
According to Max Weber, legitimacy is the belief in a political system's authority and the prestige granted to those in power. Normatively, legitimacy assesses the acceptability or justification of political power and the moral obligation to obey. It explains why the state's use of power is permissible and why there is a moral duty to comply with its orders.

Jeremy Bentham, an English philosopher and economist, recognized the challenges faced by legislators in aligning public opinion with governance. Bentham believed that public opinion was a necessary check on rulers' authority and advocated for transparency in official acts to enable public scrutiny of them. While early modern democracy scholars supported the power of public opinion, they also acknowledged its potential dangers; Tocqueville, for instance, feared that majority rule could descend into a "tyranny of the majority."

This raises the question: is public opinion always a constructive force in a democracy? Populism presents a danger, as it may lead to the government being overly influenced by public opinion. This paper explores the historical development of legitimacy in decision-making, the evolution of public opinion, and the public sphere from ancient times to modern perspectives. Understanding these developments is crucial in shaping future projections based on historical insights.

The study will examine political and philosophical thought through a theoretical framework, employing methods of specification and generalization.

Key Words: public opinion, public sphere, legitimization, genesis