

The Legitimacy of Alien Rulers

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Abstract: *In the modern world, alien rulers are generally perceived to lack legitimacy. Political legitimacy is important because it is thought to be the principal alternative to coercive institutions. Little empirical evidence supports these claims, however. We devise a laboratory experiment that isolates alienness from other ruler characteristics. The experiment tests whether alien rulers have less legitimacy than native rulers, and whether the ability to punish compensates for this disadvantage. Using American and Israeli college student samples, we find that alien rulers receive less compliance than native rulers, and that the ability to punish does not allow alien rulers to “catch-up” with native rulers.*

KEYWORDS: Alien rule, legitimacy, compliance, punishment, consent

This paper tests two widely accepted claims about legitimacy: First, legitimacy and coercion are alternatives – if a ruler has legitimacy it has less need to use coercion. Second, alien rulers have less legitimacy than native rulers.

Political legitimacy is widely seen as important because it is thought to be the principal alternative to the coercive use of power (Tyler 2005; Zelditch 2001). The resort to coercion is costly. Leaders with legitimacy can potentially achieve compliance without incurring these costs. For this reason, all leaders seek to increase their legitimacy (Zelditch and Walker 2003; Weber 1978).

But legitimacy may be more attainable for some rulers than others. In particular, achieving legitimacy may be problematic for alien rulers. In the modern world, alien rulers are generally thought to lack legitimacy. This is because native rulers are culturally similar to the governed, and alien rulers are not. Alien rule is a potential issue in situations in which there are multiple salient collectivities. These collectivities may be based on a variety of characteristics – including, for example, religion, nation, corporation, school, team, academic discipline, or ethnicity. The domain of salient social divisions (whether national, religious, ethnic and so forth) varies across time and place. When such divisions exist, alien rule is possible. Alien rulers are leaders of a particular collectivity who are not themselves members of that collectivity (Hechter 2013:2). Such rulers belong to a different social group than the governed.

The issue of whether alien rulers have legitimacy is an important one. Given the number of countries in the world with internal ethnic, religious, and language differences; instances

where governments (Krasner 2001) and non-governmental organizations seek the compliance of residents of other countries (Koppell 2010); as well as increases in global regulatory regimes (Von Staden 2012), understanding the conditions under which individuals of one group may become legitimate rulers over those of another is critical. There is a large literature in political science devoted to the study of a variety of institutions – including decentralization (Meguid 2008; Mueller 2015), federalism (Riker 1964; Gagnon et al., 2015), and indirect rule (Ferwerda and Miller 2014; Gerring et al. 2011; Hechter 2000; Lawrence 2013) – that mitigate conflict deriving from alien rule. When a ruler at the center seeks compliance from the periphery – for example, when members of the periphery seek to secede – a legitimate ruler will have a better chance of keeping the country together (Siroky et al., 2016).

In addition, when one country seeks to maintain a presence in another (as the United States military does in 148 other countries (U.S. Department of Defense 2010) it will face resistance to the degree that its presence is not considered to be legitimate. Further, the increasing pace of globalization is likely to increase the incidence of alien rule around the world. The current fiscal travails of the southern members of the Eurozone – most especially Greece – have led to popular accusations of German political domination, but alien rule – of one sort or another – may be useful for addressing global problems such as climate change, the spread of infectious disease, and control of terrorism. In general, wherever ethnicity, language or religion are politically salient, a regime that cannot reach across group boundaries to establish legitimacy is liable to be plagued with instability.

These two claims – that legitimacy and coercion are substitutes, and that alien rulers are illegitimate – are widely accepted. Yet, little empirical evidence supports them. Given that some alien rulers appear to succeed in attaining at least some legitimacy and others fail, it is not clear whether alienness itself actually reduces legitimacy. Further, in any particular instance, it is not clear whether legitimacy or coercion account for a ruler's success. Thus there is little evidence that legitimacy and coercion are substitutes.

The lack of empirical evidence adjudicating claims about legitimacy is, at least in part, due to the difficulties of disentangling legitimacy from other potentially confounding factors. For this reason, we turn to experimental methods. We use laboratory experiments to isolate and manipulate alienness and coercion. We find that experiment participants comply less with alien than with native rulers, supporting the received view that alien rulers have less legitimacy than native rulers. Further, the leader's ability to punish increases compliance. But, the results do not support the view that legitimacy is a substitute for punishment – instead, punishment capability increases compliance with both native and alien rulers.

Background and hypotheses

Coercion is often dangerous, costly, and unstable (Zelditch and Walker 2003). Coercive force is dangerous in that it may be difficult to contain (for example a security unit meant to control citizens may turn on the ruler). It is costly because it often requires constant monitoring to detect deviance, as well as the maintenance of enforcers and enforcement institutions. And coercion may produce instability in the form of civil unrest and disorder (e.g., Bischof and Fink 2015) – as seen in Egyptian discontent with Mubarak's rule and violence in other parts of the Middle East. Due to the costs associated with coercion, political stability is thought to rest in part on some normative basis. As Rousseau put it,

“The stronger is never strong enough to be forever master unless he transforms his force into right and obedience into duty” (Rousseau and Gourevitch 1997: Book i, Ch. 3, p. 43). This normative basis of the social order is referred to as legitimacy (Hurd 2007; Suchman 1995; Weber 1978; Zelditch Jr. 2001).

Legitimacy is a contested concept in the social sciences; thus no definition is universally accepted (Hardin 2007). We adopt a conception of legitimacy that moves from the micro- to the macro-level – individual subjects confer legitimacy on the ruler (Lipset 1960; Weber 1978) by giving their consent to it (Locke 1965[1690]). Thus we define legitimacy as deriving from the consent of the governed. Such consent requires expression. It is an act, not a belief (Breuilly 2011:478-9; Levi 1997; see also Burawoy 1979:27 for an argument that distinguishes consent from “the specific consciousness or subjective attributes of the individual”). Voting is one indicator of consent (Levi 1997; Anderson et al. 2005). Assisting the ruler is another (Dickson, Gordon, and Huber 2014). Voluntary compliance with governmental rules also demonstrates consent to the regime (Hechter 2013:16; Levi 1997). Accordingly, we treat legitimacy as *the extent to which citizens obey the ruler’s demands even when that ruler has no means of punishing violations* (Finer 1997; Hechter 2013).

Of course, the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of individuals all may affect individuals’ compliance. If people perceive the ruler as competent, agree with a government policy (Levi 1988), view procedures as fair (Tyler 1990), view the leader as fair and trustworthy (Levi 1997), have a habit of obedience (Levi 1997; Lustick 1999; see also Haidt and Graham 2007 for an argument about respect for authority as a moral value), are swayed by the leader’s charisma (Weber 1978), are attuned to focal points established by the leader (McAdams and Nadler 2005), or believe that others support the ruler (Levi 1997; Zelditch 2001; see also Horne 2009) they may be more likely to comply. In the literature, all of these internal states have been associated with legitimacy. The importance of these internal states may well vary across settings, however, as well as across individuals. We see little evidence for privileging one of these attitudes over the others, and expect that one or more may be at work, depending on the context. Because we view legitimacy as behavioral – rather than as attitudes or beliefs – our argument holds regardless of particular individual attitudes and beliefs.

What are the determinants of legitimacy in the modern world? Whereas it is widely assumed that alien rulers are less legitimate than native rulers, the evidence is mixed.

Research shows that colonialism (Hechter 1998; Strang 1990), military occupation (Hechter and Vida-Aparicio 2011), some corporate mergers (Demeritt 2008), and other instances of alien rule often provoke resistance (Anderson and Mendes 2005). And suspicion of alien rulers may not be unfounded – there is evidence that alien rulers often favor their own (Franck and Rainer 2012). Similarly, experimental work on ingroup-outgroup dynamics suggests that individuals have little confidence in outgroup members (Orbell, Dawes, and Schwartz-Shea 1994; Simpson, McGrimmon, and Irwin 2007; Tanis and Postmes 2005; Yuki et al. 2005; Buchan, Croson, and Dawes 2002; Yamagishi and Kiyonari 2000) and treat them worse than fellow ingroup members (see, for example, Brewer 1979; Tajfel et al. 1971).

However, there are also instances in which alien rulers succeed. The Genoese Republic successfully employed alien rulers (called *podestàs*) in the 12th and 13th centuries to curb inveterate interclan conflict (Hechter 2013). In the wake of the French Revolution, Brittany – a western territory with a significant Celtic-speaking population that was ruled indirectly as a *pays d’etat* – came for the first time under direct French rule. The Breton elites and peasants tended to regard their new French overlords as alien rulers, and as a

result an anti-French Breton nationalism was born (Reece 1977). Nowadays, however, Bretons are much more likely to regard immigrants from the Mahgreb as aliens than those from Paris. Likewise, after Sweden ceded control of Finland in 1809, the economically and politically dominant Swedish-speakers in Finland increasingly had to accede to rule by the Finns. Not only were Swedish-speakers instrumental in promoting the Finnish language, but after a time they came to accept the resulting Finnish-dominated government as legitimate (McRae, Helander and Luoma 1999). In these cases, it is difficult to disentangle legitimacy from other factors; one cannot tell whether the success of alien rulers was due to their legitimacy or something else.

The present paper tests the generally accepted view that alienness affects legitimacy – that is, that alien (outgroup) rulers have lower legitimacy than native (ingroup) rulers. More specifically it assesses whether, in the absence of coercion (that is, in situations in which the ruler has no ability to punish) alien rulers will attain less compliance with their requests or demands than native rulers.

H1: In the absence of potential punishment, people will comply less with alien than native rulers.

Ostensibly, legitimacy is important because it reduces the need for rulers to incur the costs of maintaining coercive institutions. That is, legitimacy and coercion are thought to be substitutes (Tyler 2005; 2006). If a ruler has one, it may not need as much of the other; low levels of compliance with alien rulers will be offset by the ability to punish and native rulers will not need the threat of punishment because they have legitimacy. This argument suggests that alien rulers will need the ability to punish in order to produce the compliance that native rulers can achieve without such threats. To the extent that native rulers have legitimacy, they will not need the threat of punishment to achieve compliance.

This is not an argument about the extent to which natives or aliens *use* punishment, whether they differentially sanction in- or out-group members (Goette, Huffman, and Meier 2006), or whether the effectiveness of a punishment varies depending on who imposes it. Instead, we focus simply on the threat of punishment – the extent to which the ruler has the ability to punish. We expect that people will comply more with rulers who maintain punishment capability than those who do not. However, conventional wisdom suggests that native rulers need less punishment capability than alien rulers to induce the same level of compliance – punishment provides less value added for native than for alien rulers. In other words, alien status and ability to punish will have an interaction effect on contributions.

H2: Punishment ability of the ruler will increase compliance.

H3: The effect of punishment ability on compliance will be smaller for native than for alien rulers.

Methods

We test our hypotheses using experimental methods. Experimental methods are particularly useful because they allow for the assessment of causal theory (Ostrom 2007: 203). In naturally occurring settings, it is difficult to disentangle alienness from other characteristics of the ruler, such as competence, citizens' past experiences with the ruler, or how the ruler attained its position. Further, it is difficult to disentangle ruler legitimacy from coercion. Experimental methods allow us to isolate alienness, coercion, and legitimacy.

In addition, experimental methods allow us to use a behavioral measure of legitimacy (Dickson, Gordon, and Huber 2015). Like concepts such as trust and norms, legitimacy is difficult to study. Much of the research on legitimacy in political science relies on qualitative studies in which researchers must find ways of inferring legitimacy (e.g., Hurd 2008) or on quantitative self-report survey data (e.g. Caldiera and Gibson 1992; Gilley 2006a; 2006b; Tyler 1990). While valuing the contributions to knowledge made by such work, researchers studying concepts like trust and norms have developed behavioral indicators of their theoretical concepts. Thus, instead of asking participants how much they trust person *A*, experimentalists assess how participants behave towards person *A* under specified conditions (e.g. Berg, Dickhaut, and McCabe 1995; Simpson et al. 2007). Similarly, rather than asking people what community norms are, many scholars assess how individuals react to norm violations and use those reactions as indicators of norms (e.g., Horne 2009). Here we take a similar approach – rather than ask participants what they think about a ruler, we measure legitimacy by assessing how people respond to a ruler under particular conditions. This approach is consistent with our definition of legitimacy as the consent of the governed – a behavior rather than a belief.

We test our theoretical predictions in two settings. The theoretical expectations outlined in this paper are stated in abstract terms – native versus alien rulers, punishment, and compliance. But, any empirical test of a theory is necessarily conducted in a specific time and place. This means that in order to determine an appropriate setting for testing our theoretical predictions, we must identify the conditions under which the theory is expected to apply (see Foschi's 1997 discussion of scope conditions; and Lucas 2003). We define alien rulers as leaders of a collectivity who are not members of that collectivity, in situations in which collectivity boundaries are salient. Therefore, to test our theory, we need settings in which there are two presumably salient collectivities. And as discussed above, the domain that provides the basis for the collectivity may vary – salient collectivities could include religious groups, nations, ethnicities, sports rivals, academic departments, corporations, and so forth. Any setting in which there are two salient collectivities would be appropriate for testing our theoretical predictions. For this paper, we identify two such settings. The basis for collectivity salience in these two settings is quite distinct – one involves a sports rivalry (between two American universities), the other an intractable national/religious conflict (the Israeli/Palestinian context). While these two settings clearly differ in many ways, each involves two salient collectivities and, therefore, is appropriate for testing our theoretical predictions.

Experimental Design

The experiment had a 2 x 2 between subjects design crossing the alienness of the ruler (ingroup versus alien) by the ruler's ability to punish (potential punishment versus no potential punishment). Approximately half the participants were students at an American university and half at an Israeli university. A total of 364 students participated (U.S = 188; Israel = 176). Of these, 28 failed the comprehension checks, leaving a total N of 336 (U.S. = 166; Israel = 170).¹

¹ We asked participants questions designed to assess the extent to which they read and understood the instructions (four questions in the U.S., and three questions in Israel). In both locations, we eliminated participant who got more than two answers wrong.

Participants and procedures

The *U.S. data* were collected at a large public university in the United States. Participants were recruited from lower division general education classes and received extra credit for participating. Participants were told to come to the laboratory in the sociology department and were randomly assigned to an experimental condition. They were told that this study was one of a series of studies being conducted with students from another university and that students at both universities were participating in various labs across the two campuses and were communicating over the internet. We implemented a number of procedures in order to create this impression. For example, students signed up for the study on a Sona “Interuniversity Consortium” website, signs in the lab reinforced that multiple research universities were participating in the study, and the experimental program was designed with lag times to approximate others’ decision-making. Upon arriving, each student was escorted to a separate room equipped with a computer.

The *Israeli data* were collected at a large public university in Israel. Participants were recruited from lower division political science classes. They were instructed to come to the political psychology laboratory in the department and were paid a show-up fee of 15 NIS (about 4 USD). Participants were told that this study was one of a series of studies being conducted with students from a Palestinian university, and like the American participants, were told that students at both universities were participating in various labs across the two campuses and were communicating over the internet.

During the experiment participants earned points based on their decisions and the experimental condition to which they were randomly assigned. In the U.S., those points were translated into lottery tickets for one of three 100 dollar gift cards from Amazon.com (see Batson et al., 1999; Parks and Stone, 2010; Van Vugt and DeCremer, 1999; and Van Vugt, et al. 2004 for examples of experimental research using lottery incentives). In Israel, the lottery offered two 200 NIS gift cards from Academion, the university book store. The more points that participants made, the more “tickets” they got. To ensure that the gift cards would be valued by experiment participants, we used cards that could be used to buy a wide range of products.

At the end of the experiment, participants were told the number of tickets they had earned. After all data collection was complete, the drawing was conducted and the gift cards were distributed to students. Debriefing was done at this point by providing an explanation of the study in writing to all participants.

In both studies, students were told that they were participating in an experiment on social interaction with four others. In actuality, each student participant was interacting with computer-simulated actors. Thus each experiment “group” included one student and four simulated actors. (In other words, because there were 336 participants, there were 336 “groups”.) Participants signed into the experiment site, were instructed to identify their location, and waited for other actors to do the same. As actors signed in, their identifying information appeared on the screen. Throughout the experiment, all actors were consistently identified by a letter (V-Z) and their location (i.e., university affiliation). All group members other than the leader were always identified as ingroup members (from the same university as the participant). Participants read instructions that described the experimental tasks and were given quizzes to ensure their understanding. After participants completed the instructions, the experiment began. The experiment lasted for one round.

In each experiment group, the computer “randomly chose” one of the (computer-simulated) actors to be the group leader. To establish ingroup/alien status, we manipulated the university affiliation of the leader.

After the leader was chosen, each of the group members was given 100 points. Then, the group leader made a recommendation about the number of points that group members should contribute to the Group Fund. This amount was set at 80 points. Eighty points is higher than the 40 – 60% of private endowments that participants typically contribute in public goods experiments (Ledyard 1995; Davis and Holt 1993) and therefore is likely to be higher than participants would be inclined to give on their own. Participants had to decide how much weight to give to the leader’s recommendation. In conditions with no potential for punishment, compliance with the ruler recommendation provides behavioral evidence of legitimacy.

After receiving the group leader recommendation, group members were able to choose whether to keep all of their points, or to contribute some number of them to a Group Fund. Similar to a standard public goods experimental design, points that members contributed to the Group Fund were multiplied by two and divided equally among all the actors – including the group members and the group leader. Thus participants’ payoff was equal to the points they retained plus their share of the group fund. While the group leader received a share of points from the Group Fund, s/he did not contribute to it. Thus, for group members, the experiment had the incentive structure of a social dilemma – all group members were better off if others contributed and would prefer not to contribute themselves.²

Experimental manipulations

Alienness

We used university affiliation to manipulate the ingroup/alien affiliation of the leader (see Simpson and Macy 2004 for a similar manipulation). Students were told that they were participating in a social interaction experiment involving students from two universities and that each session might include only students from their university, only students from the other university, or some combination of the two. In order to increase the strength of the manipulation, students in the U.S. signed up to participate using an online “Inter-University Research Consortium” site. Signs in the lab also identified the space as part of the inter-university consortium in which multiple labs within the universities and across universities were participating. In the United States, both universities were large western campuses. The two universities were identified by name. The other university was a sports rival; pre-testing showed that students saw it as a rival and strongly disliked it. In Israel, the universities were identified by location (either Israeli or Palestinian).

In the *native* condition, all group members and the leader were identified as attending the same university. In the *alien* condition group members were all from the same university as the participant and the leader was from the other university. Thus the only difference across conditions was the identity of the ruler (native or alien). Other group members were all identified as being from the same university as the participant.

² Use of a lottery maintained this social dilemma incentive structure (Batson et al., 1999; Parks and Stone, 2010; Van Vugt and DeCremer, 1999; and Van Vugt et al., 2004) -- each individual would prefer that others incur the costs of contributing (thereby increasing the individual’s points and chances of winning while also putting the contributor at a disadvantage).

Potential Punishment

Potential punishment was manipulated by telling participants about the leader's capabilities. In the potential punishment condition, they were told that, after they made their contribution decisions, the group leader would be able to deduct points from group members, that is, s/he would be able to take any number of points from any specific individual. In the no potential punishment condition, participants were told only that the group leader could see their contribution decision; there was no mention of punishment. Thus, in the potential punishment condition, participants made their contributions knowing that the leader *could* punish them, but without knowing whether s/he *would* punish. In addition, in all conditions, participants made their contribution decision without knowing what other group members would contribute – thus participants did not know whether other group members endorsed the leader (Zelditch 2001; Horne 2009), but had to make their own judgment.

In naturally occurring settings rulers generally have at least some ability to punish (though leaders of groups other than nation states may not). Thus our manipulation, like other features of our experimental setting, is not realistic. We use this approach because we are interested in disentangling punishment capability and legitimacy. In naturally occurring settings, coercive capability and legitimacy co-exist. Therefore, it is very difficult to disentangle their effects. Lab experiments offer the opportunity to disentangle factors experimentally that cannot be disentangled in naturally occurring settings. As Zelditch (1969) notes: “[T]he laboratory group is not like any concrete setting in society The purpose of the laboratory experiment is to create certain theoretically relevant aspects of social situations under controlled conditions [for example] [t]o produce controls and contrasts that are difficult to discover in natural settings” (pp. 529-531). Our approach takes advantage of this feature of experiments.

Measures

We measured compliance by calculating how much less participants contributed than the ruler suggested. We treated contributions of 80 and higher as compliant. For contributions of less than 80, we measured the distance of each participant's contribution from the leader's recommended amount. We then recoded those scores so that lower scores indicate less compliance; higher scores indicate more compliance. Thus a score of zero indicates that the participant contributed 80 or more points, a score of -10 indicates that the participant gave 70 points. In the no punish condition, compliance provided an indicator of legitimacy.

In both samples, we collected data on participant characteristics. While our theory makes no predictions about the effects of individual characteristics, collecting these measures enabled us to conduct exploratory analyses. Because research has identified potential differences in cooperation for men and women, we measured gender (e.g., Eckel and Grossman 1998; Simpson and Van Vugt 2009). The sample was 57% (202) female and 43% (152) male (US = 67% female; Israel = 48% female). For the U.S. sample, we measured participants' attitudes towards the outgroup by asking them how much they liked or disliked the alien university (response scale 1=very positive; 9=very negative) (mean=4.08; s.d.=1.60); we expected that the strength of individuals' feelings toward the other university might affect their compliance. For the regression analyses these numbers were reverse coded so that higher numbers indicate more positive responses. For the Israeli sample, we measured participants' ideology (1=right; 7=left) (mean=3.95; s.d.=1.44);

we expected that left-leaning students might be more likely to comply with an alien leader than conservative students. We also measured participant's birthplace (83.5% (142) were born in Israel) and religiosity (1=high; 4=low) (mean=2.94; s.d.=.888).

Results

Table 1 reports mean compliance across the experimental conditions. Mean compliance across all conditions was -14.2 (s.d.=18.6). In every condition, mean participant contributions fell short of the 80 points recommended by the group leader (though a number of participants did give the recommended amount).

We first assess whether alien rulers are less legitimate than native rulers, that is whether alienness affects compliance (Hypothesis 1), as well as whether punishment affects compliance (Hypothesis 2). To do so, we conducted OLS regressions (see Table 2). We find that, in general, native leaders receive more compliance than alien leaders and the leader's punishment capability increases compliance. In the U.S. data, alienness has a marginally significant effect on compliance (Model 1). In Israel, both alienness and punishment have effects that are statistically significant at the .05 level (Model 3). Thus, the effects of alienness and punishment appear to be stronger in the Israeli than U.S. sample. In part, this may be because the Israel-Palestinian conflict is much more salient than a simple sports rivalry between two American universities. We conducted additional analyses on pooled U.S. and Israeli data. In these pooled data, both alienness and punishment have statistically significant effects on compliance (Model 5). We find no effect of country, and country does not interact with the experimental conditions to affect compliance (Models 5-7). That is, there is no statistically significant difference in the effects of the experimental conditions across countries.

We then assess whether punishment and legitimacy are substitutes, that is, whether there is a statistically significant negative interaction effect of punishment and alienness on compliance (Hypothesis 3). For the U.S. and pooled samples the interaction coefficient is negative and not statistically significant (Model 2, 6, and 7 in Table 2). For the Israeli sample, the coefficient is positive and not statistically significant (Model 4). These results suggest little support for the substitution hypothesis. While the effect is in the predicted direction for the U.S. data and pooled data, the p-values are large (.32 and .59). Further, in the Israeli data, which show stronger effects of the experimental conditions, the interaction coefficient is positive (p=.8). Together these findings suggest that increasing the sample size for the U.S. sample would be unlikely to produce a statistically significant

Table 1: Mean Compliance across Conditions

		Ingroup/Native Mean SD N	Outgroup/Alien Mean SD N
Punish	Pooled	-8.66 (14.0) 86	-13.8 (16.1) 85
	US	-10.9 (15.7) 43	-13.3 (15.4) 44
	Israel	-6.40 (11.7) 43	-14.4 (17.1) 41
No Punish	Pooled	-13.5 (17.4) 85	-20.9 (24.2) 80
	US	-12.6 (16.1) 40	-20.6 (25.3) 39
	Israel	-14.2 (18.6) 45	-21.2 (23.4) 41

Numbers closer to 0 indicate more compliance.

Table 2: OLS Regressions of the Effects of the Experimental Conditions on Compliance

	US Data			Israeli Data			Pooled Data		
	Model 1 b (s.e.)	Model 2 b (s.e.)	Model 3 b (s.e.)	Model 4 b (s.e.)	Model 5 b (s.e.)	Model 6 b (s.e.)	Model 7 b (s.e.)		
Intercept	-19.1*** (2.53)	-20.6*** (2.95)	-21.5*** (2.43)	-21.2*** (2.83)	-20.2*** (2.00)	-20.8*** (2.26)	-22.1*** (2.67)		
Ingroup (=1)	5.05 ⁺ (2.86)	8.02 ⁺ (4.15)	7.49** (2.77)	7.00 ⁺ (3.91)	6.29** (1.99)	7.46** (2.84)	8.62* (3.43)		
Punish (=1)	4.52 (2.87)	7.35 ⁺ (4.06)	7.35** (2.77)	6.83 ⁺ (4.00)	5.95** (1.99)	7.12* (2.84)	8.53* (3.48)		
US (=1)	—	—	—	—	-.344 (1.99)	-.344 (1.99)	2.32 (3.51)		
Ingroup × Punish	—	-5.65 (5.73)	—	.998 (5.57)	—	-2.31 (3.98)	-2.29 (4.00)		
Ingroup × US	—	—	—	—	—	—	-2.37 (3.99)		
Punish × US	—	—	—	—	—	—	-2.87 (3.99)		
R-square	.03	.04	.08	.08	.05	.05	.06		
N	166	166	170	170	336	336	336		

⁺ p<.1; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001 (two-tailed tests)

Table 3: Exploratory Analyses with Individual Characteristics

	US Data		Israeli Data	
	Model 1 b (s.e.)	Model 2 b (s.e.)	Model 3 b (s.e.)	Model 4 b (s.e.)
Intercept	−39.2*** (5.94)	−41.7*** (7.88)	−28.5*** (7.08)	−34.2*** (7.95)
Ingroup (=1)	6.17* (2.87)	11.5 (11.2)	6.69* (2.77)	18.4* (8.03)
Punish (=1)	4.65 ⁺ (2.88)	4.57 (2.90)	6.72* (2.78)	6.49* (2.77)
Male	1.61 (3.09)	1.76 (3.11)	.914 (2.78)	1.16 (2.78)
Attitude toward Outgroup	3.17*** (.918)	3.60** (1.26)	—	—
Attitude × Ingroup	—	−.911 (1.84)	—	—
Ideology	—	—	2.92** (1.06)	4.49** (1.45)
Ideology × Ingroup	—	—	—	−2.98 (1.91)
Birthplace	—	—	2.22 (3.77)	1.81 (3.76)
Religiosity	—	—	−2.35 (1.71)	−2.30 (1.70)
R-square	.12	.12	.12	.13
N	156	156	170	170

⁺ p<.1; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001 (two-tailed tests)

negative interaction effect. Accordingly, our results do not support the hypothesis that coercion and legitimacy are substitutes.

Finally, we conducted exploratory analyses to look at the associations between participant characteristics and compliance (see Table 3). For the U.S. participants, we had measures of gender and attitude toward the outgroup. Because 10 U.S. participants did not answer the gender question, the N for the U.S. analysis is 156. We find that a positive attitude toward the alien group is associated with more compliance (Model 1). There is no interaction between the experimental conditions and attitudes (Model 2). These results suggest that people who have more favorable attitudes towards the leader tend to be more generous. That is, people with lower levels of outgroup hostility comply more in general – with both ingroup and outgroup leaders. Participant gender has no effect.

For the Israeli participants, we had measures of political ideology, birthplace, religiosity, and gender. Ideology was coded so that higher numbers represent more liberal participants. We find that liberal ideology is associated with more compliance (Model 3). Ideology does not interact with the alienness of the ruler (Model 4). Instead, liberal participants comply more in general than conservative participants. Birthplace (in or out of Israel) and religiosity have no effect. And, as for the U.S. sample, gender has no effect.

Discussion

We find that, in general, alien leaders have less legitimacy than native leaders – in the absence of any potential punishment, participants complied more with ingroup than outgroup leaders. However, the results do not support the expectation that punishment capability and alienness act as substitutes. If coercion and alienness were substitutes, we would expect to see a statistically significant interaction effect of coercion and alienness on compliance. We did not find such an effect. Our results suggest that both alien and native rulers benefit from the ability to punish. While alien rulers can partly compensate for low legitimacy with the ability to punish, they do not appear to catch up to native rulers. This

finding has implications for the type of center-periphery bargaining that is discussed by Siroky et al. (2016; see also Siroky et al., 2015). It suggests that alien rulers must offer greater concessions to peripheries with a credible exit threat than native rulers who face comparable levels of discontent.

Limitations and Future Research

Because we were interested in the effects of alienness on legitimacy (compliance in the absence of the possibility of punishment), our research isolated alienness from other characteristics of rulers. Thus, all else being equal, alienness weakens legitimacy. Of course, outside the lab, all else is never equal. Leaders differ in personal characteristics (such as competence and charisma), how they attained their position (invasion, appointment, election, and so forth), and past record. Future research should systematically incorporate such differences in order to assess the effects of alienness for different types of rulers, and to assess the effect of ruler and system characteristics for alien and native rulers. For example, it may be that ruler competence or attainment of position through a democratic election can overcome the negative effects of alienness. But, it might also be that elected rulers have legitimacy with the people who voted for them, and not for others.

In addition, future research should vary the characteristics of group members and relations among groups. It may be that an elected ruler who is from a different group than a particular individual may not have legitimacy with that individual, even if it is elected. It might also be useful to explore ingroup-outgroup dynamics in situations in which multiple groups must come to agreement by majority vote or consensus (as in the case of Greek/German conflict generated by Greek economic distress), or in which the structure of group relations varies (see Siroky et al., 2016; Siroky et al., 2015).

Research also should explore legitimacy dynamics over time. In order to cleanly test the effects of alienness, our experiment was a one-shot interaction. However, it is possible that if alien rulers established a record of competence and fairness, they might gain legitimacy. Performance over time might eventually compensate for alien status. It would also be useful to explore how actual punishment behavior by ingroup and alien rulers affects their legitimacy. Future work could also explore not just punishment, but favors and concessions. For example, as described by Siroky et al. (2016), Berne gave concessions to the Jura Bernois in order to be seen as sympathetic (see also Siroky et al., 2015). The effectiveness of the type, degree, and timing of concessions could be assessed experimentally.

Finally, future research should focus on contexts in which the salience of conflict between the ingroup and outgroup varies. We found that alienness had only marginally significant effects in the context of a U.S. sports rivalry, and statistically significant effects in the Israeli context where intergroup conflict is likely more salient. Evidently, some alien rulers are more alien than others. Further research across groups that assessed the salience of intergroup conflicts across domains and contexts would help to further specify the scope conditions of the theory.

Conclusion

This paper suggests that alien rulers may see little option but to be coercive. It is not surprising that countries with strong social divisions are often ruled by dictators (see the

consequences of the Arab Spring), or that subgroups seek to secede. But it is possible that evidence of ability and integrity, strategic and timely concessions, or other factors, might increase legitimacy. Both from a practical and theoretical point of view, a key challenge is to determine how alien rulers can increase compliance without resorting to coercion.

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