LEGITIMATION AND INSTITUTIONS – REVISITING BERGER AND LUCKMANN

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Abstract. *When it comes to legitimation and institutional structure, Berger and Luckmann's work remains relevant today despite its age. This paper is an attempt to explore what seems to be an unjustly underutilized approach – institutional analysis through legitimation. The first part presents the concept of legitimation and the role it plays in the construction and maintenance of institutions based on the book The Social Construction of Reality. The article argues that institutional analysis through legitimation provides us with knowledge of institutional structure and position as seen by members of society, hence bridging the gap between formal and informal institutions. In the second part, the main ideas are explored as a basis for research and cluster analysis, and a coherent theoretical and methodological approach is suggested.*

Key words: *legitimation, institutions, sociology of knowledge, cluster analysis.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Legitimation, as both an empirically observable occurrence and a theoretical concept, is invaluable to sociologists interested in institutional analysis. The conceptual framework based on legitimation is particularly useful in approaching two aspects of institutions: one is their structure, and the other is their position within the broader institutional context. This is equally valid for both formal and informal institutions, where the reliance on legitimation also helps to bridge the gap between the two. Both formal and informal institutions belong to the same part of sociality and are characterized by the same socially recognizable type of knowledge. Hence, there is no surprise that the foundation for institutional analysis through legitimation can be found in sociology of knowledge. This article argues that institutional analysis through legitimation is most comprehensively and completely developed by Berger and Luckmann (1991) in their 1966 book *The Social*

Construction of Reality. In this text I discuss a specific approach to institutional analysis drawn from Berger and Luckmann's sociology of knowledge, and argue that the focus on legitimation is not only methodologically and theoretically viable, but necessary given the complexity of the institutional world.

The first part of the paper presents the main aspects of legitimation and the link between legitimation and institutions based on Berger and Luckmann's theory. In the second part, I turn to the theoretical and methodological consequences and propose a framework for institutional analysis. Finally, the applicability of this framework is illustrated by pointing to empirical evidence from an external source.

Berger and Luckmann were not the first or the only authors to explore legitimation in their work. A century ago Max Weber, while focusing his interest on power in society, identified legitimation as one of the mechanisms an authority would rely on for asserting itself. For him, three types of authority, rational, traditional and charismatic, rely on three different types of legitimation. Weber was fully aware and understood that legitimation goes beyond justifying power relations in societies. However, as pointed out, such a broader view was beyond the scope of his interests and the methods used (Veber 1976, 167 and further).

Weber was not the only one interested in how authority and power relations are legitimized. In 1973, Habermas published a book titled *Legitimation Crisis*, in an attempt to explain tensions arising in contemporary capitalist society. More recently French sociologists, Bourdieu (1984, 2012), and later Thevenot and Boltanski (2006), have been relying on legitimation to analyze the constitution of social fields and dynamics between different actors in a given setting either focusing on: assertive statements that specific actors make; how fields as constraints on social action are shaped; or how a basis for agreement is created. Discussing economic sociology, both Fligstein (2001) and Swedberg (2003) suggest that legitimation represents an underutilized theoretical and practical tool with a significant potential for opening new fields of knowledge.

Particularly relevant for the discussion here is Maton's (2000) work about language and legitimation, which I will come back to later in the text. Regardless of the approach different authors take, or the focus specific theory creates, there are always two sides to the story of legitimation: one side is concerned with an individual or collective actor that specific legitimation activity can be linked to; and the other side is a system that a number of individual legitimation acts or processes create. These two sides are inseparable because the latter represents what is often referred to as socially constructed reality, and the former refers to individual manifestations or constituents of this reality. It is this notion, two levels of abstraction corresponding to two functional manifestations of legitimation, that has created a space for the theoretical and methodological approach presented in this paper.

2. LEGITIMATION – BERGER AND LUCKMANN

There is no, especially from a functional point, simple description and definition of legitimation in Berger and Luckmann's work. Due to the functional role of legitimation, particularly in establishing and maintaining elementary institutional facts and their connections, it is essential to present the main characteristics of legitimation in a consolidated and concise manner. This, in turn, will allow us to focus on the theoretical and methodological consequences in the second part of the paper.

The complexity of the concept of legitimation is not the simple result of the abstract nature of legitimation. On the contrary, it is the result of the very intricate role legitimation plays in social life. What legitimation is cannot be understood without understanding the phenomenon of objectivation. For Berger and Luckmann objectivation is a philosophical, or more precisely, a phenomenological issue (Berger, Luckmann, 1991:34). It is subjective meaning made objectively available to members of a community or society – a meaning that supports any socially oriented activity. The term "objective" here does not imply an essentialist category. Rather, it points to the fact that all members of community see it in a very similar way. This appearance of existence outside and independent of any particular individual arises from everyday communication where individuals pass knowledge among themselves. A piece of cloth becomes a flag only if knowledge of that is shared among people, and this knowledge does not go away if one individual ceases to exist. This is first-order objectivation. For Berger and Luckmann legitimation is second-order objectivation of meaning. It produces new meanings needed to integrate already existing meanings attached to disparate processes (Ibid, 110). The main difference in respect to the first-order objectivation is that second-order objectivation creates more complex and more encompassing knowledge structures by linking together and arranging first-order objects.

This link between legitimation and objectivation is at the same time a link between legitimation and institutions. The main result of objectivation is the institutional world in general, and every individual institution in particular (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 78). Legitimation is particularly required when the institutional world has to be explained to new generations, linking the past with the present and future of a society. In order to explain how legitimation and institutions are reliant upon each other, Berger and Luckmann introduce the concept of symbolic universe, which could be understood as a canvas consisting of all socially relevant knowledge pertinent to some society. What is important here is understanding that the institutional order gets legitimated by being placed within a symbolic universe, while the symbolic universe does not need further legitimation.

One of the inseparable attributes of institutions is the meaning they bear for members of a social group. It is this meaning that has to be explained in legitimating formulas (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 72) which place it in a symbolic universe. In addition, according to Berger and Luckmann, the logic intrinsic to the institutional world does not rely on the external function of institutions, but rather on the ways people think about them. It is a 'reflected upon' or derived logic created and maintained in individual minds of members of a society, while at the same time socially articulated. This view suggests that the functional role and socially constructed meaning of institutions may not always match, as they may belong to two not necessarily overlapping realms: as ethnic markers food taboos often prohibit favorite food of the neighboring tribe, thus being a criterion for distinction. However, one hidden function is particularly important – taboo prevents defeatism by insisting (and sanctioning when needed) that all group members follow the same rule (Pinker 1999, 385). In short, institutionalization happens when habitualized activity is shared, or reciprocated, by involved and relevant actors who perceive themselves as types (Berger and Luckmann 1996, 72). Institutions hence represent a social arrangement relying primarily on two pillars, procedures governed by some rules on the one hand, and specifically defined actors on the other.

Though the above-mentioned description of a symbolic universe as a canvas is a convenient metaphor, it could imply uni-dimensionality. In reality, a symbolic universe has as many dimensions as individual and collective intelligence allows for – it is a structure

characterized by a number of interconnected networks that contain a totality of knowledge and meaning. Every single institutional or legitimating phenomenon is situated somewhere within this cognitive structure. By coming into existence, a symbolic universe is legitimized, it does not need pre-theoretical levels of legitimation since a symbolic universe is only theoretical (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 123). There is a particularly good reason why the discussion on legitimation pivots so much around a symbolic universe. What the symbolic universe is doing is facilitating integration of discrepant meanings (Ibid, 116). This means that a common or 'official' version of the world also incorporates dissenting views and opinions, which in large and complex groups are inevitable. In this way, symbolic universe offers correct as well as incorrect ways of social conduct, facilitating individual connectedness to different sorts of social constructs, the place of these constructs in a broader picture, and allowing, through positioning, individual legitimation within the universe.

There are two particularly important applications of universe-maintaining conceptual machineries: therapy and nihilation. Therapy prevents dissent and keeps individuals within legitimized areas. It is done through a theory of deviation from a norm and instruments created and deployed to correct this deviation. On the other hand, nihilation is a process where everything outside the universe is getting 'liquidated' conceptually. This happens in two ways: through ascribing inferior ontological status to such claims or constructs, and it is used primarily on outsiders; and second and more ambitious way is translating alternative conceptions into the language of the incorporating universe in order to fit them within and legitimate them as misconceptions (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 130–132). The symbolic universe is, among other things, a place where social change really happens. The domination of a social group is secured by the ability to enforce one's conceptualizations as dominant to any other alternative. In most cases, this domination is ensured by the power of the social actor in case, rather than on the theoretical inventiveness of legitimations (Ibid, 127). In short, the symbolic universe is a structure in which position and significance of any particular legitimation or legitimating machinery is set within a given social environment – it is the sum of everything everybody knows about social world (Ibid, 110).

Although the creation of a specific legitimation is driven by need for integration, being present in so many instances of social life legitimation is present on different levels of complexity. The first level, incipient legitimation, appears with human language and linguistic articulation of concepts that are exchanged among actors, and this is manifested in the common vocabulary that a social group uses. The second level appears in the form of simple, pragmatic, and related to concrete actions, stories and schemes – such as proverbs and maxims. The third level of legitimation is observable as explicit theories that legitimize an institutional sector by offering a separate body of knowledge which is encompassing, elaborate and complex, and may even invent problems or issues in order to strengthen foundations of the theory. At this level legitimation may become partly independent from institutions that it serves to legitimate, and may even create new institutions. Finally, the fourth level of legitimation is asymbolic universe – theoretical tradition that integrates institutional order with a plethora of meanings into a symbolic totality, including its own history (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 112–113). These four levels of legitimation, presented in Table 1, are analytically distinguishable but in reality they are usually intertwined, and a specific appearance will depend on which part of the social process or phenomenon an observer is focused on: any 'higher order' legitimation inevitably relies on incipient legitimation that comes to life by creation of language. Communication of meaning is

essential for human society, and although we use other audio and visual means to communicate meanings, language is the tool we primarily rely on, and it allows us to move across layers of sociality, from simple and concrete to very abstract.

Table 1 Four levels of legitimation

1 Incipient – common vocabulary
2 Pragmatic – stories and schemes such as proverbs and maxims
3 Explicit theories – legitimizing institutional sectors
4 Symbolic universe – including its own history

As stressed earlier, social change and transformation involve change in larger or smaller parts of symbolic universe, and can be observed as manifested in changes in legitimation machineries. The historicity of the social world and institutional order suggests that legitimations can succeed each other, giving new meanings to sedimented experiences of the collectives. This new meaning can be introduced without even upsetting the existing institutional order (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 87). In addition to changes in legitimation and new meanings, the methods of legitimation change during the course of history (Ibid, 102). However, although legitimation is an indicator of social and institutional change, it usually is not the cause of it, because one of the functions of legitimation is to "keep chaos at bay" (Ibid, 121) from precarious social reality – legitimation machineries are employed as instruments for social stability, and in the case of universe maintaining, legitimation can even have personnel employed. Also, the more abstract they (legitimations) are, the less likely they will change faced with changing empirical or pragmatic necessities. They are parts of highly abstract symbolizations and are validated by social rather than empirical support (Ibid, 135–137). From the perspective of legitimation, as Berger and Luckmann claim, the most important conceptual requirement for the alteration of reality structure is the availability of a legitimating apparatus for the whole sequence of transformation, including the introduction of the new, but also abandonment of the old – the old must be reinterpreted within the legitimating apparatus of the new real (Ibid, 179). Waren Susman's *Culture as History* provides a good illustration of changes described by Berger and Luckmann in the case of the United States of America.

Finally, where legitimation and collective and individual social actors meet is a network of integration – on the symbolic and theoretical, as well as on the tangible level. The typical motivation for legitimation is integration which, however, works through fundamental social actors, namely, individuals. In short, legitimation must provide plausibility on two levels. At one level, the totality of the institutional order must make sense for many different participants. At another level, the institutional order must make sense and be subjectively plausible to the same person as it ages, and in that way goes through various institutional orders (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 110). Ageing allows for this because there are institutions that become relevant only to people at different stages of life through the roles they can occupy: parenthood or great-parenthood are two that first come to mind. Berger and Luckmann call the first case horizontal and the second case vertical integration. These two levels of integration are interesting from an additional point as well. While not denying individuality they reveal how this individuality is defined by the social group an individual belongs to. It practically defines individuality as a function of sociality. Individuals, apart from their unique, biological, genetic, or psychological properties and characteristics are also defined by the collectives they belong to

and the specific positions they occupy in this collective. Participation in social affairs and knowledge shared with the collective are a strong defining factor. The methodological consequence of such an understanding of the relationship between an individual and the society is that we can dismiss dualism individual-versus-collective as non-empirical, and use it cautiously as an analytical tool only.

In summary, Berger and Luckmann define legitimation in few points. First, it consists of a cognitive component and a normative component where the former always precedes the latter. Second, it is built on language as its principal instrumentality. Third, it takes the form of a narrative available in the same form to all group members and a second order objectivation that functions as an integrating and structuring machinery necessary for universe maintenance. Each of these three aspects, structure, form of appearance, and function, provides specific pivot points for both theoretical and methodological considerations. They, arguably, also provide a sufficient base for institutional analysis through legitimation.

However, in the broader context of a symbolic universe, into which social scientists reach for selected information or type of data, legitimation is organically linked to the concept of institution. This concept in Berger and Luckmann's work is described as sets of procedures based on rules. Institutions are enacted through prescribed roles individuals take in specific circumstances. Institutions originate from habitualization of human activity, and when this habitualization is typified (the same knowledge and meaning shared by social actors) it becomes objectivated, independent from any individual actor but dependent on, and defined by, the group. Crucially, institutions have a logic that is socially bound, belongs to the social rather than the physical world – it is not only observed, but also created. Therefore, the article proceeds with an overview of typical (reoccurring) procedures and rules that a group relies upon, expressed mainly through language.

3. LEGITIMATION – STATEMENT RATHER THAN DISCOURSE?

As discussed above, the institutional world and its social logic are set on the foundations of language and knowledge – themselves sanctioned and institutionalized through the educational system. Although coming from a different theoretical school than Berger and Luckmann's, Karl Maton focuses on how knowledge in the educational system is formed and maintained. Maton is particularly interested in legitimating mechanisms and language used in the area of education. He aligns different legitimizing languages along two different axes. Along one axis, there is a distinction between internal legitimizing language, which is used in communication with peers and colleagues within the intellectual field that a communicator belongs to. The difference along the other axis is based on knowledge itself: on the one hand, knowledge is an epistemic relation as knowledge about an object; and on the other hand, it is a social relation as knowledge of an actor. These two types of relations appear simultaneously and which one has the dominant role at a given moment is context dependent. In one case, the legitimating discourse is employed through knowledge production within education, while in the other it is employed through the institutional field and social/institutional reproduction (Maton 2000, 152).

Maton's analysis suggests that the fragmentation of the institutional field is a product of activities of knowledge actors who are involved in the creation and maintenance of a discrete institutional space. Even though in the text Maton does not make that conclusion explicitly, two types of implicit issues stand out: the issue of social power as the dominant

position of collective or individual actors acting on behalf of a collectivity; and second, the issue of the monopoly an institution has over a part of social reality. Further, some parallels with *The Social Construction of Reality* can be made. As Berger and Luckmann claim, the fragmentation of society/institutions requires different methods of legitimation to individuals belonging to different types/institutions (Berger and Lucman 1991, 102). In addition, in the process of knowledge creation there is often a conflict between experts and practitioners and between rival coteries of experts (Ibid, 135–136). Despite the common points relevant for the theory in this paper, Maton's approach is more language centred and is concerned with discourses, which is a separate issue, while the approach argued for here is initially simpler.

As argued earlier in the article, in order to create legitimation we need language. Socialization is a process where individuals internalize, above all, language. With language, various motivational and interpretative schemes are internalized and institutionally defined, and at least the rudiments of legitimating apparatus are established. Language is the first and necessary condition for any subsequent construction (Searle, 1996), be it symbolic, theoretical or institutional. However, among a variety of approaches to language not all are equally suitable, which rises the question: what sort of language analysis would be best to analyze legitimation mechanisms and statements? Burr considers language and thought to be not separate but connected phenomena, that language is the basis for all our thought (Burr 2003, 62).

Language is not only the representation of attitudes, beliefs, emotions and memories, but also their manifestation. In day-to-day life people rely on interpretative repertoires, or clusters of concepts, descriptions and figures of speech. Anything that can be read in search of meaning should be considered a text (Burr 2003, 66). Interpretative repertoires, as explained by Foucault and Derrida, are not only there to describe the world but also to define and lead action (Ibid, 60). In a process which starts with language, extends to text and discourse, Burr lays the ground for constructionist analysis based on discourses: persons are defined by positions given in the discourses they occupy, and the fact that some of these positions are shifting means that a personal identity is never completely fixed.

Consequently, people are producers and products of discourse, and social change happens when this awareness comes to play, affecting participation or refusal of participation in a discourse (Burr 2003, 124–125). Burr points at two forms of constructionism: micro constructionism where construction happens through interpersonal communication and it remains only partial; and macro constructionism where the constructive power of language is "derived from, or at least related to, material or social structures, social relations and institutionalized practices" (Ibid, 22) – discursive psychology vs Foucauldian discourse analysis, as she names them. Although discourse analysis represents a valid and fruitful approach to the social world, in addition to the point of social constructionsm, it often refers to implied meaning which should be interpreted contextually. The approach I am presenting here requires simpler forms of expression, something that would reduce the need for interpretation of basic statements to a minimum.

What we are looking for here is an approach that would allow for identification of a number of simple statements from which knowledge is constructed. Apart from a theoretical, there is also an empirical reason for this. This is because human beings are frequently sluggish and forgetful; therefore, societies have developed procedures for meanings to be re-impressed and re-memorized. Due to human stupidity this is done

through simplification and trivialization (Berger and Luckmann 1996, 87). Although cynical, this notion points to the fact that legitimation must be accessible to all members of the society, should not require significant cognitive effort to process, and must be simple. Ideally, it would have a form that could be expressed as a simple formula such as that proposed by Searl: X counts as Y in situation C (Searl 2005); or by Berger and Luckmann as: X will be performed by actors of type X (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 72). These simple statements are basic building blocks of institutions and legitimation must follow this simplicity. With language as its principal instrumentality, legitimation analysis begins with identification of language statements that speak about structure and interconnectedness of institutional elements.

In theory, every legitimation machinery can be analyzed as a structure made of simple legitimation statements. From these legitimation statements and machineries we can draw conclusions about social and institutional structures. In conclusion, analyzing institutional orders, arrangements and changes through legitimation requires only few principles to be followed. A researcher must be attuned to a simple language that passes in everyday communication. Statements that, among other communication, will be treated as legitimating must satisfy two criteria – they must have both a cognitive and a normative component. The analysis of one institutional phenomenon or arrangement requires us to keep looking for all identifiable legitimating statements, pertinent to the issue at hand. Finally, in order to identify legitimating machineries we should analyze the way individual legitimations are interconnected.

4. READING INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AND POSITION FROM LEGITIMATION

With the identification of legitimation statements and machineries, we have the first layer of analysis of a social construct. The following step is to make a credible link from publicly communicated legitimation statements to institutional orders and arrangements. According to Berger and Luckmann, legitimation acts as an integrating and structuring machinery in universe maintenance. It does that by providing institutions with validity by linking them to wider structures. In addition, this functional property defines what legitimation is made of. It contains two components: a cognitive one, which is acknowledgement of the existence of an institution, including procedures and roles; and a normative one, the norm being a general rule valid within a group, linked to an institution. This is presented in Graph 1.
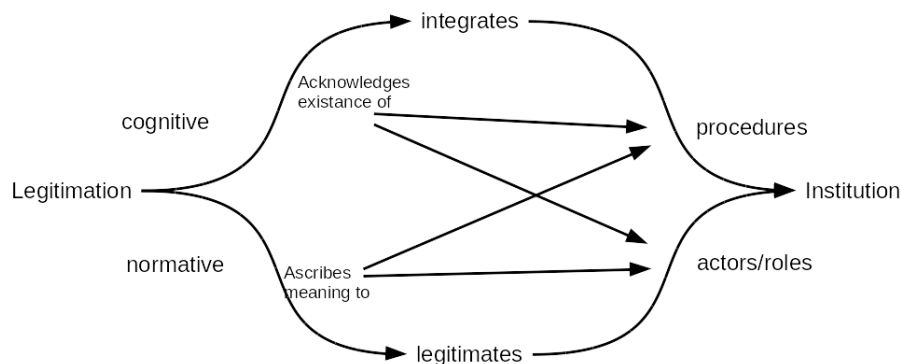
Graph 1 Legitimation and institutions

A simple statement such as 'competition is good' does not say much. It does though acknowledge competition as an entity, and ascribes to it a 'normative is good' status. However, if we combine it with 'market is competition' claim we integrate the concept of market with the concept of competition, ascribing a positive valuation to the concept of market. Even though they may imply, these two statements do not introduce actors and roles. A statement *job market is the best way for people to get access to income*, introduces actors and their expected roles in the context. The best way for people to provide for themselves is to compete on the job market. It is interesting to observe tacit communication in this context, and ask a question: if the market is good because it is competition, what is the result of market/competition processes? It is discrimination based on rules specific competition is constrained by, be it regulation, market participants structure or something else. A person without a driving license cannot compete for driver jobs, for example. In job seeking/obtaining process some will get better jobs, some worse, and some will not get a job at all, and if the competition/market is good, the results they produce are also good and legitimate. This sequence of obvious consequential statements actually illustrates how institutional knowledge is constructed and communicated. For each institution there is a number of legitimating statements that together provide a construct we recognize as a coherent institutional entity. The number of statements we can identify and observe in relation to an institution gives us a more or less detailed picture and knowledge about it. And also, through a number of legitimation statements, which put together become a legitimating machinery, we learn about the structure and position of an institution.

In society, the structure and position of an institution are intertwined because structuring elements of an institution more often than not contain information about relevant institutional and symbolic surrounding, and how each of the elements fit within. The question this discussion leads us to is: what, in practical, empirical terms, the position of an institution means? To answer that question, we should turn back to the question of what an institution is. For a society member it is a set of procedures that define the roles one can or cannot occupy. In other words, it is a set of rules that govern individual activity in certain and specific social contexts – has monopoly over a part of human conduct. In order to become a car driver, one must pass a test, which is an institutionalized procedure for acquiring status. Any divergence from this rule in normal circumstances will be prevented when observed. However, a researcher should look further than what is visible to individual members of society. "Of course, everything is done to hide the fact that the authority's legitimacy may be based on other criteria than the presumed one of economic performance" (Bauer and Bertin-Mourot 1999, 11). What is present, revealed or obvious should not obscure what is missing or is omitted from legitimation, because there might lay a threat to the present social order, distribution of power and dominance, and potentially a seed for social change.

With these theoretical considerations in mind, one needs to pick a method best suited for this type of exploration. The fact that the proposed institutional analysis relies on a collection of legitimation statements which require some structuring the most appropriate approach would be using a heuristic method such as cluster analysis. An argument in favor of cluster analysis is the main reason this method was developed: to discover structure, relations, or patterns which are not immediately obvious or accessible. As with any methodological approach, there are a few potential problems. Cluster analysis is a name used for a group of algorithms which may be relatively different on a technical level, which

means it is worth investing time in identifying the right algorithm for a purpose or a data set. In addition, although cluster analysis is devised to reveal "objective" groups or patterns, the role of theory should not be understated, especially during the selection of variables (Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984, 20).

Ultimately, the selection of variables, and more specifically justification for each included variable will have implications on the interpretation of results. Finally, as not a strictly statistical method, cluster analysis, or the results of its application, is sensitive to the initial order of data. Therefore, any solution would require verification for consistency at least, testing it on the same data set but with a different initial order of entries in the database (Cvetković 2016, 142). Essentially, what cluster analysis allows for in the analysis of legitimation statements is the discovery of patterns in which these statements occur as part of the same body of knowledge, in our case, knowledge about institutions. In other words, the resulting clusters of legitimation statements would indicate legitimation machineries. Even though the theoretical and methodological approach proposed here may favor an originally designed data collection instrument, it also allows us to read existing material, including data collected using survey questionnaires – as long as it contains variables in the form of relevant statements. The number of clusters obtained in such a way would depend not only on the number of variables used, but also on the structure of answers. For example, in the case where individual items have three values, agree, disagree, and neutral/undecided, the maximum number of clusters for two questions is nine, for three questions is twenty seven, etc.

To illustrate this I have used a questionnaire and the dataset from a recent survey of Roma in Serbia[1]. Four variables were selected initially. However, silhouette and particularly predictor importance values suggested that the model would give better results using only three variables. Therefore, three questions[2] relevant as indicators of economic foundations of family relations are processed using two-step cluster analysis. Although the maximum theoretical number of clusters is twenty-seven, silhouette measures and predictor importance indicated that a solution with three clusters offers a solid interpretational ground. Increasing the number of clusters would in principle also positively affect the values for silhouette and predictor importance. However, it can be argued that in this case the advantage gained by more nuanced results should be weighed against similarity in terms of interpretational options, since some of the additional clusters turned out to be very similar.

Table 2 Economic foundations of family relations – clusters/legitimation patterns

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
Breadwinners should have the main say in the family	Yes	No	No
Woman should only do domestic work	Yes	No	Yes
Only the man should be the breadwinner in the family	Yes	No	No
	45%	27.8%	27.1%

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[1] The research is conducted as a part of the project *Social and Cultural Potential of Roma Ethnic Community in Serbia*. It was conducted by the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, with the co-operation of sociologists from the Universities of Niš and Belgrade, and financially supported by the Open Society Fund Serbia (Belgrade).
[2] With agree, disagree, and undecided, as answer options.

The three resulting clusters, and that is one of the arguments in favor of using cluster analysis, have at this point at least, non-descriptive names. The interpretation of the results does not rely on preconceived concepts or attributes. Rather, the approach allows us to discover how legitimation mechanisms and patterns are structured, based on the available information we have about the area of social and institutional life. Exploration of a wider range of legitimation statements by cluster analysis reveals which statements are relevant in a social group, hence indicating the legitimation mechanism. In the second stage, this procedure reveals cognitive and subsequently social fragmentation as manifested in a number and characteristics of legitimation patterns within an existing legitimation mechanism. Therefore, resulting clusters from the illustration in Table 2 represent legitimation patterns and, based on the attributes implied, can be named: sexist-prohibitive, cluster 1; conservative-prohibitive, cluster 3; and liberal, cluster 2. The names suggested should not be understood as exact definitions but rather as short descriptions of complex patterns. Finally, as these patterns are indicators of institutional arrangements, we can in this particular case draw conclusions in regard to how institutions of marriage/family, employment or paid work as its less formal expression, and sex roles are positioned in relation to each other, and which one has a dominant role in defining social action. The results suggest that for almost half of the observed population, patriarchal values and norms dominate both family and economic life. As a consequence, an institution of patriarchal family, as an articulation of specific norms, establishes criteria and effectively a monopoly over part of the economic life by inclusion or exclusion of categories of actors.

4. Conclusion

Given that the theoretical approach presented here has been focused on discovering institutional structure and position, the consequences of selection and justification of variables would limit the reach of analysis, but would also provide a focus to the interpretation of results. There are few conclusions worth mentioning. First, from the initially selected sets of variables/statements only some were indicated as relevant for the observed social group, and they represent legitimation mechanisms, as channels through which legitimation of certain social/institutional area is communicated. The legitimizing mechanisms, not to be confused with legitimizing machineries, are socially recognized and accepted resources for the creation of legitimizing patterns available to social groups. Second, only within the groups of selected variables, which make legitimizing mechanisms, legitimation patterns are formed and can subsequently be identified. Third, the number of legitimizing patterns identified based on one legitimizing mechanism provides an indication of the degree of fragmentation of specific institutional definitions. This, in some cases, may also indicate a cognitive dissonance in relation to an institution. Fourth, fragmentation of a specific institutional definition would suggest a possible line along which social fragmentation is happening (or could happen in times of social crisis). Finally, when it comes to the position of an institution, the observed patterns suggest that by structuring, society is also positioning institutions. For example, the analyzed institution of family is for a significant proportion of population structured in a way to include certain actors, and exclude some others: include men and exclude women from the job market. Identified patriarchal values legitimize a specific family institutionalization pattern which establishes

a division of labor with consequences reaching far beyond the private sphere. This pattern is also manifested by the dominant role the family as an institution has in relation to establishing patterns and rules on the job market, and in a broader sense the economic foundation and reproduction of the group itself.

Although the theoretical and methodological approaches within constructionism seem scattered and not very coherent, they all focus on how a member of society perceive the world, and how the world is constructed through these perceptions. The fact that distinctions in the constructionist analysis are more analytical that empirical (cognitive and normative legitimation, institutional structure and position, etc.), means that the concepts used are more epistemological instruments than empirically identified entities. This is actually more helpful than it seems. It provides for a more holistic approach, avoiding issues of dualism or binary conceptual frameworks, juxtapositions and similar approaches to explore seemingly separate but essentially just different ends of the same phenomena, such as the notorious individual versus society problem, with insights and knowledge that is always contextualized.

Legitimation mechanisms represent cognitive maps (as knowledge of how different elements in human surrounding are related to each other), which are put to work by people in day-to-day practice. The difference between social groups would, therefore, be manifested as the difference in the way same elements are related to each other. These differences can be observed as different patterns attributable to different groups. Research techniques usually referred to as cluster analysis seem particularly suitable to the task, given that they identify patterns in otherwise unstructured data. In addition, cluster analysis allows for a ground-up approach, or observing how complex legitimation structures are built from its basic individual statements. With that in mind, any specific body of evidence and language used will have a decisive role in choosing the particular variety of cluster analysis. Finally, because of the direct connection between legitimation and institutions, there is a correspondence between legitimation statements and institutional structure and position. All legitimation patterns can be read as corresponding institutional patterns. Although that would require further discussion beyond the scope of this paper, arguments presented so far hopefully demonstrate that legitimation theory from Social Construction of Reality presents a strong foundation for social and institutional analysis, and the foundation for empirical research.

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LEGITIMACIJA I INSTITUCIJE –
PONOVNA POSETA BERGERU I LUKMANU

Kada su u pitanju legitimacija i institucionalna struktura rad Bergera i Lukmana je uprkos vremenu i danas relevantan. Ovaj rad je pokušaj da se istraže mogućnosti na prvi pogled nepravedno malo korišćenog pristupa institucionalnoj analizi – kroz legitimaciju. Prvi deo rada predstavlja u osnovnim crtama koncept legitimacije i ulogu koju igra u konstrukciji i održavanju institucija, na temeljima knjige Socijalna konstrukcija stvarnosti. Takođe se iznose argumenti da institucionalna analiza kroz legitimaciju predstavlja pristup znanju institucionalnih struktura i pozicija onako kako ih pripadnici društva vide, premošćavajući tako distancu između formalnih i neformalnih institucija. U drugom delu su obrađene ideje iskorišćene kao osnova za istraživanje i analizu korišćenjem klaster analize, te je predložen koherentni teorijsko-metodološki pristup.

Ključne reči: *legitimacija, institucije, sociologija znanja, klaster analiza.*