The Psychology of Legitimacy: Implications for Organizational Leadership and Change

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Duke University

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Three distinct chapters explore the individual-level dynamics of legitimacy judgments and support for leaders and their initiatives. Chapter 1 develops a theoretical framework for understanding the content of legitimacy judgments and the process by which those judgments develop and change over time. Chapter 2 explores the role of group orientation in moderating the impact of instrumental, relational, and moral concerns in determining support for leaders. Chapter 3 explores the role of power in moderating leaders’ assumptions about the types of behaviors that will elicit support for followers.

In Chapter 1, I build on institutional, social psychological, and sociological theory to develop a theoretical framework that specifies both the content underlying judgments of the legitimacy of social entities and a model of the process by which these judgments develop and change over time. With respect to the content of legitimacy judgments, I argue that individual-level judgments of the legitimacy of social entities are based on perceptions and beliefs about the entity that fall along three key dimensions: instrumental, relational, and moral. With respect to the process by which legitimacy judgments develop and change over time, I specify three modes of the legitimacy judgment process (evaluative, passive, and socialization), and I explain which of these modes is likely to predominate as individuals move through the stages of the legitimacy
judgment process. The model specifies the circumstances under which the legitimacy of existing institutions is likely to be either challenged or bolstered. I conclude by discussing the implications of this framework for advancing a more detailed understanding of the micro-level dynamics of critical areas of inquiry in organizational studies.

In Chapter 2, I present a series of three studies demonstrating that individuals’ intrinsic or extrinsic orientation toward their group moderates their responsiveness to different types of behaviors and appeals, such that individuals who have an intrinsic orientation (such as high identifiers and individuals who feel a high level of group belongingness) are more responsive to moral behaviors and appeals, while individuals with an extrinsic orientation (such as low identifiers and individuals who feel a low level of group belongingness) are more responsive to instrumental behaviors and appeals.

In Chapter 3, four studies demonstrate that subjective feelings of social power impact leaders’ assumptions about the bases of their legitimacy with followers, which in turn impacts leaders’ decisions about what types of leadership behaviors and tactics to engage. Study 1 demonstrates that leaders who feel a high level of power within their group or organization perceive support from followers as stemming primarily from their instrumental rather than relational behaviors, while leaders who feel a low level of power perceive that the support they receive from followers stems primarily from their
relational rather than instrumental behaviors. Study 2 is a vignette study in which individuals primed with high power report greater expectations of support in response to decisions made on instrumental rather than relational bases, while individuals primed with low power report greater expectations of support in response to decisions made on relational rather than on instrumental bases. Study 3 replicates this interaction and shows that the effect is mediated by leaders’ assumptions about the types of behaviors that followers prefer. Study 4 demonstrates that leaders primed with power are more likely to engage in instrumental behaviors in their attempts to persuade followers, while individuals primed with low power are more likely to engage in relational behaviors in their attempts to persuade followers. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Chapter 4 describes a final study that integrates the findings from Chapters 2 and 3. Specifically, Chapter 4 demonstrates that there is a positive effect of leader power on support for the leader among low, but not high, identifying groups. The findings further indicate that this effect is mediated by followers’ perceptions of the leader’s instrumental behaviors. Implications, limitations, and future directions of the research are discussed.
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1. An Integrative Model of Legitimacy Judgments

1.1 Introduction

The importance of legitimacy to organizational effectiveness and survival has been documented by sociologists and strategy researchers for decades. For example, Pollock & Rindova (2003) show that organizations' legitimacy shapes investor behavior, and Bansal & Clelland (2004) demonstrate that organizations with high levels of legitimacy are insulated from unsystematic variations in their stock prices. Indeed, legitimacy seems to provide organizations with a “reservoir of support” that enhances the likelihood of organizational survival (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Rao, 1994) and perpetuates organizational influence by increasing individuals’ loyalty to the organization and willingness to accept organizational actions, decisions, and policies (Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2005). At the same time, institutional theorists increasingly specify illegitimacy as a critical driver of the pursuit of organizational change (e.g., Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002; Suchman, 1995), and political scientists have long argued that legitimacy facilitates effective governance (Weatherford, 1992; Gibson, 2004).

Despite the critical role of legitimacy in organizational dynamics, organizational behavior scholars have paid less attention to the construct of legitimacy in theorizing the micro-level dynamics of organizational processes (though see Tyler & Blader, 2005 for an important exception). This lack of attention to the construct of legitimacy is likely due
to the fact that organizational behavior researchers lack an integrative theoretical framework for understanding the content underlying legitimacy judgments (i.e., what are the individual-level beliefs and perceptions that impact the extent to which someone regards an institution or leader as legitimate or illegitimate?) and the process by which these judgments develop and change over time. This lack of a theoretical framework for the study of legitimacy is unfortunate, because the construct of legitimacy can play a critical role in organizational processes not only at the macro level but at the individual level as well. Specifically, I argue that legitimacy functions at the individual level as a pivotal cognition (cf. Lind, 2001) that can move people between two very different types of behaviors: on the one hand, to the extent that an entity (e.g., a leader or an organizational policy) is viewed as legitimate, it is supported, and attempts at changing it are resisted; on the other hand, to the extent that an entity is viewed as illegitimate, people actively seek to change the entity.

This view of legitimacy as a pivotal cognition is important, because it empowers scholars to use the construct to understand micro-level organizational dynamics, especially processes of leadership and organizational change, in new ways. With respect to leadership, viewing legitimacy as a pivotal cognition that determines either support for existing leaders or a desire to resist the leaders’ influence attempts (or even to replace the leader) presents a new channel for research on the dynamics of leadership effectiveness. Specifically to the extent that researchers can understand the types of
leadership behaviors that promote positive judgments of legitimacy and how these behaviors may differ in different social contexts or for different groups of followers (e.g., individuals with high vs. low organizational identification), scholars can develop a better understanding of how social contexts and follower characteristics may moderate the efficacy of particular leadership behaviors and strategies in garnering support from followers.

With respect to organizational change, micro-level research related to organizational change has generally focused on strategies of coping with change (e.g., Judge, Thoreson, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999) or resistance to change (e.g., Agocs, 1997; Bovey & Hede, 2001; Oreg, 2003). From these perspectives, either organizational change is presented as a hindrance to employees’ feelings of well-being (i.e., as something individuals must cope with), or employees are viewed as a hindrance to organizational change (i.e., as resistant to the changing needs of the organization as a whole). While work in both of these areas is important for a broad understanding of the psychological dynamics of organizational change, there is also a need for research that views individuals as potentially active participants in change efforts and that examines the ways in which individuals come to view change as desirable and necessary. An integrative theoretical framework for understanding legitimacy judgments can help to fill this gap. Specifically, an integrative understanding of legitimacy at the micro level can contribute to an understanding of when, how, and why an individual’s judgment of
the legitimacy of a given social entity changes from a judgment of legitimacy to one of illegitimacy (or vice versa) and consequently leads the individual to seek change. Such an understanding would help organizational theorists to better understand the micro-level roots of the legitimacy-based processes that they study, thereby potentially contributing to the development of multi-level theories of organizational change.

Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to build an integrative theoretical framework to guide research on the content and process of legitimacy judgments at the individual level. With respect to the content of legitimacy judgments, I integrate theories of legitimacy from institutional, sociological, and psychological research to specify a theoretical framework for understanding the types of beliefs and perceptions that underlie judgments of a given entity as either legitimate or illegitimate. With respect to process, I build on the theoretical framework of the content of legitimacy judgments to develop a model of the process by which these judgments develop and change over time. I conclude with a discussion of the implications of this model for the study of organizational leadership, change, and change leadership.

1.2 Defining Legitimacy

Legitimacy refers to “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman, 1995: 574). In other words, entities are judged to be legitimate when they are seen as appropriate to their social context. It is
critical, however, to distinguish between individual-level legitimacy and legitimacy at the collective level. Legitimacy at the collective level is what Weber (1918/1968) termed “validity.” A social order is considered valid, according to Weber’s theory, when two conditions are met: 1) the norms, beliefs, and values that guide the social order are perceived as legitimate by some people and 2) even those who do not perceive the order as legitimate at least know that others perceive it as legitimate and understand that it governs behaviors. For example, some individuals may not view the promotion procedures in their organization as appropriate, but if others view it as appropriate and act accordingly, then those individuals who do not see it as appropriate will perceive that others view it as appropriate and will therefore permit it to govern their behavior. Therefore, an entity, such as a leader or policy, can be legitimate at the collective level (i.e., have validity) but may not be viewed as appropriate (i.e., as legitimate) by all individuals in the group. In this way, individual-level judgments of legitimacy can differ from the collective-level validity of an entity. Dornbusch and Scott (1975) labeled this individual-level form of legitimacy “propriety.” In essence, propriety, or individual-level legitimacy, refers to an individual’s own judgment of the extent to which an entity is appropriate to its social context, while validity refers to the extent to which there appears to be a general consensus among a collectivity that the entity is appropriate to its social context.
My focus is on individual-level legitimacy, and my definition of individual-level legitimacy as an individual’s judgment of the extent to which an entity is appropriate to its social context differs in two key ways from how some micro-level theorists have discussed legitimacy in the past. First, some previous work on legitimacy in social psychology has defined legitimacy as deference or obedience to authorities or rules. For example, Tyler (1997) defines legitimacy as “the belief that authorities are entitled to be obeyed” (323). This approach to legitimacy derives from French and Raven’s (1959) concept of legitimate power, which is a form of power that stems from a subordinate’s sense that an authority is entitled to rule. However, while this type of power, and the feelings of obligation to obey that accompany it, may be an outcome of positive legitimacy judgments, the feelings of desire or obligation to obey or provide support do not themselves constitute the legitimacy judgment. In other words, the perceptions and beliefs that underlie the judgment that a leader (for example) is legitimate produce a perception that the leader is entitled to his or her power. This perception of entitlement to power in turn produces a feeling of obligation to comply with the leader’s requests. The feeling of obligation to comply with the leader’s request is therefore an outcome of the legitimacy judgment, not the content of the judgment itself.

Second, previous work in social psychology has confounded the concepts of legitimacy and fairness. For example, Major and Schmader (2001) define legitimacy as “subjective perceptions of the fairness or justice of the distribution of socially distributed
outcomes” (180). Similarly, Weber, Mummendey, and Waldzus (2002) define illegitimacy as “the violation of group entitlements to certain outcomes or a certain status position” (451), while Hornsey and his colleagues (Hornsey, Spears, Cremers, & Hogg, 2003) define illegitimacy as “the degree to which groups perceive their status relations to conflict with values of justice or equity” (217). This tendency to confuse the constructs of legitimacy and justice likely stems from work that has specified fairness as the key determinant of legitimacy judgments (e.g., Tyler & Lind, 1992; Tyler, 1997). However, as I explain below, fairness is only one dimension of the content that underlies individual-level legitimacy judgments. Because other dimensions of legitimacy exist, it is critical that scholars differentiate the construct of legitimacy from the construct of fairness.

1.3 The Content of Legitimacy Judgments

Social psychologists who have examined the construct of legitimacy have proposed two models to specify the content of legitimacy judgments at the individual level. Instrumental models hold that individuals react to the instrumental aspects of their experiences with social institutions and authorities (e.g., Hollander, 1980; Hollander & Julian, 1970; see also Tyler, 1997). An instrumental perspective on legitimacy predicts that entities are judged to be legitimate when they are perceived as promoting the material interests of the individual. In contrast, relational models of legitimacy hold that legitimacy emerges from the extent to which a social entity
communicates to the individual that he or she is accorded respect, dignity, and status within the group context and through group membership (Tyler, 1997; Tyler & Lind, 1992).

Previous social psychological research on instrumental and relational models of legitimacy has proceeded by contrasting the two models to determine which better explains individuals’ behaviors (e.g., Tyler, 1997). The implication of this approach, of course, is that the content of legitimacy judgments is derived entirely from either instrumental or relational concerns. The primary work in this area has been conducted by Tyler (1997) who examines the impact of instrumental and relational concerns on voluntary deference to authorities when a conflict emerges between authorities and subordinates. Tyler (1997) demonstrates that, in cases of conflict between authorities and subordinates, the impact of relational concerns is larger than the impact of instrumental concerns and therefore concludes that the content of legitimacy judgments derives from individuals’ identity concerns. However, the empirical evidence that he presents indicates a significant, though somewhat smaller, impact of instrumental concerns as well. Thus, the empirical evidence indicates that both instrumental and relational concerns have some degree of impact on individuals’ legitimacy judgments. Based on this observation, I take a different approach and conceive of instrumental concerns and relational concerns as the bases for two separate dimensions of perceptions or beliefs that underlie the content of legitimacy judgments. For example, rather than examining
whether a leader is supported primarily on instrumental or relational bases, I instead advocate for the examination of the independent and interactive effects of both bases of legitimacy. Viewing instrumental and relational concerns as the bases of different dimensions of perception that can simultaneously impact overall legitimacy judgments, rather than as separate models of legitimacy judgments, permits researchers to consider the ways in which aspects of the social context or characteristics of the evaluators may moderate when one or the other comes to dominate in the legitimacy judgment process. For example, Tyler’s (1997) analyses appear to indicate that relational concerns dominate legitimacy judgments in cases of conflict between supervisors and subordinates, but there may be a number of other situations in which instrumental judgments would be predominate.

As another example, individuals may view the promotion policies within their organization as legitimate because they feel that the policies promote instrumental needs at either the individual or group levels. They may believe that the promotion policies favor them over their colleagues (i.e., individual-level instrumental concerns), or they may believe that the promotion policies are effective at identifying the best candidates for promotion and thus help the group to achieve its goals (i.e., group-level instrumental concerns). At the same time, individuals may view promotion policies as legitimate because the policies promote relational needs at the individual or group level, possibly by providing individualized treatment that ensures that the individual will be treated
with dignity and respect (i.e., individual-level relational concerns) or by enhancing the status of the group as a whole by favoring ingroup members over outgroup members (i.e., group-level relational concerns). However, these two types of bases for legitimacy judgments are not mutually exclusive. For example, an individual may view promotion policies in their organization as legitimate on both instrumental and relational grounds. Alternatively, an entity may be viewed as legitimate from an instrumental standpoint and as illegitimate from a relational standpoint. Thus, a given entity may be viewed as legitimate on one, both, or neither ground. Viewing instrumental and relational legitimacy not as separate models of legitimacy but instead as separate bases of legitimacy permits researchers to consider the circumstances under which one or another basis of legitimacy will have greater or lesser influence on the overall legitimacy judgment and consequently have the largest impact on behavior.

In addition to viewing instrumental and relational concerns as different dimensions of the perceptions that underlie legitimacy judgments, I also add a third dimension: moral concerns. I base this expansion on research from sociology and social psychology. Specifically, as Scott (2001) explains, the predominant view of legitimacy among sociologists is a view in which the primary determinant of legitimacy is the moral status of a social entity, or the extent to which the entity conforms to moral values and ethical principles. In addition, social psychologists have argued that morality is an important dimension of evaluation of social entities (e.g., Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto,
Leach and colleagues argue that, while both moral and relational concerns can be viewed as consistent with a single concept of benevolence, the two types of concerns are conceptually distinct. In a series of studies, they demonstrate that instrumental, relational, and moral concerns constitute distinct factors of evaluation and that in many circumstances, morality concerns are actually more important in evaluations than are instrumental and relational concerns.

Indeed, a variety of research has demonstrated that individuals are motivated to view themselves as moral people, to view the groups that they engage with as high in morality and integrity, and to feel that they have constructed a meaningful existence that is consistent with their moral values. The concept of moral needs builds upon research indicating that individuals desire to view themselves as ethical actors interacting in a just world (e.g., Folger, 1998; Lerner, 1980), and a range of theorists have specified a desire to be virtuous as a fundamental driver of human behavior (e.g., Fukuyama, 1999; Kohlberg, 1984; Rokeach, 1973). In addition, researchers have documented that individuals care about the ethical implications of outcomes and treatment for others even in the absence of any material or relational benefit to themselves (e.g., Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1986; Turillo, Folger, Lavelle, Umphress, & Gee, 2002; Van den Bos & Lind, 2001; Wade-Benzoni, Sondak, & Galinsky, forthcoming).

Thus, I argue that these three dimensions correspond to three critical types of concerns underlying legitimacy judgments: instrumental, relational, and moral.
Specifically, an entity is viewed as legitimate on instrumental grounds when it is perceived to facilitate the individual’s or group’s attempts to reach self-defined or internalized goals or outcomes. The phrase “self-defined or internalized goals or outcomes” is critical, because it highlights that instrumentally-based legitimacy is not based on coercion. Coercion occurs when a social entity, such as a leader or policy, uses power to promote outcomes that the individual views as undesirable. However, a positive evaluation on the instrumental dimension indicates that the entity in question aids the evaluator or the evaluator’s group in achieving outcomes that the evaluator views as desirable. Thus, examples of perceptions or beliefs that constitute the content of the instrumental dimension of legitimacy judgments would include perceptions or beliefs related to the effectiveness, efficiency, or agency of the entity. Second, an entity is viewed as legitimate on relational grounds when it is perceived to ensure that individuals or groups are treated with dignity and respect and receive outcomes commensurate with their entitlement. Examples of perceptions or beliefs that constitute the content of the relational dimension of legitimacy judgments would include perceptions or beliefs related to the fairness, benevolence, or communality of the entity. Finally, an entity is perceived as legitimate on moral grounds when it is perceived to be consistent with the evaluator’s moral and ethical values. Thus, examples of perceptions or beliefs that constitute the content of the moral dimension of legitimacy judgments would include perceptions or beliefs related to the morality, ethicality, or integrity of an
entity. In the next section, I explain that the nature of the relationships between the three dimensions of legitimacy judgments and an overall legitimacy judgment depends upon the stage of the legitimacy judgment process.

1.4 The Legitimacy Judgment Process

While institutional scholars view legitimacy as the key driver of institutional change, very little research at the individual level or the macro level has examined how individuals change their legitimacy judgments and come to view institutional, organizational, or social change as desirable. Indeed, much of the social psychological research relevant to legitimacy and change has examined the topic of change indirectly, by exploring its absence. Support for the status quo is a key dependent variable in research concerning system justification theory (for reviews, see Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Jost & Hunyady, 2002, 2005) and the just world hypothesis (e.g., Lerner, 1980), as well as in many studies examining the denial of injustice (e.g., Crosby, 1984) and victim derogation (e.g., Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005). The majority of these theories and approaches share the notion that individuals tend to resist viewing their social systems as illegitimate and thus tend to support the status quo.

However, it is clear that there are circumstances under which individuals do not resist change and instead desire and promote changes to procedures, institutions, leadership, and organizations. In this section, I present a model of the legitimacy
judgment process that specifies the circumstances under which individuals are likely to change their existing legitimacy judgments. Specifically, I argue that the legitimacy judgment process is a cyclical process that is characterized by three stages (the Initiation Stage, the Use Stage, and the Revision Stage) that involve evaluative, socialization, and passive modes.

In the evaluative mode of the legitimacy judgment process, judgments of the overall legitimacy of an entity are constructed on the basis of evaluations of that entity along instrumental, relational, and/or moral dimensions. This process of evaluation leads to a generalized legitimacy judgment that represents the entity as either appropriate (i.e., legitimate) or inappropriate (i.e., illegitimate) to its social context. Thus, in evaluative mode of the legitimacy judgment process, instrumental, relational, and moral evaluations drive judgments of generalized legitimacy (see the left side of Figure 1). In the socialization mode, however, it is validity cues, rather than evaluations of the instrumental, relational, and moral status of the entity, that determine the generalized legitimacy judgment. Finally, in the passive mode, generalized legitimacy judgments that emerge from evaluative or socialization processes act as anchors that guide interpretations of new legitimacy-relevant experiences such that new information is viewed as consistent with the existing generalized legitimacy judgment. As a consequence, in contrast to the evaluative mode of the legitimacy judgment process, in the passive mode it is the generalized legitimacy judgment that drives instrumental,
relational, and moral evaluations of the entity (rather than the other way around; see the right side of Figure 1). Thus, in the passive mode, incoming bits of information and stimuli are assimilated to conform to the initial generalized legitimacy judgment in a process characterized by motivated reasoning (Kunda, 1990), and in this way, the initial generalized legitimacy judgment is perpetuated over time.

Figure 1: The Legitimacy Judgment Process

The model of the legitimacy judgment process represents a three-stage cyclical process involving an Initiation Stage, a Use Stage, and a Revision Stage (see Figure 2). In the Initiation Stage, an initial legitimacy judgment is formed either through an evaluative or socialization processing mode. In the Use Stage, the passive mode predominates, such that the initial generalized legitimacy judgment is bolstered through processes of assimilation. The Use Stage may continue in perpetuity, or instead an alarm
event may trigger the activation of the Revision Stage. In the sections below, I explain each of these stages in more detail.

1.4.1 Initiation Stage

The Initiation Stage begins when an individual is first exposed to a social entity, such as a group procedure, a leader, a policy, or an organization. When an individual is newly exposed to a social entity, the individual may engage in either an evaluative or socialization process, or some combination of the two, to produce a generalized legitimacy judgment.

In the socialization mode, indicators of validity (i.e., other group members’ indications of the legitimacy of the entity) function as heuristics, permitting quick and easy evaluation with little time or effort on the part of the individual. The validity cues that guide the socialization process take two forms: endorsement of the entity by peers and authorization of the entity by authorities (Dornbusch & Scott, 1975). Previous
research in the field of sociology has demonstrated that these indicators of validity have a direct effect on propriety through social influence (Zelditch & Walker, 1984). Validity is likely to be used as a heuristic in the Initiation Stage because having easy access to social information about legitimacy reduces the amount of cognitive energy that individuals must expend on understanding their social environments, freeing up cognitive resources for other social concerns (Lind, 2001; Tost & Lind, Forthcoming).

An important implication of the role of validity in driving judgments of legitimacy is that judgments formed in the socialization mode are likely to be biased in a positive direction. Specifically, Ridgeway and Berger (1986) argue that when peers or authorities merely act as if an entity is legitimate, their behavior is sufficient to produce validity cues. This dynamic is referred to as “weak validation” because mere behavioral compliance with the dictates of an entity, such as a leader or organizational rule, imply collective-level legitimacy regardless of the actual individual-level legitimacy judgments of the individuals engaging in compliance. The power of weak validation in the form of mere behavioral compliance means that when individuals presuppose a consensus that an entity is legitimate, and they then act on that supposition, their act itself functions as confirmation of their presupposition for other actors, and the fact that other actors do nothing to oppose the initial action provides further confirmation. This dynamic can produce a strong bias in favor of positive perceptions of validity, which in turn have a
positive impact on individual-level generalized legitimacy judgments. This reasoning leads to the first proposition:

Proposition 1: The socialization mode predominates in the Initiation Stage of the legitimacy judgment process for established entities; in such cases, the Initiation Stage tends to produce generalized legitimacy judgments that are characterized by a positive bias.

If, however, the target of evaluation is new, then validity cues are likely to be generally unavailable. In such cases, or in cases in which validity cues exist but the sources are of a questionable reputation, then the evaluative mode is likely to predominate (Zelner, Henisz, & Holburn, 2009). As indicated above, in the evaluative mode of the legitimacy judgment process, evaluations of the entity on the basis of instrumental, relational, and/or moral concerns determine the generalized legitimacy judgment. Consequently, to understand the dynamics of the evaluative mode, it is necessary to understand the circumstances under which one or the other of the three dimensions is likely to be prioritized in the judgment process.

The relative prioritization of the three dimensions is primarily a function of the evaluator’s orientation toward the social group within which the target of evaluation is embedded. Specifically, if the evaluator has an extrinsic orientation to the group, he or she engages in group activities not because the group itself is a source of identity, joy, or meaning, but because the group can provide valued outcomes (Amabile, Hill,
Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994). If the evaluator has an intrinsic orientation to the group, then engagement with the group is a source of identity, joy, and meaning and therefore the individual engages in the group regardless of the outcomes that the group provides (Amabile et al., 1994). Based on these insights, I expect that individuals with an extrinsic orientation to the group (e.g., individuals with low group identification) would place primary emphasis on the instrumental dimension and very little emphasis on the relational and moral dimensions in determining their generalized legitimacy judgments in the evaluative mode. Individuals with an intrinsic orientation to the group, on the other hand, would place high emphasis on both relational and moral concerns, but less emphasis on instrumental concerns, in determining their generalized legitimacy judgments in the evaluative mode. This line of reasoning leads to the following propositions:

**Proposition 2:** The evaluation mode predominates in the Initiation Stage of the legitimacy judgment process for new entities; in such cases, the generalized legitimacy judgment that emerges is determined by evaluations of the entity on instrumental, relational, and moral dimensions.

**Proposition 3:** In the evaluative mode, motivational orientation toward the group moderates the emphases placed on instrumental, relational, and moral concerns in determining the generalized legitimacy judgment; specifically, instrumental concerns predominate for those with an extrinsic orientation to the group, while
relational and moral concerns predominate for those with an intrinsic orientation to the group.

Regardless of whether the Initiation Stage is predominated by the socialization mode or the evaluative mode, the outcome of the Initiation Stage is a generalized legitimacy judgment that represents the entity as legitimate or illegitimate to some degree. Once such a generalized legitimacy judgment is established, the individual moves into the Use Stage of the legitimacy judgment process.

1.4.2 Use Stage

The generalized legitimacy judgments that are formed in the Initiation Stage are carried over into the Use Stage, where they guide behavior with respect to the entity. It is, therefore, in the Use Stage that legitimacy judgments come to function as pivotal cognitions (Lind, 2001) that move people between either support for a social entity or a desire to change the entity. Specifically, individuals who develop judgments of the existing entity as legitimate will support the status quo and will resist attempts at changing it, while individuals who develop judgments of the existing entity as illegitimate will come to desire change.

This transition from judgment formation to judgment use is also marked by a transition from either the socialization or evaluative modes into a passive mode of the legitimacy judgment process. In the passive mode, the generalized legitimacy judgment produced in the Initiation Stage functions as a heuristic, acting as an anchor that guides
interpretations of new legitimacy-relevant experiences such that new information is viewed as consistent with the initial judgment. This passive mode of the legitimacy judgment process is the source of what Suchman (1995) refers to as “cognitive legitimacy,” which involves a disinclination to question the legitimacy of an entity such that the entity itself develops a taken-for-grantedness. Specifically, institutional scholars have specified cognitive legitimacy as legitimacy that is based on mere acceptance of the entity as inevitable or necessary based on culturally-based assumptions (Suchman, 1995). When an individual develops a positive legitimacy judgment in the Initiation Stage, the assimilation process that characterizes the passive mode of the Use Stage leads the individual to passively accept the legitimacy of the entity in the Use Stage: to take it for granted and view its existence and substance as “natural” or “inevitable” and thus outside the realm of critique or interrogation. Thus, in the passive mode of the Use Stage, legitimacy is based not on a carefully constructed judgment of an entity, but instead on a passive acceptance of the entity and a disinclination to question its existence. Consequently, incoming bits of information and stimuli are assimilated to conform to the initial legitimacy judgment in a process characterized by motivated reasoning (Kunda, 1990), and in this way, the initial legitimacy judgment is perpetuated throughout the Use Stage.

This assimilation process occurs for two reasons. First, assimilation minimizes the cognitive energy that must be allocated to legitimacy judgments (Lind, 2001; Tost &
Lind, Forthcoming). If assessing the legitimacy of the social environment required individuals to constantly and consistently monitor their social environments for evidence of illegitimate entities, very little could be accomplished. Such a high level of monitoring would require too much attention and cognitive energy, leaving individuals unable to engage in other tasks. Thus, the assimilation process that characterizes the passive mode significantly reduces the cognitive resources that are required for individuals to assess their security within their social environments. Second, the assimilation process helps individuals to avoid uncertainty (Lind, 2001; Tost & Lind, Forthcoming). If each new legitimacy-related experience led one to re-evaluate once again their existing legitimacy judgments, then the legitimacy of the social environment would constantly be called into question. Using the initial generalized legitimacy judgment as an anchor to guide the interpretation of new information thus ensures that ambivalence and uncertainty are minimized.

A key implication of this assimilation process that occurs in the passive mode is that, in contrast to the evaluative mode, rather than evaluations of the instrumental, relational, and moral status of the entity determining the generalized legitimacy judgment, in the passive mode it is the generalized legitimacy judgment that determines evaluations of the instrumental, relational, and moral status of the entity (see the right-hand side of Figure 1). In other words, the generalized legitimacy judgments established in the Initiation Stage can actually influence passive perceptions of the entity in terms of
instrumental, relational, and moral legitimacy during the Use Stage. What this means is
that the generalized legitimacy judgment acts as a mediator of the effect of instrumental,
relational, and moral evaluations at Time 1 (in the Initiation Stage) on instrumental,
relational, and moral evaluations at Time 2 (in the Use Stage).

This mediation effect is moderated by the passage of time. This moderation by
time delay is likely to occur because the assimilation process that characterizes the
passive mode has the effect of nullifying or neutralizing the initial instrumental,
relational, and moral evaluations (or validity cues) that produced the generalized
legitimacy judgment in the first place. Specifically, once the generalized legitimacy
judgment is established, it begins immediately to act as an anchor and biases perceptions
of any information related to the legitimacy of the entity. When the generalized
legitimacy judgment is relatively new, however, the individual may have some
recollection of the information he or she used to establish the judgment in the first place,
but as time passes, the anchoring effect of the generalized legitimacy judgment itself
comes to bias this recollection.

For example, consider a judgment that was established through an evaluative
process in which the entity was viewed as somewhat low on the moral dimension but
high on the instrumental dimension. For some time after the establishment of the
judgment, the individual may recall the moral qualms he or she initially held about the
entity, such that those initial moral evaluations would continue to have an impact on
subsequent moral evaluations, regardless of the nature of the generalized legitimacy judgment. However, as time passes, the assimilation process will bias and neutralize that recollection such that the entity becomes viewed more favorably on the moral dimension. Consequently, as more time passes, the impact of the initial moral evaluation on subsequent moral evaluations diminishes and comes to be fully mediated by the generalized legitimacy judgment.

Thus, as time delay between the formation of the initial judgment in the Initiation Stage and the use of the judgment in the Use Stage increases, the strength of the mediated effect increases. Specifically, if very little time has passed between the initial judgment and the use of the judgment, then the effect of, for example, the instrumental evaluation formed in the Initiation Stage on instrumental evaluations in the Use Stage is only partially mediated by the generalized legitimacy judgment; there would still be a direct effect of instrumental evaluations at Time 1 on instrumental evaluations at Time 2. In addition, in short time delays, the effect of the initial instrumental evaluation on the instrumental evaluation in the Use Stage would be stronger than the effect of the initial instrumental evaluation on the relational and moral evaluations in the Use Stage. However, if the time delay is long, then the effect of the instrumental evaluation formed in the Initiation Stage on instrumental evaluations in the Use Stage would be fully mediated by the generalized legitimacy judgment. In addition, for long time delays, the effect of the initial instrumental evaluation on the instrumental
evaluation in the Use Stage is no stronger than the effect of the initial instrumental evaluation on the relational and moral evaluations in the Use Stage. Of course, this moderated mediation effect will generalize to situations in which the Initiation Stage was dominated by the socialization mode: specifically, the generalized legitimacy judgment will mediate an effect of validity cues in the Initiation Stage on instrumental, relational, and moral evaluations in the Use Stage, and the mediated effect will be stronger for longer time delays between initial judgment formation and use. I therefore propose the following:

**Proposition 4:** In the Use Stage, the generalized legitimacy judgment that was formed in the Initiation Stage mediates the effect of validity cues and instrumental, relational, and moral evaluations that were established in the Initiation Stage on instrumental, relational, and moral evaluations in the Use Stage.

**Proposition 5:** This mediated effect is moderated by time, such that the indirect effect is stronger for greater time delays between initial judgment formation and judgment use.

A second important implication of the assimilation process that occurs in the passive mode is that the initial legitimacy judgment will be perpetuated throughout the Use Stage. This is important because, as predicted by Proposition 1, judgments of the legitimacy of established social entities tend to be characterized by a positive bias.
Consequently, the positive bias in the judgment of established entities will also carry over into the Use Stage. This persistence of initial positive judgments is a dynamic that is familiar to social psychologists (e.g., Klauer & Stern, 1992). In particular, as noted above, previous social psychological research on judgments of the legitimacy of status hierarchies has focused primarily on explaining the persistence of social systems rather than change, and these theorists have argued that the persistence of the status quo occurs primarily because individuals have an inherent bias toward perceiving the status quo as legitimate (see Jost et al., 2004; Jost et al., 2003; Jost & Hunyady, 2002, 2005). For example, researchers have shown that individuals rationalize the status quo by exhibiting a tendency to view the status quo as more desirable than alternative arrangements (Kay, Gaucher, Peach, Laurin, Friesen, Zanna, & Spencer, 2009). Researchers have also demonstrated that disadvantaged individuals tend to grant ideological support for the social system and its authorities despite their personal and group-based disadvantage (Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2002). These findings provide support for the contention that individuals generally exhibit positive legitimacy judgments of existing social entities and resist the perception that existing institutions and social systems are lacking in legitimacy.

However, it is clear that there are circumstances under which individuals do come to view existing entities as illegitimate, circumstances under which individuals do not resist change and instead desire and promote changes to procedures, institutions,
and organizations. Thus, any theory of the legitimacy judgment process must not only account for the tendency to justify existing social entities, but must also specify the circumstances that mitigate this tendency and lead instead to a more critical consideration of the legitimacy of existing procedures. Once an individual has entered the passive mode of the Use Stage, what are the factors that can motivate the individual to reconsider the legitimacy of a social entity? I argue that the initial generalized legitimacy judgment persists until what I call an *alarm event* acts as an external jolt (e.g., Greenwood et al., 2002; Meyer, Brooks, & Goes, 1990) to alert the individual to the need for a more active consideration of the legitimacy of the entity.

**1.4.3 Alarm Events**

Social psychologists use the term “dual process models” to refer to models that specify two different modes of information processing: one that is primarily intuitive, with processing characterized as automatic, affective, effortless, associative, rapid, and parallel (as in the passive mode that occurs in the Use Stage); and one that is primarily reflective or analytic, with processing characterized as controlled, effortful, deductive, slow, serial, and rule-based. A critical concern in social psychological research on dual process models is, therefore, the identification of the circumstances under which the reflective, effortful system is activated. Recent research in the area of social cognitive neuroscience provides an interesting response to this issue. Specifically, recent research has identified a “neural alarm system” that appears to switch individuals between
passive and active judgment processes (Eisenberger & Lieberman, 2004; Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003; Lieberman & Eisenberger, 2004; Ullsperger, Volz, & Von Cramon, 2004). Research on the activity of this neural alarm system indicates that the alarm system is activated when the potential for errors in judgment is perceived to be high (Carter et al., 1998, 2000).

Thus, this research indicates that evidence of errors in judgment can act to call attention to the need for more systematic processing. Consistent with this research, I argue that “alarm events” function to alert individuals in the Use Stage that their generalized legitimacy judgments are in need of effortful examination and may merit revision. In this sense, alarm events are events that cause what are popularly termed “crises of legitimacy.” These events involve a violation of the expectations that are based on the generalized legitimacy judgment. The contention that violations of expectations can lead people to question their passive legitimacy judgments is consistent with previous social psychological research that has demonstrated that violations of expectations produce discontent with existing social entities (e.g., Rasinski, Tyler, & Fridkin, 1985). Expectation violations that activate the alarm system involve either the occurrence of unexpected events or behaviors, or the acquisition of new pieces of information, that are so dramatically outside the realm of expectation that they simply cannot be assimilated into existing legitimacy judgments. For example, for most individuals who held a positive view of the world financial system, the financial
collapse of 2008 represented an alarm event that led to a re-evaluation of the legitimacy of the financial system.

In addition to a violation of expectations, I expect that, for the alarm system to be activated, it is also necessary that expectations be violated in a direction that is opposite of the sign of the existing generalized legitimacy judgment. I view legitimacy to be a continuous variable, with values above a neutral point constituting positive legitimacy judgments and values below a neutral point constituting negative legitimacy judgments (i.e., illegitimacy). I expect that the alarm system will only be activated when the valence of unexpected events suggests that a switch between positive and negative legitimacy judgments may be in order. Any unexpected events that do not suggest a reversal in valence would simply bolster or weaken the existing legitimacy judgment, without the need for more reflective revision. For example, if an individual holds a general judgment of an entity as moderately high in legitimacy, any violation of expectations that indicates that the judgment should be adjusted upward (i.e., that the entity is higher in legitimacy that the initial judgment indicates) would merely serve to bolster existing assumptions and would not require reflective consideration. However, any violation of expectations that indicates that the generalized legitimacy judgment should be switched to a judgment of illegitimacy would activate the alarm system.

Thus, the experience of a dramatic violation of expectations can function as an alarm event, alerting the individual to the need to reconsider their legitimacy judgments.
in a more effortful and reflective fashion. In this sense, the function of alarm events is to expose the formerly invisible assumptions underlying generalized legitimacy judgments and to motivate the individual to actively interrogate those assumptions that were previously passively accepted. In the parlance of institutional theory, alarm events cause cognitive legitimacy to dissolve or dissipate. In doing so, alarm events lead individuals to switch from the Use Stage of the legitimacy judgment process into the Revision Stage.

1.4.4 Revision Stage

While individuals use motivated reasoning to bolster initial legitimacy judgments in the Use Stage, the Revision Stage is dominated by an accuracy motive (Kunda, 1990). In the Revision Stage of the legitimacy judgment process, individuals attempt to make conscious, effortful, and direct assessments of the legitimacy of social entities. Thus, in the Revision Stage, the evaluative mode predominates, and individuals engage in active attempts to evaluate the entity along the dimensions of instrumental, relational, and/or moral legitimacy, which once again drive judgments of generalized legitimacy. In addition, individuals may also incorporate validity cues into consideration in the evaluative process in the Revision Stage, but the primary emphasis is on the individual’s own assessments of the instrumental, relational, and moral status of the entity.

As the individual engages in effortful consideration of the instrumental, relational, and moral legitimacy of a social entity, the individual creates a new
generalized legitimacy judgment. Once a new generalized legitimacy judgment is formed, the individual re-enters the Use Stage, in which the newly formed generalized legitimacy judgment will again function as a pivotal cognition, guiding behavior with respect to the entity, and as a heuristic, influencing the interpretation of additional information related to the entity. This new generalized legitimacy judgment will thus be perpetuated and will continue to guide behavior until a new alarm event prompts a re-entry into the Revision Stage (see Figure 2).

Considering each of the stages, it becomes clear that the Revision Stage of the legitimacy judgment process is the most likely stage to lead to judgments of illegitimacy of existing entities, and hence to support for change, because it is not characterized by a positive bias. Specifically, the alarm event that initializes the Revision Stage produces a more critical judgment process that is guided by accuracy motives and in which procedures, outcomes, authorities, and organizations are examined more methodically and rigorously.

Proposition 5: The Revision Stage is more likely to produce judgments of illegitimacy than are the Initiation and Use Stages and therefore is also more likely to produce support for change.

In summary, the legitimacy judgment process is characterized by three stages. In the first stage, the socialization mode predominates for judgments of existing social entities, and validity cues are used to produce a generalized legitimacy judgment; for
new social entities, the evaluative mode predominates, and evaluations of the instrumental, relational, and moral status of the entity are used to produce a generalized legitimacy judgment. This generalized legitimacy judgment functions as a heuristic in the Use Stage, guiding perceptions and behavior relevant to the social entity. The Initiation and Use Stages are both characterized by positive biases with respect to judgments of existing social entities, and thus judgments of legitimacy are more likely than judgments of illegitimacy in those two stages. In addition, the Use Stage can persist indefinitely. However, alarm events, which involve sharply unexpected outcomes, behaviors, or information, can serve to alert individuals that movement into the Revision Stage is warranted. In the Revision Stage, the legitimacy judgment process involves a more effortful and systematic approach to evaluating the legitimacy of the social entity. It is therefore in the Revision Stage of the legitimacy judgment process that judgments of illegitimacy are most likely to emerge. Those judgments of illegitimacy, in turn, produce the desire for change.

1.5 Discussion and Conclusion

The theoretical framework of legitimacy judgments that I develop integrates legitimacy research from a variety of disciplines and substantive areas of research. Previous social psychological research has tended to confound individual-level legitimacy with fairness perceptions (see Tyler, 2006, for a review) and has conceived of legitimacy as a function of instrumental and relational considerations but has generally
left the moral dimension of legitimacy unexplored. At the same time, sociologists, and institutional theorists in particular, have conceptualized pragmatic legitimacy (i.e., the instrumental dimension), normative legitimacy (i.e., the moral dimension), and cognitive legitimacy (i.e., the extent to which legitimacy judgments are taken for granted, as occurs in the passive mode) (Suchman, 1995) but have generally neglected consideration of the importance of the relational dimension and have not examined the dynamics of these judgments at the individual level. The theoretical framework presented here integrates this previous work, highlighting the ways in which research in each of these areas can inform and complement research in the other areas.

This integrative theoretical framework empowers researchers to explore both the content and process dynamics of legitimacy judgments. With respect to the content of legitimacy judgments, I argue that, rather than viewing the instrumental, relational, and moral dimensions as competing models for understanding the content underlying legitimacy judgments, these three types of perceptions, beliefs, and concerns should be viewed as three different dimensions of judgment that may simultaneously impact individuals’ judgments of the generalized legitimacy of a social target. Viewing them in this way permits scholars to explore the ways in which each of the types of concerns contributes to (or is guided by, as in the case of the Use Stage) generalized legitimacy judgments. In addition, this perspective empowers researchers to consider the factors that influence which of the three dimensions is prioritized in the evaluative mode. An
understanding of the content underlying legitimacy judgments can therefore contribute
meaningfully to scholarly understandings of the factors that impact individuals’
judgments of the legitimacy of organizations, groups, social structures, policies,
procedures, and leaders.

At the same time, with respect to the legitimacy judgment process, the
distinction between the passive and evaluative modes of the legitimacy judgment
process provides much-needed conceptual clarity to the relationships between
legitimacy and power, on the one hand, and legitimacy and fairness, on the other hand.
First, the distinction between the passive and evaluative modes helps to elucidate when
legitimacy is a source of power that produces deference to organizational authorities
and rules and when legitimacy instead represents a contingent judgment that is under
development. Specifically, in the passive mode, legitimacy judgments guide people’s
interpretations of information related to the entity and determine individuals’
behavioral orientations to the entity. Consequently, a positive legitimacy judgment
provides the entity in question with a cushion of support that promotes deference to the
entity and endows the entity with greater latitude for behavior and outcomes produced.
In this sense, a positive legitimacy judgment is a source of power for the entity when
evaluators are in the passive judgment mode. However, when an individual enters the
evaluative mode, legitimacy is contested and can no longer function as a cushion of
support, but instead is a developing judgment that is contingent upon the individual’s evaluations of the entity along instrumental, relational, and/or moral dimensions.

Second, the distinction between the passive and evaluative modes also helps scholars to conceptualize the distinctions between legitimacy and fairness. Specifically, while much previous social psychological research has confounded legitimacy and fairness, there has also been some confusion within the field of social psychology as to whether legitimacy should be treated as an antecedent of fairness perceptions (e.g., Tyler, 2006; Tyler & DeGoey, 1995) or as an outcome of fairness perceptions (e.g., Hegtvedt & Johnson, 2000). The process model presented here suggests that, in fact, fairness is both an antecedent and an outcome of legitimacy, depending upon the mode of the legitimacy judgment process. Specifically, in the evaluative mode, I would expect that procedural and interactional fairness would contribute positively to relational evaluations, and that fairness in general would have a positive impact on moral evaluations. However, in the passive mode, the generalized legitimacy judgment would be expected to guide judgments of the fairness of the entity, just as it guides other judgments related to the entity. Therefore, in the passive mode, legitimacy functions as an antecedent to fairness perceptions, but in the evaluative mode, fairness is an antecedent to legitimacy.

In addition, an understanding of how legitimacy judgments develop and change over time can contribute substantially to scholarly understandings of the individual-
dynamics of support for and resistance to organizational change. Specifically, because legitimacy functions as a pivotal cognition that impacts individuals’ inclinations to support or resist a social entity, understanding how and why legitimacy judgments change can help researchers to understand how and why individuals’ behavioral orientations to social targets, such as leaders, policies, and procedures, may shift and cause them either to support or to resist changes to those entities.

Thus, this theoretical framework of legitimacy judgments has important theoretical implications for research in a number of areas that are central to the field of organizational behavior and organizational studies more broadly. Below, I describe how this framework can be used to further scholarly understandings of leadership effectiveness and organizational change. In addition, I highlight meaningful implications of this framework for macro level theory and research.

1.5.1 Leadership Effectiveness

A critical contribution of this research is that it provides a framework for identifying the factors that impact which types of leadership behaviors are likely to resonate with followers. Specifically, this framework identifies instrumental, relational, and moral dimensions of evaluation as critical aspects of individuals’ judgments of the legitimacy of a social entity, such as a leader, and further specifies the individual’s orientation to the group as a critical moderator of which of these three dimensions is prioritized in determining generalized legitimacy judgments in the evaluative mode.
The framework implies, therefore, that behaviors and influence attempts that focus on instrumental considerations (e.g., constructing an argument for change that focuses on how the change improves organizational effectiveness) would be more effective when followers have an extrinsic orientation to the organization (such as individuals with low levels of organizational identification), while behaviors and influence attempts that focus on relational and moral considerations (e.g., constructing an argument for change that focuses on how the change is representative of group values and ethical principles) would be more effective when followers have an intrinsic orientation to the organization (such as individuals with high levels of organizational identification).

1.5.2 Organizational Change and Change Leadership

In addition, the model of legitimacy judgments presented here produces a variety of practical implications for the leadership of organizational change that should be investigated in future research. One critical avenue for further investigation concerns the determination of where in the legitimacy judgment process leaders can intervene to affect followers’ judgments of the legitimacy of procedures and policies in order to cultivate support for change. The model presented here indicates that leaders can increase their effectiveness at leading change by activating the alarm system in order to move followers into the Revision Stage and by constructing appeals that will be likely to resonate with followers as followers engage in the judgment process that characterizes the evaluative mode.
First, organizational leaders could activate followers’ alarm systems by calling attention to crises or unexpected outcomes. This role of leaders is particularly critical when the procedure or institution to be changed is not directly experienced by many of the individual followers, which would make the activation of the alarm system unlikely to occur without the active intervention of the leader. Second, organizational leaders can influence the process of judgment undertaken in the Revision Stage. One way of doing this is by influencing followers’ perceptions of the source of the alarm event. When followers experience an alarm event, it may not always be immediately apparent what aspect of the social environment is the source. It may be unclear if one or another existing procedure is to blame for an unexpected outcome, or if instead the outcome should be attributed to the actions of a particular individual. Leaders can thus play a critical role in guiding followers’ judgments in the Revision Stage by highlighting specific social entities as the source of the problem or concern, thereby affecting which social entity is the target of re-evaluation. In addition, when individuals experience conflicting legitimacy judgments across types of legitimacy (e.g., when an individual perceives a procedure as instrumentally legitimate but as morally and relationally illegitimate), a leader can have an impact by attempting to persuade followers of which dimension of legitimacy should be prioritized in guiding further actions and by acting as a source of validity.
It is also important to note that leaders of organizational change need not occupy formal positions of power or authority within an organization. Instead, leaders may emerge from any level of the organizational hierarchy to take up leadership on a particular issue. Existing research, however, is ill-equipped to predict which individuals will emerge as leaders on which issues and why. The present model suggests that one promising avenue of investigation into this important issue is to examine the extent to which individuals who emerge as leaders of change (e.g., social entrepreneurs) have relatively more sensitive alarm systems, such that the magnitude of events required to activate their alarm system and subsequently lead them to discover illegitimacy in existing social systems is generally lower for this group of individuals than for others. Such sensitivity would lead them to identify social problems earlier than others and to react to those problems more strongly.

Finally, the model presented here suggests that organizational change is most likely to be supported when an alarm event challenges organizational members to critically examine their generalized legitimacy judgments of existing practices and norms. This critical examination may result in judgments of illegitimacy, which produce a desire for change. However, a less obvious implication of the model for organizational change is that the process of assimilation in the passive mode may also promote organizational change—not radical change, but a convergent, incremental form of change (Meyer et al., 1990; Nadler, Shaw, Walton & Associates, 1995; Weick & Quinn,
1999). Specifically, it may be the case that the process of assimilation that characterizes
the passive mode produces small changes in expectations as individuals encounter
events and outcomes over time that are not entirely consistent with expectations but that
are insufficient in magnitude for alarm activation. Consequently, over time, the
magnitude of event that is necessary to activate the alarm system shifts, because the
individual’s level of expectation has shifted. As a result, the entity may change
incrementally without triggering a re-evaluation of its legitimacy. In this way, small
events may effectively recalibrate the alarm system to change the magnitude of event
necessary to activate it.

1.5.3 Institutional Theory

The model of legitimacy judgments presented here also lays the foundation for a
detailed understanding of the psychological dynamics of processes of
institutionalization and deinstitutionalization. Most institutional change scholars
conceive of the deinstitutionalization process as being preceded by a precipitating or
destabilizing jolt to the system (e.g., Greenwood, et al., 2002; Meyer, et al., 1990).
However, the way in which such a jolt would initiate change processes at the level of
individual behavior and the circumstances under which it would do so are rarely
addressed in this literature. The present model has implications regarding both the
nature of the “jolt” and its impact. According to the model presented here (but in
contradiction to a common assumption in institutional research), the jolt need not occur
at the macro-level. The alarm system can indeed be activated by radical environmental changes, such as crises, that occur at the macro-level (assuming such environmental changes produce negative unexpected outcomes). However, the alarm system can also be activated by unexpected outcomes at the individual level, leading an individual to take on a change leadership role and work toward change at the group or organizational levels.

Moreover, the impact of either type of alarm event (i.e., jolt) is dependent upon individual-level cognitive processes. Specifically, alarm events prompt an effortful process of judgment of the legitimacy of the entity in question, and the outcome of this judgment process can be affected by both individual-level (e.g., group identification) and collective-level (i.e., validity) factors. Therefore, the model has important implications both for how social entities (such as authorities or organizations) can promote judgments of their own legitimacy and for how individuals can effectively guide processes of institutionalization and thereby lead change. With respect to how social entities can protect their own legitimacy, the model presented here suggests that the effectiveness of the framing of accounts and apologies for wrongdoing may be moderated by the group orientation that characterizes members of the target audience. For example, when providing a defense against a perception of wrongdoing, an organization with a high level organizational identification among employees may be more successful in maintaining legitimacy among employees if they use appeals to the
relational and moral dimensions than if they base their claims on appeals to instrumental concerns.

1.5.4 Conclusion

The model of legitimacy judgments presented here thus lays the foundation for a detailed understanding of the micro-level dynamics of critical areas of inquiry in the field of organizational behavior, as well as organizational studies more broadly.
2. The Role of Group Orientation in Moderating the Emphases Placed on Instrumental, Relational, and Moral Concerns in Evaluating Leaders and Policies

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the role of an individual’s motivational orientation toward the group as a moderator of the emphasis the individual places on different dimensions of consideration when determining his or her support for a leader, policy, or procedure. In doing so, I build from Tyler’s (1997) examination of the sources of support for authorities. Tyler (1997) contrasted two models of support for authorities: the instrumental model and the relational model. The instrumental model holds that people determine their support for an authority on the basis of the outcomes that authority figure can provide. The relational model holds that people will support an authority to the extent that the authority affirms their social identity needs and bolsters their sense of self worth (Tyler, 1997). Tyler (1997) examined the explanatory power of the two models in contexts in which an authority and a subordinate experienced a conflict situation. He concluded that the relational model held greater explanatory power, and that support for authorities is therefore driven primarily by relational concerns. However, I argue that Tyler’s (1997) approach can be improved upon in two critical ways and that doing so can further illuminate the dynamics of support for organizational leaders.

First, I view instrumental and relational concerns as constituting two dimensions of evaluations that can simultaneously impact an individual’s decision about how much
to support a leader, rather than as competing models of the sources of that support.
While Tyler (1997) found that relational concerns explained a larger amount of the variance in his datasets, there was also often a significant effect of instrumental concerns as well. In addition, given that Tyler focused on the context of conflict situations, the generalizability of his findings may be restricted to those types of situations. It may, therefore, be the case that in other types of situations, instrumental concerns would have enhanced explanatory power.

Second, I include moral concerns as a third dimension of concerns that might impact an individual’s support for a leader. I do so because recent research in the field of social psychology has indicated that morality is an important dimension of evaluation of social entities (e.g., Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007). Specifically, Leach and colleagues demonstrate that instrumental, relational, and moral concerns constitute distinct factors of evaluation and that in many circumstances, morality concerns are actually more important in determining evaluations of individuals and groups than are instrumental and relational concerns.

In his analyses, Tyler (1997) found aspects of the individual’s orientation to the group, such as the individual’s level of group identification, to be an important moderator of the power of the relational model. Therefore, in this chapter, I explore two aspects of individuals’ orientations to the group (individuals’ levels of group identification and group belongingness) as potential moderators of the importance of
instrumental, relational, and moral concerns in impacting support for leaders and their initiatives. The intention of this focus on group identification and group belongingness is to determine if my adaptations to Tyler’s (1997) approach can help to enhance understandings of the dynamics of organizational leadership beyond Tyler’s (1997) already important contribution.

Social identity theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), holds that people define and evaluate themselves on the basis of their group memberships and that individuals vary in their level of identification with their groups. Individuals who identify highly with a group draw a significant extent of their identity and self-view from their membership in the group, whereas those who do not identify highly with the group do not rely on the group for meaning, identity, or self-view (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). Similarly, group belongingness refers to the extent to which individuals feel included within their groups and feel like they are an integral member of the group (Van Prooijen, Van den Bos, & Wilke, 2004). Thus, individuals with high levels of group identification and belongingness have an intrinsic orientation to the group. That is, these types of individuals care about the nature of the group, are concerned about how the group is perceived and about the group’s core identity, and are motivated to protect and cultivate the group’s identity and meaning (Leach et al., 2008; Okimoto, 2009; Van Vugt, 2004). Individuals with low levels of group identification and belongingness, on the other hand, have a more extrinsic orientation to the group (Leach et al., 2008; Van Vugt,
I therefore expect that individuals with high levels of group identification or group belongingness are likely to emphasize relational and moral concerns in evaluating social entities, while individuals with low levels of group identification or belongingness are likely to emphasize instrumental concerns. I test these ideas in a series of three studies.

2.2 Overview of Studies

In Study 1, I explore how group identification moderates the emphases placed on instrumental, relational, and moral leadership behaviors in determining their support for the leader. That study demonstrates that, contrary to my expectations, group identification did not moderate the effect of relational behaviors on support for the leader; instead, there was a significant positive main effect of relational behaviors on support for the leader. Consistent with my predictions, however, group identification did moderate the impact of instrumental and moral leadership behaviors on support for the leader. Therefore, in Studies 2 and 3, I conducted experiments to examine the nature of these interactions in more detail.
2.3 Study 1

The first study involves a survey of executives who were asked to evaluate their team leaders on instrumental, relational, and moral leadership behaviors. They were also asked to report their level of identification with their organization and the extent to which they support the leader. I tested the following three hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** There will be an interaction between perceptions of the leader’s instrumental behaviors and the follower’s identification with the group, such that the effect of instrumental behaviors on leadership effectiveness will be stronger for low identifiers than for high identifiers.

**Hypothesis 2:** There will be an interaction between perceptions of the leader’s social and moral behaviors and the follower’s identification with the group, such that the effect of social and moral behaviors on leadership effectiveness will be stronger for high identifiers than for low identifiers.

**Hypothesis 3:** For high identifiers, the effect of social and moral behaviors on leadership effectiveness will be greater than the effect of instrumental behaviors, while for low identifiers, the effect of instrumental behaviors will be greater than the effect of social and moral behaviors.
2.3.1 Method

2.3.1.1 Participants and Study Design

The data used for this study was collected as part of a larger research project designed to test the Sitkin-Lind Multiple Leadership Domain Instrument which is based on the Sitkin-Lind theoretical framework of leadership (Sitkin, Lind, & Long, 2005). The data for the present study is from the 2007 administration of the survey, in which 28 working professionals (22 male, 5 female, 1 declined to report) evaluated their team leaders (28 leaders; 22 male, 5 female, 1 declined to report) in terms of the leader’s instrumental, relational, and moral behaviors. In addition, the participants reported their own levels of identification with their team and indicated the extent to which they supported their leader.

2.3.1.2 Measures

Instrumental behaviors. Participants’ evaluations of the leader’s instrumental behaviors were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “[Leader] provides useful solutions to the problems we face,” “[Leader] helps us understand what the team can accomplish,” “[Leader] protects us from danger,” and “[Leader] helps us understand where the team’s strengths and weaknesses lie.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the four items were averaged to form a scale (α = .93) with higher scores indicating higher levels of instrumental behaviors (scores ranged from 2.50 to 7.00, $M = 5.69$, $SD = 0.99$).
Relational behaviors. Participants’ evaluations of the leader’s relational behaviors were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “[Leader] takes the time to get to know his/her team members as people,” and “[Leader] is genuinely interested in learning about his/her team members, their backgrounds, and their interests.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the two items were averaged to form a scale ($r = .67; \alpha = .80$) with higher scores indicating higher levels of relational behaviors (scores ranged from 4.00 to 7.00, $M = 5.64$, $SD = 0.95$).

Moral behaviors. Participants’ evaluations of the leader’s moral behaviors were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “[Leader] argues for high ethical standards,” and “[Leader] takes responsibility for doing what is right.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the two items were averaged to form a scale ($r = .76; \alpha = .85$) with higher scores indicating higher levels of moral behaviors (scores ranged from 4.00 to 7.00, $M = 6.05$, $SD = 0.83$).

Group identification. Participants’ levels of identification with their group were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “I am proud of the team’s work and accomplishments,” and “Our team shares a strong sense of community.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the two items were averaged to form a scale ($r = .54; \alpha = .70$) with higher scores indicating higher levels of group identification (scores ranged from 4.00 to 7.00, $M = 5.72$, $SD = 0.89$).
Support for leader. Participants’ levels of support for their leader were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “I think [leader] is an exceptional leader,” “I rely on [leader’s] judgment on issues that affect the team,” “I know [leader] will guide us well in times of doubt,” “[Leader’s] leadership has a very positive effect on the team,” and “We look to [leader] for leadership.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the five items were averaged to form a scale (α = .94) with higher scores indicating higher levels of support for the leader (scores ranged from 2.40 to 7.00, M = 5.74, SD = 1.15).

2.3.2 Results

The measure of support for the leader was first regressed on the measures of instrumental, relational, and moral behaviors and on the measure of group identification (all centered) as the first step in a hierarchical regression analysis. This initial regression revealed a main effect of instrumental behaviors (b = .45, SE = .17, t(22) = 2.71, p = .01) and relational behaviors (b = .37, SE = .15, t(22) = 2.55, p = .02) on support for the leader. In the next stage of the hierarchical regression analysis, I entered the interactions between group identification and the three dimensions of leader behavior. The results of this model are summarized in Table 1.
Table 1: Regression Results for Leader Support (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>2.71*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>2.55*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adj $R^2 = .80^{***}$

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
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<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>3.06**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>3.83**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IdentXInst</td>
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<td>0.16</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>-2.60*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IdentXRel</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IdentXMoral</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>2.32*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adj $R^2 = .86^{***}$

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The analysis revealed significant interactions between group identification and instrumental behaviors ($b = -0.41$, $SE = 0.16$, $t(19) = -2.60$, $p = .02$) (see Figure 3) and moral behaviors ($b = 0.50$, $SE = 0.22$, $t(19) = 2.32$, $p = .03$) (see Figure 4). In order to explore the interactions in more detail, I examined the simple slopes of instrumental and moral behaviors at different levels of group identification (-1 and 1 standard deviation from the mean). This analysis revealed that there was a positive and significant effect of instrumental behaviors on leadership support among low identifiers ($b = 0.96$, $SE = 0.24$, $t(19) = 4.03$, $p < .001$), but not among high identifiers ($b = 0.14$, $SE = 0.24$, $t(19) = 0.57$, $p = .58$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. In addition, there was a positive and significant effect of moral behaviors on leadership support among high identifiers ($b = 0.62$, $SE = 0.25$, $t(19) = 2.32$, $p = .03$).
$t(19) = 2.45, p = .02$ but not among low identifiers ($b = -.39, SE = .30, t(19) = 1.33, p = .20$).

Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported for the moral dimension. However, there was no interaction between group identification and relational behaviors. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not supported for the relational dimension.

Figure 3: Interaction between Group Identification and Instrumental Behaviors on Support for the Leader (Study 1)
These analyses also reveal support for Hypothesis 3 (see Figure 5). Specifically, among high identifiers, there were positive effects of the relational and moral dimensions on support for the leader, and there was no effect of the instrumental dimension. Among low identifiers, there was a positive effect of the instrumental dimension and no effect of the moral dimension. In addition, there was also a positive effect of the relational dimension for low identifiers, but that effect was smaller than the effect for the instrumental dimension. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.
2.3.3 Discussion

The results of this study provided preliminary support for the notion that group identification moderates the relative emphases placed on the three dimensions of evaluation in determining support for leaders. Specifically, the results indicate that, while there was a positive effect of relational leadership behaviors on support for the leader regardless of the follower’s level of group identification, high identifiers place relatively greater emphasis on instrumental than moral concerns, while low identifiers place greater emphasis on moral than instrumental concerns.

In order to explore this dynamic in more detail, I conducted two follow-up experiments. In Study 2, I examine how group belongingness moderates the efficacy of framing a proposal for change on the basis of either instrumental or moral concerns. In

Figure 5: Hypothesis 3 (Study 1)
Study 3, I replicate the effects from Study 2 and explore the implications of combining instrumental and moral framings.

2.4 Study 2

The second study is designed to assess how the effect of group identification on the dynamics of instrumental and moral concerns impacts the persuasiveness of arguments for change. Study 2 is a survey-based experiment designed to test both for the focal interaction and for mediation. Participants were American citizens who were students at a university in the United States. Participants reported their feelings of belongingness within American culture and then read an argument for changing the Electoral College system, which is the system that the United States uses in selecting presidents. Half of the participants read an argument that was based on instrumental concerns, while the other half read an argument that was based on moral concerns. They then reported their support for the proposal to abolish the Electoral College. I tested the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 4*: There will be an interaction between identification and argument frame, such that individuals reporting low feelings of belongingness will report a greater desire to change the procedure when presented with an instrumentally-framed argument for change than when presented with a morally-framed argument, while individuals reporting a high level of belongingness will report a greater desire to change the
procedure when presented with a morally-framed argument for change than when presented with an instrumentally-framed argument.

Hypothesis 5: Instrumental evaluations of the procedure will mediate the impact of framing on desire to change the procedure for those low in group belongingness.

Hypothesis 6: Moral evaluations of the procedure will mediate the impact of framing on desire to change the procedure for those high in group belongingness.

2.4.1 Method

2.4.1.1 Participants and Study Design

Forty-three undergraduate and graduate students (20 women and 23 men) at a major university participated in the experiment and were paid for their participation. Participants were all United States citizens and were randomly assigned to one of the two argument frame conditions: instrumental framing or moral framing.

2.4.1.2 Experimental Procedure

Participants were recruited to participate in an experiment concerning perceptions about the American political system. They began by reading a brief essay advocating the elimination of the Electoral College system. This essay contained the manipulation of argument framing.

Framing manipulation. Half of the participants were assigned to read an essay that utilized an instrumental argument framing while the other half were assigned to read an essay that utilized moral argument framing (see Appendix A). The arguments were
constructed to be parallel. Specifically, both essays began with an opening paragraph, then included four paragraphs specifying four separate flaws in the Electoral College, and ended with a concluding paragraph. Importantly, the four flaws were the same in both essays; the only difference was the reasons that these attributes were viewed as flaws. For example, both essays indicated that one flaw in the Electoral College is that the winner of the popular vote may not win the Presidency in the Electoral College system. However, in the instrumental argument, this possibility was viewed as a flaw because it contributes to lower voter turnout. In the moral framing, on the other hand, this possibility was interpreted as a flaw because this aspect of the institution violates the American ideal of empowerment for individual citizens in choosing their leaders and because it communicates that individual citizens’ votes are not valued. The concluding paragraphs of each essay reinforced the framings. In the instrumental essay, the conclusion read, “In order to maintain the effectiveness of our presidential elections, it is imperative that we put an end to the Electoral College system.” In the moral essay, the conclusion read, “In order to stay true to our American identity and the values that we as a country represent, it is imperative that we put an end to the Electoral College system.”

After reading the essay, participants were asked to respond to a series of questions in which they reported their desire to change the Electoral College system,
their instrumental and moral evaluations of the Electoral College, and their feelings of belongingness with American culture.

**Group belongingness.** The measure of group belongingness was based on a reversal of the cultural estrangement measure constructed by Cozzarelli and Karafa (1998). Cultural estrangement refers to the extent to which individuals feel that estranged from or excluded from their group (Cozzarelli & Karafa, 1998) and is therefore the opposite of group belongingness. The items used to measure group belongingness included the following: “In general, it seems that I am a good example of what people would consider a typical American”, “My worldview seems to be like that of most other people”, and “I feel that I am very different as compared to what society would call a normal person” (reversed). The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree), and the three items were averaged to form a scale measuring group belongingness ($\alpha = .81$) with higher scores indicating higher levels of group belongingness (scores ranged from .67 to 8.00, $M = 4.32$, $SD = 2.02$).

**Support for change.** Participants’ desire to change the Electoral College was measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “The Electoral College should be abolished,” “The Electoral College should be maintained” (reversed), and “The United States should continue to use the Electoral College system to elect presidents” (reversed). The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree), and the three items were averaged to form a scale of desire to change
the Electoral College (\( \alpha = .97 \)) with higher scores indicating higher levels of desire for change (scores ranged from 1.33 to 10.00, \( M = 5.94, SD = 2.60 \)).

**Instrumental evaluations.** Participants’ instrumental evaluations of the Electoral College were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “The Electoral College system is dysfunctional,” “The Electoral College system is ineffective,” and “The Electoral College system is a highly effective method of electing presidents” (reversed). The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). However, the items had low inter-item reliability (\( \alpha = .64 \)). Therefore, rather than use an unreliable scale, I utilized a single-item measure of instrumental evaluations. Specifically, I used the third item listed above, which specified the type of effectiveness I was trying to assess (“The Electoral College system is a highly effective method of electing presidents” (reversed)). I suspect that the low reliability of the three-item scale was caused by the lack of specificity of the other two items with respect to the dimension of functionality that the participants were being asked to evaluate (i.e., electing presidents). I kept the item reverse-scored. Thus, higher scores on this measure indicate more positive instrumental evaluations (scores ranged from 1.00 to 10.00, \( M = 6.33, SD = 2.33 \)).

**Moral evaluations.** Participants’ moral evaluations of the Electoral College were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “The Electoral College system violates American values,” “The Electoral College system is inconsistent with American values,” and “The Electoral College system is representative of American
values” (reversed). The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree), and the three items were averaged to form a scale measuring moral evaluations ($\alpha = .90$) with higher scores indicating more positive moral evaluations (scores ranged from 1.67 to 10.00, $M = 5.48$, $SD = 2.10$).

2.4.2 Results

2.4.2.1 Desire to Change the Electoral College System

Participants’ ratings on the measure of desire to change the Electoral College system were first regressed on a dummy variable for argument frame (instrumental = 0; moral = 1) and the measure of group belongingness (centered) as the first step in a hierarchical regression analysis. This initial regression revealed only a main effect of group belongingness ($b = -1.59$, $SE = .33$, $t(40) = -4.86$, $p < .001$). In the next stage of the hierarchical regression analysis, I entered the interaction between the dummy variable for argument frame and the group belongingness measure (centered). The results of this model are summarized in Table 2. The analysis revealed a significant interaction between argument frame and group belongingness ($b = 1.86$, $SE = .62$, $t(39) = 3.00$, $p = .005$) (see Figure 6). In order to explore the interaction in more detail and to test Hypothesis 4, I examined the simple slopes of argument frame at different levels of group belongingness (1 and -1 standard deviations from the mean). Hypothesis 4 predicted that individuals who reported high feelings of belongingness within American culture would report a greater desire to change the procedure when presented with an
argument based on moral concerns than when presented with an argument based on instrumental concerns. Indeed, the simple slope of argument frame at high levels of group belongingness was positive and significant ($b = 1.90$, $SE = .85$, $t(39) = 2.23$, $p = .032$). Hypothesis 4 also predicted that individuals who reported low levels of group belongingness would report a greater desire to change the procedure when presented with an instrumentally-framed argument than when presented with a morally-framed argument. The simple slope of argument frame at low levels of group belongingness was negative and significant ($b = -1.811$, $SE = .057$, $t(39) = -2.112$, $p = .041$). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

**Table 2: Regression Results for Desire to Change the Electoral College System (Study 2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$b$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
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<th>$t$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argument Frame</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>-1.59</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>-0.61</td>
<td>-4.86***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj $R^2$</td>
<td>.34***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Argument Frame | 0.05  | 0.59  | 0.01    | 0.08 |
| Belongingness  | -2.77 | 0.49  | -1.06   | -5.61*** |
| Interaction    | 1.86  | 0.62  | 0.57    | 3.00** |
|                |       |       |         |       |
| Adj $R^2$      | .45***|       |         |       |

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
2.4.2.2 Instrumental Evaluations

To assess the mediation effect proposed in Hypothesis 5, I utilized the Edwards and Lambert (2007) approach. The Edwards and Lambert procedure addresses limitations of previous approaches of combining moderation and mediation and is based on path analysis. The procedure is implemented by running regressions on both the mediator and the dependent variable and using the results of these regressions to generate a reduced form equation. Reduced form equations are equations that involve only exogenous variables as predictors. The reduced form equation is then used to compute simple paths that constitute the direct, indirect, and total effects of the independent variable at different levels of the moderator variable. This approach allows researchers to assess where in the mediated causal chain the moderation occurs. When

**Figure 6: Hypothesis 4 (Study 2 Interaction)**
engaging in this type of analysis, Edwards and Lambert (2007) recommend using bootstrapped confidence intervals, which can accommodate the non-normal distributions that result from the multiplication of regression coefficients in the computation of indirect and total effects.

Hypothesis 5 predicted first stage mediation, in which group belongingness would moderate the effect of argument framing on instrumental evaluations of the Electoral College system, which in turn would transmit the effect to desire to change the Electoral College system. Participants’ ratings on the measure of instrumental evaluations of the Electoral College system were regressed on a dummy variable for argument frame (instrumental = 0; moral = 1) and the measure of group belongingness (centered) as the first step in a hierarchical regression analysis. This initial regression revealed a main effect of group belongingness (b = -1.13, SE = .31, t(40) = -3.66, p = .001). In the next stage of the hierarchical regression analysis, I entered the interaction between the dummy variable for argument frame and the measure of group belongingness (centered). The results of this model are summarized in Table 3. The analysis revealed a marginally significant interaction between argument frame and group belongingness (b = 1.16, SE = .62, t(39) = 1.87, p = .069) (see Figure 7). This interaction provides initial support for the first stage moderated mediation model.
Table 3: Regression results for Instrumental Evaluations (Study 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argument Frame</td>
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<td>0.61</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>-1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>-1.13</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>-3.66***</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Adj $R^2 = .26^{**}$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argument Frame</td>
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<td>0.59</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>-2.04**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>-1.87</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
<td>-3.77***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>1.87*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adj $R^2 = .31^{***}$

Note: * p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p < .01, **** p < .001

In order to examine the path from instrumental evaluations to desire to change the Electoral College, I regressed the measure of desire for change on argument frame and instrumental evaluations. The analysis demonstrated a positive and significant
effect of instrumental evaluations on desire for change (b = 1.34, SE = .37, t(40) = 3.63, p = .001), thus indicating support for the second stage of the moderated mediation proposed in Hypothesis 5. Given this initial support for the first stage moderated mediation proposed in Hypothesis 5, I conducted the bootstrap procedure in order to produce bias-corrected confidence intervals to assess the indirect effect of argument framing on support for change through instrumental evaluations. Hypothesis 5 predicted that instrumental evaluations of the procedure would mediate the effect of argument frame on desire for change, but only for those low in their level of group belongingness. I therefore computed and compared the paths at low and high levels of group belongingness. For individuals reporting low group belongingness, the indirect effect of argument frame on desire for change, mediated through instrumental evaluations, was significant for those reporting low group belongingness (b = -3.18, p < .01, bias-corrected 95% confidence interval: -1.09, -7.23), indicating that instrumental evaluations did indeed mediate the effect of argument frame on desire for change for these individuals. Furthermore, the direct effect of argument frame on desire for change was not significant for this group (b = .770, p > .10), indicating that this is full rather than partial mediation. With respect to individuals reporting high group belongingness, however, the first stage indirect effect of argument frame on instrumental evaluations was not significant (b = -.05, p > .10). Thus, Hypothesis 5 was supported.
2.4.2.3 Moral Evaluations

To assess the mediation effect proposed in Hypothesis 6, in which I expected that for those high in group belongingness, moral evaluations of the procedure would mediate the impact framing on desire to change the procedure, I again followed the procedures developed by Edwards and Lambert (2007). To assess the first stage of the moderated mediation hypothesis, participants’ ratings on the measure of moral evaluations of the Electoral College system were regressed on a dummy variable for argument frame (instrumental = 0; moral = 1) and the measure of group belongingness (centered) as the first step in a hierarchical regression analysis. This initial regression revealed a main effect of group belongingness (B = -1.19, SE = .27, t(40) = -4.42, p < .001). In the next step of the hierarchical regression analysis, I entered the interaction between the dummy variable for argument frame and the group belongingness measure (centered). The results of this model are summarized in Table 4. The analysis revealed a significant interaction between argument frame and group belongingness (b = 1.11, SE = .54, t(39) = 2.06, p = .046) (see Figure 8). This interaction provides initial support for the first stage moderated mediation model.
Table 4: Regression Results for Moral Evaluations (Study 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$b$</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argument Frame</td>
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<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>-1.19</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>-0.57</td>
<td>-4.42***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adj R$^2 = .31^{***}$

| Argument Frame | 0.48  | 0.51| 0.12    | 0.94    |
| Belongingness  | -1.90 | 0.43| -0.91   | -4.42***|
| Interaction    | 1.11  | 0.54| 0.42    | 2.06*   |

Adj R$^2 = .36^{***}$

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

In order to examine the path from moral evaluations to desire to change the Electoral College, I regressed the measure of desire for change on argument frame and moral evaluations (centered). The analysis demonstrated a positive and significant effect
of moral evaluations on desire for change ($b = 1.02, \ SE = .12, t(39) = 8.38, p < .001$), thus indicating support for the second stage of the moderated mediation proposed in Hypothesis 6. Given this initial support for the first stage moderated mediation proposed in Hypothesis 6, I conducted the bootstrap procedure in order to produce bias-corrected confidence intervals to assess the indirect effect of argument framing on support for change through moral evaluations. Hypothesis 6 predicted that moral evaluations of the procedure would mediate the effect of argument frame on desire for change, but only for those high in their level of group belongingness. I therefore computed and compared the paths at low and high levels of group belongingness. For individuals reporting high belongingness within American culture, the indirect effect of argument frame on desire for change, mediated through moral evaluations, was significant ($b = 3.56, p < .05$, bias-corrected 95% confidence interval: $.41, 6.58$), indicating that moral evaluations did indeed mediate the effect of argument frame on desire for change. Furthermore, the direct effect of argument frame on desire for change was not significant for this group ($b = -.46, p > .10$), indicating that this is full rather than partial mediation. With respect to individuals reporting low group belongingness, however, the first stage indirect effect of argument frame on moral evaluations was not significant ($b = -.63, p > .10$). Thus, Hypothesis 6 was supported.

2.4.3 Discussion

All three hypotheses were supported. Specifically, individuals who reported
high levels of group belongingness indicated a greater desire to change the procedure in response to the moral appeal than the instrumental appeal, while individuals who reported low levels of group belongingness indicated a greater desire to change the procedure in response to the instrumental appeal than the moral appeal. In addition, instrumental evaluations fully mediated the indirect effect of framing of appeal on desire for change for low (but not high) belongingness individuals, while moral evaluations fully mediated the indirect effect among high (but not low) belongingness individuals.

One practical implication of this study is that if leaders want to persuade both low and high belongingness followers, they should use both types of framings. However, previous research on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation provides reason to doubt the efficacy of this approach (e.g., Deci, 1971). Specifically, research has indicated that when individuals experience an intrinsic motivation for engagement, the application of extrinsic motivators can actually undermine the level of intrinsic motivation. Given that individuals with high identification and high feelings of belongingness have an intrinsic orientation to their group, it is likely that adding an instrumental appeal to a moral appeal would undermine the efficacy of the moral appeal. Study 3 seeks to investigate this possibility.

2.5 Study 3

Study 3 was an online national survey of American citizens designed to replicate
the focal interaction and to examine the effect of combining instrumental and moral framings. Participants were asked to read one of three excerpts from a speech made by the current president of the United States, Barack Obama, in which he argues that an existing policy (regarding the interrogation of terrorism suspects) should be changed. One excerpt focused on instrumental concerns, another focused on moral concerns, and the third combined the two. Participants were asked to respond to a series of items intended to measure their identification with American culture and were also asked to indicate their desire to change the policy. The goal of this study was to replicate the interaction from Study 2 in further support of Hypothesis 4 and also to test the following additional hypothesis:

Hypothesis 7: High identifiers will be more persuaded by an exclusively moral appeal than by an appeal that combines both moral and instrumental reasoning.

2.5.1 Method

2.5.1.1 Participants and Study Design

A national sample of 363 individuals (96 women, 266 men, 1 declined to report; age range: 18 to 73) participated in the study online. Participants were paid for their participation. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three argument frame conditions: instrumental framing, moral framing, or both.

2.5.1.2 Experimental Procedure
Participants were recruited to participate in an experiment concerning perceptions about the American political system. They began by reading a paragraph excerpted from President Barack Obama’s on May 21, 2009 in which he announced that he would ban “enhanced interrogation techniques” such as water-boarding.

Framing manipulation. The paragraph contained the manipulation of argument framing. First, all participants read the following paragraph:

President Obama took dramatic steps yesterday to reverse Bush administration policies on the detention and interrogation of suspected terrorists, banning the use of controversial CIA interrogation techniques. Obama insisted that the overarching message of his first national security orders was unequivocal: "The United States will not torture."

Next, participants in the instrumental condition read the following:

He went on to assert: "Brutal methods like waterboarding … undermine the rule of law. They alienate us in the world. They serve as a recruitment tool for terrorists and increase the will of our enemies to fight us, while decreasing the will of others to work with America. They risk the lives of our troops by making it less likely that others will surrender to them in battle, and more likely that Americans will be mistreated if they are captured. In short, they did not advance our war and counterterrorism efforts — they undermined them, and that is why I ended them once and for all."
Those in the moral condition read the following:

He went on to assert: “From Europe to the Pacific, we have been a nation that has shut down torture chambers and replaced tyranny with the rule of law. That is who we are. And where terrorists offer only the injustice of disorder and destruction, America must demonstrate that our values and institutions are more resilient than a hateful ideology … The Framers who drafted the Constitution could not have foreseen the challenges that have unfolded … But our Constitution has endured … because it provides a foundation of principles … that have been the source of our strength, and a beacon to the world.

Individuals in the “both” condition read both the instrumental and the moral paragraphs.

*Group identification.* The measure of group identification included the following items: “I feel closely identified with American society”, “I am proud to be a part of American society”, and “Being part of American society is very meaningful for me”. The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the three items were averaged to form a scale ($\alpha = .97$) with higher scores indicating higher levels of group identification (scores ranged from 1.00 to 7.00, $M = 5.51$, $SD = 1.27$).

*Support for change.* Participants’ support for Obama’s change initiative was measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “Obama made the right decision in changing the interrogation policies” “I am glad that Obama made this policy
change,” and “Obama made a bad decision on this issue” (reversed). The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the three items were averaged to form a scale ($\alpha = .87$) with higher scores indicating higher levels of desire for change (scores ranged from 1.33 to 10.00, $M = 5.94$, $SD = 2.60$).

### 2.5.2 Results

Participants’ ratings on the measure of support for change were first regressed on two dummy variables for argument frame (instrumental = 1, moral and both = 0; both = 1, instrumental and moral = 0) and the measure of group identification (centered) as the first step in a hierarchical regression analysis. This initial regression revealed no main effects. In the next stage of the hierarchical regression analysis, I entered the interaction between the dummy variable for the instrumental argument and the group identification measure (centered) as well as the dummy variable for the combined argument and the group identification measure (centered). The results of this regression are summarized in Table 5. The analysis revealed a significant interaction between instrumental framing and group identification ($b = -0.60$, SE = .26, $t(355) = -2.26$, $p < .05$) as well as a significant interaction between the combined framing and group identification ($b = -0.53$, SE = .25, $t(355) = -2.17$, $p < .05$) (see Figure 9).
Table 5: Regression Results for Support for Obama’s Change Initiative (Study 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>$b$</th>
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<th>$\beta$</th>
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<td>-1.54</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>2.87**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental X ID</td>
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<td>-0.18</td>
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</tr>
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<td>-2.17*</td>
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$Adj R^2 < .01$

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</table>

$Adj R^2 = .015; R^2\Delta = .017^*$

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 9: Support for Obama’s Change Initiative

Hypothesis 4 predicted that individuals who reported high identification would
report greater support for change when presented with an argument based on moral concerns than when presented with an argument based on instrumental concerns. To examine this prediction, I created a new dummy variable (instrumental = 1; moral = 0) and regressed support for change on the new dummy variable, the measure of group identification, and the interaction between the two. I then examined the simple slopes of argument frame at different levels of group identification (1 and -1 standard deviations from the mean). Indeed, the simple slope of argument frame at high levels of group identification was negative and significant ($b = -0.97$, SE = .35, $t(230) = -2.76$, $p = .006$).

Hypothesis 4 also predicted that individuals who reported low levels of identification would report a greater desire to change the procedure when presented with an instrumentally-framed argument than when presented with a morally-framed argument. However, in this study, the simple slope of argument frame at low levels of group identification was not significant ($b = 0.23$, SE = .35, $t(230) = 0.65$, $p = .52$). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported for high identifiers but not for low identifiers.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that high identifiers would be more persuaded by the moral argument than by the argument that combined both moral and instrumental arguments. To examine this prediction, I created a new dummy variable (both = 1; moral = 0) and regressed support for change on the new dummy variable, the measure of group identification, and the interaction between the two. I then examined the simple slopes of argument frame at different levels of group identification (1 and -1 standard
deviations from the mean). Indeed, the simple slope of argument frame at high levels of
group identification was negative and significant (b = -0.78, SE = .33, t(232) = -2.32, p = .02). The simple slope of argument frame at low levels of group identification was not
significant (b = 0.29, SE = .32, t(232) = 0.91, p = .36). Thus, Hypothesis 7 was supported for
high identifiers.

2.5.3 Discussion

The two goals of this study were to replicate the interaction from Study 2 and to show that combining instrumental and moral arguments can have an undermining
effect for high identifiers. With respect to the first goal, the interaction was replicated,
but the effect was only significant for high identifiers. Specifically, high identifiers were
more persuaded by the moral than the instrumental argument. For low identifiers,
however, while they were more persuaded by the instrumental than the moral
argument, the effect was not significant. The reason for the lack of effect for low
identifiers is not clear, but perhaps it is the case that torture is such a morally-charged
issue that instrumental framings seem less relevant to individuals regardless of their
orientation to the group. Future research should explore this possibility in more detail.
Finally, the second goal of Study 3 was to demonstrate that the combination of
instrumental and moral arguments can have an undermining effect for high identifiers.
This expectation was supported.
2.6 General Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this set of studies make three key contributions. First, the studies demonstrate that the relative emphasis placed on instrumental, social, and moral concerns is moderated by individuals’ orientations to their groups (e.g., levels of group identification and belongingness). Specifically, this set of studies demonstrates that high identifiers and individuals who feel a high level of belongingness within their group place greater emphasis on moral concerns than on instrumental concerns in their evaluations of social entities, while low identifiers and those who feel low levels of belongingness place greater emphasis on instrumental concerns. Second, these findings indicate that the success of leadership and attempts at persuasion may depend upon the extent to which the leader’s behaviors match with the dispositions and preferences of members of the target audience. Finally, these studies indicate that leaders need to think contingently about the tactics they utilize in their attempts to lead and persuade, because different groups of followers may be responsive to divergent types of appeals.
3. The Impact of Leader Power on Influence Tactics: The Mediating Role of Leaders’ Assumptions about Legitimacy

3.1 Introduction

Numerous studies have examined the relative effectiveness of different leadership behaviors and styles, and research has suggested that the effectiveness of different styles varies across different social contexts (see Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996 for a review). However, very little research has focused on understanding how leaders choose the behavioral strategies and tactics that they use in their attempts to influence followers, and even less research has examined how aspects of leaders’ social contexts can impact the types of behaviors that leaders choose to engage. Instead, existing research on the determinants of leadership behaviors has focused on relatively immutable characteristics of the leader him- or her-self as the primary explanatory variables. For example, previous research has explored the role of personality traits (see House & Aditya, 1997 for a review) and gender (see Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995 for a review) in impacting leadership behaviors and styles. This research has contributed to a broad-based understanding of how traits and characteristics inherent to the leader can impact leadership behavior. However, to the extent that scholars wish to understand how leaders adapt their strategies and tactics to different features of their social environments or to their followers’ needs, it is necessary to move beyond the examination of immutable characteristics of leaders and to consider
how cues in the leaders’ social environments might impact their decisions about which types of strategies to adopt.

I argue that leaders’ assumptions about the sources of their legitimacy in the eyes of followers are a critical determinant of leadership strategy choices and that these assumptions can be shaped by aspects of the leaders’ social environment. In the studies presented here, I examine how one aspect of a leader’s social environment (specifically, the extent to which the leader feels a subjective sense of power within his or her group, team, or organization) influences the leader’s assumptions about the basis of his or her support from followers, which in turn impacts the leader’s decisions about what types of strategies to use in attempting to influence followers. I focus on power because power is intimately tied to the processes of influence that are critical to leadership (for reviews, see Cartwright, 1959; Hollander and Offerman, 1990; Magee, Gruenfeld, Keltner, and Galinsky, 2004). Moreover, with the increasing focus on the dynamics of shared leadership (e.g., Pearce and Conger, 2003), it is increasingly recognized that situational and structural power is not inherent to leadership but can vary across leaders. Given that power is both intimately tied to the process of leadership and varies across leaders, it is important to understand how feelings of power might impact leadership behaviors. Based on previous research on the psychological effects of the experience of social power, I argue that power impacts leaders’ assumptions about followers’ needs and desires, which in turn influences leaders’ expectations about the types of behaviors that
will elicit follower support. As a consequence, the leader’s experience of social power
can have a profound impact on the strategic choices the leader makes when determining
what types of behaviors to engage.

In the following sections, I explain why legitimacy is a critical construct for
leadership research and I describe how leaders’ assumptions about the roots of their
own legitimacy are shaped by their social environments and have a powerful impact on
their choices of behaviors. I then present four studies that demonstrate the proposed
dynamics. I conclude with a discussion of the implications of this research and avenues
for further investigation.

3.2 Legitimacy as a Critical Construct for Leadership Research

Consistent with previous research, I define leadership as “a process of influence
that enlists and mobilizes the involvement of others in the attainment of collective goals”
(Hogg, 2001: p. 194; see also Bass, 2008; Stogdill, 1950). Thus, leadership is a type of
social influence, but as Pfeffer (1977) maintains, “In leadership, influence rights are
voluntarily conferred” (p. 105). This voluntary cooperation differentiates leadership
from other types of influence attempts in which power is used without the consent of
followers, such as coercion. Legitimacy is therefore a critical construct in understanding
leadership dynamics because legitimacy is the key judgment that distinguishes
leadership from coercion. That is, to the extent that an authority is judged to have
legitimacy, individuals will voluntarily defer to the authority because they perceive that
the authority has a right to request their cooperation (Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2005; Tyler & DeGoey, 1995). When an authority is viewed as illegitimate, however, voluntary deference is not forthcoming, and the authority must resort to coercion.

Given that positive legitimacy judgments are a necessary prerequisite for the effective exercise of leadership, it is surprising that the legitimacy construct has not played a greater role in leadership research (see Hollander, 1993 for an exception). I propose that there are three dimensions of perceptions, beliefs, and concerns that underlie individual-level legitimacy judgments: instrumental, relational, and moral. First, a leader is viewed as legitimate on instrumental grounds when he or she is perceived to facilitate the individual’s or group’s attempts to reach self-defined or internalized goals or outcomes. Examples of perceptions or beliefs that constitute the instrumental dimension would include perceptions of the efficacy, skills, expertise, or efficiency of the leader. Second, a leader is viewed as legitimate on relational grounds when he or she is perceived to ensure that individuals or groups are treated with dignity and respect and receive outcomes commensurate with their entitlement. Examples of perceptions or beliefs that constitute the relational dimension of legitimacy judgments would include perceptions or beliefs related to the leader’s fairness, benevolence, or communality. Finally, a leader is perceived as legitimate on moral grounds when he or she is perceived to be act in consistency with the evaluator’s moral and ethical values. Thus, examples of perceptions or beliefs that constitute the moral dimension of
legitimacy judgments would include perceptions or beliefs related to the morality, ethicality, or integrity of the leader.

The instrumental-relational-moral trichotomy aligns well with how leadership theories have described leadership behaviors. For example, the path-goal theory (House, 1971) describes leaders as engaging in primarily instrumental tasks, such as facilitating follower goals and increasing pay-offs to followers. Also, consistent with the relational dimension, Hogg’s (2001; Haslam & Platow, 2001) social identity theory of leadership holds that people support leaders who affirm social and group identity concerns. In addition, Fiedler’s (1967) contingency model contrasts task-motivated leadership behavior (instrumental) with relationship-motivated leadership behavior (relational), while Lord (1977) contrasts task-related functional leadership behavior (instrumental) with socio-emotionally related leadership behavior (relational). Furthermore, a number of leadership theories combine instrumental and relational considerations into a single type of leadership style. For example, the transformational leadership style involves facilitating followers’ goal pursuits as well as more relational behaviors such as listening to followers’ needs and concerns (see Judge & Piccolo, 2004 for a review). Finally, while less attention has been paid to the moral dimension in leadership research, the construct of ethical leadership has recently been gaining attention (e.g., Brown & Trevino, 2006).

Thus, previous research has described leadership behaviors that reflect each of the three dimensions of concerns and perceptions that underlie legitimacy judgments.
Previous approaches to studying leadership effectiveness have specified different leadership behaviors or collections of behaviors (i.e., styles) and examined the various situations or social contexts in which one or the other is more likely to elicit the desired behavior from followers (House & Aditya, 1997; Lowe et al., 1996). However, relatively little research has examined the situational and social determinants of which of these types of behaviors leaders themselves are likely to choose to engage. In the following section, I propose that leaders’ assumptions about the bases of their legitimacy in the eyes of followers are a key determinant of their behavioral choices. Specifically, based on research on implicit leadership theory (Engle & Lord, 1997; Lord & Maher, 1991), I argue that leaders have tacit assumptions about what followers expect of them as leaders and that these assumptions 1) are influenced by aspects of the leaders’ relationship with the group as a whole, such as the leaders’ feelings of social power, and 2) impact the types of behaviors that leaders choose to engage.

### 3.3 Leaders’ Assumptions about the Bases of their Legitimacy

Leadership researchers have argued that individuals have implicit theories of leadership, which consist of assumptions about the abilities or traits that characterize ideal leaders (Engle & Lord, 1997). While implicit theories of leadership represent followers’ expectations for leaders’ behaviors, I argue that leaders also have implicit theories related to their behaviors. Specifically, I argue that leaders have implicit theories, or tacit assumptions, about the types of behaviors that followers desire and
expect from them. These assumptions constitute leaders’ beliefs about the types of behaviors that their followers would view as appropriate or legitimate in a specified context.

The role of social context is important because there is reason to expect that leaders’ assumptions about the types of behaviors that followers would view as legitimate would vary from one social situation to the next. For example, research has shown that expectations of male and female leaders vary across different types of leadership positions and organizational levels, such that more masculine positions and more powerful positions elicit different expectations of behavior from women leaders than more feminine or subordinate positions (Heilman, Martell, & Simon, 1988; Rosette & Tost, forthcoming). Furthermore, research has indicated that women leaders are aware that expectations of them depend on social context (Lyness & Thompson, 2000). Thus, there is extensive evidence that leaders themselves perceive that the types of behaviors that are expected of them can vary across social contexts.

At the same time, research on issue crafting has indicated that the ways in which people frame issues for persuasive purposes may depend upon their perceptions of the types of framings that will be most effective in a particular social context (Sonenshein, 2006). For example, individuals in business organizations are more likely to use instrumental than moral frames in trying to sell issues to others, regardless of whether their personal stance on the issue is based on instrumental or moral concerns.
(Sonenshein, 2006). Research indicates that people take this strategic approach because they believe that instrumental arguments will be more persuasive with their business colleagues (Sonenshein, 2006).

Thus, not only is there reason to expect that the content of leaders’ assumptions about the sources of their legitimacy varies across social context, but further it is likely that these assumptions themselves impact the types of behaviors leaders choose to engage. Specifically, because judgments of legitimacy are the crucial pivotal cognitions that differentiate influence through leadership from influence through coercion, leaders’ assumptions about their own legitimacy in essence constitute their assumptions about the types of behaviors that will elicit follower support and voluntary deference. Therefore, these assumptions determine leaders’ expectations about the amount of support they would expect to receive from followers in response to different leadership behaviors, and because leaders desire to be effective in their influence attempts, these expectations of support in turn impact the likelihood that different types of behaviors will be engaged. For example, if a leader believes that followers are expecting primarily instrumental behaviors, he or she is likely to expect that instrumental behaviors will elicit greater support from followers than relational or moral behaviors and is therefore most likely to engage in instrumental behaviors.
3.3.1 Power

There are a variety of social contextual factors that might influence the content of leaders’ assumptions about their own legitimacy as leaders, but one that merits particular attention is the leader’s experience of social power. Social power is defined as “asymmetric control over valued resources in social relations” (Magee & Galinsky, 2008; see also Blau, 1964, 1977; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). While power is not the same construct as leadership, it merits particular attention in considering how leaders choose their behaviors because power is an instrument of influence (French and Raven, 1959) and because differences of structural power between influencers and the targets of influence have been shown to impact the types of influence tactics (e.g., rational persuasion, ingratiation, etc.) that influencers choose (Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson, 1980; Kipnis and Schmidt, 1988; Yukl and Falbe, 1990).

In this research, rather than focusing on structural positions that endow leaders with power, I focus on power as a type of internal state that is of critical importance in decision making contexts: the leader’s subjective sense of power. A subjective sense of power refers to the extent to which individuals feel that they can exert influence over the outcomes and experiences of others (Anderson and Berdahl, 2002; Van Kleef, Oveis, Van der Lowe, LuoKogan, Goetz, and Keltner, 2008). A focus on leaders’ subjective feelings of power is critical for scholarly research on leadership because, increasingly,
researchers are coming to understand that leadership is not exclusively a top-down
dynamic (e.g., Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber, 2009). That is, individuals can lead
others regardless of their structural position within a group or organization. Individuals
can lead their peers and supervisors as well as their subordinates, and researchers are
increasingly coming to view leadership as a dynamic that can be shared across teams
(e.g., Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber, 2009; Conger and Pearce, 2003).

A developing stream of research in social psychology has demonstrated that the
psychological feelings associated with having power over others lead to a number of
systematic psychological and behavioral effects. Among these effects of power is that
individuals experiencing social power tend to be more goal-oriented in their tasks and
social interactions (e.g., Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Keltner et al., 2003; Magee,
Galinsky, & Gruenfeld, 2007; Overbeck & Park, 2001, 2006). At the same time,
individuals with low levels of power are more likely than individuals with high levels of
power to engage in perspective-taking (Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006), to
allocate attention to others in their environments (Overbeck & Park, 2001), and to be
concerned about the nature of social bonds within their groups (Kipnis, 1972). Thus, this
previous research suggests that individuals who feel a high level of power tend to take
an instrumental orientation to their social environments, while individuals who feel a
lower level of power take a more relational orientation to their social environments.
In addition, research in this area has demonstrated that power diminishes individuals’ inclinations to engage in perspective-taking (Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, and Gruenfeld, 2006). Perspective-taking is a practice that involves the active consideration of the viewpoints of others, considering others’ emotions, perceptions, and motivations. In a series of studies, researchers have documented that the psychological experience of power leads people to engage in lower levels of perspective taking and to anchor on their own viewpoints (Galinsky et al., 2006).

Given that individuals experiencing power are less likely to consider others’ perspectives, I expect that high power leaders are likely to assume that others share their instrumental orientation to their social environments and therefore expect and desire instrumental behavior from leaders. At the same time, because power is associated with the capacity to control outcomes, I expect that low power leaders feel less able to influence others on the basis of instrumental behaviors and that they therefore assume that their followers expect and desire primarily relational leadership behaviors. Furthermore, as a consequence of these divergent assumptions about the expectations and desires of followers, high power leaders are likely to expect that follower support is determined by instrumental behaviors, while low power leaders are likely to expect that follower support is predicated on relational behaviors. Finally, as a consequence of these expectations, I expect that the experience of high feelings of power is likely to lead
leaders to choose instrumental influence tactics, while the experience of low feelings of power is likely to lead leaders to choose relational influence tactics.

Therefore, I test the following three hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1**: Leaders who feel a high level of power in their groups or organizations will perceive that the support that they receive from followers is based primarily on their instrumental rather than relational or moral behaviors; leaders who feel a low level of power in their groups or organizations will perceive that the support that they receive from followers is based primarily on their relational rather than instrumental or moral behaviors.

**Hypothesis 2**: This effect of power on expectations of support is mediated by leaders’ assumptions about what followers expect and desire from them as leaders.

**Hypothesis 3**: High power leaders will be more likely to engage in instrumental than relational or moral leadership behaviors, while low power leaders will be more likely to engage in relational than instrumental or moral leadership behaviors.

### 3.4 Overview of Studies

I test these hypotheses in a series of four studies. Study 1 tests Hypothesis 1 using a survey of executives engaged in a leadership training course. Leaders evaluated themselves on instrumental, relational, and moral leadership behaviors and reported their level of power in their organization as well as the extent to which they expected that others in their organization support them as leaders. Study 2 is a vignette studies
designed to further test Hypothesis 1 by assessing the causal link between the experience of social power and leaders’ expectations that instrumental and social behaviors will engender follower support. Study 3 replicates the design of Study 2 and tests for the mediation effect proposed in Hypothesis 2. Finally, Study 4 is an experiment designed to test Hypothesis 3.

### 3.5 Study 1

Study 1 consists of a survey of executives engaged in a leadership training course. The leaders evaluated themselves on instrumental, relational, and moral leadership behaviors and reported their feelings of power within their organizations. They also indicated the extent to which they felt that others in their organizations support them as leaders. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, I expected that high power leaders would indicate a strong positive relationship between their instrumental behaviors and follower support but a weaker relationship between their relational and moral behaviors and follower support. Conversely, I expected that low power leaders would indicate a strong positive relationship between their relational behaviors and follower support but a weaker relationship between their instrumental and moral behaviors and follower support.
3.5.1 Method

3.5.1.1 Participants and Study Design

The data used for this study was collected as part of a larger research project designed to test the Sitkin-Lind Multiple Leadership Domain Instrument which is based on the Sitkin-Lind theoretical framework of leadership (Sitkin et al., 2005). The data for the present study is from the 2007 administration of the survey, in which 114 working professionals (88 male, 23 female, 3 declined to report) evaluated their instrumental, relational, and moral leadership behaviors. In addition, the participants reported their feelings of power within their organization and indicated the extent to which they felt that others in their groups and teams supported them as leaders. Participants ranged in age from 25 to 52 and represented over ten different nationalities and a wide range of industries.

3.5.1.2 Measures

Instrumental behaviors. Participants’ evaluations of their instrumental behaviors were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “I provide useful solutions to the problems the team faces,” “I help the team to understand what the team as a whole can accomplish,” “I actively look out for team members,” “I protect team members from danger,” and “I help the team to understand where the team’s strengths and weaknesses lie.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the five items were averaged to form a scale (α = .78) with higher scores
indicating higher levels of instrumental behaviors (scores ranged from 3.80 to 7.00, $M = 5.69$, $SD = 0.74$).

*Relational behaviors.* Participants’ evaluations of their relational behaviors were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “I take the time to get to know my team members as people,” “I am genuinely interested in learning about my team members, their backgrounds, and their interests,” “I treat everyone with fairness,” and “I take a real interest in how my team members are doing.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the four items were averaged to form a scale ($\alpha = .74$) with higher scores indicating higher levels of relational behaviors (scores ranged from 3.75 to 7.00, $M = 5.86$, $SD = 0.68$).

*Moral behaviors.* Participants’ evaluations of the leader’s moral behaviors were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “I argue for high ethical standards,” “I encourage everyone to be true to their ethical beliefs and values,” and “I take responsibility for doing what is right.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the three items were averaged to form a scale ($\alpha = .85$) with higher scores indicating higher levels of moral behaviors (scores ranged from 3.67 to 7.00, $M = 6.18$, $SD = 0.78$).

*Power.* Participants’ feelings of power were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “In this context, I have a great deal of power,” and “I have a great deal of authority around here.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7
(strongly agree), and the two items were averaged to form a scale \( r = .83; \alpha = .91 \) with higher scores indicating higher levels of feelings of power (scores ranged from 2.00 to 7.00, \( M = 4.87, SD = 1.19 \)).

**Leadership support.** Participants’ feelings of leadership support were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “Members of the team think I am an exceptional leader,” “My team relies on my judgment on issues that affect the team,” “Team members know I will guide them well in times of doubt,” and “Team members look to me for leadership.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the four items were averaged to form a scale (\( \alpha = .76 \)) with higher scores indicating higher feelings of support (scores ranged from 3.00 to 7.00, \( M = 5.51, SD = 0.76 \)).

**3.5.2 Results**

The measure of leadership support was first regressed on the measures of instrumental, relational, and moral behaviors and on the measure of power (all centered) as the first step in a hierarchical regression analysis. This initial regression revealed main effects of power (\( b = .29, SE = .06, t(108) = 4.74, p < .001 \)) and instrumental behaviors (\( b = .20, SE = .07, t(108) = 2.88, p < .01 \)) on support for the leader. In the next stage of the hierarchical regression analysis, I entered the interactions between power and the three dimensions of leader behavior. The results of this model are summarized in Table 6.
Table 6: Regression Results for Leader Support (Study 1)

<table>
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\[ Adj R^2 = .34*** \]

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\[ Adj R^2 = .39*** \]

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

The analysis revealed significant interactions between power and instrumental behaviors (\( b = .14, \ SE = .07, \ t(105) = 2.13, \ p = .036 \)) (see Figure 10) and relational behaviors (\( b = -.17, \ SE = .06, \ t(22) = 2.55, \ p = .02 \)) (see Figure 11). In order to explore the interactions in more detail, I examined the simple slopes of instrumental and relational behaviors at different levels of power (-1 and 1 standard deviation from the mean). This analysis revealed that there was a positive and significant effect of instrumental behaviors on expectations of leadership support among high power leaders (\( b = .36, \ SE = .09, \ t(105) = 3.84, \ p < .001 \)), but not among low power leaders (\( b = .08, \ SE = .09, \ t(105) = .84, \ p = .40 \)). In addition, there was a positive and significant effect of relational behaviors on expectations of leadership support among low power leaders (\( b = .30, \ SE = .10, \ t(105) = \)).
2.95, p < .01) but not among high power leaders (b = -.04, SE = .08, t(105) = -0.56, p = .58).

Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Figure 10: Interaction between Power and Instrumental Behaviors (Study 1)

Figure 11: Interaction between Power and Relational Behaviors (Study 1)
3.5.3 Discussion

The results of this study provided preliminary support for the notion that leaders’ feelings of social power moderate their expectations that instrumental and relational behaviors produce support from followers. Specifically, the responses of high power leaders indicated a perception of a positive relationship between instrumental behaviors and support from followers but no relationship between relational or moral behaviors and support from followers. Conversely, the response of low power leaders indicated a perception of a positive relationship between relational behaviors and support from followers but no relationship between instrumental or moral behaviors and support from followers.

In order to explore this dynamic in more detail, I conducted three follow-up experiments. In Study 2, I examine how power moderates leaders’ expectations of support in response to specific decisions premised on instrumental or relational reasoning. In Study 3, I replicate the findings of Study 3 and demonstrate that the effects are mediated by leaders’ assumptions about followers’ preferences for specific types of leadership behaviors. In Study 4, I demonstrate that this effect of power on leaders’ assumptions about the bases of follower support and legitimacy impacts leaders’ decisions about influence strategies.
3.6 Study 2

Study 2 is a vignette study designed to assess the causal link between the experience of social power and leaders’ expectations that instrumental and relational behaviors will engender follower support. The experiment has a 3 (power: high, low, control) x 2 (decision basis: instrumental, relational) between-subjects design. Participants first encountered a power prime commonly used in social psychological research (Galinsky et al., 2003). They were then asked to read a paragraph that described a decision made on exclusively instrumental or relational grounds, and they were asked to imagine that they were the leader who made this decision. They were then asked to respond to a series of items designed to test the extent to which they expected that their followers would support their decision.

3.6.1 Method

3.6.1.1 Participants and Study Design

Eighty individuals (20 women, 59 men, 1 declined to report; age ranged from 19 to 69) participated in the study online.

3.6.1.2 Experimental Procedure

Participants were recruited to participate in an experiment about perceptions of decision making procedures.

*Power prime.* Participants began by engaging in a writing task designed to prime high or low feelings of power. Participants were asked to recall and describe a situation
in which they had power over other people (high power), a situation in which other people had power over them (low power), or their last visit at the grocery store (control) (see Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky, 2008).

*Manipulation of decision basis.* Participants then read a description of a decision that was made on either instrumental or relational bases. Participants received the following instructions: “Now imagine you are the leader of a small team of colleagues. You have recently made a decision that will affect the group. Below is a description of your decision. Please read the description.” The instrumental decision was described as follows:

This decision definitely serves the interests of everyone in the group in a way that is both effective and efficient – group members will get very positive outcomes because of this decision. However, the decision was not entirely fair to everyone, and it was not the most ethical decision that could have been made in this situation.

The relational decision was described as follows:

This decision was definitely fair and the decision process and outcome was considerate of all group members and treated everyone with dignity and respect – group members will feel that they are valued members of the group because of this decision. However, the decision did not produce the best outcomes for
group members, and it was not the most ethical decision that could have been made in this situation.

After reading the description of the decision, participants were asked to respond to a series of items designed to assess their expectations that others in their group would support them in response to this decision.

*Expectations of support.* Participants’ expectations of support were measured by asking them to respond to the following items regarding other group members’ likely responses to the decision: “They will see me as a good leader,” “They will view me as an exceptional leader,” “They will be glad that I am the group leader,” and “They will have a high level of commitment to me.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the four items were averaged to form a scale of expectations of support ($\alpha = .96$) with higher scores indicating higher levels of expected support (scores ranged from 1.25 to 7.00, $M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.45$).

### 3.6.2 Results

To confirm the effectiveness of the power prime, I asked participants to think back to the experience that they had written about at the beginning of the study and to indicate the amount of power they personally felt in that experience using a 7-point scale (1 = very little; 7 = a great deal). Responses to this item were used as the dependent variable in a 2 (power) x 2 (decision basis) between-subjects ANOVA. This analysis revealed only a significant effect of power ($F(2,74)=10.02$, $p < .001$). Participants reported
higher feelings of power in the high power condition \((M=5.79, SD=1.40)\) compared to both the control condition \((M=4.75, SD=1.90; p<.10)\) and the low power condition \((M=3.24, SD=2.42; p<.001)\). In addition, the ratings of feelings of power were significantly lower in the low power condition than in the control condition \((p<.01)\).

To test Hypothesis 1, I conducted a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the power prime and decision basis as between-subjects factors and with expectations of follower support as the dependent variable. The analysis revealed a marginally significant main effect of decision basis, such that participants reported higher expectations of support in response to a relational decision \((M = 4.79, SD = 1.36)\) than in response to an instrumental decision \((M = 4.04, SD = 1.48)\) \((F(1, 74) = 3.71, p = .06)\).

However, there was also a significant interaction between power and decision basis \((F(2, 74) = 3.03, p = .05)\) (see Figure 12), such that participants in the control condition and the low power condition expected greater support in response to the relational decision \((low power: M = 5.15, SD = 1.48; control: M = 4.76, SD = 1.23)\) than the instrumental decision \((low power: M = 3.68, SD = 1.49; control: M = 3.80, SD = 1.37)\) \((low power contrast: F(1, 74) = 6.78, p = .01; control contrast: F(1, 74) = 4.20, p = .04)\). However, the effect was reversed but non-significant for those in the high power condition \((relational decision: M = 4.30, SD = 1.42; instrumental decision: M = 4.86, SD = 1.47)\) \((high power contrast: F(1, 74) = 0.77, p = .38)\). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported.
3.6.3 Discussion

The findings of this study supported partially supported Hypothesis 1. Specifically, consistent with Hypothesis 1, individuals in the low power condition reported greater expectations of leadership support in response to a relational decision than in response to an instrumental decision. Also consistent with Hypothesis 1, individuals in the high power condition reported greater expectations of leadership support in response to an instrumental decision than in response to a relational decision. However, the latter effect did not reach statistical significance. It is also important to note that the manipulation check for the efficacy of the power prime indicated that those in the high power condition reported a higher level of power than individuals in the control condition, but this difference was only marginal. Therefore, in Study 3 I use a
different prime for the control condition in an attempt to generate a greater difference in feelings of power between the high power and control conditions and in doing so to provide greater support for Hypothesis 1. An additional goal of Study 3 is to examine the mediation prediction specified in Hypothesis 2.

3.7 Study 3

Study 3 is a vignette study modeled after Study 2. The two key modifications are a change in the writing prime used in the control condition and an additional measure to gauge participants’ assumptions about the sources of leadership legitimacy. Thus, the experiment has a 3 (power: high, low, control) x 2 (decision basis: instrumental, relational) between-subjects design.

3.7.1 Method

3.7.1.1 Participants and Study Design

Participants included 322 individuals (50% men, 50% women; age ranged from 18 to 64) participated in the study online.

3.7.1.2 Experimental Procedure

The procedure was the same as in Study 2 with the exceptions specified below.

*Power prime.* Participants were again asked to recall and describe a situation in which they had power over other people (high power) or a situation in which other people had power over them (low power). However, in the control condition, participants were asked to describe their general experiences from the previous day (see
Galinsky et al., 2003). Immediately after engaging in the writing exercise, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they experienced feelings of power in the experience they just wrote about. I included this item to be used as a continuous measure of power in case the power prime did not produce strong differences across conditions. On this measure, higher scores represented higher feelings of power (scores ranged from 1.00 to 7.00, $M = 4.21$, $SD = 2.04$).

*Manipulation of decision basis.* Participants then read either the same description of an instrumental or a relational decision that was used in Study 2. After reading the description of the decision, participants were asked to respond to a series of items designed to assess their assumptions about leadership legitimacy and their expectations that others in their group would support them in response to this decision.

*Assumptions about leadership legitimacy.* Participants’ assumptions about the bases of leadership legitimacy were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “People prefer that leaders prioritize effectiveness over fairness,” “People prefer leaders who prioritize results over leaders who emphasize relationships,” “People prefer leaders with competence and expertise over leaders with "people skills,” “Most people would rather work for someone with high expertise and less people skills than for someone who is really good with people but is not competent at their job,” “It is more appropriate for leaders to focus on task competence and outcomes than on relationships,” “Leaders are expected to focus on producing good outcomes rather than
on developing people skills,” and “People expect leaders to exhibit expertise in producing outcomes rather than relationship skills.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the seven items were averaged to form a scale of assumptions about leadership legitimacy (α = .89) with higher scores indicating stronger assumptions that legitimacy is based primarily on instrumental rather than relational behaviors (scores ranged from 1.00 to 7.00, M = 4.53, SD = 1.16).

Expectations of support. Participants’ expectations of support were measured by asking them to respond to the following items regarding other group members’ likely responses to the decision: “They will see me as a good leader,” “They will view me as an exceptional leader,” and “I think they will support my decision.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the three items were averaged to form a scale of expectations of support (α = .90) with higher scores indicating higher levels of expected support (scores ranged from 1.00 to 7.00, M = 4.62, SD = 1.35).

3.7.2 Results

To investigate the effectiveness of the power prime, I conducted a 2 (power) x 2 (decision basis) between-subjects ANOVA with the continuous measure of feelings of power as the dependent variable. This analysis revealed only a significant effect of power (F(2,288)=30.36, p < .001). Again, participants in the low power condition reported lower feelings of power (M=2.71, SD=1.70) than participants in the control condition
However, participants in the high power condition did not report significantly greater feelings of power ($M=4.88, SD=1.74$) than participants in the control condition ($p = .22$). Therefore, in the analyses below, I use the continuous measure of power.

### 3.7.2.1 Expectations of support

Participants’ expectations of support from followers were first regressed on a dummy variable for decision basis (instrumental = 1; relational = 0) and the measure of power (centered) as the first step in a hierarchical regression analysis. This initial regression revealed only a main effect of power ($b = .41$, $SE = .07$, $t(319) = 5.60$, $p < .001$). In the next stage of the hierarchical regression analysis, I entered the interaction between the dummy variable for decision basis and the measure of power (centered). The results of this model are summarized in Table 7. The analysis revealed a significant interaction between decision basis and power ($b = 0.33$, $SE = .15$, $t(318) = 2.22$, $p = .027$) (see Figure 13). In order to explore the interaction in more detail, I examined the simple slopes of decision basis at different levels of power (1 and -1 standard deviations from the mean). The simple slope of decision basis at high levels of power was positive and significant ($b = .43$, $SE = .21$, $t(318) = 2.00$, $p = .046$). However, the simple slope of decision basis at neutral power ($b = .10$, $SE = .15$, $t(318) = .63$, $p = .53$) and low power were not significant ($b = -0.24$, $SE = .21$, $t(318) = -1.11$, $p = .27$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was again partially supported.
Table 7: Regression Results for Expectations of Leadership Support (Study 2)

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Adj $R^2 = .09^{***}$

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Adj $R^2 = .10^{***}$

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

3.7.2.2 Mediation analysis

To assess the mediation effect proposed in Hypothesis 2, I first used the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach. Specifically, I entered the measure of leaders’ assumptions
about leadership legitimacy in the third stage of the hierarchical regression analysis conducted for the analysis of Hypothesis 1. In doing so, I found a significant positive effect of leaders’ assumptions on their expectations of support \( (b = .39, \ SE = .07, t(317) = 5.62, p < .001) \). In addition, the interaction between power and decision basis was no longer significant \( (b = .26, \ SE = .15, t(317) = 1.80, p = .073) \), indicating evidence that the measure of leaders’ assumptions about the bases of legitimacy mediates the effect of the interaction on expectations of support.

In order to explore the pattern of mediation in more detail, I utilized the Edwards and Lambert (2007) approach. The path analysis approach advocated by Edwards and Lambert addresses limitations of previous approaches of combining moderation and mediation. The procedure is implemented by running regressions on both the mediator and the dependent variable and using the results of these regressions to generate a reduced form equation, which are equations that involve only exogenous variables as predictors. The reduced form equation is then used to compute simple paths that constitute the direct, indirect, and total effects of the independent variable at different levels of the moderator variable. This approach allows researchers to assess where in the mediated causal chain the moderation occurs. When engaging in this type of analysis, Edwards and Lambert (2007) recommend using bootstrapped confidence intervals, which can accommodate the non-normal distributions that result from the multiplication of regression coefficients in the computation of indirect and total effects.
I expected a pattern of second stage moderated mediation, such that in the first stage of the mediated path there would be a main effect of power on leaders’ assumptions about followers’ preferences for instrumental rather than relational behaviors. In the second stage, I expected that the main effect of leaders’ assumptions about followers’ preferences would be moderated by decision basis, such that there would be a positive effect of these assumptions on expectations of support for individuals in the instrumental condition but no effect for individuals in the relational condition. Therefore, I began by regressing the measure of leaders’ assumptions about legitimacy on the measure of power (centered). There was a significant and positive effect of power (b = .15, SE = .06, t(320) = 2.30, p = .02) on leaders’ assumptions about whether followers preferred instrumental to relational behaviors. In addition, consistent with my expectations, additional analyses revealed that there was no interaction between power and decision basis on leaders’ assumptions. Thus, the hypothesized first stage of the path model was supported.

In order to explore the second stage of the path model, I regressed participants’ expectations of support on the measures of power (centered), decision basis (instrumental = 1; relational = 0), and leaders’ assumptions (centered) as the first step in a hierarchical regression analysis. This initial regression revealed main effects of power (b = .36, SE = .07, t(318) = 5.11, p < .001) and leaders’ assumptions (b = .40, SE = .07, t(318) = 5.79, p < .001). In the second stage of the hierarchical regression analysis, I entered the
interaction between decision basis and leaders’ assumptions, which was significant (b = .43, SE = .15, t(317) = 2.85, p < .01) (see Figure 14). In order to explore the interaction in more detail, I examined the simple slopes of leaders’ assumptions about followers’ preferences for instrumental over relational behaviors separately for the two decision basis conditions. The simple slope of leaders’ assumptions on expectations of support was significant and positive for those in the instrumental condition (b = .53, SE = .08, t(317) = 6.36, p < .001). However, the simple slope of leaders’ assumptions was not significant for those in the relational decision condition (b = .10, SE = .13, t(317) = .80, p = .43). In addition, consistent with my expectations, additional analyses revealed that there was no interaction between power and decision basis or between power and leaders’ assumptions on expectations of support. These analyses thus provide support for the hypothesized second stage of the path model.
Therefore, I conducted the bootstrap procedure in order to produce bias-corrected confidence intervals to assess the indirect effect of power on expectations of support through the measure of leaders’ assumptions. Again, Hypothesis 2 predicted that this indirect effect would be significant for those in the instrumental condition but not for those in the relational condition. This moderated mediation is expected to occur because power has a positive effect on all participants’ assumptions that followers desire instrumental more than relational behaviors, which in turn has a positive effect on expectations of leadership support, but only for those in the instrumental condition. For individuals in the instrumental decision condition, the indirect effect of power on expectations of support, mediated through leaders’ legitimacy assumptions, was
significant and positive \( b = 0.08, p < .05, \) bias-corrected 95% confidence interval: 0.01, 0.17), indicating that leaders’ assumptions did indeed mediate the effect of power on expectations of support for these individuals. At the same time, the direct effect of power on expectations of support remained significant for this group \( b = .34, p < .01 \), indicating that this is partial mediation. With respect to individuals in the relational decision condition, however, the indirect effect of power on expectations of support, mediated through leaders’ legitimacy assumptions, was not significant \( b = .02, p > .10 \). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

### 3.7.3 Discussion

Study 3 supplements and extends the findings from Studies 1 and 2. The findings from Study 3 again support the notion from Hypothesis 1 that individuals who feel high levels of power expect more support in response to instrumental behaviors than in response to relational behaviors, while individuals who feel low levels of power expect the reverse. In Study 2, the contrast effect was significant for low power but not high power participants. In Study 3, the contrast effect was significant for high power but not low power participants. However, the pattern of the interaction was consistent across both studies and consistent with the findings of Study 1.

Study 2 also provided support for the proposed causal mechanism for these effects as specified in Hypothesis 2. Specifically, there was a main effect of power on participants’ assumptions about followers’ preferences for leadership behaviors: the
more power an individual reported feeling, the stronger the individual’s assumption that followers prefer instrumental to relational behaviors. In addition, these assumptions lead to a positive effect on expectations of support for those in the instrumental decision condition but not for those in the relational decision condition. In Study 4, I seek to extend these findings to demonstrate that leaders who experience higher feelings of power are more likely to use instrumental tactics in their attempts to persuade other group members, while leaders who experience low feelings of power are more likely to engage in relational tactics.

3.8 Study 4

Study 4 is designed to test Hypothesis 3, which predicts that high power leaders will emphasize instrumental behaviors in their attempts to persuade followers, while low power leaders will emphasize relational behaviors. Participants encountered either the high or low power prime that was used in Studies 2 and 3 and were then asked to engage in an attempt at persuasion.

3.8.1 Method

3.8.1.1 Participants and Study Design

Participants included 61 individuals (50% men, 50% women; age ranged from 18 to 72) participated in the study online.
3.8.1.2 Experimental Procedure

Participants first engaged in the writing task designed to prime either high or low power that was used in Studies 2 and 3. After engaging in a few intervening tasks, they were then told that they would have the opportunity to participate in a future study in a leadership role. They were informed, however, that the other participants would have a chance to vote, at the beginning of this future study, on whether the participant should maintain the leadership position or instead another group member should take the leadership role. I informed the participants that in order to facilitate this voting procedure, they should select one of three statements that their future group members will read before voting. This statement would inform future group members of how the leader intends to conduct the leadership role. In a sense, this statement functioned as a “campaign statement” in that it was a statement designed to persuade other group members to support the leader in the leadership role. Participants were presented with three statements: one that emphasized instrumental behavior, one that emphasized relational behavior, or one that emphasized moral behavior. The instrumental statement read, “I intend to work hard to ensure that everyone receives the highest possible outcomes and benefits from their engagement in this task.” The relational statement read, “I intend to work hard to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect throughout their engagement in this task.” The moral statement read,
“I intend to work hard to ensure that the group’s activities in the task are conducted in a way that is consistent with ethical and moral principles.”

3.8.2 Results

To confirm the effectiveness of the power prime, I asked participants to think back to the experience that they had written about at the beginning of the study and to indicate the amount of power they personally felt in that experience using a 7-point scale (1 = very little; 7 = a great deal). Responses to this item were used as the dependent variable in a one-way between-subjects ANOVA. This analysis revealed a significant effect of power ($F(1,59)=22.45, p < .001$) such that participants in the high power condition reported greater feelings of power ($M=4.61, SD=1.85$) than participants in the low power condition ($M=2.43, SD=1.71; p < .001$).

I then examined the frequencies with which high power participants and low power participants chose to send each of the three messages. As expected, high power participants chose the instrumental message ($n = 18$) more often than either the relational ($n = 10$) or moral messages ($n = 5$), while low power participants chose the relational message ($n = 16$) more often than either the instrumental ($n = 7$) or moral messages ($n = 5$) (see Figure 15). In addition, a chi-square test was significant ($\chi^2 = .05$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.
3.8.3 Discussion

Study 4 provides substantial support for Hypothesis 3. When given the option to emphasize instrumental, relational, or moral behaviors in seeking leadership support, high power participants chose the instrumental approach almost twice as often as the relational approach and over three times as often as the moral approach. Low power participants, on the other hand, chose the relational approach over twice as often as the instrumental approach and over three times as often as the moral approach.

3.9 General Discussion

The four studies presented here have provided consistent evidence in support of the notion that high power leaders perceive that follower support emerges primarily on the basis of instrumental leadership behaviors, while low power leaders perceive that
follower support emerges primarily on the basis of relational leadership behaviors. In Study 1, executives who felt a high level of power within their organization or team perceived a positive effect of their instrumental behaviors on support from followers but no effect of their relational or moral behaviors. Executives who felt a low level of power, on the other hand, perceived a positive effect of their relational behaviors, but no effect of their instrumental or moral behaviors. Studies 2 and 3 demonstrated the same dynamics in the context of expectations of support in reaction to instrumental or relational decisions, such that high power participants expected more support in response to instrumental decisions, while low power participants expected more support in response to relational decisions. Study 3 further documented that this effect is at least partially mediated by the effect of power on individuals’ assumptions about what followers desire in terms of behavior from leaders. Specifically, as power increases, leaders assume that followers desire instrumental behaviors more than relational behaviors. Finally, Study 4 demonstrated that this effect of power can have a considerable impact on the types of behaviors that leaders choose to engage: high power participants overwhelmingly chose to take an instrumental approach to persuading followers, while low power participants overwhelmingly chose to take a relational approach.

There are numerous important theoretical and practical implications of these findings. Critically, from a theoretical standpoint, these studies move research on the
determinants of leadership behavior away from a focus on immutable aspects of the individual leader (e.g., gender and personality) and toward an understanding of how aspects of leaders’ social contexts can impact the types of behaviors they choose to engage. Specifically, these studies demonstrate that feelings of social power impact leaders’ assumptions about what followers want in terms of leadership behaviors and that these assumptions in turn influence the behaviors that leaders choose to engage. There may be other social contextual factors that researchers should explore as well. For example, research on issue crafting (Sonenshein, 2006) has demonstrated that social settings (e.g., business settings) may activate assumptions about the particular types of behaviors that are expected. In addition, organizational culture may moderate the types of assumptions that individuals adopt within the organizational context, such that hierarchical cultures may activate an instrumental orientation, while more egalitarian cultures may activate a relational orientation.

Finally, there are important implications of these studies for the practice of leadership. Most centrally, research on followers’ reactions to different leadership behaviors and styles suggests that leaders should think contingently about the types of behaviors they choose to engage because the types of leadership styles and behaviors that are effective may vary across social contexts (Lowe et al., 1996). The research presented here, however, suggests that leaders may be inherently impaired in their abilities to do so because aspects of their social environments (e.g., the amount of social
power they feel within their social group) may bias their assumptions about the types of
leadership behaviors that are likely to elicit support. These studies therefore suggest a
critical role for leadership training: to the extent that educators can help potential
leaders to understand not only what types of leadership behaviors followers may desire
in particular social contexts, but also how social contexts may bias leaders’ abilities to
discern these desires, educators may be able to help to improve leaders’ effectiveness.
4. Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, I build upon institutional, social psychological, and sociological theory to develop an integrative theoretical framework for understanding the content underlying judgments of the legitimacy of social entities. I argue that individual-level judgments of legitimacy are based on perceptions and beliefs that fall along three key dimensions: instrumental, relational, and moral. On the basis of this framework, I further develop a model of the process by which legitimacy judgments develop and change over time, and I specify three modes of the legitimacy judgment process (evaluative, passive, and socialization), explaining which of these modes is likely to predominate as individuals move through the stages of the legitimacy judgment process.

The second and third chapters focus on empirical examinations of the dynamics of support for leaders (Chapter 2), as well as leaders’ assumptions about their own legitimacy and the effects of these assumptions on leaders’ behaviors (Chapter 3). Chapter 2 explores the role of group identification and belongingness in moderating the effectiveness of leadership behaviors and appeals. In that chapter, I argue that individuals’ intrinsic or extrinsic orientation toward the group moderates their responsiveness to different types of behaviors and appeals, such that individuals who have an intrinsic orientation (such as high identifiers and individuals who feel a high
level of group belongingness) are more responsive to moral behaviors and appeals, while individuals with an extrinsic orientation (such as low identifiers and individuals who feel a low level of group belongingness) are more responsive to instrumental behaviors and appeals.

Chapter 3 examines the role of social power in influencing leaders’ assumptions about their own legitimacy and demonstrates that high levels of social power produce an assumption that followers desire more instrumental behaviors, while low levels of power produce an assumption that followers desire more relational behaviors. These expectations about followers’ desires, needs, and concerns in turn impact the types of leadership behaviors that leaders choose to engage, such that high power leaders are more likely to engage in instrumental leadership behaviors, while low power leaders are more likely to engage in relational leadership behaviors.

One implication of the combined findings of Chapters 2 and 3 is that it may be the case that individuals with an extrinsic orientation to their group find high power leaders to be particularly worthy of support. Specifically, Chapter 2 demonstrated that individuals with an extrinsic orientation to their group (e.g., low identifiers) are particularly responsive to instrumental behaviors, and Chapter 3 demonstrated that high power leaders are particularly likely to engage in instrumental behaviors. On the basis of these findings, I conducted a final study to test the following hypotheses:
**Hypothesis 1:** There is a positive effect of power on support for the leader among groups with high, but not low, levels of identification.

**Hypothesis 2:** This interaction between leader power and follower identification is mediated by the followers’ perceptions of the leader’s instrumental behaviors.

**4.2 Final Study**

**4.2.1 Method**

**4.2.1.1 Participants and Study Design**

The data used for this study was collected as part of a larger research project designed to test the Sitkin-Lind Multiple Leadership Domain Instrument, which is based on the Sitkin-Lind theoretical framework of leadership (Sitkin et al., 2005). This survey consisted of a 360 degree survey in which 475 executives (284 male, 170 female, 21 declined to report; age range: 20-71) evaluated the leadership behaviors and abilities of a leader within their organization. There were 114 leaders included (88 male, 23 female, 3 declined to report; age range: 25-52). The leaders themselves reported their own feelings of power within their groups or organizations. Followers were asked to rate the leader they were asked to evaluate on instrumental, relational, and moral leadership behaviors and were also asked to indicate their own levels of identification with the organization and to indicate the extent to which they support the leader. In the analyses, the responses for each leader from their group of followers are averaged into a single measure representing the perceptions of the group.
4.2.1.2 Measures

*Leader power.* Leaders’ feelings of power were measured by asking the leaders themselves to respond to the following item: “In this context, I have a great deal of power.” Thus, higher scores indicated higher feelings of power on the part of the leader (scores ranged from 2.00 to 7.00, $M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.30$).

*Instrumental behaviors.* Participants’ evaluations of the leader’s instrumental behaviors were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “[Leader] provides useful solutions to the problems we face,” “[Leader] helps us understand what the team can accomplish,” and “[Leader] actively looks out for team members.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the three items were averaged to form a scale ($\alpha = .80$) with higher scores indicating higher levels of instrumental behaviors (scores ranged from 3.83 to 6.75, $M = 5.98$, $SD = 0.51$).

*Relational behaviors.* Participants’ evaluations of the leader’s relational behaviors were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “[Leader] takes the time to get to know his/her team members as people,” “[Leader] is genuinely interested in learning about his/her team members, their backgrounds, and their interests,” “[Leader] treats everyone with fairness,”, and “[Leader] takes a real interest in how I am doing.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the four items were averaged to form a scale ($\alpha = .89$) with higher scores indicating
higher levels of relational behaviors (scores ranged from 4.71 to 6.86, \( M = 6.12, \ SD = 0.47 \)).

**Moral behaviors.** Participants’ evaluations of the leader’s moral behaviors were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “[Leader] argues for high ethical standards,” “[Leader] encourages everyone to be true to their personal beliefs and values,” and “[Leader] takes responsibility for doing what is right.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the three items were averaged to form a scale (\( \alpha = .90 \)) with higher scores indicating higher levels of moral behaviors (scores ranged from 4.67 to 7.00, \( M = 6.24, \ SD = 0.44 \)).

**Group identification.** Participants’ levels of identification with their group were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “Each of us is concerned with the success of the team as a whole,” and “Our team shares a strong sense of community.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the two items were averaged to form a scale (\( r = .68; \ \alpha = .79 \)) with higher scores indicating higher levels of group identification (scores ranged from 4.00 to 7.00, \( M = 6.03, \ SD = 0.53 \)).

**Support for leader.** Participants’ levels of support for their leader were measured by asking them to respond to the following items: “I think [leader] is an exceptional leader,” “I’m willing to go with what [leader] says, just because [he/she] says it,” and “We look to [leader] for leadership.” The items were measured from 1 (strongly
disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and the three items were averaged to form a scale (α = .89) with higher scores indicating higher levels of support for the leader (scores ranged from 3.33 to 7.00, $M = 5.77$, $SD = 0.67$).

4.2.2 Results

4.2.2.1 Leadership support

Hypothesis 1 predicted an interaction between leader power and follower identification such that there would be a positive effect of leader power on support for the leader among groups with low levels of identification but not among groups with high levels of identification. In order to investigate this relationship, the measure of support for the leader was first regressed on the measures of leader power and follower identification with the group (both centered) as the first step in a hierarchical regression analysis. This initial regression revealed a main effect of follower identification ($b = .34$, $SE = .06$, $t(86) = 5.40$, $p < .001$) on support for the leader. In the next stage of the hierarchical regression analysis, I entered the interaction between leader power and follower identification. The interaction was significant ($b = -0.11$, $SE = .05$, $t(85) = -2.06$, $p = .04$) (see Table 18 and Figure 16). In order to explore the interaction in more detail, I examined the simple slopes of leader power at different levels of group identification (-1 and 1 standard deviation from the mean). This analysis revealed that there was a positive and significant effect of leader power on leadership support among groups with low levels of identification ($b = .19$, $SE = .09$, $t(85) = 2.02$, $p = .046$), but not among groups
with high levels of identification (b = -0.03, SE = .07, t(85) = -0.42, p = .67). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

**Table 8: Regression Results for Expectations of Leadership Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>5.40***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj R²</td>
<td>.27***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>5.18***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
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<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-2.06*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj R²</td>
<td>.29***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

**Figure 16**: Interaction between Leader Power and Follower Identification on Leadership Support
4.2.2.2 Mediation analysis

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the effect of power on support for leaders in low identifying groups would be mediated by followers’ assessments of the leader’s instrumental behaviors. To assess the mediation effect proposed in Hypothesis 2, I used the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach. I began by regressing the measure of instrumental behaviors on the measures of leader power and follower identification with the group (both centered) as the first step in a hierarchical regression analysis. This initial regression revealed a main effects of follower identification ($b = .32, \text{SE} = .04, t(86) = 7.90, p < .001$) and leader power ($b = .10, \text{SE} = .04, t(86) = 2.46, p = .02$) on perceptions of instrumental behaviors. In the next stage of the hierarchical regression analysis, I entered the interaction between leader power and follower identification. The interaction was significant ($b = -0.09, \text{SE} = .04, t(85) = -2.51, p = .01$) (see Table 9 and Figure 17). Conducting the same regressions using the measures of relational and moral behaviors did not yield a significant interaction. In order to explore the interaction in more detail, I examined the simple slopes of leader power at different levels of group identification (-1 and 1 standard deviation from the mean). This analysis revealed that there was a positive and significant effect of leader power on perceptions of instrumental behaviors among low identifying groups ($b = .20, \text{SE} = .05, t(85) = 3.69, p < .001$), but not among high identifying groups ($b = 0.03, \text{SE} = .05, t(85) = 0.51, p = .61$).
Table 9: Regression Results for Instrumental Behaviors

<table>
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<th>SE</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Power</td>
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<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>2.46*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>7.90***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adj $R^2 = .47***$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$b$</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>2.90**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>7.74***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-2.51*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adj $R^2 = .50***$

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Next, I entered the measure of instrumental behaviors (centered) in the third stage of the hierarchical regression analysis conducted for the analysis of Hypothesis 1.
In doing so, I found a significant positive effect of instrumental behaviors on expectations of support ($b = 0.61$, $SE = .06$, $t(84) = 11.06$, $p < .001$). In addition, the interaction between leader power and follower identification was no longer significant ($b = -0.01$, $SE = .04$, $t(84) = -0.19$, $p = .85$), indicating evidence that the measure of instrumental behaviors fully mediates the effect of the interaction on expectations of support. In addition, a Sobel test indicated that the indirect effect was significant ($z = -2.43$, $p = .015$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

### 4.2.3 Discussion

Both hypotheses were supported. Specifically, the findings of this study indicate that a leader’s feelings of power has a positive impact on the extent to which high identifiers, but not low identifiers, are inclined to support the leader. Furthermore, this dynamic was mediated by followers’ perceptions of the leader’s instrumental behaviors. One interesting aspect of this mediating effect is that it was first stage, rather than second stage, moderated mediation. The studies in Chapter 3, particularly Study 4, indicate a main effect of leader power on leader behavior, such that more powerful leaders are more inclined to enact instrumental behaviors. Based on this finding, one might expect a pattern of second stage moderated mediation in which there is a main effect of leader power on perceptions of the leader’s instrumental behaviors and that these perceptions have a positive impact on leadership support for low identifiers but not for high identifiers. Instead, what this study indicates is that in fact follower
identification moderates the extent to which followers perceive that high power leaders are engaging in greater levels of instrumental behaviors – individuals in groups with low levels of group identification appeared to perceive more instrumental behaviors from more powerful leaders, but this effect was not observed in groups with high levels of identification. Furthermore, there was no interaction between follower identification and perceptions of instrumental behaviors on support for the leader, which further bolsters the conclusion that the moderation occurs in the first stage, rather than the second stage, of the mediated path. Future research should explore the reasons for the divergent perceptions of leaders’ instrumental behaviors among high and low identifiers.

This approach to the study of leadership effectiveness and support for leaders provides an avenue for leadership researchers to theorize and explore empirically the social contextual factors (e.g., power and group identification) that impact 1) the types of tactics and styles that leaders choose to utilize and 2) the types of behaviors that are likely to be effective with followers. A key implication of this work is that leaders can be more effective to the extent that they can match the types of behaviors they choose to engage with the types of behaviors to which their target audience is likely to be most responsive. In the final section below, I provide a brief overview of the contributions and limitations of each of the three chapters and describe potential next steps in each of the three research streams.
4.3 General Discussion and Conclusions

The theoretical framework for understanding legitimacy judgments presented in Chapter 1 empowers researchers to explore both the content and process dynamics of legitimacy judgments. With respect to the content of legitimacy judgments, this framework suggests that instrumental, relational, and moral concerns are best viewed as three different dimensions of legitimacy judgments rather than as competing models for understanding the content of legitimacy judgments. Viewing them in this way empowers researchers to explore the ways in which each of the types of concerns contributes to (or is guided by, as in the case of the Use Stage) generalized legitimacy judgments. In addition, this perspective permits scholars to consider the factors that influence which of the three dimensions is prioritized in the evaluative mode.

Furthermore, an understanding of how legitimacy judgments develop and change over time can contribute substantially to scholarly understandings of the individual-dynamics of support for and resistance to organizational change.

In addition, this theoretical framework of the dynamics of legitimacy judgments at the individual level may facilitate the forging of more meaningful linkages between the work of organizational behavior scholars and organization theorists on the topic of organizational change and change leadership. Specifically, organizational theorists argue that when entities are perceived as legitimate, they are supported, but when they are viewed as illegitimate, change occurs. However, organizational theorists have not
fully examined the content underlying legitimacy judgments or the process by which such judgments develop and change over time. An understanding of these dynamics at the individual level may help micro-level organizational behavior researchers and macro-level organizational behavior and organizational theorists to link up their theories and empirical work more directly in order to come to a better understanding of the dynamics of change and change leadership across levels of analysis.

One limitation of Chapter 1 is that the theoretical framework has not yet been tested empirically. However, there are a variety of approaches that might be taken to begin empirical investigations to test the theory. An ideal first step in the testing process would be to develop measures of instrumental, relational, and moral concerns, as well as a measure of generalized legitimacy judgments. Studies could then be conducted to test the causal relationships depicted in Figure 1.

The key contributions of Chapter 2 are the demonstrations that instrumental, relational, and moral concerns function as different dimensions of evaluation of leaders and that the relative emphasis placed on the three dimensions is moderated by the evaluator’s orientation to the group. These findings were supported by both survey-based and experimental research designs, which represents an important strength of this set of studies. However, there are also limitations of this research. The most critical limitation that should be addressed in future research is the lack of behavioral dependent variables. One way to address this concern would be to run an additional
study in which participants are asked to consider a leader’s appeal for support for a particular initiative. Participants would read an appeal from a leader, and the appeal would involve either an instrumental or a moral framing. Participants would also report their level of identification with the group in which they and the leader share membership. Participants would then be given the opportunity to work to support the leader’s initiative by preparing a mailing to be sent out to other group members to appeal for support. The dependent variable in such a study would be the number of envelopes the participant prepares to be mailed. I would expect to see that individuals who report high levels of identification with the group would prepare more envelopes when presented with a morally framed appeal than when presented with an instrumentally framed appeal, whereas individuals with a low level of identification with the group would prepare more envelopes when presented with the instrumental framing than when presented with the moral framing.

The four studies presented in Chapter 3 provided evidence indicating that leaders make assumptions about the types of behaviors that will elicit support from followers, that these assumptions can impact leaders’ choices of behaviors, and that these assumptions can be influenced by factors associated with the leader’s social context (in this case, the leader’s feelings of power). Specifically, these studies demonstrated that high power leaders perceive that follower support emerges primarily on the basis of instrumental leadership behaviors, while low power leaders perceive that
follower support emerges primarily on the basis of relational leadership behaviors. In addition, the results of Study 4 in particular suggest that leaders are likely to engage in different behaviors based on these assumptions. A critical implication of these findings is that leaders’ choices of behaviors can be biased by aspects of their social context (such as the amount of power that they feel in a given situation), and this bias may occur outside of the leader’s conscious awareness. These studies therefore suggest a critical role for leadership training: to the extent that educators can help potential leaders to understand not only what types of leadership behaviors followers may desire in particular social contexts, but also how social contexts may bias leaders’ abilities to discern and respond to these desires, educators may be able to help to improve leaders’ effectiveness.

Another important contribution of the research presented in Chapter 4 is to move research on the determinants of leadership behavior and effectiveness away from a focus on immutable aspects of the individual leader (e.g., gender and personality) and toward an understanding of how aspects of leaders’ social contexts (e.g., power) can impact the types of behaviors they choose to engage. This opens up exciting new channels of research into leaders’ choices of behaviors. Specifically, while the studies in Chapter 4 focused on the leader’s feelings of social power as the social contextual factor that impacts leaders’ choices of behaviors, there may be other social contextual factors that researchers should explore as well. For example, research on issue crafting (Sonenschein,
2006) has demonstrated that social settings (e.g., business settings) may activate assumptions about the particular types of behaviors that are expected. In addition, organizational culture may moderate the types of assumptions that individuals adopt within the organizational context, such that hierarchical cultures may activate an instrumental orientation, while more egalitarian cultures may activate a relational orientation. These possibilities could be explored in future research in this area.

The studies from Chapter 3 could be strengthened as well by the inclusion of additional studies that utilize behavioral dependent variables. For example, a fifth study might involve asking participants to craft an appeal on an issue that is important to them. Specifically, participants could come into the lab and begin the study by being exposed to the power prime used in Studies 2-4. They would then be asked to consider an issue that is important to them and to write a brief essay designed to persuade others to adopt their position on the issue. The essays could then be coded to examine the extent to which the participants focused on instrumental and relational framings in crafting their appeals. I would expect to see that individuals primed with high power would use instrumental framings more than relational framings and that those primed with low power would use relational framings more than instrumental framings.

Finally, while the three chapters of this dissertation constitute distinct domains of study, it would be interesting to explore the extent to which leaders are able to discern differences among their followers and to respond to those differences, and how that
process might be moderated by aspects of the leader’s social context. Specifically, it would be interesting to investigate whether leaders would craft their appeals differently if they knew they were targeting individuals with high versus low levels of identification with the group. Do leaders strategically frame their appeals based on the types of individuals they are attempting to persuade? Do aspects of the leader’s social context, such as the leader’s feelings of power, impact the leader’s ability to strategize in this way? An interesting experiment to investigate these issues could involve asking participants to engage in the power prime used in Chapter 4 and then asking them to craft appeals to an audience of either high or low identifiers. Given recent findings on the impact of power on perspective-taking (Galinsky et al., 2006), I would expect that participants primed with high power would be less likely to discern and respond to differences, whereas participants primed with low power would be more likely to discern and respond to differences. Thus, the pattern of results might be that those primed with high power use primarily instrumental framings regardless of the audience they are asked to persuade, while those primed with low power may be more likely to craft instrumental arguments for low identifiers and relational or moral arguments for high identifiers. Future research should explore this possibility.
Appendix A

Moral framing:

As Americans, we pride ourselves on being citizens of the longest-standing democratic polity in the world. For over 300 years, American citizens have voted to elect officials for public office, and this has set an example for other political systems around the world to empower individuals to influence their own political destiny. However, the use of the Electoral College to elect American presidents runs counter to the long-held American ideals of democracy and empowerment of citizens and therefore should be changed.

First, under the Electoral College, individual citizens’ votes do not actually get credited to the candidates for whom they meant to vote. Instead, citizens’ votes are credited to electors who have been nominated by political parties to represent the candidates. Then those electors who receive the most votes come together to vote for the actual candidates. This violates American ideals because it takes away power from individual citizens and grants it to unelected individuals who only have the elector position because powerful people in political parties wanted to grant them favors. In most states, these electors are not even required to cast their vote for the candidate that won the majority of the votes in their state. They can simply change their mind and vote however they want. Again, this is in violation of the American ideals of empowering individual citizens and promoting democracy.
Second, under the Electoral College, the winner of the popular vote is not always elected. This means that the winning candidate for the presidency could have fewer votes from individual citizens than the losing candidate. This runs counter to the American ideal of empowerment for American citizens because it communicates that individual citizens’ votes are not valued.

Third, in the Electoral College, a candidate must receive 270 of the 538 votes to win the election. However, if no candidate wins a majority of the electoral votes, the decision of whom to elect as the president is handed over to the House of Representatives. Instead of consulting the individual citizens by looking at the popular vote, as the American ideals of democracy and the empowerment of individual citizens would demand, the Electoral College removes even more power from the people and hands it over to the House of Representatives. Again, this procedure violates American ideals.

Fourth, the Electoral College system also creates the phenomenon of “swing states,” which are states that have populations that are roughly equally composed of members of both of the main political parties. Politicians focus their campaigning efforts on these states in order to secure their electoral votes. This leads politicians to neglect other states. Moreover, this aspect of the Electoral College narrows the range of issues that are addressed in the campaigns because politicians want to focus primarily on issues that are important to voters in swing states, to the neglect of the issues that matter
to other voters. Therefore, this aspect of the Electoral College further violates the American ideals of empowering individual citizens, promoting democracy, and treating all citizens equally.

Finally, while it is true that the Founding Fathers established the Electoral College, it is also clear that they never would have done so if they had realized how political parties would corrupt the process in violation of American ideals over the centuries. In order to stay true to our American identity and the values that we as a country represent, it is imperative that we put an end to the Electoral College system.

Instrumental framing:

The Electoral College system is a flawed method of electing presidents. By disempowering voters in general, and some voters more than others, it produces low voter turnout and a restriction in the range of debate within presidential campaigns. It is an ineffective and increasingly dysfunctional method of electing presidents and therefore should be changed.

First, under the Electoral College, individual citizens’ votes do not actually get credited to the candidates for whom they meant to vote. Instead, citizens’ votes are credited to electors who have been nominated by political parties to represent the candidates. Then those electors who receive the most votes come together to vote for the actual candidates. This is an impractical approach because, in most states, these electors
are not even required to cast their vote for the candidate that won the majority of the votes in their state. They can simply change their mind and vote however they want. As a result, the results of the election may not reflect the will of the people, and that is precisely what elections are supposed to do.

This leads to the second problem with the Electoral College: the winner of the popular vote is not always elected. This means that the winning candidate for the presidency could have fewer votes from individual citizens than the losing candidate. This is counter-productive because it leads people to feel like their votes don’t count, and as a result it reduces voter turnout. Americans have a notoriously low rate of voter turnout at elections, and this is one reason.

Third, in the Electoral College, a candidate must receive 270 of the 538 votes to win the election. However, if no candidate wins a majority of the electoral votes, the decision of whom to elect as the president is handed over to the House of Representatives. Again, when the power to elect the president is turned over to an institution, individual voters may feel disempowered and thus might be less likely to exercise their right to vote in the future.

Fourth, the Electoral College system also creates the phenomenon of “swing states,” which are states that have populations that are fairly equally composed of members of both of the main political parties. Politicians focus their campaigning effort on these states in order to secure their electoral votes. This leads politicians to neglect
other states. Moreover, this aspect of the Electoral College narrows the range of issues that are addressed in the campaigns because politicians want to focus primarily on issues that are important to voters in swing states, to the neglect of the issues that matter to other voters. Therefore, this aspect of the Electoral College not only produces disempowerment and low voter turnout in non-swing states, it also restricts the range of issues and debates that are addressed, making political campaigns less meaningful.

Finally, while it is true that the Founding Fathers established the Electoral College, it is also clear that they never would have done so if they had realized how political parties would corrupt the process to make it so dysfunctional over the coming centuries. In order to maintain the effectiveness of our presidential elections, it is imperative that we put an end to the Electoral College system.
References


Biography

Leigh Plunkett Tost was born on October 6, 1976 in Fort Smith, Arkansas. She obtained a B.A. in Anthropology from Harvard College in June 1999 and an M.A. in Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in June 2005. She has published the following articles: “Agentic women and communal leadership: How role prescriptions confer advantage to top women leaders” in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* with Ashleigh Rosette; “The legacy motive: A catalyst for sustainable decision making in organizations” in *Business Ethics Quarterly* with Matthew Fox and Kimberly A. Wade-Benzoni; “The egoism and altruism of intergenerational behavior” in *Personality and Social Psychology Review* with Kimberly A. Wade-Benzoni; “The reality and myth of sacred issues in ideologically-based negotiations” in *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research* with Ann Tenbrunsel, Kimberly A. Wade-Benzoni, Vicki Medvec, Leigh Thompson, and Max Bazerman; and “The dynamic interaction of context and negotiator effects: A review and commentary on current and emerging areas in negotiation” in the *International Journal of Conflict Management* with Min Li and Kimberly A. Wade-Benzoni. She is a recipient of the John Harvard Scholarship for Academic Achievement from Harvard College and the Global Studies Fellowship from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.