplemental material), and data exclusions in this study.

*Procedure and Materials.* The procedure of the present study was almost identical to Study 1. After recalling either a social exclusion situation as bystander or as target for three minutes, participants completed the *perceived self-legitimacy* measure from Study 1 ( $\rho = .73$ ). Next, participants completed the same several single-items measuring *affect* as in Study 1 (index aggression-related feelings  $\rho = .84$ ). Afterwards, participants described how they immediately reacted after the recalled situation was

over for two minutes and were asked to judge their *distal defense reaction* on a 100-point scale from personal (0) to social (100). Participants then answered how much their defense reaction was guided by the desire to reduce *guilty conscience* on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).<sup>8</sup> Subsequently, they answered the same questions for their long-term reactions for explorative reasons. In the analyses, we only focus on the immediate reaction because we found no differences for the long-term distal defense reaction (personal to social). *BIS-BAS activation* was measured at five times: after the study instruction (Baseline), after the recall task (t1), after the immediate reaction (t2), after the long-term reaction (t3), and before demographic details (t4; averaged across all measurement points  $\alpha = .75$ ). At the end, participants were asked several control questions (e.g., image the situation and motivation of the participants) and for demographic information.<sup>9</sup>

### 5.7.2 Results

Descriptive and inference statistics are presented in Table 7. For the analyses of affect, we excluded one participant for guilt (target) because the score of the guilt item was more than 1.5 interquartile ranges away from the first quartile. As in Study 1, we found that bystanders reported more feelings of guilt and shame compared to targets, whereas targets reported more aggression-related feelings and sadness compared to the bystanders (Hypothesis 1). Moreover, to test the mediation model on perceived self-legitimacy (Hypothesis 3), we used the same procedure as in Study 1. We found a partial mediation effect for shame (indirect effect = .23, 95% CI [.08, .41] and guilt (indirect effect = .29, 95% CI [.15, .47]). Participants in the bystander condition perceived their behavior in the social exclusion situation as less legitimate ( $b = -.76, p < .001$ ) which led to higher reports of shame ( $b = -.30, p = .002$ ) and guilt ( $b = -.38, p < .001$ ) in contrast to participants in the target condition.

For the analyses of the BIS-BAS activation, we excluded three participants (one bystander and two targets) because their line bisection scores for at least three measurement points were more than 1.5 interquartile ranges away from the first quartile. We analyzed the slope of the BIS-BAS activation with a repeated measure ANOVA with time as the within-subjects factor (baseline vs. t1 vs. t2 vs. t3 vs. t4). It revealed a (u-shaped) marginal main effect of time,  $F(4, 712) = 2.08, p = .08, \eta_p^2 = .01$ .

<sup>8</sup> Additionally, at this part of the study participants were asked how much their defense reaction was guided by the desire to forget the situation/to solve the situation/to divert/to cover up the situation/to compensate their behavior. T-tests are presented in the supplemental material.

<sup>9</sup> Details regarding control questions are presented in the supplemental material.



Table 7

*Mean, Standard Deviations and inference statistics of Study 2*

Variables	Bystander (n = 83)	Target (n = 99)	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>CI 95%</i>
Perceived self-legitimacy	3.89 (1.42)	5.40 (1.24)	< .001	1.14	[.83; 1.45]
Feelings of guilt	4.31 (1.82)	2.23 (1.48)	< .001	-1.27	[-1.59; -.95]
Feelings of shame	4.28 (1.73)	2.82 (1.78)	< .001	-.83	[-1.14; -.53]
Feelings of sadness	3.82 (1.71)	5.18 (1.66)	< .001	.81	[.51; 1.11]
Feelings of aggression	4.35 (1.68)	5.21 (1.47)	< .001	.55	[.25; .85]
Guilty conscience	3.49 (1.98)	2.07 (1.52)	< .001	-.81	[-1.12; -.51]
Defense reaction	51.83 (33.47)	46.13 (34.13)	.26	-.17	[-.46; .12]

*Note.* Standard deviations are in parentheses.  $N = 182$  (except guilt  $N = 181$ ). Defense reaction

0 = personal and 100 = social. For all other variables we used a 7-point rating scale

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

A planned contrast comparing the baseline measurement with the measurement after the threat induction was marginally significant,  $F(1, 178) = 3.41, p = .07, \eta_p^2 = .02$ . As expected, the result suggests that all participants show an activation of the BIS (fundamental threat reaction) to a social exclusion (Hypothesis 2).<sup>10</sup>

Most importantly, to test the mediation hypothesis that perceived self-legitimacy, feelings of guilt as well as shame, and guilty conscience mediate the effect of role (bystander vs. target) on the immediate defense reaction, we conducted a path analysis with 10,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval. All paths are illustrated in Figure 4. The results of the path analysis confirm our expectation regarding the mediation hypothesis for guilt and shame simultaneously (indirect effect guilt = .21, 95% CI [.01, .78] and indirect effect shame = .14, 95% CI [.01, .59]). Participants who recalled a bystander situation perceived their actions as less legitimate, which elicited feelings of guilt and shame that increased guilty conscience, which led – despite of the non-significant direct effect (Hypothesis 4) – to a stronger social defense reaction compared to participants who recalled a situation in which they were the target of the social exclusion. We did not find a significant mediation effect for divert or compensate instead of guilty conscience.

### 5.7.3 Discussion

In sum, like in Study 1, we found the same emotional and cognitive reactions from participants in the bystander and target condition. Bystanders (compared to targets) reported more guilt and shame whereas targets reported more aggression-related emotions and sadness. Moreover, like in Study 1, the mediation effect for perceived self-legitimacy replicated for shame and guilt. Bystanders perceived their behavior in the social exclusion situation as less legitimate compared to participants who recalled a situation where others excluded them which led to higher reports of shame and guilt. The result of the mediation analysis for the behavioral reaction support our theoretical assumptions that the influence of the role in a social exclusion situation on the distal defense reaction is mediated by experiencing a legitimacy crisis and feelings of guilt/shame and guilty conscience, which is in line with research on moral emotions and their impact on behavior. In contrast to the targets, bystanders perceived their behavior as less legitimate, which elicited feelings of guilt and shame that increased guilty conscience and subsequently led to a stronger social defense reaction.

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<sup>10</sup> There was no difference between bystanders and targets.

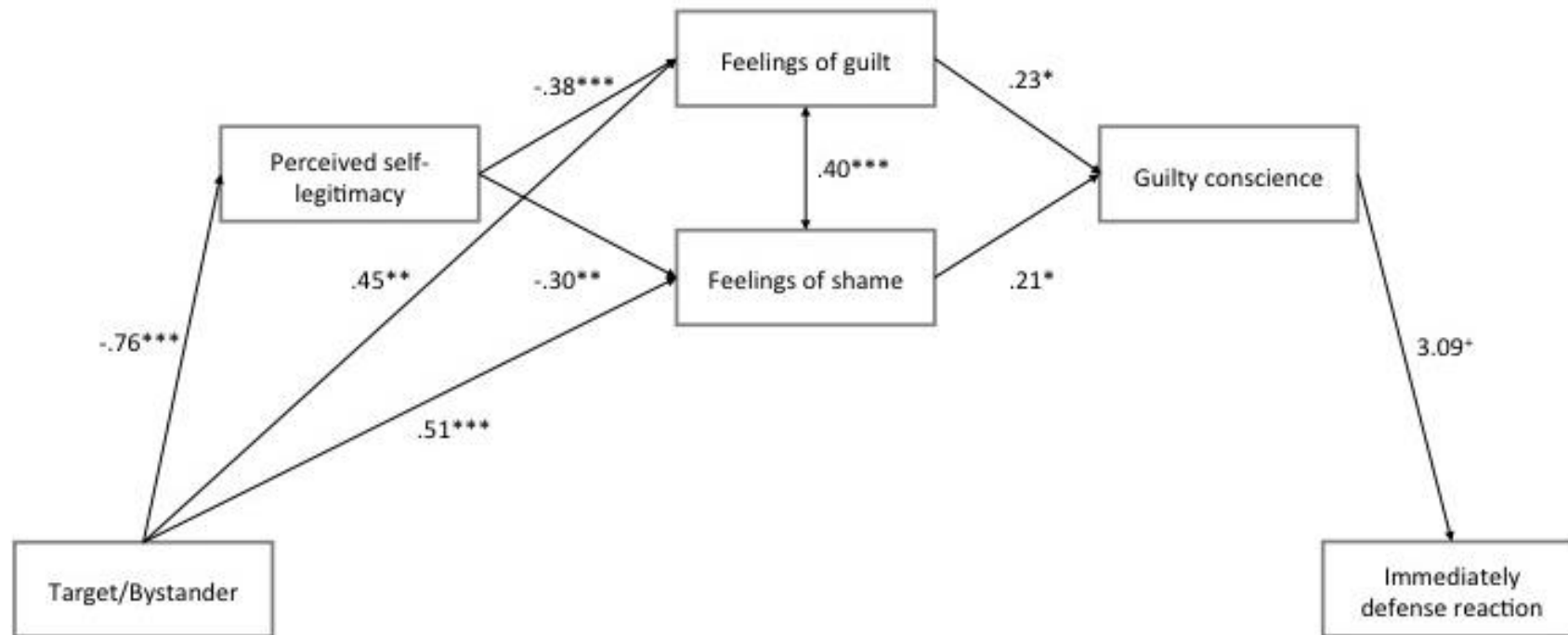


Figure 4. A serial mediation model (10,000 bootstrap samples and 95% CI) of role (bystander/target) on defense reaction via perceived self-legitimacy, guilt and shame, and guilty conscience. Target = -1 and Bystander = 1. Study 2 ( $N = 181$ ).  $***p < .001$ ,  $**p < .01$ ,  $*p < .05$ ,  $^+p < .10$ . All coefficients are unstandardized. Only significant paths are present for reasons of clarity.

Furthermore, in the present study, we found an activation of BIS (fundamental threat response) for targets and bystanders in the line bisection task after recalling their social exclusion situation. A minor constraint of Study 2 is that we did not find a direct effect for the defense reaction between both conditions like in Study 1. This aspect will be addressed in the general discussion.

### 5.8 Study 3

The present study is one of the first studies that investigates the psychological processes of bystanders during and after a real social exclusion situation. In this study, we used a face-to-face interaction paradigm (Zadro & Gonsalkorale, 2014), to test our assumptions about the impact of social exclusion on bystanders directly in and after a social exclusion situation. More specifically, we investigated how bystanders and targets interact with each other when the perpetrator leaves the situation. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (the role of a bystander vs. the role of a target) and worked with two female confederates on several tasks, whereby one confederate was in all conditions the perpetrator and the second was either bystander or target depending on the role of the participant. Thus, in the bystander condition, in which the participant was a bystander, the confederate had the role of the target; in the target condition, in which the participant was a target, the confederate had the role of the bystander. The manipulation was realized in a discussion situation, where all three agents, the actual participant and the two confederates, had to discuss job-application documents (following Foti & Hauenstein, 2007). In the discussion situation, the perpetrator (always a confederate) excluded the target, which was witnessed by the bystander. Subsequently, participants assessed their behavior in the discussion situation and their actual emotional status. The confederates also filled out the questionnaires in order to maintain the credibility of the cover story. Then, the perpetrator left the room, because we wanted to see how bystander and target react on the emotional and behavioral level (defense reaction) over the course of the study. Therefore, we repeated the measurement for the emotional status at different points of time. Besides, we measured the defense reaction with an interaction task, where personal and social reactions were possible.

First, based on our theoretical assumptions and the findings of Study 1 and 2, we hypothesize that bystanders (compared to targets) experience more guilt and shame whereas targets predominantly experience aggression-related emotions and sadness (compared to bystanders) (Hypothesis 1). This study also offers the opportunity for

exploratory analyses of the course of the emotional level during and after a social exclusion situation for bystanders and targets.

Second, we assume that bystanders as well as targets show an activation of BIS (fundamental threat response) to the social exclusion situation, because both experience the social exclusion situation as threatening to the self (Hypothesis 2).

Third, we expect that perceived self-legitimacy after the discussion situation mediates the relationship between the extent of the violation of societal shared convictions by an individual (low = role target vs. high = role bystander) and the emotional reactions. Bystanders, compared to targets, perceive their behavior towards the target in the discussion situation as inappropriate, because it violates the societal shared convictions to help people who are excluded by others and to integrate them into the group process, which elicits more feelings of guilt and shame (Hypothesis 3).

Fourth, as mentioned above, we aim to replicate the findings from Study 1 and Study 2 that bystanders show more social defense reaction compared to personal defense reactions, because they want to compensate their misconduct in the discussion situation. In contrast, targets were expected to show more personal defense reactions than social defense reactions, because re-inclusion is not possible and hence they supposedly want to restore autonomy in the situation (Hypothesis 4).

### 5.8.1 Method

*Participants.* 38 students from a German university (35 women;  $M_{age} = 20.0$ ,  $SD = 2.0$ ; one participant did not indicate her/his sex) participated in Study 3. The students received course credit for their participation. Moreover, five participants (all bystander condition) were excluded because they misunderstood the instructions of the experimenter. They ignored one of the two confederates during the entire time of the study. At the end, 33 students (15 bystander and 18 targets) were analyzed in the present study. We report all manipulations, measures (in the paper or in the supplemental material), and data exclusions in this study.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Procedure and Materials.*

*Overview.* Our study is based on the contagion source induction paradigm of Zadro and Gonsalkorale (2014), where the bystander is part of the social exclusion situation. The social exclusion situation in the present study was induced in the context

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<sup>11</sup> Admittedly, the data collection procedure led to a low sample size. Following Hoenig and Heisey (2001), we did, however, not perform post-hoc power analyses, because post-hoc power values do not allow an interpretation of the results for the simple reason that post-hoc power is determined completely by the p-value. To assess the reliability of the results in the present paper we conducted a meta-analysis of all studies, which is included in the supplemental material.

of a discussion situation about the suitability of candidates for a job position. All agents - the participant and the two confederates - sat at a round table in front of laptops and had eye contact with each other. Each session consisted of three people (one participant and two confederates). Their task was to discuss three job applications presented as hardcopy and decide on a rank order of the candidates. The perpetrator (confederate 1) behaved friendly to the bystander (either confederate 2 or the participant) but ignorant, dismissive, and disruptive towards the target (either the participant or confederate 2). To create a bystander condition in this experimental setting where the bystander did not intervene, the bystander (confederate 2 or the actual participant) were instructed not to talk with the target. They should talk with the perpetrator (confederate 1) only. At the end of this five-minute discussion, the perpetrator asked the bystander and the target for their decision. The perpetrator, however, ignored the decision of the target (e.g., did not establish eye-contact and did not respond to the target's decision) and decided the order of the candidates in coordination with the bystander (e.g., established eye-contact and talked friendly with the bystander about the order). Only when the perpetrator started the unfair behavior, the situation shifted to a social exclusion situation. In the following, we describe the procedure and material of the study in more detail.

*Baseline Phase.* The study, which was labeled as “communication in groups”, was part of a larger research project. Participants and two confederates – who were allegedly also participants in the study – were greeted at the cafeteria of the psychology department. After being taken to the laboratory, participants were seated in front of a computer screen, which was separated by blinds so that agents could see each other, but could not see each other's screens. First, participants read the study information (e.g., that they later work together on an interaction task) and signed the informed consent. Then, they completed like in Study 1 measures for affect and BIS-BAS activation ( $\alpha = .81$ ) which served as baseline measurement.

*Manipulation Phase.* In this phase the role of the participants – either target or bystander – was manipulated. In the bystander condition, the confederates were instructed to complete the baseline measures very slowly. This was necessary to be able to explain the bystander role to the participants, who finished the baseline measures before the confederates. When the experimenter, who was present in the room, noticed that the participant in the bystander condition finished the baseline measure, he or she approached in the bystander condition the participant in a low voice and asked her or him to come outside the room so that she or he could be explained the further procedure

meanwhile while the two other “participants” (i.e., actually the confederates) were completing the measures. The participant in the bystander condition was explained that in the study, besides communication in groups, it would be investigated, how people react to non-communication of a group member in a specific discussion situation. To prevent that the participant in the bystander condition would intervene in the following discussion situation, the experimenter explained the participant that he or she should not talk or react to confederate 2 in the following discussion situation. The participant in the bystander condition was therefore supposed not to interact with confederate 2. Then, the participants in the bystander condition were asked whether they wanted to follow this instruction or not. This method was used to prevent a shift of responsibility for the non-communication behavior to the experimenter. Nobody in the bystander condition denied the agreement to this procedure, which might have been influenced by the authority of the experimenter (Zadro & Gonsalkorale, 2014). After the confederates had finished, all agents went together with the experimenter to a video lab for the discussion situation. In the target condition, the confederates completed the baseline measures in a similar time as the participant and went together with the experimenter to a video lab for the discussion situation.

*Discussion Phase.* In the discussion situation, the agents were supposed to discuss the suitability of three job applicants for a specific job position. Referring to Foti and Hauenstein (2007) the participant and the two confederates were given three profiles of physicians. The task for the group was to order the three profiles according to the suitability of the candidates for a provided job description. All agents were given five minutes to individually review the three profiles. Afterwards, the participant and the confederates had five minutes to discuss the order of preference. Regardless of whether the participant or the confederate 2 was bystander/ target, the perpetrator (confederate 1) behaved friendly (e.g., smiling, interested in the opinion of the bystander) towards the bystander but ignorant (e.g., no reaction to statements of the target), dismissive (e.g., question the competence of the target), and disruptive (e.g., interrupting the target) towards the target. The reactions of the perpetrator (the same person in all sessions) were scripted and the perpetrator was instructed to act in accordance with this script. According to the instruction they received, the bystander (confederate 2 or participant) should not talk to the target. They should only talk with the perpetrator (confederate 1). None of the bystanders helped the target of the social exclusion. When the five minutes were over, the experimenter finished the discussion

and asked the group for the order of the candidates. Then, the agents answered the questions for perceived legitimacy<sup>12</sup>, affect, and BIS-BAS activation on their own. *Perceived self-legitimacy* was assessed with three items (inappropriate (*reverse-coded*), fair, and unjust (*reverse-coded*)). The rating was made on an 8-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 8 = strongly agree;  $\alpha = .90$ ). Affect and BIS-BAS activation ( $\alpha = .86$ ) were assessed as in the baseline measurement. When the agents had finished their measurements, the experimenter explained that one person has to work on a task in another room with another group. All had to draw a lot to decide who have to work with the other group. The lots were all blank so that the perpetrator allegedly drew the lot, where she had to leave the room in order to work with the other group. The perpetrator (confederate 1) then left the room, because we wanted to see, how bystander and target react on the emotional and behavioral level (defense reaction) over the remaining course of the study situation.

Subsequently, bystander and target separately completed an intelligence test evaluating work efficiency, which is not part of the current research project. Afterwards, bystander and target answered the same measures on affect and BIS-BAS activation ( $\alpha = .80$ ) as before.

*Defense reactions Phase.* The aim of this phase was to measure with two tasks whether bystander and target differ in the kind of defense reaction (personal vs. social) they show after a social exclusion situation.

First, they allegedly played the prisoner's dilemma game (PDG) against each other for ten rounds, to measure the direction of the defense reaction (personal or social). This is in line with previous research on social exclusion and PDG, where cooperation with the other player was used as an indicator for prosocial behavior, which can be classified as a social defense reaction (e.g., Twenge et al., 2007). The computer defected on the first, fifth, and ninth turns and was programmed to play tit-for-tat, mimicking the participants' response on the preceding turn (Twenge et al., 2007, Experiment 4). For our analysis we only used the first decision, because the remaining reactions of the participants were influenced by the pre-programmed responses of the PDG. The personal defense reaction in the PDG meant to defect the confederate by talking to the police, whereas a social defense reaction corresponds to cooperation with

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<sup>12</sup> Perceived self-legitimacy was assessed as part of a greater self and external assessment section. Details are presented in the supplemental material, because the other aspects are not part of this research project.



the confederate. Next, both answered the same measures on affect and BIS-BAS activation ( $\alpha = .83$ ).

After this measurement, we used a second instrument to measure the defense reaction. Bystander and target had to decide whether they want to work on a picture-selection task (e.g., Denzler, Förster, & Liberman, 2009) alone (*personal defense*) or together (*social defense*). When both had read the instruction of this task, they wrote on a short paper their decision and gave it covertly to the experimenter. The experimenter informed both about the decision. Bystander and target only completed the task alone, when the participant decided to work alone; otherwise, they worked together on the picture-selection task. Although the decision to work together or alone on the picture-selection task served as the dependent variable for this task, the picture-selection task was fully conducted (but its results not analyzed) to maintain experimental realism. Finally, they completed the same questions on affect and BIS-BAS activation ( $\alpha = .83$ ), were asked for demographic information, were fully debriefed (Appendix B), and then participants were thanked for their participation.

### 5.8.2 Results

*Affect.* To investigate the proposed temporal effects on affect, we specified a discontinuous multilevel growth model (Bliese, Chan, & Ployhart, 2007) with five measurement time points of individual affect (separated for guilt, shame and aggression-related emotions) as the dependent variable. Repeated measurements of guilt, shame, as well as aggression-related emotions within participants were non-independent. Participants were also distinguishable with regard to their mean levels of guilt, shame as well as aggression (see Table 8, Table 9, & Table 10). We fitted the models as a random-intercept models, because a random-slope models did not fit to the data better. Bystanders experienced more guilt and shame compared to targets at measurement time point one and two (see Figure 2) and targets only experienced more aggression compared to bystanders at measurement time point one (see Figure 5, Table 8, Table 9, Table 10, & Table 11). Besides the temporal effects, the results correspond to the assumptions of hypothesis 1, that participants in the bystander condition (compared to the target condition) felt more guilty and ashamed and participants in the target condition (compared to the bystander condition) experienced more aggression-related emotions. We found no significant differences for sadness.

*Perceived self-legitimacy.* Next, we analyzed the results for perceived self-legitimacy. As expected, participants in the bystander condition perceived their behavior

as less legitimate ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 1.64$ ) compared to participants in the target condition ( $M = 7.31$ ,  $SD = .66$ ),  $t(30) = 7.21$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 2.68$ , 95% CI [1.73; 3.64].<sup>13</sup> To test the mediation model for perceived self-legitimacy, we used the same procedure like in Study 1 and 2. We found a mediation effect for shame (T1 – after manipulation) (indirect effect = 1.24, 95% CI [.15, 3.23]) but not for guilt (T1 – after manipulation) (indirect effect = 1.19, 95% CI [-1.24, 3.04]) which partially confirmed hypothesis 3. Participants in the bystander condition, in contrast to participants in the target condition, perceived their behavior in the discussion situation as less legitimate ( $b = -3.17$ ,  $p < .001$ ) which elicited stronger feelings of shame ( $b = -.39$ ,  $p = .04$ ) but not guilt ( $b = -.38$ ,  $p = .13$ ). This can be explained by a high overlap in variance of shame and guilt,  $r(32) = .63$ ,  $p < .001$ .

*Defense reaction.* To test hypothesis 4, we analyzed the PDG (see upper part of Figure 6). Because of the nominal data structure, we used the Pearson chi-square test. As assumed, we found a significant difference between the bystander and target condition,  $\chi^2(1, N = 32^{14}) = 4.39$ ,  $p = .04$ . As expected, participants in the target condition defected more (personal defense reactions) ( $N = 13$ ) than they cooperated (social defense reactions) ( $N = 4$ ) ( $\chi^2(1, N = 17) = 4.77$ ,  $p = .03$ ), whereas participants in the bystander condition defected less (personal defense reaction) ( $N = 6$ ) than they cooperated (social defense reactions) ( $N = 9$ ), but this difference was not significant ( $\chi^2(1, N = 15) = .60$ ,  $p = .44$ ). Second, we analyzed the decision to work alone or together in the picture-selection task, see lower part of Figure 6 below. Similar to the prisoner's dilemma game, we used the Pearson chi-square test, due to of the nominal data structure. As expected, we found a significant difference between the bystander and target condition,  $\chi^2(1, N = 33) = 3.75$ ,  $p = .05$ . In the bystander condition, more participants decided to work together, a social defense reaction ( $N = 13$ ), than to work alone ( $N = 2$ ) ( $\chi^2(1, N = 15) = 8.07$ ,  $p = .01$ ), whereas in the target condition more participants decided to work alone, a personal defense reaction ( $N = 10$ ), than to work together ( $N = 8$ ), but this difference was not significant ( $\chi^2(1, N = 18) = .22$ ,  $p = .64$ ).

*Behavioral inhibition system (BIS).* For the analyses of the BIS activation, one participant (target condition) was excluded because the line bisection score for baseline and t1 (after the discussion phase) was more than 1.5 interquartile ranges away from the first quartile. A repeated measure ANOVA with the factor time (baseline vs. t1) yielded

<sup>13</sup> For one participant (target) this answer could not be measured because of technical problems.

<sup>14</sup> For one participant (target) this answer could not be measured because of technical problems.

Table 8

*Random intercept model for guilt (140 measurements on level 1, N = 28 unique participants across measurements on level 2) Study 3*

	$\gamma$ (SE)
Fixed Effects	
Intercept	1.00 (.30)**
Condition	.33 (.41)
T1	.08 (.33)
T2	.08 (.33)
T3	.62 (.33) <sup>+</sup>
T4	< .01 (.33)
Condition × T1	1.99 (.45)***
Condition × T2	.86 (.45) <sup>+</sup>
Condition × T3	.18 (.45)
Condition × T4	.53 (.45)
Random Effects	
Intercept	.47
Residual	.71
ICC 1	.40***
ICC 2	.77

<sup>+</sup> $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . Target = -1 and Bystander = 1. T1 = after manipulation, T2 = after work efficiency, T3 = after PDG, T4 = after picture selection task. Four participants (all targets) were excluded, because their guilt score for at least two measurement points was more than 1.5 interquartile ranges away from the first quartile.

Table 9

*Random intercept model for shame (150 measurements on level 1,  
N = 30 unique participants across measurements on level 2) Study 3*

	$\gamma$ (SE)
<b>Fixed Effects</b>	
Intercept	1.86 (.23)***
Condition	-.02 (.38)
T1	-.31 (.29)
T2	-.50 (.29) <sup>+</sup>
T3	-.06 (.29)
T4	-.56 (.29) <sup>+</sup>
Condition × T1	.81 (.42) <sup>+</sup>
Condition × T2	.79 (.42) <sup>+</sup>
Condition × T3	-.22 (.42)
Condition × T4	.28 (.42)
<b>Random Effects</b>	
Intercept	.40
Residual	.66
ICC 1	.36***
ICC 2	.74

*Note.* <sup>+</sup> $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . Target = -1 and Bystander = 1. T1 = after manipulation, T2 = after work efficiency, T3 = after PDG, T4 = after picture selection task. Two participants (one target and one bystander) were excluded, because their shame score for at least two measurement points was more than 1.5 interquartile ranges away from the first quartile.

Table 10

*Random intercept model for aggression (155 measurements on level 1, N = 31 unique participants across measurements on level 2) Study 3*

	$\gamma$ (SE)
Fixed Effects	
Intercept	1.76 (.23)***
Condition	-.05 (.35)
T1	.79 (.28)**
T2	-.24 (.28)
T3	.06 (.28)
T4	-.38 (.28)
Condition $\times$ T1	-.87 (.42)*
Condition $\times$ T2	-.05 (.42)
Condition $\times$ T3	.01 (.42)
Condition $\times$ T4	-.15 (.42)
Random Effects	
Intercept	.25
Residual	.68
ICC 1	.23***
ICC 2	.60

*Note.*  $^+p < .10$ ;  $*p < .05$ ;  $**p < .01$ ;  $***p < .001$ . Target = -1 and Bystander = 1. T1 = after manipulation, T2 = after work efficiency, T3 = after PDG, T4 = after picture selection task. One participant (bystander) was excluded, because their guilt score for at least two measurement points was more than 1.5 interquartile ranges away from the first quartile.

Table 11

*Mean, Standard Deviations for all measurement points of guilt (N = 28), shame (N = 30) and aggression (N = 31) in Study 3*

Variables	Bystander	Target
Guilt t0	1.33 (.49)	1.00 (.00)
Guilt t1	3.40 (1.84)	1.08 (.28)
Guilt t2	2.27 (1.44)	1.08 (.28)
Guilt t3	2.13 (1.23)	1.62 (1.33)
Guilt t4	1.87 (1.41)	1.00 (.00)
Shame t0	1.86 (.95)	1.88 (1.09)
Shame t1	2.36 (1.45)	1.56 (.81)
Shame t2	2.14 (1.41)	1.38 (.72)
Shame t3	1.57 (.94)	1.81 (1.11)
Shame t4	1.57 (1.02)	1.31 (.60)
Aggression t0	1.71 (.96)	1.76 (1.36)
Aggression t1	1.64 (1.01)	2.56 (1.36)
Aggression t2	1.43 (.65)	1.53 (.70)
Aggression t3	1.79 (.96)	1.82 (.90)
Aggression t4	1.18 (.46)	1.38 (.76)

*Note.* T0 = Baseline, T1 = after manipulation, T2 = after work efficiency, T3 = after PDG, T4 = after picture selection task.

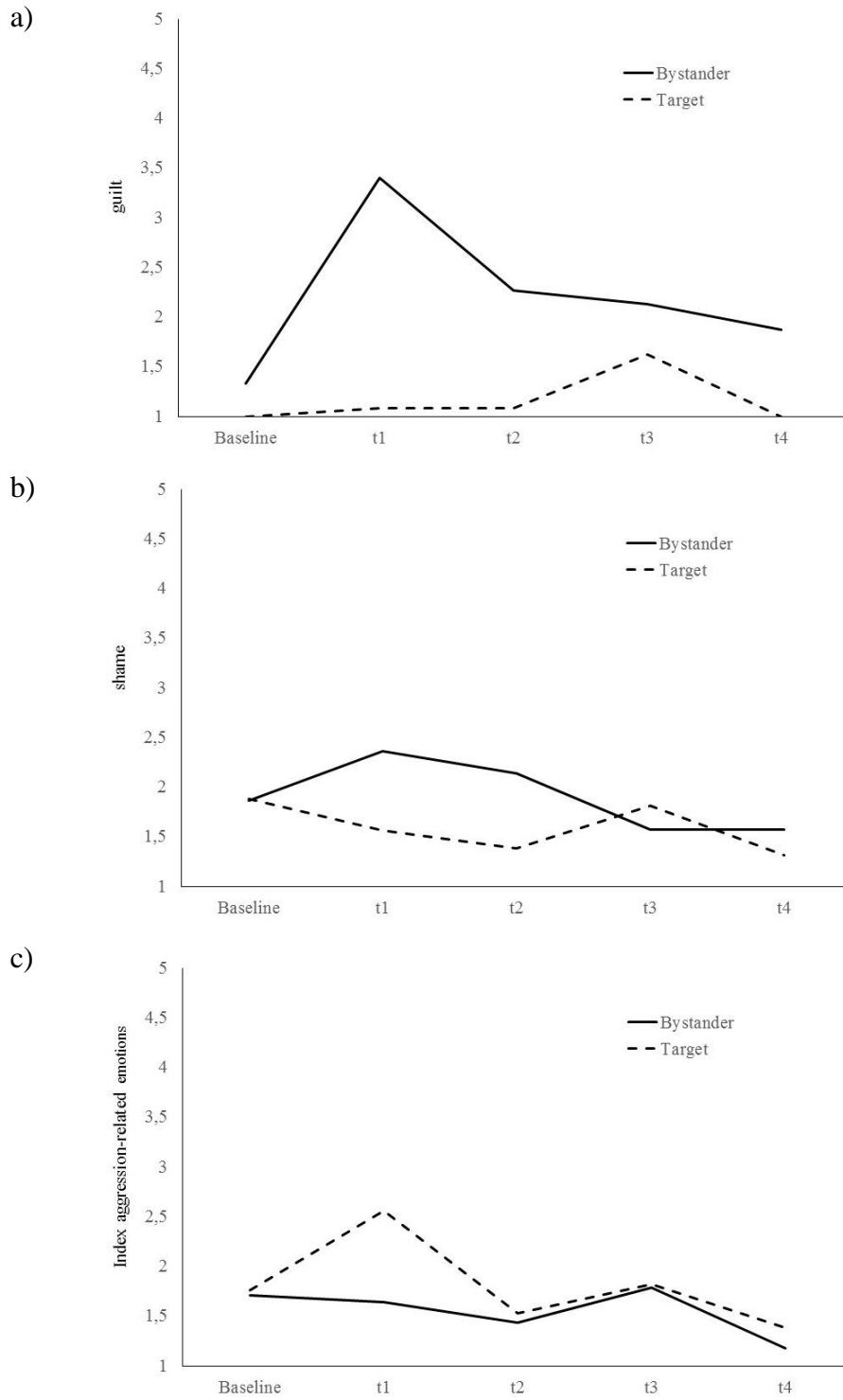


Figure 5. Course of the emotional reactions of guilt (a), shame (b) and aggression-related emotions (c) in Study 3. T1 = after manipulation, T2 = after work efficiency, T3 = after PDG, T4 = after picture selection task.

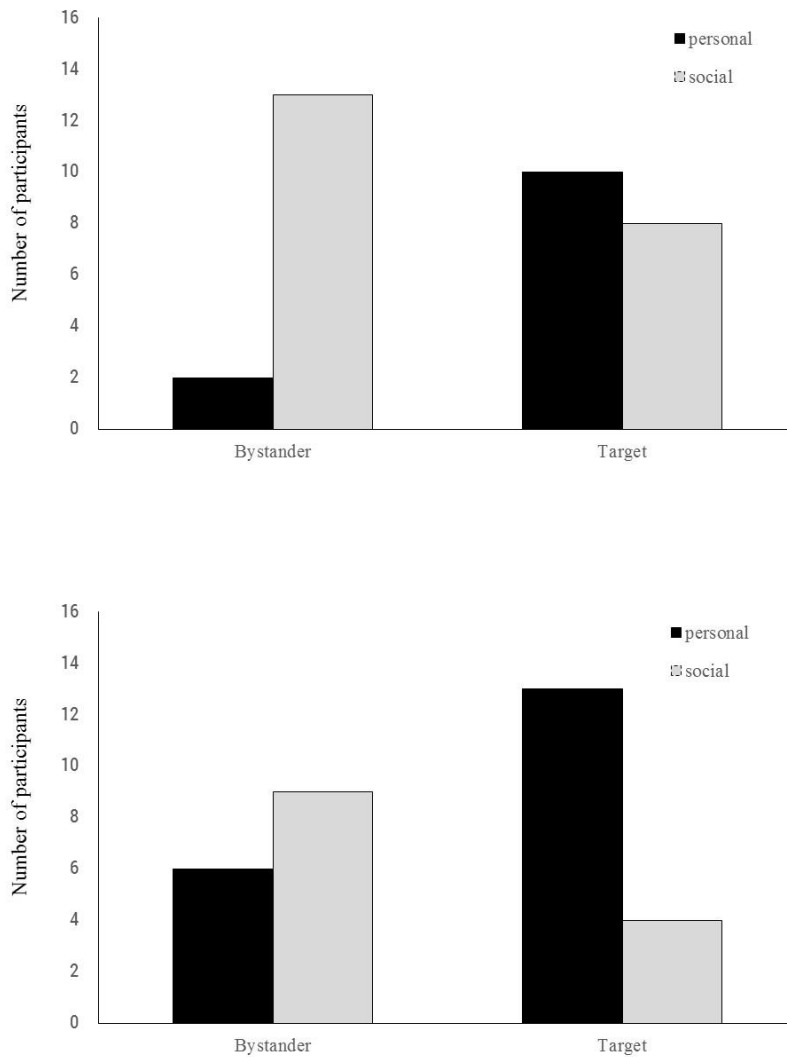


Figure 6. Number of participants for both defense reactions tasks from Study 3. *PDG* above and *picture selection task* below.

no significant main effect,  $F(1, 34) = 1.76, p = .19, \eta_p^2 = .05$ . Thus, hypothesis 2 was not supported.

### 5.8.3 Discussion

In summary, the main results correspond to the findings of Study 1 and 2: Bystanders in a face-to-face interaction paradigm of social exclusion perceive their inaction as less legitimate, than elicits feelings shame. Moreover, the present study shows that for bystanders, the feelings of guilt and shame decreased until the end of the study. In contrast, aggression-related feelings of targets decrease after the perpetrator left the situation. Contrary to our expectations, we found no significant differences for



sadness. There is the possibility that the social exclusion situation was either not strong enough or too short to elicit feelings of sadness. Compared to the targets, bystanders generally showed more social than personal defense reactions. Certainly, we found differences between the two defense reactions tasks, which we will discuss in the general discussion. Finally, we could not find a threat response (BIS activation) for targets and bystanders with the line bisection task. All results will be discussed in the general discussion.

## 5.9 Meta-analysis

To establish the overall effects of BIS activation in the line bisection task and defense reactions between bystanders and targets, we performed a meta-analysis over all three studies for BIS activation and one for defense reaction. For BIS activation, we averaged the effects of all three studies weighted by the sample size. The result show a low but significant BIS activation across all three studies ( $d = .12$ ,  $SE = .05$ , 95% CI [.02, .21],  $Z = 2.37$ ,  $p = .02$ ). This means that people who are bystanders or targets in the context of social exclusion experience the situation as threatening. To investigate the defense reaction between bystanders and targets over all three studies, we conducted a meta-analysis like for the BIS activation. Because we used two different measures for the defense reaction in Study 1 and 3, we averaged the effects in each study, so that only one effect for each of the three studies was part of the meta-analysis. We found a low to medium effect across all three studies ( $d = .40$ ,  $SE = .10$ , 95% CI [.20, .59],  $Z = 3.99$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which indicate that bystanders show more social defense reactions in contrast to targets.

## 5.10 General Discussion

Our three studies demonstrate that bystanders experience a threat to the self by witnessing social exclusion. This complements previous research showing that targets and perpetrators in a social exclusion situation experience a threat to the self (e.g., Bastian et al., 2013; Williams, 2007).

However, the threat to the self leads to different cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions for bystanders compared to targets after the social exclusion situation. Thus, this paper offers a deeper insight in the psychological processes of bystanders who are involved in a social exclusion situation than past research on social exclusion (e.g., Wesselmann et al., 2009; Wesselmann, et al., 2013; Williams & Nida, 2011) and hence provides a contribution to the dynamics of social exclusion (Zadro & Gonsalkorale, 2014). Moreover, it provides a contribution to the research field of threat

and defense (e.g., (Jonas et al., 2014; Hart, 2014), by showing that different kinds of threats (threat perceived by targets vs. threat perceived by bystanders) lead to different defense reactions (personal vs. social defense reactions).

All three studies show reliable differences in the cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions between bystanders and targets on social exclusion. First, participants in the bystander condition reported more feelings of guilt and shame in all three studies (compared to participants in the target condition) after recalling or experiencing a social exclusion situation, which might indicate that they perceived their inaction as less legitimate in the context of societal shared convictions and felt responsible for their behavior. In this context, Study 3 additionally shows that the feelings of bystanders decrease only slowly until the end of the study, which might be a sign of the threat strength. It could also be that the available defense reactions did not sufficiently resolve the legitimacy crisis. Second, we demonstrated in Study 1 and 2, that legitimacy crisis mediated the extent of the violation of societal shared convictions on emotions of guilt and shame. Participants who were recalling a bystander situation, in contrast to participants who were recalling a target situation, perceived their behavior in the social exclusion situation as less legitimate which elicited feelings of guilt and shame. Based on the great overlap of variance between shame and guilt, especially feelings of shame were elicited by legitimacy crisis. In Study 3, we were able to replicate this finding in a face-to-face interaction paradigm, where participants showed actual behavior and were either a target or a bystander of a social exclusion situation. Third, the inaction of bystanders in a social exclusion situation is linked to more social defense reactions after a social exclusion situation. In contrast to participants in the target condition, participants in the bystander condition judged their behavioral reaction after the social exclusion situation and their current most important projects as more social (Study 1 and 2). We replicated this finding in Study 3 with actual behavioral reactions: Bystanders decided more often on working together in a picture selection task and targets defected more in the prisoner's dilemma game.

Our general findings are also supported by the mediation analysis in Study 2. The influence of the role in a social exclusion situation on the distal defense reaction is mediated by the extent of the legitimacy crisis, feelings of guilt and shame, and guilty conscience. Contrary to the target condition, participants who recalled a bystander situation perceived their behavior as less legitimate, which elicited feelings of guilt and shame that increased guilty conscience, which led to a stronger social defense reaction.

The findings in Study 3 demonstrate the relevance of the interaction between the kind of threat (bystander or target) and type of distal defense reaction (personal vs. social) for the BAS activation. Targets who chose a personal and not a social defense reaction showed an increase in BAS activation, which indicates a successful reduction of the threatening situation. A possible explanation would be that the participants in the target condition estimated the probability of re-inclusion as low, indicating that a personal defense reaction is appropriate to reduce the threatening situation. It suggests that targets with a personal defense reaction satisfied at least their need for autonomy (Williams & Nida, 2011). Unfortunately, we found no significant differences for bystanders in BAS activation. As mentioned above, the possible defense reactions were insufficient to fully decrease the threat for the bystanders. This is in line with comments from the debriefing section, where participants from the bystander condition answered that they were not eased before they had had the chance to explain their behavior to the target after the study was over.

In general, our research contributes to the knowledge on social exclusion dynamics because it enlightens the underlying processes of bystanders' reactions. The present findings indicate that being an involved bystander is threatening to self. This threat is characterized by a legitimacy crisis (Baumeister et al., 1985; Habermas, 1973), feelings of guilt and shame (e.g., Haidt, 2003; Tangney, et al., 2007), and social defense reactions (Jonas et al., 2014). This suggests that bystanders want to restore their need for relatedness through affiliative behavior. These insights are important for the development of prevention or intervention programs, as they offer the opportunity to illustrate to people that being a bystander can also be harmful after a social exclusion situation. This could support the aim of interventions to stress the importance of acting and helping others in a threatening situation (e.g., social exclusion or bullying).

The results on the different defense reactions of bystanders and targets contribute to the field of threat and defense. While most research (for an overview see Jonas et al., 2014) investigated the impact of the difference between threat and non-threat conditions on defense reactions, our results provide first evidence that the kind of defense reaction depends on the kind of threat, which was demonstrated with different kind of measurements. Bystanders showed more social defense reactions whereas targets showed more personal defense reactions. Further research is necessary to better understand under which circumstances (e.g., type of need violation, personality or

opportunities for defense reaction) the different kinds of distal defense reactions, postulated in the general model of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014), occur.

### 5.10.1 Limitations and future directions

Despite the generally consistent results in this paper, there are some limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, our research only focuses on short-term consequences. Research on targets of social exclusion shows serious physiological and psychological consequences, such as reduced immune system functioning and higher incidence of psychopathology in the long-term (e.g., Cacioppo, Hawkey, & Berntson, 2003; Eisenberger, Lieberman, M., & Williams, 2003; Twenge, et al., 2007; Williams, 2007). The question is how the repeated experience of social exclusion situations (at work, family or friends) affects the psychological and physiological well-being of bystanders. Research on aggression in the family shows that children who witness interparental aggression show impaired mental health and reduced psychological well-being (for an overview see Barnett, Miller-Perrin, & Perrin, 2011; Evans, Davies, & DiLillo, 2008). In line with these findings, research on unethical behavior at work shows that witnessing unethical behavior (e.g., unpleasant interactions, abusive supervision and bullying) leads, for example, to negative affect, stress, mental stress reactions or decreased job satisfaction (for an overview see Giacalone & Promislo, 2010; Mitchell, Vogel, & Folger, 2012; Robinson, Wang, & Kiewitz, 2014). Beside the anxiety of being the next target (Giacalone & Promislo, 2010), our results suggest that the repeated inaction in social exclusion situations might also be an explanatory factor for the harmful consequences on bystanders. Future research should therefore also focus on the long-term consequences for people who repeatedly witness social exclusion situations and should investigate how the legitimacy crisis contributes to the negative consequences of observing such situations relative to other factors (e.g., anxiety of being the next target). In this regard, it would be also interesting to compare third-party observers who interfere to those who do not interfere regarding the consequences to their well-being and health.

Second, we postulated that bystanders experience a legitimacy crisis when they break the social norms of inclusion and equality. With respect to the reported and experienced feeling of shame and guilt, the findings indicate that the extent of self-perceived responsibility might be a relevant factor for the extent of the legitimacy crisis and, therefore, the emotional and behavioral consequences of being a bystander (Haidt, 2003; Tangney et al., 2007). The aspect of responsibility seems to be an important

factor for the differences between involved bystanders and vicarious ostracism (e.g., Wesselmann et al., 2013; Will et al., 2013), where people only witness social exclusion from an outside perspective. People in vicarious ostracism should only experience compassion and not guilt, because they should feel not responsible for the social exclusion of the target as the involved bystander. To extend our present research, future studies should take the self-perceived responsibility into account when investigating the impact on legitimacy, and the subsequent emotional and behavioral consequences of involved bystanders. Research on perpetrators in social exclusion (e.g., Bastian et al., 2013; Legate et al., 2015; Van Tongeren et al., 2015) provides evidence that people who are responsible for the exclusion report more guilt and show more social defense reactions (e.g., allocation decisions) than people who are not responsible. This implies that, independent from the role of bystander or perpetrator, people who perceive their behavior in a social exclusion situation as unjustified and therefore feel responsible for the exclusion of the target, experience a legitimacy crisis (Baumeister et al., 1985; Habermas, 1973). The legitimacy crisis then leads to feelings of guilt and shame, which in turn increases the probability of a social defense reaction.

Third, although we found significant differences between bystanders and targets in their defense reactions, it is unclear which of these groups deviates from the standard, because no control group was included in the study designs. Notwithstanding, our results are in line with the theoretical assumptions and previous empirical findings, we know that the integration of the results is slightly problematic. Especially in Study 1 and 2, the focus was on the description of the social exclusion situation and the subsequent reactions of bystanders and targets to this situation, so we decided to drop the control group. In our view, the task, to describe how they reacted to this situation, could be perceived as illogical in a control group. This would have meant to change the details of the task, which reduces the comparability between the conditions. Basically, future research should enhance the existing research design and add a control group. Furthermore, a simultaneous comparison of bystanders and targets to the group of perpetrators would also be informative for the understanding of the dynamics of social exclusion. As mentioned in the theory section and the previous paragraph about responsibility, there should be a vast overlap between perpetrators and bystanders. Especially, future research should take a closer look on these two groups.

Fourth, as mentioned above, we found cognitive, affective and behavioral evidence that a social exclusion situation is threatening to the self for targets and

bystander. Nevertheless, over all three studies, we found a small effect for BIS activation on the line bisection task (e.g., Nash et al., 2010), which measures the relative cerebral asymmetry and hence the activation of BIS and BAS. The BIS result of Study 2 shows a typical pattern of a threat reaction, whereas Study 1 and 3 did not show significant results. In Study 2, we found a slight but typical threat response with a decrease of BAS activation after recalling the social exclusion situation, which implies a BIS activation. As mentioned above, the meta-analysis over all three studies show a low effect, which is the possible result of the weaker manipulation in Study 1 and 2, and some methodological problems of the line bisection task, such as time pressure (Roskes, Sligte, Shalvi, & De Dreu, 2011) or neurophysiological locality of the behavioral inhibition system (Naylor et al., 2015). Future research is needed to clarify influence factors on BIS activation and the impact on the line bisection measure. Furthermore, based on the small effect size obtained in our meta-analysis, future research should use larger sample sizes and perhaps, more sensitive measures for BIS activation, such as EEG measurement (Jonas et al., 2014).

Fifth, referring to the contribution of our work to the field of threat and defense, we wanted to show that bystanders and targets react differently to the threatening situation. Our findings predominantly show a significant difference in defense reaction between both roles with different types of measurements, but there are some restrictions. We used the same measure (judging one's reaction to a social exclusion situation) for capturing the defense reaction in Study 1 and Study 2 which, however, yielded different results. Although the patterns of the data are similar, we only found a direct significant difference between bystanders and targets in Study 1. In Study 2, we found a significant serial mediation, which showed that bystanders prefer more social than personal defense reactions compared to targets. It is unclear to us, why we did not obtain the direct effect of Study 1 in Study 2. Possible explanations are situational (e.g., probability for re-inclusion) or personality factors (e.g., self-esteem, trait BIS-BAS and empathy) which might have influenced the kind of defense reaction in this study (Davis, 1996; Hart, 2014; Park, 2010; Wesselmann et al., 2009). In Study 3, we used two established measures from social psychology (Prisoner's Dilemma Game and picture selection task) to capture the dimensionality (personal vs. social) of the defense reactions for bystanders and targets. Although the findings of both measures show evidence in favor of our theoretical assumptions, the results for each measure are driven by one condition: the targets in the Prisoner's Dilemma and the bystanders in the picture

selection task. Targets might have evaluated the probability for re-inclusion differently or the different basic human needs were differently threatened, which influenced their decision to work alone or together. It is also possible, that the Prisoner's Dilemma Game influenced the decision in the picture selection task, although the concrete process of this influence is unclear to us. Certainly, the meta-analysis on defense reaction shows a low to medium effect over all three studies, which suggests that bystanders show more social defense reactions in contrast to targets. Until now, there is no research, which addresses this aspect of threat and defense. Our studies provide first attempts to offer insights by using different measures of this aspect.

To extend our findings, future research should generally investigate the influence of other situational and, personality factors and their interaction on the type of defense reactions. Especially the probability for re-inclusion and the threat of the basic human needs seems to be important factors determining the type of defense reaction. Moreover, our findings should be replicated with other measures such as the 10-coin give-some dilemma game (e.g., De Hooge et al., 2008; Van Lange & Kuhlman, 1994), where participants decide how many coins they would like to give to an interaction partner. However, the conceptualization of the dimensions for distal defense reactions (Jonas et al., 2014) should be clarified in more detail to develop a better operationalization of these dimensions.

Finally, while our findings regarding the cognitive, affective and behavioral consequences of bystanders and targets are almost the same in Study 1, 2 and 3, the sample size of Study 3 is quite small. We are aware that this is problematic from a power perspective, especially for the analysis between targets and bystanders in the dichotomous defense measures and the line bisection task. However, we think that this study is important because it provides a first insight in the direct behavioral defense reactions and the course of affect from targets and bystanders after a real social exclusion situation. Moreover, we found strong results for legitimacy crisis and partially strong for the defense reactions (e.g., social defense reaction for bystanders in the picture selection task). These results are supported by our two meta-analyses for BIS activation and defense reaction. Based on this evidence, future research should take this as a starting point for investigating the dynamics of social exclusion situations (targets, bystanders and perpetrators) in such kind of face-to-face interactions. We hope that the present findings inspire such and other new research on the interactions between social exclusion and threat (reactions).

## 6 Legitimacy crises and Leadership

This chapter has been submitted under Zill<sup>1</sup>, A., Knoll, M., Cook, A., & Meyer, B. (2017). *Examining why leaders withhold their views and why followers compensate for their team leaders' silence.*

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*Submitted to Leadership Quarterly*

### **Abstract**

Leaders are mostly seen as an influence factor helping to overcome silence by acting as a role model or by providing conditions that facilitate voice, for example, a climate of justice. However, when critical issues occur in organizations, employees may decide to withhold their views. In this study, we examine reasons for leader silence in organizations and challenge prior research suggesting trickle down- and role-modeling processes by proposing that leader silence may be negatively related to team-member silence. Furthermore, we propose that perceiving one's leader as just does not necessarily lead to more voice behavior. Our reasoning is based on the assumption that team members aim at protecting their resources which are threatened by a leader who is reluctant to address critical issues. We furthermore expect that team-members will not show such compensatory behavior if the leader is perceived as just. Applying conservation of resources theory and uncertainty management theory, we expect that working under unjust conditions aggravates the potential for resource loss and thus increases the need to step up in order to protect one's resources. We examine our hypotheses in two multi-level studies using samples from organizations undergoing restructuring, which makes resource loss particularly likely.

*Keywords:* silence, leader, follower, conservation of resource, legitimacy crises



## 6.1 Introduction

Organizations rely on the knowledge (sharing) and involvement of employees on every hierarchical level in order to improve performance and prevent harm (Connelly & Zweig, 2015; Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). However, expressing work-related ideas, opinions, questions, and concerns with the aim of initiating change (i.e., voice) is a risky form of extra-role behavior (Hirschman, 1970; van Dyne, Cummings, & MacLean Parks, 1995). Challenging the status quo may upset others and disturb the smooth operation of the group. Moreover, employees do not know whether their investments in voice behavior (e.g., develop a strategy for how to address the issue, prepare potential solutions, disturbing social harmony) will result in change. Consequently, fear and the expectancy that voice is futile have been found to be the two most prominent reasons for employee silence (i.e., the withholding of ideas, views, and concerns regarding work-related issues from others' who could affect change; Pinder & Harlos, 2001; see also Morrison, 2014).

Compared to followers, leaders should be less likely to engage in silence behaviors as their status position makes voice less risky, provides them with more opportunities to bring an issue to the attention of powerful others which, in turn, makes it less likely that their voice is futile. However, despite their powerful position, at times, leaders hesitate to take action, withhold their views, and fail to address malfunctioning (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008; Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland, & Hetland, 2007). Leader silence should be more dangerous for organizations than follower silence, because leaders have greater responsibility to initiate improvements and to protect their followers and the organization from harm. If leaders do not address critical issues, inefficiencies or malfunctioning endure and - as the leader appears not to care - may even disseminate aggravating the situation for followers and impeding the group's progress (Kelloway, Sivanathan, Francis, & Barling, 2005; Leyman, 1996). Moreover, leaders function as role models (Bandura, 1986; Gibson, 2004). If followers observe leader silence, silence may trickle-down (Schaubroeck et al., 2012) and may establish itself as the appropriate response to critical issues in the respective team.

Although followers may use leader behavior as a cue when deciding upon how to behave, they may not necessarily copy their leader's behavior. Followers may have an interest in doing a good job, they may want to see the team and the organization flourish, and they may use work as a vehicle to realize their potential and fulfil their needs (Gagne & Deci, 2005; Lind & van de Bos, 2013; McGregor, 1960).

Consequently, followers invest their resources in their job even if it is not rewarded or even discouraged (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Meyerson, 2001). If leaders do not deal with critical issues that may have detrimental effects on followers, these investments are in danger. Followers of leaders who are reluctant to address critical issues may need to work under inefficient policies, lack the organizational support they need, or suffer in toxic environments (Lutgen-Sandvik & Arsht, 2014; Skogstad, Hetland, Glaso, & Einarsen, 2014). Putting up with these difficult conditions requires followers to invest additional resources, for example, work longer hours to compensate for inefficient processes (Kelloway et al., 2005).

Drawing on conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Ng & Feldman, 2012), we propose that due to their need to protect their resources and avoid additional resource loss, team-members may compensate for their leader's silence by reducing their own tendency to withhold their views. We furthermore propose that such compensatory behavior is determined by followers' justice perceptions, but not in a way justice perceptions are usually linked to individuals' tendency to express or withhold their views. Prior research showed that justice climate encourages voice (Chamberlin, Newton, & LePine, 2017; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). Drawing on uncertainty management theory (van de Bos & Lind, 2002), we expect a different relationship. As a perceived lack of justice causes uncertainty and resource loss is particularly threatening in an uncertain environment, having an unjust supervisor may increase followers' need to overcome silence themselves.

We examine these two controversial assumptions - the negative relationship between leaders and their follower' silence and the silence-reducing effect of injustice - in two organizations that went through considerable changes in the years prior to our study and thus make threats of resource loss likely (Fugate, Prussia, & Kinicki, 2012; Kiefer, 2005; Niessen & Jimmieson, 2016). Applying a multi-level approach, in Study 1, we examine whether follower silence can be negatively related to leader silence. In Study 2, we aim to qualify this finding by showing that the negative relationship between leader and follower silence is moderated by team-members' justice perceptions. Moreover, in Study 2, we extend our model by including potential antecedents for leader silence thus enriching the scarce knowledge on the reasons for why leaders withhold their views.

## 6.2 Theoretical Background - Leader Silence and its Consequences

From time to time, employees face situations in which they have ideas for improvement, disagree with superiors or the company policies, or they observe unethical or inefficient behavior. Detert and Edmondson (2011) labelled such situations latent voice episodes as employees can decide whether to express their views (i.e., voice), or to withhold them (i.e., silence). Voice is a form of extra-role behavior, as contributing ideas and concerns cannot be prompted and others may not even know whether or when employees withhold their views (van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). For leaders, however, there is some kind of social consensus that they should intervene when they notice critical issues. Setting up an efficient and ideally effective work environment and finding ways to increase productivity is a genuine leadership task (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996; Hackman & Wageman, 2005). It is also within leaders' requirements to protect their team from physical and psychological harm and thus guarantee safety and ethical standards, and assign workload to an appropriate level (Frost, 2004). In that, fulfilling a leader role differs from having power which might go without the need to fulfil others' expectations and social norms (Biddle, 1986; Joshi & Fast, 2013; Katz & Kahn, 1978).

At times, leaders fail to fulfill these expectations. Most prominent examples of such situations are cases when leaders intentionally take advantage of their position, however, besides crimes of commission, harm may follow from omission as well (Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007). Leaders who do not confront a subordinate's or fellow managers' shortcomings, who do not address inefficient processes, or are reluctant to sanction a bully within their own team do not only fail to provide a supportive work context, put a psychological toll on their team (Leyman, 1996; Skogstad et al., 2007). The team may be forced to work in toxic and non-supportive environments or make up for inefficiency by investing more resources (e.g., time, energy) than necessary (Frost, 2004; Hackman & Wageman, 2005).

## 6.3 Followers' Response to Leader Silence – A Conservation of Resources View

Followers have different options to deal with their leaders' reluctance to address critical issues. Role model theory and research suggests that followers use their leader's behavior as a cue and adjust their own behavior accordingly (Bandura, 1986; Schaubroeck et al., 2012). Copying leader behavior is a safe option whereas diverging from leader behavior can be risky. Speaking up requires resources, for example to

analyze the status quo, figure out how to improve it or prevent harm, prepare to communicate one's concerns or ideas. In the follow-up, one may be asked to implement this idea, mostly on-top of one's normal workload, and one may face retaliation from superiors or peers who were responsible for, tolerated or benefited from the status quo (Burris, 2012; Detert & Edmondson, 2011). As voice is effortful and potentially disturbs social harmony and the smooth functioning of the unit, it seems reasonable that followers join their leader's silence. Conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) provides a theoretical framework for the withholding of efforts under conditions of stress and high workload (Ng & Feldman, 2012). COR theory suggests that employees need resources to cope with stressful events which, in turn, consumes resources. Consequently, employees are motivated to acquire, protect, and retain resources such as time, energy, status, health, and social relations. Cognitive psychology shows that it is psychologically more harmful for individuals to lose resources than it is helpful for them to gain resources (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). This "primacy of resource loss" (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014, p. 1335) has been used to explain that employees show less extra-role behavior when experiencing burnout symptoms (as health resources are depleted; Leiter, 1993). In line with this reasoning, Ng and Feldman (2012) found in their meta-analysis that all of the included stressors and strains were negatively related to voice, a form of extra-role behavior.

COR theory, however, also suggests that individuals invest resources in order to protect against resource loss (Hobfoll, 2001; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003). We propose that in the situation that we described above, namely that a leader has a tendency to remain silent in the face of critical issues, the resource investment principle of COR theory does suggest an increase in follower voice. If leaders remain silent in the face of critical situations, for example insufficient resource allocation, inefficient company policies, bullying within the team, or incivilities caused by customers, they tolerate and probably encourage conditions that interfere with task completion and consume resources (Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Lutgen-Sandvik & Arsht, 2014). In such cases, followers have to invest more resources than necessary in order to accomplish their aims and toxic or inefficient environments function as further strains. These processes do not only consume resources, followers also have to expect further resource loss. If critical issues endure due to a leader's reluctance to initiate change, this may deny followers

accomplishing their goals at all threatening the loss of resources they already invested, for example, in a project or their career in the company.

Cognitive psychology proposed that people are rather risk averse and thus prefer avoiding resource loss compared to the prospect of resource gain; however, it also suggests that when in the loss zone, people become more prone to risk (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). We think that the threat of losing further resources due to leader silence in the face of critical issues moves followers in the loss zone and thus makes them less risk averse. This should reduce followers' tendency to withhold their views in cases when they are faced with critical issues, although they normally would prefer to remain silent. Drawing on COR theory's principle that employees aim at avoiding further loss of resources and prospect theory, we expect:

*Hypothesis 1:* Leader silence is negatively related to follower silence.

#### **6.4 Factors Determining Followers' Compensatory Response - Applying Uncertainty Management Theory**

The proposed negative relationship between leader and follower silence contradicts established views that draw on role modeling theory and proposed trickle-down effects of leader behavior (Schaubroeck et al., 2012). We proposed that the negative relationship signifies compensatory behavior that is shown because followers want to avoid losing further resources. To further substantiate our reasoning, we examine a condition that should make a threat of resource loss particularly likely amplifying compensatory behavior.

As we explained above, engaging in voice behavior consumes resources. Thus, even if leaders remain silent in cases when confronted with critical issues, followers may hesitate to engage in voice. Moreover, if they think they work in an environment that protects them from further resource loss even if their leader remains silent, they may be tempted to remain silent and save the resources they would need to invest when speaking up. Being treated in a fair and just way is one such environmental characteristic that offers employees protection (Lind & Tyler, 1988) which, in turn, could make compensatory behavior less necessary.

Uncertainty management theory (van den Bos & Lind, 2002) proposes that human beings aim at avoiding uncertainty as uncertainty is associated with a number of unpleasant states (e.g., anxiety, helplessness, lack of meaning; see also Hogg, 2007). Being subject to other people's decisions, which is often the case in the work context, causes uncertainty. If followers notice that their leader does not address critical issues,

they may doubt that their leader will protect them from potential threats which, in turn, increases uncertainty. In their attempts to reduce uncertainty, followers look for cues that makes this uncertainty more manageable. Working in a just environment or perceiving their leader as fair is such a cue (Lind & Kulik, 2009, van den Bos & Lind, 2002). If, in contrast, a leader is seen as unjust, this causes even more uncertainty (Takeuchi, Chen, & Cheung, 2012). To give an example, followers do not only need to invest additional resources to make up for the leader's reluctance to address inefficient processes, they need also be afraid that the leader distributes the workload in an unfair way or does allocate resources not based on demands.

Consequently, we think that if a leader tends to remain silent when confronted with critical issues and followers cannot count on the leader's overall justice, their motivation to avoid further resource loss will reduce their tendency to withhold their views. If they work for a leader that appears to be just, compensatory behavior seems not that necessary. Thus, we expect:

*Hypothesis 2:* The negative relationship between leader silence and team-member silence is stronger when the leader is perceived as unjust.

## **6.5 Exploring Reasons for Leader Silence**

Due to the potential detrimental effects of silence in organizations, research on the antecedents, outcomes and boundary conditions of employee voice and silence flourished in recent years (for recent reviews, see Knoll, Wegge, Unterrainer, Silva, & Jonsson, 2016; Morrison, 2014). Notably, in this research, leaders usually embody the role as facilitator or inhibitor of follower voice attempts whereas knowledge on leaders' own voice and silence behavior is scarce (Ashforth, Sutcliffe, & Christiansen, 2009). This is problematic as what we know about follower' voice and silence may not apply to leaders' voice and silence. One reason is that the two dominant motives for remaining silent, namely fear and resignation (Morrison, 2014; Pinder & Harlos, 2001), might be less determining for leaders, because they command more resources and their voice has more impact than that of follower. A second difference is that leaders need to consider a broader range of responsibilities. Leaders are formally installed to serve the companies best interest, they are expected to support their superiors who assigned them to their position, their team expects them to nurture their resources, and they need to secure their employability and consider their well-being (Drucker, 1993; Mintzberg, 1989). It is this conglomerate of responsibilities and role requirements that makes being a leader a difficult task, at times, a burden.

Not all individuals feel that they can live up to this task. At times, individuals doubt whether they have the skills or the "mettle" (i.e., confidence and optimism) to fulfill leader roles, or they think their individual characteristics are simply not in match with the current role requirements (Chemers, 1997; Fiedler, 1978; Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, & Harms, 2008; McCormick, 2001). As individuals feel the need to embody the expectations others associate with the role of a leader (Joshi & Fast, 2013; Katz & Kahn, 1978), the perception of not being able to meet these expectations is likely to cause a legitimacy crisis (Baumeister, Shapiro, & Tice, 1985; Habermas, 1973; Hollander & Julian, 1970). A legitimacy crisis is a specific type of an ego-threat that results from a perceived discrepancy between the characteristics a person embodies and the actions a person is able to conduct on the one hand and, on the other hand, the person's perception of what is "desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions" (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). In line with the general process model of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014), a self-threat is linked to feelings of anxiety and uncertainty which elicits a reduction of approach behavior. As approach behavior is a precondition for action and thus essential for voice (Morrison, See, & Pan, 2015), leaders who experience a legitimacy crisis should show more silence behavior.

Notably, power is associated with approach behavior (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003) and thus, compared to followers, leaders should be more likely to show voice. However, Lammers, Galinsky, Gordijn, and Otten (2008) showed that the link between power and approach behavior is broken when the power relationship is evaluated as illegitimate. This seems reasonable, because perceiving one's powerful position as illegitimate, one may fear that others challenge the distribution of power and question one's position (Keltner et al., 2003). If leaders think they lack the qualities necessary to fulfill the leader role, they may expect followers to stop granting leadership and thus experience their role as insecure (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). In a state of job insecurity, leaders may not want to expose themselves by speaking up as this would put their otherwise fragile position on show. In sum, we expect the following serial effect: *Hypothesis 3: Leader self-efficacy is negatively related to leader silence. This relationship is serially mediated by self-legitimacy and job insecurity.*

## **6.6 Present Research**

Drawing on conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), we expect that team member silence is negatively related to leader silence, because team members

want to protect their resources that are threatened by a leader who tends to withhold his/her views when confronted with critical issues. Furthermore, drawing on uncertainty management theory (van den Bos & Lind, 2002), we expect the negative relationship between leader silence and team-member silence to be stronger when the leader is perceived as unjust. This is proposed because working under unjust conditions aggravates the potential for resource loss and thus increases the need to step up in order to protect one's resources. Finally, in an attempt to explore potential antecedents for leader silence, we propose that if they have the perception that they are not able to fulfill leader tasks (i.e., a lack of self-efficacy), leaders will experience a legitimacy crisis which increases job insecurity which, in turn, increases leader silence. Figure 7 shows our complete theoretical model.

## **6.7 Methods**

### **6.7.1 Samples**

In summer 2016, we were part of a consulting project which aiming at helping two organizations, one energy provider and one public administration, through a period of organizational change. Both companies went through mergers and restructuring within the last years and during the time of the project. Although being secured that no layoffs are to be feared, employees' were affected by the changes resulting in a considerable amount of uncertainty among staff on all levels. Restructuring after mergers and outplacement threatens status, prior investments, and the value of qualifications - all of which resources for employees (Kiefer, 2005), therefore the circumstances made the sites appropriate contexts (Johns, 2006) for examining the phenomena of silence and compensatory behavior.

In Study 1, we examined our basic assumption, namely whether leader silence is negatively related to team-member silence (Hypothesis 1) in a local German energy company which undertook restructuring and outplacement in order to keep up with changing demands in the energy sector. The company was divided in two large divisions: power supply operation and trade and distribution for electricity, gas, waste water, drinking water, and thermal energy. In both divisions, we surveyed employees with a diverse range of qualifications such as engineers, foreman, consultants and blue-collar workers. We took arrangements to preserve the anonymity of the respondents (e.g., by reporting only aggregated data to the organization, using identification numbers in the dataset, etc.).



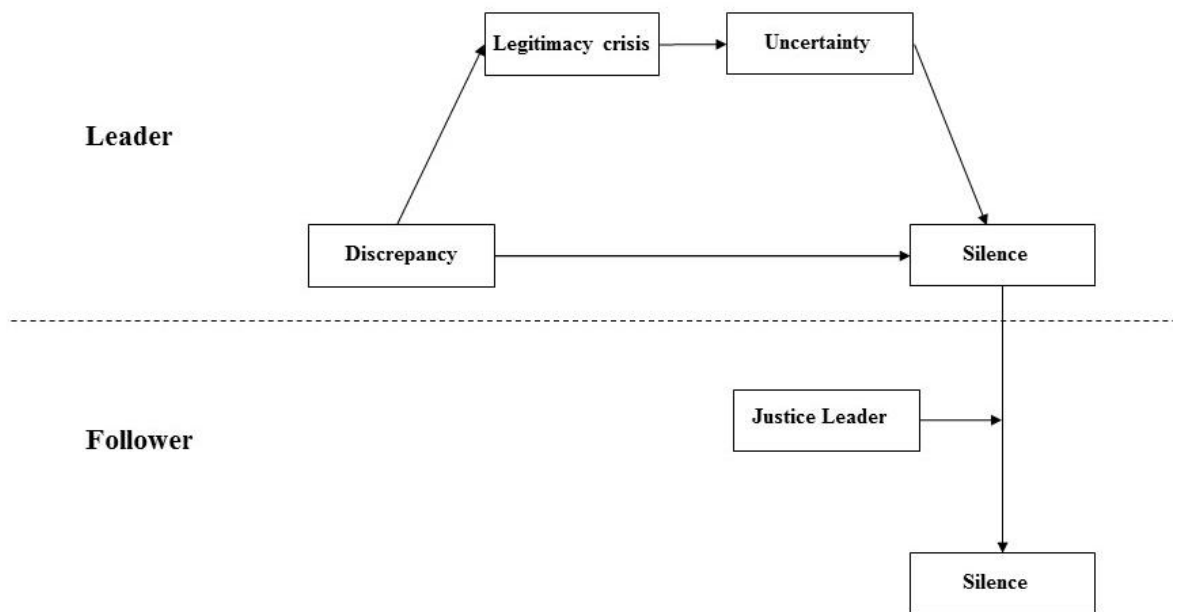


Figure 7. Conceptual model showing the proposed process leading to leader silence, the relationship between leader and follower silence, and the moderating effect of perceived leader justice.

The collected variables were part of a large employee survey which we carried out in the organization. All 1070 employees were invited to participate in the survey which could be completed either as paper pencil survey or online. With 668 employees responding, the overall participation rate was 62.4 %. Two-hundred fifty-two women and 398 men took part, 18 respondents did not specify their gender. More than 50 % of the respondents being older than 46 years: 31 (under 25 years), 105 (26-35 years), 134 (36-45 years), 237 (46-55 years) and 128 (over 55 years), 34 did not specify their age. The organization had a rather stable workforce with more than 50 % of the respondents being with the company for at least 15 years. In total, 48 leaders and 195 team-members provided usable responses to all relevant items and were included in the descriptive analyses. However, as not all team-members and leaders stated their team membership our sample was reduced to a total of 39 leaders and 187 team-members for multilevel hypotheses testing.

In Study 2, we aimed at replicating the proposed compensatory effect in a different setting. The second sample comprised members of a public administration unit which had gone through a process of merger of three geographical divisions in a federal state in Germany prior to the survey. Although the three original units had been merged for five years at the time of the study, they had not yet grown as one which caused

problems regarding both identification and the cooperation across units. We were asked to examine these issues and were therefore provided with the opportunity to replicate and extend Study 1. All of the 1490 organization's employees were invited to participate in the employee survey. Overall participation rate was 60% with 894 employees responding using either the paper and pencil or the online survey. Of the participants, 563 were women, 282 were men, and 49 did not specify their gender. More than 50% of the respondents were older than 46 years and more than 15 years with the organization: 26 (under 25 years), 126 (26-35 years), 190 (36-45 years), 285 (46-55 years) and 212 (over 55 years), 55 did not specify their age. Of all 754 respondents, 76 leaders and 236 team-members provided usable responses on all relevant items and were included in the descriptive analyses. Our final sample for Hypothesis 1 and 2 consisted of 43 leaders and 227 employees who provided information about their team membership and could therefore be included in the multilevel analyses. Finally, 82 leaders provided usable responses to analysis Hypothesis 3.

#### 6.7.2 Measures

*Follower and Leader Silence* was measured with the 3-items subscales for fear- and resignation-based silence (i.e., quiescent and acquiescent silence) that are part of the 12-item employee silence scale developed by Knoll and van Dick (2013). We furthermore included the 3-item subscales for prosocial and opportunistic silence as control variables. In a brief introduction, participants read that people in organizations sometimes face problematic situations and that they can deal with these situations in different ways: some may voice their concerns to people who have the chance to change the situation, whereas others remain silent. Following the item root: "I remain silent at work....", we asked participants how often they remained silent and what motivated them to do so. Sample items are "...because of a fear of negative consequences" (quiescent silence); "...because nothing will change, anyway" (acquiescent silence). We assessed silence on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often), in Study 1 and, due to requirements of the second survey format, on a seven-point scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (daily), in Study 2. We focused on the quiescent and acquiescent silence items, as we assumed that the state of uncertainty of the leaders as well as the team members have the greatest impact on uncertainty related motives of silence (e.g., Jonas et al., 2014).

*Perceived Leader Justice* was measured with two items: "Please assess, how unjust [item 1]/ fair [item 2] your direct supervisor is" which were derived from an

overview on measuring justice and fairness (Colquitt & Rodell, 2015). The Likert-type scale ranged from 1 (to a very large extent) to 5 (to a very small extent).

*Leader Self-efficacy* was measured with a three-item subscale of Spreitzer's (1995) empowerment scale: "I am confident about my ability to do my job", "I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities", and "I have mastered the skills necessary for my job". The scale, ranged from 1 (fully agree) to 5 (not agree).

*Perceived Self-legitimacy* was measured with the following three items which were derived from Suchman's (1995) definition: "I principally regard my actions as leader as appropriate, as they meet the expectations towards my role", "My leadership is generally appropriate, as it matches the general picture of a leader", and "I generally experience my behavior as a leader as appropriate, as it meets the general requirements for a leader." The scale ranged from 1 (fully agree) to 5 (not agree).

*Job insecurity* was measured with the four-item measure from the COPSQ (Kristensen & Borg, 2000; Nübling et al., 2005). After the item root: "Are you worried about..." the items were as follows: "...becoming unemployed?", "...new technology making you redundant?", "...it being difficult for you to find another job if you became unemployed?" and "... being transferred to another job against your will?". Scale range was from 1 (to a very large extent) to 5 (to a very small extent).

### 6.7.3 Analyzing procedure

In both studies, follower-ratings were nested within teams headed by an individual leader. Followers and leaders stated their team affiliation on a voluntary basis, which allowing us to match follower ratings (Level 1) to the respective leader ratings (Level 2). Due to the hierarchical structure of the data and the cross-level nature of the Hypotheses, we used mixed-models using the lme4 package (Bates, Mächler, Bolker, & Walker, 2014) of the R environment (R Development Core Team, 2015) for Hypotheses 1 and 2. The mixed models therefore include only cases for which we could match the follower data to the respective team leader.

## 6.8 Results

### 6.8.1 Study 1

Table 12 presents descriptive statistics of the study variables. Intraclass-coefficients (ICC) did not indicate that Follower Silence was non-independent within teams,  $ICC(1) = .04$ ,  $F(39,155) = 1.22$ ,  $p = .19$ . Teams were moderately distinguishable regarding Follower Silence,  $ICC(2) = .18$ .

Table 12

*Study 1 Descriptive statistics*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	5.
1. L2 Tenure	24.62	12.29				
2. L2 Opportunistic Silence	1.81	.71	-.09			
3. L2 Prosocial Silence	1.36	.47	-.27	.42**		
4. L2 Follower Silence	2.06	.94	-.15	.55**	.51*	
5. L1 Tenure	22.69	13.56				
6. L1 Leader Silence	2.19	.98				.08

Variables 1-4 on Level 2 ( $N_{\text{Leader}} = 48$ ), Variables 9-11 on Level 1 ( $N_{\text{Follower}} = 195$ ), \*  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Due to the multilevel structure of data and hypotheses, further analysis had to include only cases with a known team affiliation, resulting in a reduction of the data set of  $N_{\text{Follower}} = 187$  on level 1 and  $N_{\text{Leader}} = 39$  on level 2. As a first step towards hypothesis testing, we identified the random effects structure by comparing simple models with our Level 1 control variable tenure. A random-intercept-and-slopes model allowing the relationship between follower tenure and Follower Silence to vary freely between teams did not fit the data better than a random-intercept model,  $\Delta \chi_{(2)}^2 = .36$ ,  $p = .84$ . Thus we continued hypothesis testing by fitting random-intercept models with the standardized predictor and control variables. Model 1 included only the control variables and Model 2 included the control variables and Leader Silence as the main predictor (Table 1). To evaluate the model fit, we computed  $R^2_{\text{GLMM}}$  values that quantify the variance explained by the models' fixed factors (Nakagawa & Schielzeth, 2013) using the R-package MuMIn (Burnham & Anderson, 2002). As expected in Hypothesis 1, Leader Silence was negatively related to Follower Silence ( $B = -.21$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Adding Leader Silence as a predictor in Model 2 explained an additional 3% of the variance in comparison to Model 1. Of all included control variables, only Follower tenure was related to the outcome variable ( $B = .14$ ,  $p = .06$ ) supporting prior findings that proposed that tenure diminishes voice (Avery, McKay, Wilson, Volpone, & Killham, 2011).

Table 13

*Study 1 random coefficient models regressing level 1 Follower Silence on standardized independent and control variables. Level 1  $N_{Follower} = 187$ , level 2  $N_{Leader} = 39$  supervisors*

	Model 1	Model 2
Fixed Effects Level 2 Leader		
Tenure	-.07	-.09
Opportunistic Silence	.08	.16
Prosocial Silence	-.02	.02
Leader Silence		-.21*
Fixed Effects Level 1		
Follower		
Intercept	2.20**	2.21**
Tenure	.13 <sup>+</sup>	.14 <sup>+</sup>
Random Effect Variances		
Intercept	.06	.03
Residual	.92	.93
AIC	549.9632	550.5097
BIC	572.5809	576.3586
Marginal Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	.02	.05
Conditional Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	.08	.07

<sup>+</sup> $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

### 6.8.2 Study 2

Study 2 aimed at replicating the findings from Study 1 and at qualifying the results regarding to when the compensating effect of the followers is particularly likely and when leaders are more likely to withhold their views. Table 14 presents descriptive statistics of the study variables. Intraclass-coefficients (ICC) did not indicate non-independence of Follower Silence within teams,  $ICC(1) = .05$ ,  $F(44,191) = 1.28$ ,  $p = .13$ , while teams were moderately distinguishable regarding Follower Silence,  $ICC(2) = .21$ . Prior to hypotheses testing, we fitted simple models with the level 1 moderator perceived justice as sole predictor in order to identify the random effects structure of the baseline model.

Table 14

*Study 2 Descriptive statistics*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	8.	9.
1. L2 Tenure	174.24	112.71								
2. L2 Opportunistic Silence	1.31	.48	-.06							
3. L2 Prosocial Silence	2.20	1.21	.05	.45**						
4. L2 Self-legitimacy	3.61	.78	-.01	-.17	-.12					
5. L2 Self-efficacy	4.49	.57	-.16	-.24	-.22	.38**				
6. L2 Job insecurity	1.65	.65	.13	.24	.26	-.30**	-.23			
7. L2 Leader Silence	2.07	1.3	-.02	.54**	.62**	-.10	-.14**	.40*		
8. L1 Tenure	182.08	117.43								
9. L1 Perceived Justice	1.83	1.14							-.23	
10. L1 Follower Silence	3.98	.93							.03	-.39**

Variables 1-8 on Level 2 ( $N_{Leader} = 76$ ), Variables 9-11 on Level 1 ( $N_{Follower} = 236$ ), \*  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Comparing the -2 log-likelihood-based model fits showed that a random-intercepts-and-slopes model allowing the relationship between Follower-perceived Leader Justice and Follower Silence to vary freely between teams fit the data significantly better compared to the random-intercepts model,  $\Delta \chi_{(2)}^2 = 14.95, p < .01$ . We then fitted two random-intercepts-and-slopes models including all cases with complete data on all study variables with a known team affiliation, which reduced the sample to  $N_{Follower} = 227$  (level 1) and  $N_{Leader} = 43$  (level 2). Model 1 regressed Follower Silence on the standardized predictor, moderator, and control variables. In Model 2, we added the interaction term to the model. Table 15 depicts the results of the analyses. Similar to Study 1, we computed  $R^2_{GLMM}$  values to evaluate model fits.

Results for Model 1 show that follower-perceived Leader Justice was negatively related to Follower Silence supporting prior research that suggests that followers who work for an unfair leader show more silence behaviors. When controlling for the strong effect of follower-perceived Leader Justice, the relationship between Leader Silence and Follower Silence was only marginally significant. Thus, the well-known silence-reducing effect of leader justice seems to be stronger than the compensatory effect. However, when occurring together with Leader Silence, justice perceptions had a different effect. In line with Hypothesis 2, the interaction between Leader Silence and Perceived Leader Justice emerged as a significant predictor of Follower Silence,  $B = .18, p < .05$ . Adding the interaction term to the model increased the marginal pseudo  $R^2$  by 2% which can be considered as relevant increase in explained variance in a field study (Champoux & Peters, 1987; Evans, 1985; Zhang et al., 2012). We plotted the interaction for slope analyses (Figure 8) and ran simple slope tests with an online tool for multilevel slope analysis (Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2006). Leader Silence has a significantly negative impact on Follower Silence when Perceived Justice is low, - 1 SD,  $z = -2.65, p < .01$ . When justice is perceived as high, there is no significant effect of Leader Silence and Follower Silence, + 1 SD,  $z = -.10, p = .93$ .

To test Hypothesis 3, that a lack of leader self-efficacy relates to more Leader Silence which is serially mediated by perceived self-legitimacy and uncertainty, we conducted a serial mediation model with Process (Hayes, 2012), 10,000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals. The results of the mediation model confirm our expectation with an indirect effect of .08 [CI:.008; .270]. Leaders who rate their self-efficacy as low perceive their leadership behavior as less legitimate ( $b = .48, p < .01$ ), which elicits job insecurity ( $b = -.21, p = .03$ ) which then increases Leader Silence,  $b =$

.81,  $p < .001$ . The effect remains when controlling for tenure, opportunistic and prosocial silence. Process also tests alternative mediation models. No other mediation model was significant.

Table 15

*Study 2 random coefficient models regressing level 1 Follower Silence on standardized independent and control variables. Level 1  $N_{Follower} = 227$ , level 2  $N_{Leader} = 43$  supervisors*

	Model 1	Model 2
Fixed Effects Level 2 Leader		
Tenure	.11	.10
Opportunistic Silence	.07	.07
Prosocial Silence	<.01	-.01
Leader Silence (LS)	-.17 <sup>+</sup>	-.19 <sup>+</sup>
Fixed Effects Level 1 Follower		
Intercept	1.80**	1.81**
Tenure	-.03	-.02
Perceived Justice (PJ)	-.47**	-.45*
Interactions		
LS x PJ		.18*
Random Effect Variances		
Perceived Justice	.09	.07
Intercept	.05	.04
Residual	.93	.93
AIC	686.3048	687.3635
BIC	732.9793	728.4629
Marginal Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	.19	.21
Conditional Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	.29	.30

<sup>+</sup> $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

## 6.9 Discussion

Organizational change comes with a considerable amount of uncertainty and risk of resource loss (e.g., status, value of qualifications, social relationships) for employees at all levels (Fugate et al., 2012; Kiefer, 2005; Niessen & Jimmieson, 2016). Leaders occupy an important role in this process. If leaders do not address critical issues, their



teams may feel left alone in dealing with the perceived threats of resource loss (Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). Our studies suggest that, when leaders do not address critical issues or inefficiencies related to change, employees may try to compensate their leader's reluctance to speak up by showing less silence behavior thus trying to avoid further resource loss.

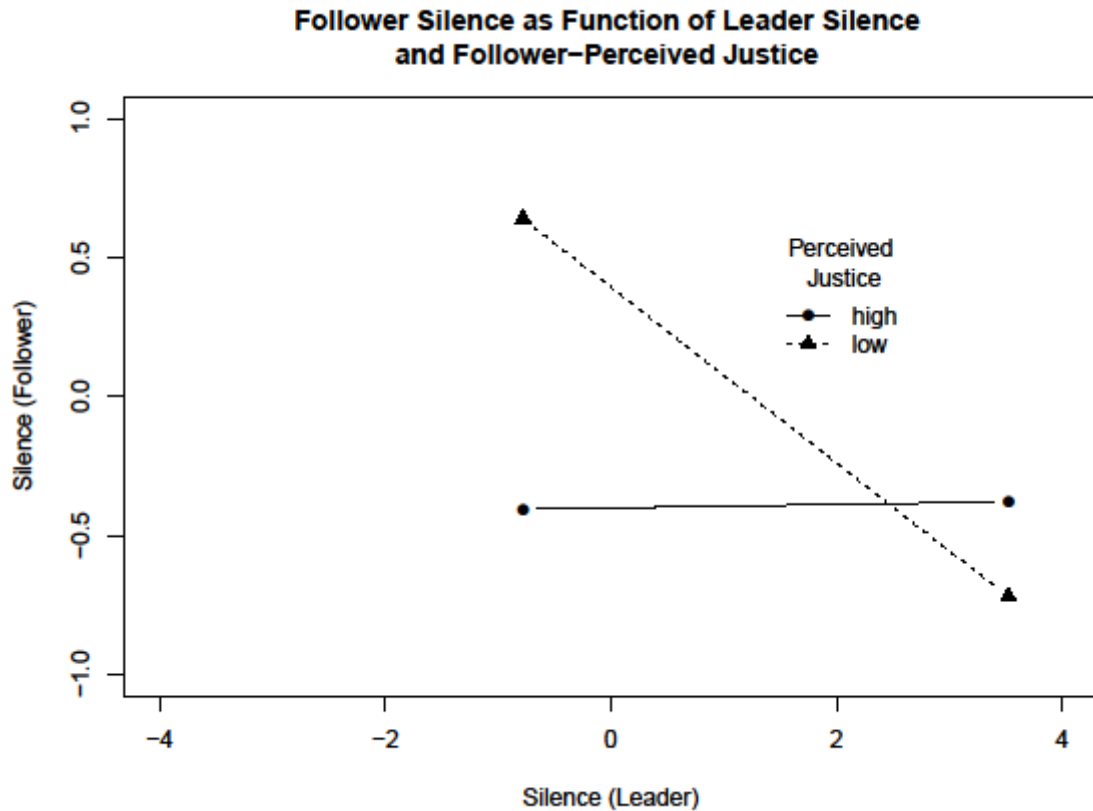


Figure 8. Plot of the interaction between standardized Leader Silence and follower-perceived leader justice

After showing the negative relationship between team-member and leader silence (Hypothesis 1) in Study 1, we used Study 2 to qualify Study 1 findings in two ways. First, we showed that followers' perception of leader justice moderated this relationship. As expected in Hypothesis 2, perceived leader injustice strengthens the relationship between Leader and Follower silence while the compensatory effect disappeared when the leader was perceived as just. As a second extension of Study 1, we examined potential antecedents of leader silence contributing to an often-neglected phenomenon. Results showed a serial mediation effect. Leaders who have low leader self-efficacy seem to experience a legitimacy crisis which, in turn, increases leader's job insecurity eventually resulting in a greater tendency to show silence behavior.

### 6.9.1 Theoretical Implications

Our research has implications for theory building on leader and follower silence, and their coexistence. In models describing voice/silence, leaders have not been considered as those who decide whether to speak up or not, but as context influencing followers' decisions (Morrison, 2014). Given the potential consequences of silence shown by people in leadership positions which we can observe, for instance, in the Volkswagen scandal (e.g., Ewing & Bowley, 2015), theorizing on leader silence deems overdue. Our article provides starting points from which a model of leader silence could be developed, and it builds bridges to existing concepts. We treat leaders' withholding of concerns, questions, and views as a behavioral manifestation of passive, laissez-faire or non-leadership (Kelloway et al., 2005; Skogstad et al., 2007). Notably, there is some controversy whether these leadership styles are caused by bad will or self-doubts (Einarsen et al., 2007). By showing that low leader self-efficacy, lacking self-legitimacy, and job insecurity may lead to leader silence, we provide first evidence that applying theories about the self (Baumeister et al., 1985; Habermas, 1973; Hollander & Julian, 1970; Jonas et al., 2014) seems to be a promising avenue, especially for explaining leader silence that is based on fear and resignation. Moreover, our serial mediation points at the social nature of the leadership role (DeRue & Ashford, 2010) which requires a social conceptualization of the self (of which the leader role is part; Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011).

Our research also contributes to debates on follower voice/silence and extra-role behavior more generally. So far, research on extra-role behavior, which includes helping and voice, is grounded in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, & Mainous, 1988). This implies that employees show extra-role behavior if the company provides satisfaction of basic needs or provides a balanced cost-reward structure - which is indicated by job satisfaction, organizational identification, leader-member-exchange, and perceived justice - whereas they withhold their efforts when these preconditions are not given (Chamberlin et al., 2017; van Dick, Grojean, Christ, & Wieseke, 2006). Our findings point at employee motivation that is not necessarily based in what employees gain for speaking up but in what they might lose if they remain silent. Our study suggests that Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) could be a reasonable starting point for further developing this alternative to social-exchange approaches. Integrating concepts such as embeddedness (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, & Erez, 2001) which emphasize aspects employees want to conserve (e.g.,

sacrifices, links, and person-organization fit) could further substantiate this approach. Furthermore, we suggest considering theories on decision making under specific conditions such as gain and loss (e.g., prospect theory; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Considering context may also reveal - and explain - counterintuitive effects such as our finding that perceived justice which normally facilitates voice may under specific conditions prevail silence. The interaction we found in Study 2 supports approaches that good characteristics may have detrimental effects (Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009). We do not question that more justice facilitates employee participation and thus voice - actually, this is exactly what bivariate correlations show in Study 2. However, justice perceptions may weaken the impetus to engage in compensatory employee behavior.

In Study 2, we aimed at identifying factors that affect leader and follower silence. Our multi-level approach allowed for examining both phenomena simultaneously. This is useful as it allows for examining the interplay of approach and avoidance behavior on the side of the leader and the team-members. The majority of prior research associated being in a powerful position, perceiving one's environment as just, and threat with approach behavior (Anderson & Brion, 2014). For instance, studies on leadership and self-perceived incompetence show that leaders compensate their lack of competence with aggressive behavior (e.g., Cho & Fast, 2012; Fast & Chen, 2009; Georgesen & Harris, 2006). Our findings support situational approaches suggesting that power may lead to less approach behavior (e.g., less risk preference) when it is experienced as illegitimate (Lammers et al., 2008). On the side of the team-members, we found that perceived injustice may lead to more approach behavior, a result that we proposed to be triggered by employees' impetus to protect their resources. Examining approach and avoidance behavior for different actors in the same situation seems promising given that approach and avoidance are supposed to be important and parsimonious predictors of employee (and leader) voice and silence (Morrison et al., 2015).

### **6.9.2 Practical Implications**

Our research suggests that leaders who perceive that they are not able to fulfill the expectations associated with the role of a leader (Joshi & Fast, 2013; Katz & Kahn, 1978) may not only show more aggression as prior research suggest (e.g., Cho & Fast, 2012), but may also fail to address critical issues at work. Thus, we showed a second and more subtle way through which a mismatch between a leader's self-view and his or her role requirements may harm followers and the organization as a whole. Providing

leaders with trainings aiming at increasing self-efficacy (e.g., Baron & Morin, 2010) deems a promising strategy to reduce silence in organizations without focusing directly on speaking up. The link between more general leadership skills and silence shows that a lack of skills or confidence may have broader consequences that go beyond the single leader's performance.

With respect to practical attempts to overcome silence, our research supports approaches that emphasize a more active and even proactive follower role (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2013; Riggio, Chaleff, & Lipman-Blumen, 2008). Employees may not respond to difficult conditions or contract breach by withholding efforts but may take charge and show personal initiative (Frese & Fay, 2001; Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Although these findings challenge prior research suggesting that favorable working conditions facilitate voice, they do not negate them. Indeed, we propose our findings suggest a two-stage process. Organizations need to allow employees to acquire resources in the first hand so that they will protect them when context conditions get worse or a leader seems not to be able to protect them. We cannot prove this two-stage process with the data available but deem this a promising avenue to integrate seemingly contradicting findings.

### **6.9.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

Our research was exploratory to the extent that we wanted to show that leader silence does not necessarily results in follower silence and provide preliminary evidence under which conditions both are likely to occur. Future research needs to apply longitudinal studies and experiments to investigate causality. We propose that lower scores in follower silence are a compensation for leader silence. However, it is also possible that followers' tendency to speak up makes leader voice redundant. This pattern would be particularly likely in organizations with high worker empowerment and shared leadership. Although we doubt that this was the case in the public administration unit where we did Study 2, given our cross-sectional design, we cannot rule-out this possibility.

A second limitation is that we examined leader silence rather broadly. We first wanted to examine whether there is an effect at all and thus did neither specify the context within which leaders chose to remain silent nor the issue that was at stake. We furthermore only considered fear and resignation as motives behind leader silence. Further research should examine further silence motives such as prosocial orientation and opportunism (Knoll & van Dick, 2013). Potential antecedents of opportunistic

leader silence could be individual differences (e.g., Machiavellism; Judge et al., 2009) and competition (e.g., Desmet, Hoogervorst, & van Dijke, 2015). Prosocial leader silence may be caused by positive relations to higher-up leaders or a prosocial attitude towards the organization that biases perceptions of unethical acts conducted by members of the company (Umphress & Bingham, 2011).

Third, we proposed that when employees expect a possible loss of resources due to a leader's reluctance to address critical issues, employees compensate by reducing their own tendency to withhold their views. To examine these hypotheses, we chose organizations that went through considerable changes in the years prior to our study and we asked leaders whether they remained silent in the context of critical issues. Both organizational changes and critical issues make threats of resource loss likely, however, we did not directly assess whether employees expected a possible loss of resources. To strengthen our findings, future research should directly examine this theoretical assumption or use adequate manipulation in experiments.

#### **6.9.4 Conclusion**

The research presented in this article contributes to the knowledge on how leaders and followers deal with critical issues at work in three ways. First, we show that perceptions of not being able to fulfill societal expectations regarding the leader role are associated with leader silence and that this relationship is mediated by low self-legitimacy and job-uncertainty. Second, we show that leader silence does not necessarily come with follower silence. Our findings suggest that followers may compensate for leader silence by showing less silence behavior, a finding we predicted based on Conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Third, using the example of perceived leader justice, we show that positive context conditions may at times result in more silence. Our findings suggest that this can be the case when justice perceptions weaken compensatory attempts, a finding that we predicted based on Uncertainty management theory (van den Bos & Lind, 2002). In sum, our findings suggest jointly considering antecedents of leader and follower silence may reveal counterintuitive effects and thus is a promising way to complement current research in this important domain.

## 7 Overall Discussion

The main objective of this dissertation was to demonstrate the crucial importance of legitimacy crises is crucial in the understanding of the violation of societal shared convictions. In addition to the theoretical integration of legitimacy crises in the overarching frameworks in chapters 1 to 3, chapters 4 to 6 provided an empirical examination of the emotional and behavioral reactions, as well as the mediating function in moral and competence related domains based on nine studies.

At first, chapter 4 fundamentally shows that a high extent of violation of societal shared convictions elicits a stronger increase in the accessibility of negative legitimacy-related words (legitimacy crisis) compared to a low extent of violation. As predicted, this implicit associations signals a link between societal shared convictions and legitimacy. Independent from the domain, all four studies of chapter 4 prompt that legitimacy crises are evaluations of a perceived violation of societal shared convictions. Evaluating one's own actions as less appropriate provokes specific moral emotions (predominantly guilt), which activate specific defense reactions. We found that feelings of guilt are more related to moral behavior, whereas feelings of shame are less related to moral behavior. Finally, this chapter shows the expected mediational function of legitimacy crises between the perception of the violation of societal shared convictions and moral emotions. The stronger the violation, the stronger are the legitimacy crisis and, hence, the stronger the moral emotions.

Second, chapter 5 focused on a specific violation of societal shared convictions in the moral domain: Social exclusion and the role of bystanders, because bystanders are a vast group who participate in social exclusion situations. In the context of social exclusion, bystanders' inactions violate the social norms of inclusion and equality (Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno, 1991; Deutsch, 1975; Forsyth, 1995; Wesselmann et al., 2013). The results of three studies strengthen the general findings of chapter 4. Bystanders who evaluate their inaction as less appropriate report more feelings of shame and guilt. In line with the theoretical assumption that legitimacy crises can be seen in the overarching framework of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014), the findings of chapter 5 demonstrate an increased BIS-activation for bystanders in contrast to targets of social exclusion, which serves as a proxy for a threat response. Moreover, this chapter shows that legitimacy crises are more related to social defense reactions (Jonas et al., 2014) compared to other kind of threats (e.g., target of social exclusion) and that legitimacy crises are an important mediator of this process.

Third, chapter 6 examined a specific violation of societal shared convictions in the competence domain in two field studies: Leadership and the perception of not being able to meet the expectations of a leaders' role. As in chapter 4 and 5, leaders who perceived themselves to violate the societal expectations on a leader, evaluated their actions as less appropriate thereby eliciting a higher extent of job insecurity that led to more silence behavior. As mentioned above, the violation of societal shared convictions threatens not only the self, but it affects others as well. Chapter 6 offers a deeper insight into these consequences for other people. The findings show that coping behavior of leaders influences the behavior of their team-members. As people fear a loss of resources (Hobfoll, 1989), high levels of leader silence is associated with less team-member silence when the leader is seen as unjust.

In summary, including different types of methods and participants, the findings of the nine studies in Chapter 4, 5, and 6 demonstrate that the construct of legitimacy crises is crucial for the understanding of various violations of societal shared convictions. People who perceive a discrepancy between their personal characteristics or actions and normative standards evaluate themselves as inappropriate. As a consequence of legitimacy crises people experience a higher extent of moral emotions. Certainly, there are some differences between the findings of chapter 4 and 5 when simultaneously analyzing shame and guilt as a consequence of legitimacy crises in the mediation model. Whereas guilt is predominantly elicited by legitimacy crises in the studies of chapter 4, shame is predominantly elicited by legitimacy crises in the studies of chapter 5. Nevertheless, Study 2 in chapter 5 also shows that guilt, as well as shame, can be the emotional consequence of legitimacy crises. This issue will be discussed more in detail in chapter 7.3. On the behavioral level, the results generally show the typical defense reactions proposed by the general process model of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014). In addition to this, the data suggest that the type of defense reactions to legitimacy crises depends on the prevailing moral emotion. While the previous chapters discussed theoretical implications with a specific focus on the respective studies' results, the next chapter will take a closer look on the general theoretical implications.

### **7.1 Theoretical Implications**

Up to now, psychological research on the construct of legitimacy was almost entirely limited on evaluations of external entities' legitimacy, for example authorities, intergroup relations, or political / legal systems (e.g., Anderson & Brion, 2014; Jost &

Major, 2001; Suddaby et al., 2017; Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Lind, 1992). As proposed by modern approaches to legitimacy (e.g., Beetham, 1991; Weber, 1968), social norms and values are fundamental for the perception of legitimacy as they guide the behavior of people in a society. From this theoretical point of view, it seems logical that individuals use the construct of legitimacy not only to evaluate others, but also for themselves. Based on Habermas' (1973) analysis of political actions and legitimation crisis in late capitalism, Baumeister and colleagues (1985) transferred the construct to the field of psychology and thus created the link between legitimacy and the self. In the following decades, only a few researchers in social and organizational psychology dealt with this approach (e.g., Bettencourt et al., 2001; Lammers et al., 2008; Turner, 1999). However, there is a lot of research on violations of societal shared convictions in various domains (e.g., Barkan et al., 2012; Fast et al., 2009; 2014; Heilman, 2001), which disregards the link to legitimacy.

One aim of this dissertation was to theoretically and empirically demonstrate that legitimacy, and especially legitimacy crises, are a fundamental constructs in the underlying process of various violations of societal shared convictions and its consequences. The current work goes beyond the Self-standards Model (SSM) of Cognitive Dissonance (Stone & Cooper, 2001). Legitimacy crises serve as a mediator of the perceived discrepancies between actual characteristics or actions of one's self and normative standards and the subsequent emotional and behavioral consequences. The findings of this dissertation provide empirical evidence for this theoretical assumption in several domains, therefore emphasizing the universal character of the construct of legitimacy crises in societal related situations. In summary, to understand the underlying process of discrepancies with normative standards, the SSM and the construct of legitimacy crises provide an important theoretical framework, which works independent from the specific domain. Moreover, this research presents a new perspective and contributes to a more holistic view of legitimacy in psychological research.

In relation to the general process model of threat and defense (Jonas et al., 2014), this current work demonstrates the threatening character of the violation of societal shared convictions. Additionally, the theoretical and empirical findings support the assumption of Hart (2014) that threats are related to specific emotional reactions and thus behavioral consequences. This research, stronger than previous research, clarifies that threats elicit certain emotions, besides feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, which are crucial for the behavioral actions. Future research on threat and defense should take



this into consideration more strongly and thus shed light on the antecedents for specific defense reactions. This should be flanked by personal and situational factors (Hart, 2014; Jonas et al., 2014).

## 7.2 Practical Implications

To evaluate one's actions as inappropriate signals a perceived discrepancy between one's actions or characteristics and normative standards of the society, which provides the chance to change something or compensate for misconduct. Therefore, legitimacy crises can be seen as a reasonable corrective keeping a social unit together (e.g., couple, family, team, organization or the society). For instance, children who strongly believed in the appropriateness of aggressive behavior were more aggressive, less withdrawn, and less prosocial, measured using responses to hypothetical situations and peer evaluations (Erdley & Asher, 1998). In terms of legitimacy crises, these children might perceive no discrepancy because their beliefs about the moral correctness of aggression are in line with their reactions, and thus, no legitimacy crisis arises. However, a legitimacy crisis might be beneficial in situations where individuals show or want to show an aggressive reaction because this could decrease further aggressive behavior. This suggests that beliefs regarding the morality of aggressive behavior should be modified. In chapter 4, legitimacy crises were more generally investigated in the two main domains of morality and competence. To give an example, the results of the two competence studies imply that it is less responsible to assign a task to someone who is not competent enough to fulfill the demands of the task in a satisfactory manner. On the one hand it can be harmful for third parties (e.g., patients) and on the other hand it represents a threat to the acting person, which might lead to health risks in the long run. To avoid such negative consequences, organizations should be more careful in adequately preparing their employees for their work tasks and demands. Chapters 5 and 6 dealt with a more specific example for morality and competence. In the following, I will give a short insight in the practical implications for both.

Referring to chapter 5 and the role of bystanders in the context of social exclusion situations, the findings provide a good starting point for intervention programs, as they demonstrate the threatening and unpleasant consequences for bystanders after a social exclusion situation. As social exclusion represents one form of bullying (Wang, Iannotti, & Luk, 2012), this is of relevance for anti-bullying programs. Children as well as adults should be informed about the negative consequences for

themselves when they do not interfere to increase the general positive effects of bullying prevention programs' on bystander intervention behavior (e.g., Branch, Ramsay, & Barker, 2012; Polanin, Espelage, & Pigott, 2012). Current intervention programs mainly focus on the negative consequences for the targets and the reinforcing effect of bystanders' inaction that supports the actions of the perpetrator (e.g., Katz, 1995; Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010). Increasing the salience of the negative consequences for bystanders and show that social exclusion is also threatening and related to negative affect for them, especially after the social exclusion situation, might enhance bystander intervention behavior, because people are generally motivated to avoid threatening situations (cf. Jonas et al., 2014). Future intervention research on social exclusion and bystander should include such a part in the intervention program and examine whether bystanders show a higher amount of bystander intervention behavior after taking part in such a program compared to existing programs.

The link between legitimacy crises and leadership, as a specific example for the competence domain, was examined in chapter 6. Leaders are central for the goal achievement of an organization (e.g., Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008). However, societal role expectations on leadership (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Lord & Maher, 1993) produce pressure on the leader to be successful. The findings of chapter 6 indicate that when there is a perceived mismatch between these societal expectations and the individual characteristics of the leader, legitimacy crises, fear of job loss, and silence behavior are the consequences. Moreover, previous research shows that leaders who feel incompetent are more aggressive and avoid employee voice (e.g., Fast et al., 2009; 2014). Altogether, these consequences could have negative effects on the team and possibly even on the organization. To prevent harm from the team or the whole organization, decision makers and staff departments have two possibilities: the selection of personnel and staff development. First, organizations should determine the requirements for a leadership position in their organization and then select a qualified person instead of selecting a person who has been in the organization the longest or who is the best according to other professional criteria, because leadership skills are completely different to professional competence. Second, when a supervisor or the staff department notices a lack of leadership, they have the responsibility to initiate adequate activities in the context of staff development (e.g., coaching). Within the context of coaching, the concept of legitimacy crises could be helpful to clarify the fundamental problem to the affected person. On the one side,

there are societal expectations and the demands of the organization and on the other side there is the actual behavior and the characteristics of the leader. It could, in fact, be useful to use legitimacy crises as a metaphor help the affected leaders understand their current situations, because using a technical term implies that this phenomenon is established and other leaders have also made similar experiences. Similar effects can be found in psychotherapy, where patients are primarily eased when they are informed about the diagnosis. This could provide a good foundation to analyze the concrete situation and reduce the mismatch for the leader. Finally, coaches should add this issue to leadership coaching and the field of coaching research should empirical examine the effect compared to traditional leadership coaching.

### 7.3 Limitations and Future Research

The current dissertation investigated the construct of legitimacy crises in the context of norm violations in two important domains of daily life: morality and competence. Although the nine studies predominantly demonstrate consistent empirical pattern which are in line with the theoretical assumptions, there are some general limitations across all findings. Whereas specific limitations were addressed in the particular chapters, I will present in the following some general limitations which simultaneously imply future research.

First, chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate slightly different results between legitimacy crises and the emotional reactions. While findings in chapter 4 predominantly show that legitimacy crises mediate the effect between the violation of societal shared convictions and guilt (not shame), the findings in chapter 5 show the mediation effect for shame and partial for guilt. Shame and guilt have a high overlap on variance in both chapters which may be explain why only one of these two moral emotions led to a significant mediation effect. Despite the fact that shame and guilt often occur together (e.g., Tangney et al., 2007), both have different conceptualizations regarding the role of the self. Feelings of shame are directly related to the self, whereas guilt is related to the negative behavior. This conceptualization lead to the assumption, that shame is more painful than guilt for most people. Furthermore, people can experience shame in moral and non-moral situations, while guilt is strongly linked to moral situations (e.g., Ausubel, 1955; Haidt, 2003; Smith et al., 2002; Tangney et al., 2007). One problem in research on these two moral emotions might be that the same situation can elicit shame or guilt depending on the level of threat of the situation for the self (Smith et al., 2002). Future research on legitimacy crises should consider the involvement of the self to improve the

understanding of the link between legitimacy crises and moral emotions. Another problem in the research of shame is the link between the shame-influencing situation and the subsequent defense reaction. When there is a content-related relationship, individuals react with prosocial behavior to an interaction partner in a social dilemma game when this interaction partner witnessed the shameful behavior before – *endogenous shame*. When there is no content-related relationship (e.g., the interaction partner did not witness the shameful behavior before), individuals show more negative actions or action intentions (e.g., immoral behavior, withdrawal, risky, illegal and otherwise problematic behaviors), as they want to hide negative self-perceptions and restore a positive self-view – *exogenous shame* (e.g., De Hooge et al., 2008; De Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2010; Haidt, 2003; Nelissen, Breugelmans, & Zeelenberg, 2013; Tangney et al., 2007). Future research on legitimacy crises should systematically examine whether violations of societal shared convictions lead to different defense reactions depending on the content-related relationship between the violating situation and the defense reaction. The findings of this dissertation demonstrate first empirical evidence. In Study 2 (chapter 4), with a no content-related relationship, shame led to less moral behavior in contrast to Study 2 (chapter 5), content-related relationship, where shame led to more affiliative behavior.

Second, most of the studies in this work deal with past events or scenarios, which may be influenced by hindsight bias or the artificial setting of the scenarios. To learn more about the specific process occurring when people violate societal shared convictions, it would be an asset to conduct studies such as Study 3 (chapter 5), where people actively violate a specific norm or value. In such a controlled setting, it is easier to investigate the emotional and behavioral reactions with several methods (e.g., wearable sensors, observation, physiological measures and questionnaires). With regard to the field studies of chapter 6, multi-time, diary or event-sampling studies would allow to examine legitimacy crises more in detail over a specific period in organizations. Multiple-time, diary or event-sampling studies offer the possibility to examine cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions within the natural work context (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003; Ohly, Sonnentag, Niessen, & Zapf, 2010). For instance, the findings of chapter 6, more specifically the interactional character between leaders who perceive themselves as less legitimate and their team members, provide a starting point for future research in this field. Up to now, only few studies in organizational psychology investigated the relationship between leaders and employees on multi-time,

diary or event-sampling studies (e.g., Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & Derks, 2015). In the context of legitimacy crises and leadership, event sampling offers the possibility to take a closer look on the prevalence of legitimacy crises in a given time. Moreover, one has the chance to learn more about the pattern of legitimacy crises. Multiple-time studies are more appropriate to examine the interactions between leaders and team members: Do employees realize the legitimacy crisis of their leader? How do the employees react to the legitimacy crisis of their leader and how do the leaders react to the reactions of their employees? In short, multiple-time studies provide the opportunity to get a deeper insight in the dynamics between leaders and employees over a longer period.

Third, general research on threat and defense suggest that defense reactions and their efficacy depending on contextual and personality factors (e.g., Hart, 2014; Jonas et al., 2014). To give an example, people who are high on anxious uncertainty aversion, show more religious idealism in a threatening condition than people with low anxious uncertainty aversion (McGregor, Nash, & Prentice, 2010). Although, there is evidence that contextual and personality factors can influence the defense reactions, the current dissertation did not focus on this aspect. Future research should investigate how contextual factors (e.g., culture, objective self-awareness) and personality traits (e.g., self-esteem, moral identity, preference for consistency or motivation to lead) influence the process of legitimacy crises. Culture is a crucial factor in the socialization process and may also have an impact on the internalization of societal convictions (e.g., Bandura, 1991; Hoffman, 1977; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Depending on the culture, the same action can be perceived as a violation or not which elicit a legitimacy crisis or not. Focusing on personality traits raise two questions which should be considered in future research: How influence general and specific personality traits the process of legitimacy crises? At which point of the process do they have an effect? Whereas self-esteem (e.g., Baumeister & Tice, 1985; Jones, 1973) and preference for consistency (Cialdini, Trost, & Newsom, 1995) should affect the process of legitimacy crises more generally, specific traits like moral identity (Aquino & Reed, 2002), motivation to lead (Chan & Drasgow, 2001), or perfectionism (Hewitt & Flett, 1991) should be more relevant in the moral or the competence domain.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

Up to now, various phenomena where people violate societal shared convictions were investigated separately and were based on different theoretical frameworks. This

dissertation contributes by representing a comprehensive and domain-independent process variable, legitimacy crises, which mediates the effect between the perception of the violation, the emotional and behavioral consequences. Moreover, it offers a perspective on the self and legitimacy, which is underrepresented in the broad field of legitimacy research. In context of research on discrepancy, legitimacy crises demonstrate a partial extension of the Self-Standards Model of Cognitive Dissonance, as a legitimacy crisis is the logical consequence from a perceived discrepancy between individual characteristics or actions and normative standards. Within the scope of threat and defense, legitimacy crises are a specific kind of threat, which elicit specific emotional consequences and defense reactions. Taken together, the construct of legitimacy crises is theoretically well integrated in the research fields of legitimacy, discrepancy, and threat, but it also provides new insights.

Nine studies empirically investigated the construct with different methods and samples. In summary, people who perceive a violation of societal shared convictions evaluate their actions or characteristics as less appropriate. This inappropriateness elicits the moral emotions of guilt and shame, which lead in the predominant part of the studies to more social defense reactions. These fundamental results were also found in two representative studies for the two main domains of morality and competence. Especially the findings from the last two chapters (bystander and social exclusion, leadership) provide specific starting points for practical implications. In conclusion, the theoretical and empirical evidence of this dissertation provides an interesting and profound foundation for future research in this relatively new research field.

## 8 References

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## 9 Appendix A

### Experiment 1

#### LDT Analysis

##### Without Outliers (in the chapter)

A 2 (condition: discrepancy high vs. low) x 2 (LDT version: legitimacy positive vs. negative) ANOVA on the mean reaction times was conducted, with condition and LDT version as a between-subjects factor. The analysis yielded a main effect for condition,  $F(1, 137) = 4.71, p = .03, \eta^2p = .03$ , a main effect for LDT version,  $F(1, 137) = 10.7, p < .01, \eta^2p = .07$  and no two-way interaction between condition and LDT version ( $F = 2.00, p = .16$ ).

##### With Outliers

A 2 (condition: discrepancy high vs. low) x 2 (LDT version: legitimacy positive vs. negative) ANOVA on the mean reaction times was conducted, with condition and LDT version as a between-subjects factor. The analysis yielded no main effect for condition,  $F = 1.94, p = .17$ , a main effect for LDT version,  $F(1, 147) = 7.41, p < .01, \eta^2p = .05$  and no two-way interaction between condition and LDT version ( $F = .61, p = .44$ ).

#### Legitimacy crises

##### Without Outliers

A 2 (condition: discrepancy high vs. low) x 2 (LDT version: legitimacy positive vs. negative) ANOVA on the mean reaction times was conducted, with condition and LDT version as a between-subjects factor. The analysis yielded a main effect for condition,  $F(1, 147) = 10.00, p < .01, \eta^2p = .06$ , no main effect for LDT version,  $F = 2.62, p = .11$  and no two-way interaction between condition and LDT version,  $F = .48, p = .49$ .

##### With Outliers (in the chapter)

A 2 (condition: discrepancy high vs. low) x 2 (LDT version: legitimacy positive vs. negative) ANOVA on perceived self-legitimacy was conducted, with condition and LDT version as a between-subjects factor. The analysis yielded a main effect for condition,  $F(1, 148) = 7.87, p < .01, \eta^2p = .05$ , no main effect for LDT version,  $F = 1.70, p = .19$  and no two-way interaction between condition and LDT version,  $F = .88, p = .35$ .

**BIS activation**Without Outliers (in the chapter)

A 2 (condition: discrepancy high vs. low) x 2 (LDT version: legitimacy positive vs. negative) ANOVA on the evaluation question was conducted, with condition and LDT version as a between-subjects factor. The analysis yielded a main effect for condition,  $F(1, 138) = 6.76, p = .01, \eta^2p = .05$ , no main effect for LDT version,  $F = .26, p = .61$ , and no two-way interaction between condition and LDT version,  $F = .62, p = .43$ .

With Outliers

A 2 (condition: discrepancy high vs. low) x 2 (LDT version: legitimacy positive vs. negative) ANOVA on the mean reaction times was conducted, with condition and LDT version as a between-subjects factor. The analysis yielded a no main effect for condition,  $F = 1.02, p = .31$ , no main effect for LDT version,  $F = .03, p = .86$ , and no two-way interaction between condition and LDT version ( $F = .55, p = .46$ ).

**Experiment 2****Manipulation Check Measure Competence**Without Outliers

A t-test for independent means showed a significant difference between low and high discrepancy for self-perceived competence,  $t(62.41) = 6.65, p < .001, d = -1.41$ .

With Outliers (in the chapter)

A t-test for independent means showed a significant difference between low and high discrepancy for self-perceived competence,  $t(83.99) = 4.55, p < .001, d = -.95$ .

**Mediation (Hypothesis 2)**Without Outliers (in the chapter)

guilt (indirect effect = .13, 95% CI [.044, .233]); shame (indirect effect = .04, 95% CI [-.011, .115])

With Outliers

guilt (indirect effect = .18, 95% CI [.073, .306]); shame (indirect effect = .09, 95% CI [.001, .216])

**Mediation (Hypothesis 4)**Without Outliers (in the chapter)

Indirect effect = -.04, 95% CI [-.135, -.007])

With Outliers

Indirect effect = -.01, 95% CI [-.066, .045])

**Experiment 3****Legitimacy crisis**Without Outliers

$t(183) = 2.06, p = .04, d = -.30$ .

We found a significant interaction between condition and gender,  $t(180) = 2.21, p = .03, 95\% \text{ CI } [.034, .607]$ . Only for men, the manipulation impacted perceived self-legitimacy (effect = -.37, 95% CI [-.623, -.101]) but not for women (effect = -.05, 95% CI [-.173, .082]).

With Outliers (in the chapter)

$t(185) = 2.42, p = .02, d = -.35$ .

We found a marginal significant interaction between condition and gender,  $t(182) = 1.89, p = .06, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.013, .588]$ . Only for men, the manipulation impacted perceived self-legitimacy (effect = -.37, 95% CI [-.636, -.097]) but not for women (effect = -.08, 95% CI [-.212, .054]).

**Mediation (Hypothesis 2)**Without Outliers

We conducted a moderated mediation model with 10,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval for shame (controlled for guilt) and one for guilt (controlled for shame) and gender as moderator. Only for men, the extent of perceived self-legitimacy mediated as expected the effect of the instruction to (not) discriminate foreign applicants on guilt (indirect effect men = .18, 95% CI [.079, .328]; indirect effect women = .06, 95% CI [-.001, .133]) but not on shame (indirect effect men = .01, 95% CI [-.045, .093]; indirect effect women = .004, 95% CI [-.015, .036]). The indexes of moderated mediation for guilt is significant (index = -.12, 95% CI [-.276, -.013]) but not for shame (index = -.01, 95% CI [-.081, .029]).



With Outliers (in the chapter)

We conducted a moderated mediation model with 10,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence interval for shame (controlled for guilt) and one for guilt (controlled for shame) and gender as moderator. Only for men, the extent of perceived self-legitimacy mediated as expected the effect of the instruction to (not) discriminate foreign applicants on guilt (indirect effect men = .16, 95% CI [.062, .302]; indirect effect women = .04, 95% CI [-.021, .107]) but not on shame (indirect effect men = .04, 95% CI [-.017, .147]; indirect effect women = .01, 95% CI [-.005, .051]). The indexes of moderated mediation for guilt is significant (index = -.13, 95% CI [-.275, -.020]) but not for shame (index = -.03, 95% CI [-.145, .010]).

**Experiment 4****Manipulation check**Without Outliers

As expected, participants differed between the three conditions on the manipulation check item,  $F(2, 60) = 68.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2p = .70$ . All post-hoc comparisons were significant at the 1% level (Bonferroni).

With Outliers (in the chapter)

As expected, participants differed between the three conditions on the manipulation check item,  $F(2, 65) = 54.96$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2p = .63$ . All post-hoc comparisons were significant at the 1% level (Bonferroni).

**Legitimacy crisis**Without Outliers

As expected, we found a significant effect for legitimacy crisis,  $F(2, 59) = 116.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2p = .80$ . All post-hoc comparisons were significant at the 1% level (Bonferroni).

With Outliers (in the chapter)

As expected, we found a significant effect for legitimacy crisis,  $F(2, 65) = 80.92$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2p = .71$ . All post-hoc comparisons were significant at the 1% level (Bonferroni).

**Mediation (Hypothesis 2)**Without Outliers

The extent of perceived self-legitimacy mediated the effect of violation of social convictions on guilt (indirect effect = 5.26, 95% CI [1.92, 9.10]) but not on shame (indirect effect = .83, 95% CI [-2.21, 5.02]).

With Outliers (in the chapter)

The extent of perceived self-legitimacy mediated the effect of violation of social convictions on guilt (indirect effect = 4.83, 95% CI [1.83, 7.54]) but not on shame (indirect effect = .52, 95% CI [-1.31, 3.18]).

**Mediation (Hypothesis 3)**Without Outliers

We found that the extent of perceived self-legitimacy and feelings of guilt serially mediated the effect of the violation of social convictions on ultra-honest self-behavior which confirmed our expectation (indirect effect = 3.15, 95% CI [.723, 6.28]).

With Outliers (in the chapter)

We found that the extent of perceived self-legitimacy and feelings of guilt serially mediated the effect of the violation of social convictions on ultra-honest self-behavior which confirmed our expectation (indirect effect = 2.66, 95% CI [.810, 4.86]).

## 10 Appendix B

### Extract Ethics Proposal - Debriefing Study 3 -



FAKULTÄT FÜR HUMAN- UND SOZIALWISSENSCHAFTEN

#### Debriefing

#### DISTALE VERTEIDIGUNGSREAKTIONEN BEI LEGITIMITÄTSKRISEN

Das Debriefing erfolgt mündlich am Ende der Studie mit allen Teilnehmern zusammen.

#### Die Teilnehmer erhalten folgende Informationen:

- In der Studie, an der Sie gerade teilgenommen haben, ging es nicht wie angekündigt um das Kommunikationsverhalten in Gruppen.
- Unser Ziel war es, zu untersuchen wie Personen sich fühlen und verhalten, wenn sie einer Bedrohung ausgesetzt sind. Eine Bedrohung in dieser Studie war der soziale Ausschluss durch die anderen Studienteilnehmer und die andere Bedrohung war der soziale Ausschluss eines anderen Studienteilnehmers aus einer Gruppenaufgabe.
- Insgesamt gab es vier Versuchsbedingungen (Kontrollbedingung 1, Kontrollbedingung 2, Legitimitätskrise und Bedrohung der Zugehörigkeit) welche Ihnen zufällig zugeteilt wurden.
- Keiner der Teilnehmer an dieser Studie wurde wirklich von den anderen Teilnehmern ausgeschlossen. Der Ausschluss hatte nichts mit Ihren Eigenschaften als Person zu tun, sondern erfolgte rein zufällig.
- Alle Personen, welche die Teilnehmer in der Bedingung Legitimitätskrise und Kontrollbedingung 2 für den Ausschluss ausgewählt haben, wurden entgegen der Aussage in der Studie nicht über den Ausschluss informiert.
- Es erfolgt eine Aufklärung über die Hintergründe der gemessenen Variablen in der Studie. Außerdem wird darauf verwiesen, dass die empfundenen Emotionen während der Studie (bspw. Scham und Schuld) in solchen Bedrohungssituationen nicht selten sind.
- Die Namen, welche die Teilnehmer in der Studie auf ihre Zettel schreiben sollten, werden nicht ausgewertet.
- Des Weiteren erkundigen sich die Verantwortlichen dieser Studie bezüglich des aktuellen Befindens der Teilnehmer und weisen auf Gesprächsangebote mit den Verantwortlichen der Studie oder Mitarbeitern der Psychosozialen Beratungsstelle der TU Chemnitz hin.
- Wir bitten Sie höflichst um Verständnis für diese erst nachträglich umfassende Aufklärung. Dies war nötig, um Ihr Verhalten während der Studie so alltagsnah wie möglich erfassen zu können. Des Weiteren bitten wir Sie um Verschwiegenheit bezüglich dieser Information, um nachfolgende Versuchsteilnehmer/innen nicht zu beeinflussen. Vielen Dank!
- Wenn Sie weitere Fragen haben, wenden Sie sich bitte an die verantwortliche Ansprechpartnerin für diese Studie. Die Kontaktadresse finden Sie untenstehend.

DISTALE VERTEIDIGUNGSREAKTIONEN BEI LEGITIMITÄTSKRISEN

## Vote Ethics Commission



Fakultät für Human- und Sozialwissenschaften  
Ethikkommission  
Prof. Dr. Henry Schulz  
Vorsitzender

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Ort, Datum: Chemnitz, 05.11.2014

## Ihr Antrag V-066-15-SM-AZ-Vert.reaktion-06102014

Sehr geehrter Herr Zill,

die Ethikkommission der Fakultät für Human- und Sozialwissenschaften der Technischen Universität Chemnitz hat in seiner Sitzung am 14.10.2014 Ihr Forschungsvorhaben

**„Auswirkung unterschiedlicher Bedrohungen auf die Wahl von Verteidigungsreaktionen“**

begutachtet und folgendes Votum erteilt:

**Es bestehen keine ethischen Bedenken gegen die Durchführung des Forschungsvorhabens.**

Die Ethikkommission weist vorsorglich darauf hin, dass ihr Votum sich ausschließlich auf die vorgelegten Antragsunterlagen bezieht. Abweichungen in der Studiendurchführung vom beantragten Vorgehen oder nachträgliche Änderungen im Untersuchungsplan führen automatisch zum Erlöschen der ethischen Unbedenklichkeitsbeurteilung. In diesem Falle oder bei Auftreten unerwarteter Ereignisse, die die Sicherheit der Teilnehmer beeinträchtigen könnten, sind die Änderungen der Ethikkommission unverzüglich mitzuteilen und eine Nachbegutachtung des Vorhabens zu beantragen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Prof. Dr. Henry Schulz

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## 11 Curriculum Vitae

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### Schulbildung

Gymnasium: September 1994 – Juni 2002  
 Dr. Wilhelm-Andre-Gymnasium in Chemnitz

### Fachliche Qualifikation

Studium: Oktober 2005 – Dezember 2010

#### **Diplomstudium an der Technischen Universität Chemnitz**

Hauptfach: Psychologie (Vertiefung Klinische Psychologie sowie Arbeits- und Organisationspsychologie)

Nebenfach: Pädagogik (Vertiefung Medienpädagogik)

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#### **Magisterstudium an der Technischen Universität Chemnitz**

Hauptfach: Pädagogik (Vertiefung Medienpädagogik)

Nebenfach: Psychologie (Vertiefung Pädagogische Psychologie)

Nebenfach: Neuere- und Neueste Geschichte

Wissenschaftlicher  
Mitarbeiter:

seit April 2011

**TU Chemnitz - Lehrstuhl für Organisations- und  
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Sozialpsychologie)**

Aufgaben:

- Planung und Durchführung von wissenschaftlichen Studien
- Vorbereitung und Durchführung von Seminaren im Bereich Bachelor und Master Psychologie
- Betreuung von Abschlussarbeiten und Forschungspraktika

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Vermarktung von TV Nachrichten:	seit Juli 2014 <b>Audiovision Chemnitz</b>
<b>Ehrenamtliche Aktivitäten</b>	
Mitglied Senat:	seit April 2015 <b>Technische Universität Chemnitz</b>
Vorsitzender Vertretung des akademischen Mittelbaus der TU Chemnitz (VAMC):	seit September 2013 <b>Technische Universität Chemnitz</b>
<b>weitere Kenntnisse</b>	Review Tätigkeit - Small Group Research EDV- Kenntnisse (MS Office, SPSS, Unipark, Lime Survey) Fremdsprachenkenntnisse (Englisch – gut) Führerschein Klasse B

## 12 Declaration

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit ohne unzulässige Hilfe Dritter und ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe. Die aus fremden Quellen direkt oder indirekt übernommenen Gedanken sind als solche kenntlich gemacht. Die Arbeit wurde bisher weder im Inland noch im Ausland in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form einer anderen Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegt.

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Alexander Zill

Chemnitz, den 29.09.2017