Mobilizing Rhetoric: Cheap Talk, Credibility, and Repression

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Abstract

I study the influence of leaders in persuading citizens to participate in risky collective action. An informed leader communicates with uninformed followers through costless, nonbinding, and payoff-irrelevant messages. The analysis separates two forms of mobilizing rhetoric: rhetoric emphasizing the weakness of the regime's repressive capacity and rhetoric centered on the value of victory. I show that these forms of leadership communication operate differently when protest participation involves coordination concerns. Different information interacts differently with strategic complementarity. Consequently, state repression can increase protest participation when opposition organizations mobilize supporters through appeals to freedom, liberation, and democracy. More broadly, the paper shows that the persuasiveness of cheap talk communication depends not only on the information transmitted, but also on the dimension of the political environment that the message emphasizes.

Keywords— Multidimensional cheap-talk; Coordination; Protest; Deterrence failure.

1 Introduction

A central problem facing opposition organizations is how to mobilize large numbers of citizens for political change. Unlike incumbent governments, opposition groups typically lack control over state resources and coercive institutions. The objective of mobilization is further

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complicated by uncertainty. Citizens are often unsure about both the benefits of successful political change and the level of repression they are likely to face if they participate (Basak, Deb, and Kuvalekar 2026; Shadmehr and Bernhardt 2011). As a result, many people view the authoritarian regime as permanent and resistance as futile. How can opposition organizations rally support under such conditions? Existing research explains protest mobilization through selective incentives, revolutionary agenda setting, and coercive or violent strategies used by revolutionary entrepreneurs (Bueno de Mesquita 2010; Chen and Suen 2021; DeNardo 1985; Olson 1965; Shadmehr 2015). These mechanisms are important, but they say less about a common instrument available to opposition leaders who cannot distribute state resources, credibly commit to a post-revolutionary agenda, or use violence.

This paper studies how cheap-talk communication by an informed opposition leader shapes citizens' beliefs and mobilizes participation under repression. The analysis separates two forms of mobilizing rhetoric. *Value-of-victory* rhetoric emphasizes the benefits of successful regime change, such as freedom, equal rights, and justice. *Regime-weakness* rhetoric emphasizes limited repression, such as elite and military defections.

Leaders who employ regime-weakness rhetoric often emphasize divisions within the ruling coalition, the possibility that security forces will defect rather than violently suppress dissent, and the regime's political isolation. During the 1986 People Power Revolution in the Philippines, Corazon Aquino and other opposition elites repeatedly portrayed the Marcos regime as isolated and increasingly unable to sustain large-scale repression (Thompson 1995). In Serbia in 2000, Otpor! developed a centralized communication strategy that portrayed Slobodan Milošević as weak, isolated, and politically vulnerable (Popovic 2015; Rosenberg 2011). One of the movement's central slogans was "Gotov je!" ("He's finished").

In other settings, successful social movement leaders centered public communication on the value of victory. Rather than reassuring followers about safety, this rhetoric seeks to raise the perceived benefits of successful regime change by describing victory as liberation, justice

for all, or democratic transformation. Leaders openly acknowledge the costs of repression while emphasizing that political liberation justifies the sacrifices. In South Africa, the ANC (African National Congress) and the South African Indian Congress organized the 1952 Defiance Campaign against unjust laws. As part of the campaign leadership, Nelson Mandela's August 1952 statement "We Defy" described the broader objective as achieving "freedom and national independence" (Mandela 1952). During the Rivonia trial, Nelson Mandela similarly framed the struggle against apartheid as morally and politically worth the ultimate price (Mandela 1964). Participants confronted repression by deliberately violating apartheid laws. In India, Mahatma Gandhi's slogan "Do or die" became a central mobilizing phrase during the Quit India campaign(Gandhi 1942).

Building on these stylized facts, the current paper asks whether public cheap-talk communication can mobilize protest and help citizens confront state repression. I develop a model in which citizens are uncertain about both the benefits of successful regime change and the level of repression they will face upon participation. An opposition leader with private information about these two political dimensions attempts to mobilize protest by sending costless, nonbinding, and payoff-irrelevant messages. I compare an equilibrium in which the mobilizing message mainly reveals information about the value of successful political change—value-of-victory rhetoric—with one in which it primarily informs citizens about the regime's limited capacity for repression—regime-weakness rhetoric.

The model identifies a novel mechanism through which a sender's cheap-talk communication can be persuasive. With many strategically interdependent receivers, different types of information interact differently with strategic complementarity. Information about the value of victory changes not only citizens' direct incentives to participate but also the importance of others' participation. When citizens expect victory to produce meaningful political change, participation by others becomes more consequential because it raises the likelihood of achieving a highly valued outcome. This message-dependent amplification is

the coordination-multiplier mechanism through which leadership communication can raise ex ante aggregate turnout.

Although regime-weakness rhetoric generates a weaker coordination-multiplier effect, it can still increase participation by persuading citizens that repression is unlikely to be severe. Its effectiveness in highly repressive environments, however, depends on the credibility of claims about regime weakness. As repression intensifies, such claims become less persuasive because observable political conditions increasingly contradict the message.

Because it generates stronger coordination feedback, value-of-victory rhetoric mobilizes more citizens than regime-weakness rhetoric. It can also help citizens confront repression. A more repressive environment may induce the leader to make the mobilizing message more selective, thereby increasing the posterior expected value of victory among citizens. By declaring, for example, that "freedom is worth the ultimate price," a leader can persuade citizens that the benefits of political change justify the risks of participation. In this sense, repression can enhance the credibility of value-of-victory rhetoric and thereby increase protest participation.

The outline of the paper is as follows. Section 2 describes my empirical motivations and draws the distinction between the two types of rhetoric. It also situates the paper in the literature on leadership and cheap-talk communication, state repression, and protest mobilization. Section 3 presents the model. Sections 4, 5, and 6 present the analysis, comparative statics, and welfare results. Section 7 summarizes the argument and discusses equilibrium selection.

2 Empirical Motivation and Contribution

2.1 Value-of-victory and regime-weakness rhetoric

In what ways do materially weak opposition organizations mobilize large numbers when citizens face uncertainty? I focus on public communication, and I distinguish between two types of rhetoric: *value-of-victory* rhetoric and *regime-weakness* rhetoric.

Opposition leaders often mobilize citizens through rhetoric that emphasizes the value of victory. This rhetoric aims to shape beliefs by portraying political change as highly rewarding and worth the sacrifice. In the 1952 Defiance Campaign in South Africa, Nelson Mandela sent a public message that "the struggle for the freedom and national independence of all non-European people shall continue" (Mandela 1952). In Russia under Lenin and China under Mao Tse-Tung, the Communist Party was presented not merely as a political organization, but as the embodiment of a global revolutionary project (McAdams 2017, ch. 3). Followers were offered a powerful justification for sacrifice: participation promised inclusion in a historically destined movement and the chance to serve a cause greater than oneself (Lenin 1964). Mao Tse-Tung articulated a similar logic in his 1927 Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan, where he described peasant rebellion as a world-historical uprising against landlords and local tyrants (Tse-Tung 1965, 15–16).

Importantly, opposition communication often intensifies this message as the environment becomes more repressive. During the Rivonia Trial, Nelson Mandela framed the struggle against apartheid as morally and politically worth the ultimate sacrifice. He declared that he cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society and that it was an ideal for which he was prepared to die (Mandela 1964). Likewise, during the pro-democracy movement in Myanmar in 1990–91, Aung San Suu Kyi repeatedly emphasized perseverance and sacrifice, arguing that demands for democracy and human rights required a collective willingness to endure hardship in pursuit of enduring freedom (Suu Kyi 1991). These examples suggest

that repression may induce opposition leaders to tighten their communication around the political message.

Mahatma Gandhi further illustrates this hypothesis with his famous slogan "Do or Die." The model shows how this effect can emerge when state repression increases. Mobilizing rhetoric that emphasizes the value of victory becomes more centered on that message as repression increases. As a result, the mobilizing message becomes more credible about the value of success, which may lead to a positive relationship between repression and protest participation. Hence, leadership communication that mobilizes citizens through appeals to freedom informs them that, if they make sacrifices and resist repression, victory would lead to historical transformation.

I find that regime-weakness rhetoric does not produce similar effects. Leaders who focus on this rhetoric attempt to lower the expected costs of mobilization by portraying the regime as fragile or unable to sustain repression. During the People Power Revolution in the Philippines in 1986, Corazon Aquino and opposition leaders repeatedly emphasized the declining capacity of Ferdinand Marcos's regime to sustain repression. Public appeals stressed that sections of the military were defecting, that the regime had become isolated, and that mass participation could overwhelm the dictatorship without provoking large-scale violence (Thompson 1995). A similar rhetorical strategy appeared in Serbia during the opposition campaign against Slobodan Milošević in 2000. Otpor's famous slogan, "Gotov je" ("He is finished"), conveyed the idea that the regime was already collapsing (Forbrig and Demeš 2007; Popovic 2015; Rosenberg 2011). Srda Popovic explains that Otpor! intentionally sought to destroy the "myth of invincibility" surrounding Milošević by using repetitive public messaging to communicate that the regime was already weakening (Popovic 2015, ch. 5). The model predicts that this rhetoric can drive participation. However, as repression increases, the leader places greater emphasis on a message that contradicts the repressive environment.

2.2 Protest and leadership literature

This paper contributes to rational-choice theories of revolutionary mobilization. The starting point is the classic collective-action problem (Olson 1965; Tullock 1971). In the context of protest and revolution, this problem is sharpened by the strategic interaction between opposition movements and incumbent regimes (DeNardo 1985; Tilly 1978).[1] Repression is viewed as mobilizing through its effect on emotions and grievances (Gurr 1970; Lebas and Young 2024; Shadmehr 2014).

Furthermore, an expansive literature has sought to explain which factors contribute to the resilience of movements, pointing to the opposition organizational capacity (Davenport 2007; Sullivan 2016; Sullivan and Davenport 2018). In Siegle 2011's computational model, social networks in which leaders are uniformly committed to participation are highly resistant to repression. In my model, an opposition organization that is materially weak attempts to mobilize participation using public cheap-talk communication. I provide an equilibrium analysis of posterior beliefs, strategic communication, and mobilizing rhetoric.

A related literature studies vanguards and revolutionary entrepreneurs. Bueno de Mesquita 2010 shows how revolutionary entrepreneurs can use violence to shape citizens' beliefs about the level of anti-government sentiment in society.[2] Scholars have also examined radicalism and coercion in protest movements, emphasizing how informed revolutionary leaders can exaggerate reform agendas or how extremists can exert disproportionate influence over the revolutionary program (Chen and Suen 2021; Shadmehr 2015; Shadmehr and Bernhardt 2019).

My paper shares with this literature the view that leaders are informed and can shape

1. Lohmann 1994 studies a leaderless model of dynamic protest in which acts of activism reveal information about the quality of the regime. In Little 2016, ICT (Information Communication Technology) changes information and coordination.

2. See also Landa and Tyson 2017, who studies an informed leader with coercive influence over followers; coercion helps coordinate agents by binding them to the leader's chosen policy, and the leader's policy choice becomes more informative as coercive capacity increases.

citizens' beliefs under uncertainty. It differs, however, in the instrument through which leadership operates. I focus on public communication. The interaction between the leader and citizens therefore takes the form of a two-dimensional cheap-talk game between one informed sender and a continuum of receivers.

The quality of communication is central in Dewan and Myatt 2008. In contrast, my model examines the substantive content of leadership communication when information is transmitted strategically. In my model, the leader already observes information about the political environment. A central issue is which political dimensions leadership communication chooses to emphasize publicly. In Edmond 2013, the sender is an incumbent seeking to suppress collective action. Its instrument is a costly hidden action that manipulates the information available to citizens. Holding fixed the number of information sources, the author shows that sufficiently precise signals can make manipulation effective, and thereby improve the regime survival chances. In my model, the sender is an informed opposition leader seeking to increase participation. The leader has two-dimensional private information and relies on cheap-talk communication to shape citizen beliefs.

I show that repression affects citizen learning because it allows a strategic leader to adjust the mobilizing message. This logic is consistent with the literature on repression and information (Gehlbach et al. 2026; Shadmehr and Boleslavsky 2022). Shadmehr and Boleslavsky study how repression itself conveys information and shapes subsequent mobilization, whereas in Gehlbach et al., repression reduces the quality of the information contained in signals of popular support.

2.3 Formal literature on cheap-talk communication

This paper also contributes to the literature on cheap talk. The canonical model of cheap talk studies the transmission of information between an informed sender and an uninformed receiver when the sender's private information is one-dimensional and there is a conflict of

interest (Crawford and Sobel 1982). The multidimensional structure of my model connects the paper to existing works on comparative and multidimensional cheap talk. In Battaglini 2002, multidimensional information can substantially expand the scope of communication, especially when a receiver can consult multiple informed senders. Chakraborty and Harbaugh 2007 show that comparative statements can be credible because they restrict the sender's ability to exaggerate along all dimensions at once. Multidimensional cheap talk can also be persuasive when an expert with state-independent preferences makes credible comparative claims that trade off incentives to exaggerate across dimensions (Chakraborty and Harbaugh 2010; Lipnowski and Ravid 2020). My model features multiple receivers, and I study persuasive communication. I show that different information interacts differently with strategic complementarity.

Finally, the paper also relates to political-economy applications of multidimensional cheap talk. Che, Dessein, and Kartik 2013 study the ranking of projects by an informed sender with the incentive to bias recommendations. Schnakenberg 2016 studies directional cheap talk in electoral campaigns.

3 Model

3.1 Setup

There is a continuum of citizens indexed by $i \in [0, 1]$ and an opposition leader. The leader chooses between a public mobilization message $m = m_1$ and a no-mobilization message $m = m_2$. Citizens choose whether to participate, $a = 1$, or not, $a = 0$. Denote aggregate turnout by $A = \int_0^1 a_i \, di$.

Participation can mean protesting, attending an opposition rally, or contributing to op-

position activity. Non-participation gives a citizen the payoff

$$S(A)V,$$

while participation yields

$$kS(A)V - R - c_i.$$

The analysis focuses on the net gain from choosing action $a = 1$,

$$KS(A)V - R - c_i,$$

where $K = k - 1 > 0$ is common knowledge. The cost c_i is an individual private cost of participation. It represents the energy and time spent in opposition activities. I assume c_i to be i.i.d. and uniformly distributed on $[0, C]$. The probability $S(A)$ is the likelihood of success given an aggregate turnout A. To separate society's coordination capacity from other factors entering the likelihood of success, I assume that

$$S(A) = S(0) + \beta A,$$

where $S(0) > 0$ and $\beta \geq 0$. If $\beta = 0$, individuals make decisions independently, as if the leader communicates with only one follower. When $\beta > 0$, citizens have coordination incentives, and others' participation directly influences an individual's decision to participate. V represents the value of success, while R is the level of repression.

The leader cares about large turnout. The leader receives payoff

$$u_l(A, R) = \begin{cases} B - R & \text{if } A \geq T \\ -R & \text{if } A < T, \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

where $T \in (0,1)$ is common knowledge and $B > 0$.

Opposition leaders often care about reaching a critical mass: filling Tahrir Square, achieving a national strike, or generating enough attendance for a rally. Once the threshold is crossed, additional participation matters much less for the leader. This logic is captured by the payoff function $u_l(A, R)$. The leader has a satiation point, and reaching that point gives the leader the recognition benefit B. The threshold T can also be interpreted as a mobilization recognition threshold. An opposition leader who demonstrates broad support becomes harder for the regime to ignore, even if the mobilization fails to achieve political change.[3] Finally, the leader's payoff also assumes that the leader is already experiencing repression and cares only about the net payoff.

The state space has two dimensions. One dimension is the value of successful regime change V, and the other is regime repressiveness R. The value of successful regime change can be high $V = v^H$ or low $V = v^L$. The regime can be very repressive, $R = r$, or less repressive, $R = 1 < r$. The parameter r measures state repression. The two dimensions are independent, citizens share the same prior, and each realization is equally likely: $\Pr[V = v^H] = \Pr[R = r] = \frac{1}{2}$. In addition, the private cost c_i is independent of R and V. The state space is $\mathcal{V} \times \mathcal{R} = \{(v^H, 1), (v^H, r), (v^L, 1), (v^L, r)\}$. I assume that

$$1 < v^L < r < v^H.$$

The timing of the game is as follows. The state (V, R) is realized and privately observed by the leader. The leader sends a public message $m \in \{m_1, m_2\}$, which is observed by all citizens. Citizens observe the public message m and their private costs. They update their beliefs about the value of regime change V and the repression they will face if they participate, R. Each citizen i chooses between $a_i = 1$ and $a_i = 0$. Payoffs are then realized.

3. For example, in 2008, Morgan Tsvangirai secured the prime minister position partly due to his leadership in the strong resistance campaign against Mugabe, although the campaign itself was unsuccessful.

In this game, I look for Perfect Bayesian equilibria, henceforth equilibrium. I make two assumptions about the likelihood of success to ensure an interior level of participation. First, I assume that $KS(0) > \frac{r}{v^L}$.[4] This is the **positive participation condition**. It states that, even in the worst political environment, citizens with costs close to 0 participate.

Throughout the analysis, I also assume that the maximum private cost is high enough, so that $C > KS(1)v^H - 1$. This is the **full-participation restriction**. If this condition holds, some citizens do not participate even in the most favorable political environment.[5] With these conditions, aggregate participation is interior for every on-path posterior belief.

3.2 Notation and preliminaries

Some notation will be crucial for the analysis. After a leader's message m, define posterior means

$$\overline{V}(m) \equiv \mathbb{E}[V \mid m], \qquad \overline{R}(m) \equiv \mathbb{E}[R \mid m].$$

These are the posterior expected value of success and the posterior expected level of repression induced by the leader's message. Similarly, define $A(m)$ as the turnout induced by message m. For any informative communication strategy, ex ante expected turnout is

$$A^C = \Pr[m_1] \times A(m_1) + \Pr[m_2] \times A(m_2),$$

where $\Pr[m]$ is the equilibrium probability with which the leader sends message m.

In the setup with no communication, I denote by $\overline{V}^0 = \frac{v^L + v^H}{2}$ the posterior expected value of success under the prior; similarly $\overline{R}^0 = \frac{1+r}{2}$. We can derive aggregate participation A^0 under no communication. The citizen's decision is a threshold strategy, and the citizen

4. The literature often replaces this assumption with the technical condition that there is a positive fraction of citizens with a cost below zero.

5. The full-participation restriction implies that β cannot exceed some $\overline{\beta}$. Hence, the analysis assumes that $\beta \in [0, \overline{\beta}]$.

chooses action $a = 1$ if

$$c_i \leq KS(A^0)\overline{V}^0 - \overline{R}^0.$$

Hence, the level of participation A^0 satisfies $CA^0 = KS(A^0)\overline{V}^0 - \overline{R}^0$, since c_i is uniformly distributed on $[0, C]$. Under no communication, aggregate turnout is given by

$$A^0 = \frac{KS(0)\overline{V}^0 - \overline{R}^0}{C - K\beta\overline{V}^0} = \frac{KS(0)\left(v^L + v^H\right) - (1+r)}{2C - K\beta\left(v^L + v^H\right)}. \tag{2}$$

It is clear that aggregate turnout mechanically decreases with repression, measured by r. An increase in r only raises expected repression under the prior. Participation becomes more frightening, which reduces turnout.

In this model, an informative equilibrium is persuasive if it raises ex ante aggregate turnout relative to no communication:

$$A^C > A^0.$$

This game admits multiple equilibria, including a babbling equilibrium in which citizens ignore the leader's message. I focus on equilibria that capture salient features of protest dynamics.[6] Because crossing the recognition threshold yields the same gain B in every state, no equilibrium can induce turnout below T after one on-path message and at or above T after another: every leader type would choose the latter. I therefore study perfect Bayesian equilibria in which the no-mobilization message m_2 induces $A(m_2) = T$.

6. Section 7 discusses the properties of other equilibria.

4 A theory of mobilizing rhetoric

I analyze the game using backward induction, starting with citizens' decisions. Suppose the leader sends a message $m \in \{m_1, m_2\}$. For citizen i, the net gain from participation is

$$U_i = K(S(0) + \beta A(m))\overline{V}(m) - \overline{R}(m) - c_i.$$

In the model, strategic complementarity is measured by the impact of others' participation on citizen i's incentive to participate. More formally, actions are strategic complements if

$$\frac{\partial U_i}{\partial A} = K\beta\overline{V}(m) > 0.$$

When $\beta > 0$, $K\beta\overline{V}(m)$ measures the force of strategic complementarity. An important observation is that a higher perceived value of success, $\overline{V}(m)$, increases the impact of others' participation on citizen i's own incentive. Therefore, a leader's mobilizing rhetoric m that raises the posterior expected value of success does more than make participation attractive. It also makes the participation of others more valuable. This is the **coordination multiplier** effect of mobilizing rhetoric. When citizens believe that political change would be highly rewarding, each additional participant makes joining the movement even more attractive. This is because additional participation now raises the chance of achieving something worth achieving.

Put differently, when citizens believe that political change would bring freedom, democracy, or national liberation, the participation of others becomes more consequential for their own participation decision. This often occurs when the participation of groups that were unexpected to participate changes the meaning of success. During civil-rights movements, the participation of children in Birmingham, Alabama, transformed the overall incentive to participate (King, n.d.). The movement became not simply about the fight against segrega-

tion, but the struggle for the future of black children. In Egypt 2011, the participation side by side of Christians and Muslims told citizens that revolution could be a national, civic, and nonsectarian project (Knickmeyer 2011). Hence, once citizens attach a higher value to victory, participation by others has a stronger effect on individual incentives to join.

It is useful to contrast this reasoning with a case in which the leader uses strategic mobilizing rhetoric mainly to reduce the fear of repression. A message that reduces expected repression increases an individual's incentive to participate through the term $\overline{R}(m)$. However, such a message has limited impact on $\beta\overline{V}(m)$. Therefore, although the message m makes participation more attractive, it does not change how much the individual values others' participation. The coordination multiplier effect of such a message is weak.

In equilibrium, citizens use a threshold strategy. The cost cutoff is

$$c(m) = KS(A(m))\overline{V}(m) - \overline{R}(m),$$

and since $c_i \sim U[0, C]$ and $S(A) = S(0) + \beta A$, aggregate turnout satisfies

$$CA(m) = K\overline{V}(m)\big[S(0) + \beta A(m)\big] - \overline{R}(m). \tag{3}$$

Each posterior belief on the equilibrium path induces interior aggregate turnout:

$$A(m) = \frac{\overset{\textbf{Direct effect on participation}}{\overset{\downarrow}{S(0)\overline{V}(m)} - \overline{R}(m)}}{C - K\beta\overline{V}(m)}. \tag{4}$$
$$\underset{\textbf{Multiplier feedback from others' participation}}{\overset{\uparrow}{\phantom{C - K\beta\overline{V}(m)}}}$$

Lemma 1 *After any message m, aggregate participation is given by $A(m)$. Furthermore, an individual citizen with private cost c_i chooses action $a = 1$ if $c_i \leq CA(m)$ and $a = 0$ if $c_i > CA(m)$. The citizen is indifferent if $c_i = CA(m)$. Lastly, $A(m)$ is strictly increasing in $\overline{V}(m)$.*

Equation (4) provides an additional interpretation of the coordination multiplier. A message m that raises the expected value of victory, $\overline{V}(m)$, affects aggregate turnout $A(m)$ through two channels. First, holding the participation of others fixed, it increases each citizen's direct incentive to participate; this effect is captured by the numerator of Equation (4). In this respect, a higher expected value of victory operates similarly to a reduction in expected repression, $\overline{R}(m)$, because both make participation individually more attractive. Second, when $\beta > 0$, a higher expected value of victory strengthens the force of strategic complementarity. Because the participation of others increases the likelihood of success, that participation becomes more consequential when victory is perceived to be more valuable. This second effect is captured by the denominator of Equation (4) (or the term $\frac{1}{C-K\beta\overline{V}(m)}$). By contrast, a reduction in expected repression affects citizens' direct participation incentives but does not alter the strength of the feedback generated by the participation of others.

4.1 Regime-weakness rhetoric

I first construct a regime-weakness equilibrium, denoted by the superscript w. As argued, I construct an equilibrium that fixes participation after the no-mobilization message m_2 at the leader's threshold, $A^w(m_2) = T$. This makes sending m_2 enough for the leader to obtain the recognition benefit after the no-mobilization message.

Consider a strategy that mobilizes by emphasizing the regime weakness and mainly revealing information about low repression. The leader sends the mobilization message mainly in states where repression is low. The leader uses the following communication strategy m^w:

m^w	$R = 1$	$R = r$
$V = v^H$	m_1	m_1 with probability α
$V = v^L$	m_1	m_2

Hence, the leader sends the mobilization message m_1 in the states $(v^L, 1)$ and $(v^H, 1)$ to inform citizens that the regime is weak and that repression will not be severe. In the state (v^L, r), the leader sends the no-mobilization message m_2. In the state (v^H, r), the leader obfuscates by sending the mobilization message m_1 with probability α and the no-mobilization message m_2 with probability $1 - \alpha$.

Since the states are equally likely and V is independent of R, the posterior expectations are

$$\overline{V}^w(m_1) = \frac{(1+\alpha)v^H + v^L}{2+\alpha}, \qquad \overline{R}^w(m_1) = \frac{2+\alpha r}{2+\alpha}.$$

On the other hand, after message m_2,

$$\overline{V}^w(m_2) = \frac{(1-\alpha)v^H + v^L}{2-\alpha}, \qquad \overline{R}^w(m_2) = r.$$

Since $A^w(m_2) = T$ and $\overline{R}^w(m_2) = r$, using the participation equation (3), the posterior value after m_2 must satisfy

$$CT = KS(T)\overline{V}^w(m_2) - r.$$

The mixing probability α is determined so that the no-mobilization message m_2 induces aggregate turnout at level T. Achieving that level of participation is difficult because the no-mobilization message fully reveals that the regime is repressive: $\overline{R}^w(m_2) = r$. To offset this bad information, the mixing probability α must reveal enough good information about the value of success to reassure citizens. Hence, the posterior expected value of success must satisfy

$$\overline{V}^w(m_2) = \frac{CT + r}{KS(T)} \equiv \lambda.$$

The next proposition derives conditions under which this communication strategy is part of an equilibrium.

Proposition 1 *Suppose that*

$$v^L < \lambda < \frac{v^L + v^H}{2}. \tag{5}$$

There exists a regime-weakness equilibrium in which the leader uses the communication strategy m^w defined above. The leader sends message m_1 in the state $(v^H, 1)$ and in the state $(v^L, 1)$. In the state (v^L, r), the leader sends message m_2. When the state is (v^H, r), the leader sends message m_1 with probability

$$\alpha = \frac{v^L + v^H - 2\lambda}{v^H - \lambda} \in (0, 1); \tag{6}$$

the leader sends message m_2 with probability $1 - \alpha$ in that state. Aggregate turnout after message m_1 satisfies

$$A^w(m_1) = \frac{KS(0)\overline{V}^w(m_1) - \overline{R}^w(m_1)}{C - K\beta\overline{V}^w(m_1)}.$$

According to Proposition 1, the no-mobilization message is sent in the low-value and high-repression state and, with some probability, in the high-value and high-repression state. Expectations about repression are bad, as citizens infer that $\overline{R}^w(m_2) = r$ after hearing m_2. Because there are two dimensions, the only thing mixing can change is expectations about the value of success. Mixing improves those expectations enough to ensure a minimum turnout of T. Expectations about the value of success can range from v^L (when message m_2 is sent only in the state $(v^L, 1)$) to $\frac{v^L+v^H}{2}$ (when message m_2 pools in the high-repression states).

Hence, to ensure $\alpha \in (0, 1)$, the expectation about the value of success must satisfy the condition

$$v^L < \frac{r + CT}{KS(T)} = \lambda < \frac{v^L + v^H}{2}.$$

4.2 Value-of-victory rhetoric

I construct a value-of-victory equilibrium denoted by the superscript s.[7] The leader uses value-of-victory rhetoric and calls on citizens to mobilize when the value of success V is high. Consider the following communication strategy m^s, in which the mobilization call emphasizes the high value of success:

m^s	$R = 1$	$R = r$
$V = v^H$	m_1	m_1
$V = v^L$	m_1 with probability π	m_2

This strategy induces the posterior expectations

$$\overline{V}^s(m_1) = \frac{2v^H + \pi v^L}{2 + \pi}, \qquad \overline{R}^s(m_1) = \frac{1 + \pi + r}{2 + \pi}.$$

On the other hand, after message m_2, citizens infer that

$$\overline{V}^s(m_2) = v^L, \qquad \overline{R}^s(m_2) = \frac{1 - \pi + r}{2 - \pi}.$$

Since $\overline{V}^s(m_2) = v^L$, message m_2 reveals bad news about the value of success. The no-mobilization message is sent in the low-value and high-repression state (v^L, r) and, with some probability, in the low-value and low-repression state $(v^L, 1)$. Citizens have low expectations about the value of success after hearing m_2. The only thing mixing can change, to ensure a minimum turnout of T, is the expectation of repression. Given this logic, Proposition 2 provides conditions under which the communication strategy m^s is part of an equilibrium.

Let $\rho = KS(T)v^L - CT$. The parameter ρ is the expectation of repression that can induce turnout T after message m_2.

7. The superscript "s" stands for success.

Proposition 2 *Suppose*

$$\frac{r+1}{2} < \rho < r. \tag{7}$$

There exists a value-of-victory equilibrium in which the leader uses the communication strategy m^s defined as follows. The leader sends the mobilization message m_1 in the state (v^H, r) and the state $(v^H, 1)$. In the state (v^L, r), the leader sends message m_2. When the state is $(v^L, 1)$, the leader sends message m_1 with probability

$$\pi = \frac{2\rho - r - 1}{\rho - 1} \in (0, 1); \tag{8}$$

the leader sends message m_2 with probability $1 - \pi$ in that state. Aggregate turnout is given by

$$A^s(m_1) = \frac{KS(0)\overline{V}^s(m_1) - \overline{R}^s(m_1)}{C - K\beta\overline{V}^s(m_1)}.$$

A key observation from Propositions 1 and 2 is that the conditions (7) and (5), which ensure the existence of the two equilibria m^s and m^w, can be combined into condition (A):

$$0 < r - \rho < \frac{1}{2}\min\left\{r - 1, KS(T)(v^H - v^L)\right\}. \tag{A}$$

Assumption (A) has an intuitive interpretation. It ensures that the no-mobilization message m_2 carries enough information to induce aggregate turnout T. The gap $r - \rho$ is the amount of information compensation needed to induce participation at the minimum level T. The joint condition ensures that the needed information compensation is not too large. If it is large, the high-repression and low-value state is too unattractive. Citizens need low-repression reassurance, measured by the repression gap $r - 1$, or high-value reassurance, measured by the value gap $v^H - v^L$ scaled by the likelihood of success at T, $KS(T)$, for par-

ticipation to meet the threshold. For the rest of the analysis, I assume that the information compensation condition (A) holds. The next section analyzes the persuasive power of leadership communication by comparing ex ante expected aggregate turnout with and without communication. I also describe which form of rhetoric has stronger mobilizing power.

4.3 Persuasive communication

Communication is persuasive if ex ante aggregate turnout in the communication game—A^w or A^s—exceeds aggregate turnout with no communication—A^0—defined in (2). The next result shows that the answer depends on society's capacity to coordinate—β.

Proposition 3 *If $\beta > 0$,*

$$A^s > A^0 \qquad \textit{and} \qquad A^w > A^0,$$

where A^s and A^w are the ex ante turnout levels in the value-of-victory and regime-weakness equilibrium, respectively. If $\beta = 0$, then

$$A^s = A^w = A^0.$$

The mobilizing message m_1 raises conditional turnout $A(m_1)$, whereas the demobilizing message m_2 lowers it. When $\beta = 0$, the coordination multiplier feedback is absent since $A^j(m) = \frac{S(0)\overline{V}^j(m) - \overline{R}^j(m)}{C}$. The gain and the reduction in turnout cancel each other out. Given that for $j \in \{s, w\}$, $A^j(m_1) > A^0 > A^j(m_2)$, the average turnout produces the aggregate turnout in the no-communication benchmark.

When $\beta > 0$, the coordination multiplier is activated. In both equilibria, the posterior expected value of victory is higher following the mobilizing message:

$$\overline{V}^j(m_1) > \overline{V}^j(m_2), \qquad j \in \{s, w\}.$$

It follows that

$$\frac{1}{C - K\beta\overline{V}^{j}(m_1)} > \frac{1}{C - K\beta\overline{V}^{j}(m_2)}.$$

The coordination multiplier feedback therefore amplifies participation both after the messages m_1 and m_2, but not symmetrically. The behavioral importance of others' participation is proportional to the perceived value of victory. The mobilizing message places citizens in a high-value environment in which others' participation is especially consequential. As explained above, the participation of others is valuable because it facilitates the achievement of a valuable prize. In contrast, after the demobilizing message, a citizen believes that victory is only marginally valuable. Consequently, the participation of others has less additional motivational value: the turnout gain following the high-value message m_1 receives a larger coordination multiplier feedback than the turnout loss following the low-value message m_2. As a result, the aggregate turnout with communication exceeds the no-communication benchmark.

The parameter β measures how strongly an additional unit of participation increases the probability of success and therefore an individual's incentive to participate. β is high when citizens can observe one another easily. For example, in dense urban spaces, a small increase in turnout is more visible and more easily observed by undecided citizens. Thus, β can measure the location of the protest movement. This is consistent with Beissinger 2022 in *The Revolutionary City*. He emphasizes how the spatial location of revolutionary contention influences revolutionary dynamics. In my model, protest mobilization increases after communication by an informed leader. The proposition shows that both regime-weakness and value-of-victory rhetoric increase participation above its level without communication.

Proposition 4 *If $\beta > 0$, then aggregate turnout when communication is centered on the*

value of victory exceeds aggregate turnout when communication emphasizes regime weakness:

$$A^s > A^w.$$

Proposition 4 shows that the substantive content of leadership communication matters. Value-of-victory rhetoric signals that success would produce a more valuable political transformation. It therefore raises citizens' direct incentives to participate and strengthens the feedback generated by others' participation. Citizens do not merely believe that it is safer to join; they believe that, if enough people join, they may achieve something highly valuable.

Regime-weakness rhetoric primarily lowers the perceived cost of participation. Although it can facilitate turnout, it is less selective on high-value states and therefore generates weaker a coordination feedback than value-of-victory rhetoric.

A key step in the proof of Proposition 4 establishes that

$$\overline{V}^s(m_1) > \overline{V}^w(m_1).$$

Consequently,

$$\frac{1}{C - K\beta\overline{V}^s(m_1)} > \frac{1}{C - K\beta\overline{V}^w(m_1)}. \tag{9}$$

Thus, the turnout gain following the mobilizing message receives a larger coordination multiplier feedback in the value-of-victory equilibrium. This result follows from the fact that the mobilizing message in the value of victory equilibrium is more selective on high value states.

The opposite comparison holds following the demobilizing message:

$$\overline{V}^s(m_2) = v^L < \overline{V}^w(m_2),$$

and therefore

$$\frac{1}{C - K\beta\overline{V}^{w}(m_2)} > \frac{1}{C - K\beta\overline{V}^{s}(m_2)}. \tag{10}$$

The coordination feedback component of demobilization is therefore amplified more strongly in the regime-weakness equilibrium. The demobilizing message in the regime weakness equilibrium informs citizens that the regime will repress severely. It does not rule out the possibility that victory would be highly valuable because m_2 is also sent in the state (v^H, r). Citizens may still believe that successful political change would be extremely valuable. Because the prize remains important, the participation of others is also highly consequential. If repression causes some citizens to stay home, their withdrawal lowers the probability of achieving an outcome that the remaining citizens still value greatly. By contrast, after m_2 in the value-of-victory equilibrium, citizens believe that victory itself would not be especially valuable. This produces a direct reduction in participation. But the same belief also dampens the subsequent coordination response. When the prize is modest, the reduction in the probability of obtaining it has a smaller effect on the remaining citizens. This is the logic behind expression (10).

5 State Repression

The previous section shows that value-of-victory rhetoric is especially powerful at mobilizing. But regime-weakness rhetoric also has the capacity to raise turnout above the no-communication benchmark. Given that these two forms of rhetoric are often used in protest movements, it is crucial to analyze how they interact with state repression. This section examines the effectiveness of these forms of rhetoric as the environment becomes more repressive. The results depend on how the leader strategically adjusts the call for mobilization as repression intensifies.

To start, recall that α is the probability of sending the mobilizing message in the regime-

weakness equilibrium, when the victory would be highly valuable and repression severe (v^H, r). In the value-of-victory equilibrium, the leader sends the mobilizing message with probability π when the value of success would be modest but repression low $(v^L, 1)$.

Proposition 5 *Consider regime-weakness rhetoric. As repression intensifies,*

1. *The leader sends the mobilizing message less often in the state (v^H, r):*

$$\frac{d\alpha}{dr} < 0;$$

2. *Consequently, the value of political change that citizens expect is strictly decreasing in repression:*

$$\frac{d\overline{V}^w(m_1, r)}{dr} < 0.$$

3. *Ex ante expected turnout is strictly decreasing:*

$$\frac{dA^w(r)}{dr} < 0.$$

Since repression has a direct negative impact on the incentive to participate, the leader who cares about achieving a political objective (e.g reaching a critical mass) must adjust the message as repression increases to ensure that condition (A) holds. As a result, the no-mobilization call is sent more often in the high-value and high-repression state (v^H, r). This means that m_1, the low-repression message, loses some of its high-value content, although it becomes more concentrated on low repression. This strategic adjustment reduces citizens' conditional expectation about the value of regime change following m_1.

Under regime-weakness rhetoric, the mobilizing message is about safety. It says, in effect, "the regime is unlikely to repress us severely." That message can mobilize people. But when

repression rises, the mobilizing message (m_1) becomes more centered on low repression. The leader must intensify this rhetoric to offset the negative perception of repression. Leadership communication then becomes less credible because the repressive political environment contradicts it. The loss of credibility implies that citizens' perceived value of political change decreases (see Figure 1). Citizens become less inclined to participate.

Proposition 6 *Consider value-of-victory rhetoric. As repression intensifies,*

1. *The leader's sends the mobilizing message less often in the state* $(v^L, 1)$*:*

$$\frac{d\pi}{dr} < 0.$$

2. *Repression increases the value content of the mobilizing message. Consequently, the posterior expected value of success is increasing in repression:*

$$\frac{d\overline{V}^s(m_1, r)}{dr} > 0.$$

3. *There exist* $\overline{\beta}$ *and* $\underline{\beta}$ *such that if* $\underline{\beta} < \beta < \overline{\beta}$*, then ex ante expected turnout is strictly increasing in repression:*

$$\frac{dA^s(r)}{dr} > 0.$$

As described in Proposition 6, when the leader's call for mobilization in the state $(v^L, 1)$ decreases with repression, the mobilizing rhetoric (m_1) becomes more tightly centered on the message that victory would produce meaningful change. The mobilizing message then increases the value of political change that citizens expect (see Figure 1). Repression increases expectations further because it induces the leader to concentrate his message on the historical impact of success. Hence, in repressive environments, the credibility of the mobilizing

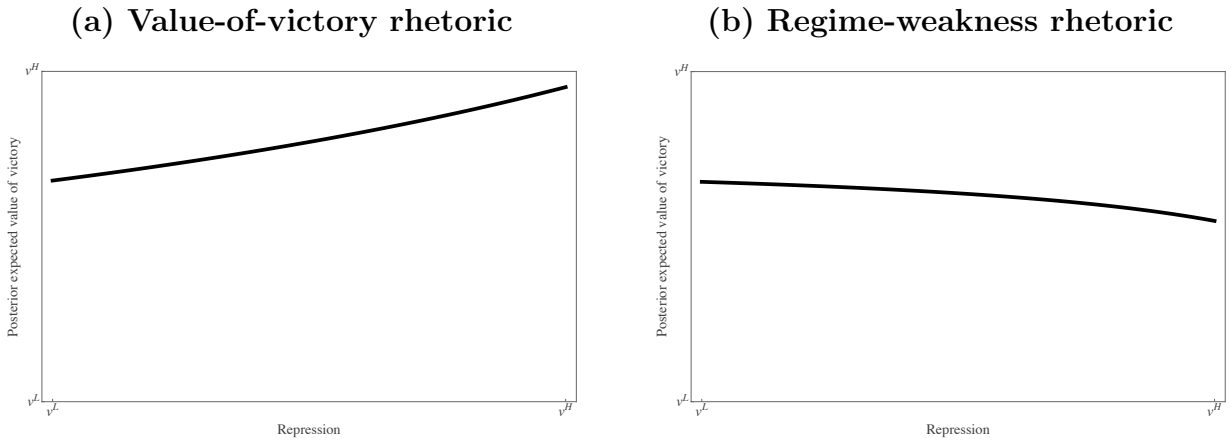


Figure 1: Posterior expected value of victory after the mobilizing message m_1.

message increases when the leader advances rhetoric such as "freedom is worth the ultimate price" or "despite the repression, victory will lead to historical transformation."

As shown in Figure 2, repression increases aggregate turnout when rhetoric is centered on the value of victory. Higher repression makes the mobilizing call more credible about the importance of victory. Because victory is a collective prize, whether the increase in the conditional expectation of the value of success translates into stronger mobilization depends on society's coordination capacity. If β is too high ($\beta > \overline{\beta}$), turnout is already very high, and repression can only decrease participation. If $\beta < \underline{\beta}$, the coordination multiplier effect is too weak to amplify the credibility effect the leader gains as state repression increases.

Therefore, the model predicts different comparative statics depending on the dimension of uncertainty that leadership communication attempts to resolve. Under value-of-victory rhetoric, the dimension of emphasis is the value of political change. Repression can increase aggregate turnout. Under regime-weakness rhetoric, repression always decreases aggregate turnout because communication is mainly about safety and less about the value of sacrifice. In this sense, when fear is the principal obstacle and the leader has credible information that repression will be limited, regime-weakness rhetoric directly addresses the binding constraint. When repression is visibly severe and cannot credibly be minimized, leaders may instead

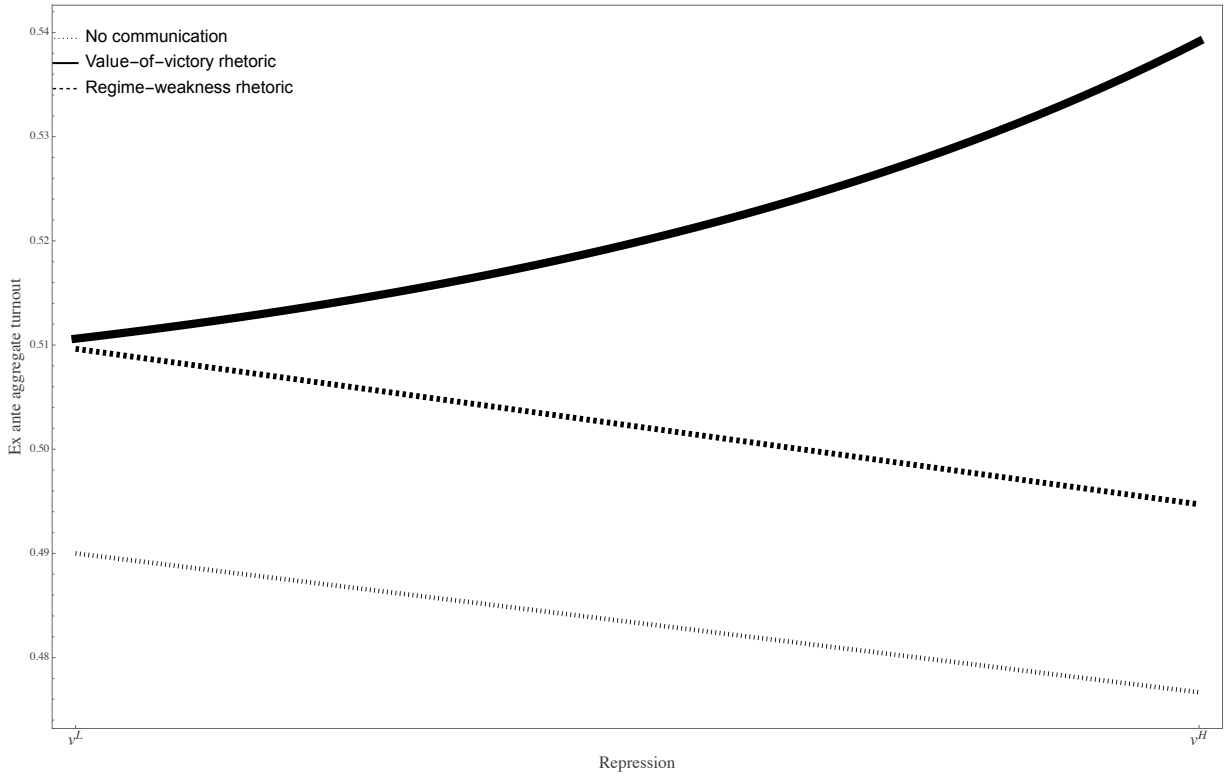


Figure 2: Repression and ex ante aggregate turnout.

Note: The effect of repression depends on the mobilizing rhetoric opposition organizations use to frame participation. Aggregate turnout is decreasing in repression if the mobilizing rhetoric emphasizes regime weakness, but increasing if it emphasizes the value of political change. The parameters are $v^L = 1.5$, $v^H = 4$, $T = 0.20$, $K = 20$, $C = 74.5$, $S(0) = 0.5$, $\beta = 0.4$.

emphasize the stakes of the struggle. Value-of-victory rhetoric does not deny the danger; it persuades citizens that confronting that danger may be worthwhile.

6 Welfare

This section studies ex ante expected welfare. First, I explore whether citizens benefit from public communication. I also analyze whether citizens prefer public communication that informs them about the safety of participation or the value of political change. The value-of-victory equilibrium is denoted by the superscript s, while the regime-weakness equilibrium

is denoted by the superscript w. The interim expected citizen welfare after message m is

$$\mathcal{W}(m) = S(A(m))\overline{V}(m) + \frac{C}{2}A(m)^2.$$

Hence, citizens' ex ante expected welfare in equilibrium $j \in \{s, w\}$ is

$$\mathcal{W}^j = q^j \left[S(A^j(m_1))\overline{V}^j(m_1) + \frac{C}{2}(A^j(m_1))^2 \right] + (1-q^j) \left[S(A^j(m_2))\overline{V}^j(m_2) + \frac{C}{2}(A^j(m_2))^2 \right]. \tag{11}$$

Without communication,

$$\mathcal{W}^0 = S(A^0)\overline{V}^0 + \frac{C}{2}(A^0)^2. \tag{12}$$

Proposition 7 *In both the value-of-victory equilibrium and the regime-weakness equilibrium, citizens' ex ante expected welfare exceeds welfare in the no-communication benchmark:*

$$\mathcal{W}^s > \mathcal{W}^0 \qquad \textit{and} \qquad \mathcal{W}^w > \mathcal{W}^0.$$

This ranking holds for every $\beta \geq 0$.

This result shows that communication has informational value for citizens. Even when communication does not raise average turnout—when $\beta = 0$—it allows citizens to condition their participation on better information. Citizens participate more after favorable messages and less after unfavorable messages, which improves their expected payoff. The previous result shows that both forms of communication improve citizens' ex ante expected welfare relative to no communication. The next proposition compares the two communication equilibria. Denote by $D = v^H - v^L$ the value gap, and by $P = KS(T)$.

Proposition 8 *Suppose $\beta > 0$. If*

$$PD \geq r - 1,$$

then citizens' ex ante expected welfare is higher in the value-of-victory equilibrium than in the regime-weakness equilibrium:

$$\mathcal{W}^s > \mathcal{W}^w.$$

Consequently,

$$\mathcal{W}^s > \mathcal{W}^w > \mathcal{W}^0.$$

The sufficient condition $PD \geq r - 1$ says that the value gap, scaled by the likelihood of success at the leader's threshold, is at least as large as the repression gap. When this condition holds, value-of-victory rhetoric generates not only higher ex ante turnout but also higher citizens' ex ante expected welfare.

Furthermore, although value-of-victory rhetoric generates higher turnout and higher citizen welfare, the leader is only weakly better off. Once turnout reaches the threshold T, the leader's payoff is already maximized. Hence, the value-of-victory equilibrium *weakly* Pareto dominates the no-communication benchmark. Under the additional sufficient condition $PD \geq r - 1$, it also *weakly* Pareto dominates the regime-weakness equilibrium.

7 Discussion and Summary

The analysis focuses on messaging strategies that produce interesting comparative statics. A pure regime-weakness message that emphasizes low repression would be uninteresting. Consider rhetoric in which the leader sends message m_1 in the states $(v^L, 1)$ and $(v^H, 1)$, and sends message m_2 in the remaining states with probability 1:

$$(v^H, 1) \mapsto m_1, \qquad (v^L, 1) \mapsto m_1, \qquad (v^H, r) \mapsto m_2, \qquad (v^L, r) \mapsto m_2.$$

This message perfectly reveals regime repressiveness and reveals no information about the value of success. One can show that $\mathbb{E}[V \mid m_1] = \mathbb{E}[V] = \mathbb{E}[V \mid m_2]$. Consequently,

the coordination multiplier feedback has nothing to amplify. The level of participation that responds to this message is therefore the same as in the no-communication benchmark: $A^w = A^0$.

Similarly, there is a messaging strategy that reveals all information about the value of success:

$$(v^H, 1) \mapsto m_1, \qquad (v^H, r) \mapsto m_1, \qquad (v^L, 1) \mapsto m_2, \qquad (v^L, r) \mapsto m_2.$$

This strategy does not reveal information about repression. However, it increases the posterior expectation about the value of success after the mobilization message m_1: $\overline{V}(m_1) > \overline{V}^0 > \overline{V}(m_2)$. Hence, ex ante aggregate turnout exceeds turnout in the no-communication equilibrium: $A^s > A^0$. In this messaging strategy, leadership communication is adjusted as repression intensifies. Yet, opposition leaders often strategically adjust their communication as the environment becomes more repressive. Although this type of a value-of-victory rhetoric can be an equilibrium, the leader is not responding to repression in a way that is consistent with empirical observations.

I also emphasize that there is a continuum of equilibria that share the structure discussed in the main analysis. The analysis derived an equilibrium in which the no-mobilization message satisfies $A(m_2) = T$. It follows that there is a continuum of equilibria such that $A(m_2) = t \geq T$. An important observation is that each of these equilibria shares the comparative statics on repression and also stresses the mobilizing power of value-of-victory rhetoric.

The analysis raises a number of lessons. The model suggests that repression can interact with leadership communication. The same act of repression may discourage participation when opposition leaders frame mobilization around regime weakness, but increase participation when leaders frame it around the value of political change. The theory implies that

revolutionary leaders often mobilize large numbers not by persuading followers that participation is safe, but by persuading them that victory is historically meaningful. Emphasizing the value of victory while acknowledging repression can be both more effective and welfare improving than reassuring citizens about safety.

More importantly, the model predicts that repression can give a strategic leader reasons to center communication on the value of sacrifice for freedom. Since many protest models treat communication as exogenous, endogenous communication then appears crucial for our understanding of protest dynamics. Finally, the theory suggests that opposition organizations face a strategic choice not only over whether to publicly communicate, but also over the dimension of uncertainty around which communication should be organized.

The results in this paper rest on the assumption that leaders choose a rhetoric not to maximize participation, but to reach a political objective. Future research can examine setups in which the preference of a revolutionary leader is more sensitive to aggregate turnout. The model can also be extended to examine the optimal structure of communication by comparing private and public messaging. A value-of-victory rhetoric may also carry commitment costs: promises of liberation or historical transformation can create expectations that leaders must satisfy after victory. Future research can examine a model with a small rhetoric-specific cost.

Appendix: Proofs

Appendix

Proof of Lemma 1. Fix a message m and write $(\overline{V}, \overline{R})$ for the posterior means induced by that message. Given a conjectured aggregate turnout A, citizen i participates if and only if

$$c_i \leq K[S(0) + \beta A]\overline{V} - \overline{R}.$$

Since $c_i \sim U[0, C]$, an interior turnout must satisfy

$$CA = K[S(0) + \beta A]\overline{V} - \overline{R}.$$

Solving for A gives

$$A = \frac{KS(0)\overline{V} - \overline{R}}{C - K\beta\overline{V}}.$$

It remains to verify that the solution is interior and that the denominator is positive. The positive participation condition implies

$$KS(0)\overline{V} - \overline{R} \geq KS(0)v^L - r > 0,$$

so some citizens participate at every on-path posterior. The full-participation restriction implies

$$KS(1)\overline{V} - \overline{R} \leq KS(1)v^H - 1 < C,$$

so turnout never reaches the full-participation corner. Finally, the same full-participation restriction implies $C > K\beta v^H$. To see this, note that the positive participation condition

and $v^H > r > v^L$ imply $KS(0)v^H > 1$. Hence

$$C > KS(1)v^H - 1 = KS(0)v^H + K\beta v^H - 1 > K\beta v^H.$$

Because every posterior mean satisfies $\overline{V} \leq v^H$, we have $C - K\beta\overline{V} > 0$. Therefore the fixed point is unique and is given by (4).

To complete the proof I show that $A(m)$ is strictly increasing in $\overline{V}(m)$. A differentiation of the participation equation yields $\frac{dA}{d\overline{V}} = \frac{KS(A)}{C - K\beta\overline{V}} > 0$. *Q.E.D*

Proof of Proposition 1. Under the regime-weakness strategy m^w, the no-mobilization message m_2 is sent in state (v^L, r) and with probability $1 - \alpha$ in state (v^H, r). Hence

$$\overline{R}^w(m_2) = r, \qquad \overline{V}^w(m_2) = \frac{v^L + (1-\alpha)v^H}{2 - \alpha}.$$

The requirement $A^w(m_2) = T$ and the fixed-point equation imply

$$CT = KS(T)\overline{V}^w(m_2) - r.$$

Therefore

$$\overline{V}^w(m_2) = \frac{CT + r}{KS(T)} \equiv \lambda.$$

Solving

$$\frac{v^L + (1-\alpha)v^H}{2 - \alpha} = \lambda$$

for α gives

$$\alpha = \frac{v^L + v^H - 2\lambda}{v^H - \lambda}.$$

The condition $v^L < \lambda < (v^L + v^H)/2$ implies $\alpha \in (0, 1)$. Indeed, the numerator is positive because $\lambda < (v^L + v^H)/2$, and $\alpha < 1$ because $v^L < \lambda$.

The message m_1 is sent in the two low-repression states and with probability α in the high-value, high-repression state. Thus

$$\overline{V}^w(m_1) = \frac{v^L + (1+\alpha)v^H}{2+\alpha}, \qquad \overline{R}^w(m_1) = \frac{2+\alpha r}{2+\alpha}.$$

Since m_2 is supported only on high-repression states, $\overline{R}^w(m_1) < r = \overline{R}^w(m_2)$. Moreover, because $\overline{V}^w(m_2) = \lambda < \overline{V}^0$ and $\overline{V}^0$ is the prior average of the two posterior value means, the Law of Iterated Expectations (LIE) implies $\overline{V}^w(m_1) > \overline{V}^w(m_2)$. The turnout formula is increasing in $\overline{V}$ and decreasing in $\overline{R}$, so

$$A^w(m_1) > A^w(m_2) = T.$$

Citizens' threshold strategy is therefore optimal given the posterior beliefs. The leader also has no profitable deviation. After either on-path message, turnout is at least T: $A^w(m_2) = T$ and $A^w(m_1) > T$. Hence, in any realized state (V, R), every on-path message gives the leader payoff $B - R$. Deviating to the other message cannot improve this payoff, because the other message also induces turnout weakly above T and gives the same payoff $B - R$. In the mixed state (v^H, r), both messages give payoff $B - r$, so mixing is optimal. Thus m^w is part of a PBE. *Q.E.D*

Proof of Proposition 2. Under the value-of-victory strategy m^s, the no-mobilization message m_2 is sent in state (v^L, r) and with probability $1 - \pi$ in state $(v^L, 1)$. Hence

$$\overline{V}^s(m_2) = v^L, \qquad \overline{R}^s(m_2) = \frac{r + 1 - \pi}{2 - \pi}.$$

The requirement $A^s(m_2) = T$ and the fixed-point equation imply

$$CT = KS(T)v^L - \overline{R}^s(m_2).$$

Let

$$\rho \equiv KS(T)v^L - CT.$$

Then $A^s(m_2) = T$ requires $\overline{R}^s(m_2) = \rho$. Solving

$$\frac{r+1-\pi}{2-\pi} = \rho$$

for π gives

$$\pi = \frac{2\rho - r - 1}{\rho - 1}.$$

The condition $(r+1)/2 < \rho < r$ implies $\pi \in (0,1)$. The numerator is positive because $\rho > (r+1)/2$, and $\pi < 1$ because $\rho < r$.

After the mobilizing message,

$$\overline{V}^s(m_1) = \frac{2v^H + \pi v^L}{2+\pi}, \qquad \overline{R}^s(m_1) = \frac{1+\pi+r}{2+\pi}.$$

The message m_2 is supported only on low-value states, so $\overline{V}^s(m_1) > \overline{V}^s(m_2) = v^L$. Also, $\overline{R}^s(m_2) = \rho > (1+r)/2 = \overline{R}^0$, so LIE implies $\overline{R}^s(m_1) < \overline{R}^s(m_2)$. The turnout formula is increasing in $\overline{V}$ and decreasing in $\overline{R}$, and therefore

$$A^s(m_1) > A^s(m_2) = T.$$

Citizens' threshold strategy is optimal given the induced posterior beliefs. As before, the leader has no profitable deviation because both messages induce turnout weakly above T. Thus, m^s is part of an equilibrium. *Q.E.D*

Information compensation condition. The two existence conditions in Propositions 1

and 2 can be written as a single information compensation condition. Let

$$P \equiv KS(T), \qquad D \equiv v^H - v^L, \qquad x \equiv r - \rho.$$

The high-value condition is

$$\frac{1+r}{2} < \rho < r.$$

Since $x = r - \rho$, this is equivalent to

$$0 < x < \frac{r-1}{2}.$$

The regime-weakness condition is

$$v^L < \lambda < \frac{v^L + v^H}{2}.$$

Because

$$\lambda = \frac{CT + r}{P} = v^L + \frac{r - \rho}{P} = v^L + \frac{x}{P},$$

the previous condition is equivalent to

$$0 < x < \frac{PD}{2}.$$

Combining the two inequalities gives

$$0 < x < \frac{1}{2}\min\{r - 1, PD\}.$$

Thus the conditions on ρ and λ are equivalent to the information compensation condition used below. *Q.E.D*

The next lemma will be useful for the rest of the proofs. It provides sufficient conditions

on posterior expectations under which communication is persuasive.

Lemma A.1 *Consider any two-message communication structure with message probabilities* $q_1, q_2 \in (0,1)$*, posterior means* $(\overline{V}(m_1), \overline{R}(m_1))$ *and* $(\overline{V}(m_2), \overline{R}(m_2))$*, and induced participation levels* $A(m_1)$ *and* $A(m_2)$ *satisfying* (3)*. Let*

$$A^C = q_1 A(m_1) + q_2 A(m_2)$$

be the ex ante participation level under communication. If

$$\overline{V}(m_1) > \overline{V}(m_2) \qquad \textit{and} \qquad A(m_1) > A(m_2),$$

then

$$A^C > A^0$$

whenever $\beta > 0$*. If* $\beta = 0$*, then* $A^C = A^0$*.*

Proof of Lemma A.1. By the Law of Iterated Expectations (LIE),

$$\overline{V}^0 = q_1 \overline{V}(m_1) + q_2 \overline{V}(m_2), \qquad \overline{R}^0 = q_1 \overline{R}(m_1) + q_2 \overline{R}(m_2).$$

Multiplying the participation equation (3) by the message probabilities and summing over the two messages gives

$$CA^C = KS(0)\overline{V}^0 + K\beta \left[q_1 \overline{V}(m_1) A(m_1) + q_2 \overline{V}(m_2) A(m_2) \right] - \overline{R}^0.$$

The no-communication equation is

$$CA^0 = KS(0)\overline{V}^0 + K\beta \overline{V}^0 A^0 - \overline{R}^0.$$

Subtracting and adding $K\beta\overline{V}^0 A^C$ gives

$$\left(C - K\beta\overline{V}^0\right)(A^C - A^0) = K\beta\left[q_1\overline{V}(m_1)A(m_1) + q_2\overline{V}(m_2)A(m_2) - \overline{V}^0 A^C\right].$$

The expression in brackets can be rewritten as

$$q_1\overline{V}(m_1)A(m_1) + q_2\overline{V}(m_2)A(m_2) - \overline{V}^0 A^C = q_1 q_2\left[\overline{V}(m_1) - \overline{V}(m_2)\right]\left[A(m_1) - A(m_2)\right].$$

In fact,

$$\begin{aligned}
\overline{V}^0 A^C &= \left(q_1\overline{V}(m_1) + q_2\overline{V}(m_2)\right)\left(q_1 A(m_1) + q_2 A(m_2)\right) \\
&= q_1^2\overline{V}(m_1)A(m_1) + q_1 q_2\overline{V}(m_1)A(m_2) + q_1 q_2\overline{V}(m_2)A(m_1) + q_2^2\overline{V}(m_2)A(m_2).
\end{aligned}$$

Therefore, with $q_1 + q_2 = 1$,

$$\begin{aligned}
q_1\overline{V}(m_1)A(m_1) + q_2\overline{V}(m_2)A(m_2) - \overline{V}^0 A^C &= q_1(1-q_1)\overline{V}(m_1)A(m_1) + q_2(1-q_2)\overline{V}(m_2)A(m_2) \\
&- q_1 q_2\overline{V}(m_1)A(m_2) - q_1 q_2\overline{V}(m_2)A(m_1) \\
&= q_1 q_2\left[\overline{V}(m_1) - \overline{V}(m_2)\right]\left[A(m_1) - A(m_2)\right].
\end{aligned}$$

Therefore

$$\left(C - K\beta\overline{V}^0\right)(A^C - A^0) = K\beta q_1 q_2[\overline{V}(m_1) - \overline{V}(m_2)][A(m_1) - A(m_2)]. \tag{13}$$

By the full-participation condition, $C - K\beta\overline{V}^0 > 0$. Hence the right-hand side is strictly positive when $\beta > 0$ and the two inequalities in the lemma hold. Thus $A^C > A^0$. If $\beta = 0$,

the right-hand side is zero, and $A^C = A^0$. *Q.E.D*

Proof of Proposition 3. Propositions 1 and 2 established the relevant posterior comparisons. Under value-of-victory rhetoric, $\overline{V}^s(m_1) > \overline{V}^s(m_2)$ and $\overline{R}^s(m_1) < \overline{R}^s(m_2)$, so the turnout formula in Lemma 1 implies $A^s(m_1) > A^s(m_2) = T$.

Under regime-weakness rhetoric,

$\overline{V}^w(m_1) > \overline{V}^w(m_2)$ and $\overline{R}^w(m_1) < \overline{R}^w(m_2)$, so again $A^w(m_1) > A^w(m_2) = T$.

Lemma A.1 then applies to each communication structure. Therefore, if $\beta > 0$,

$$A^s > A^0 \qquad \text{and} \qquad A^w > A^0.$$

If $\beta = 0$, Lemma A.1 gives $A^s = A^w = A^0$. *Q.E.D*

For the remaining comparative statics, keep the notation

$$P \equiv KS(T), \qquad D \equiv v^H - v^L, \qquad x \equiv r - \rho,$$

with $\rho = Pv^L - CT = \overline{R}(m_2)$ and $\lambda = (CT + r)/P = v^L + x/P$.

Proof of Proposition 4. Define

$$X \equiv \frac{PD}{2} + \rho - \overline{R}^0. \tag{14}$$

The information compensation condition implies $X > 0$. We first show that the ex ante turnout in each selective equilibrium can be written as

$$A^j = T + \frac{X}{C - K\beta\overline{V}^j(m_1)}, \qquad j \in \{s, w\}.$$

For value-of-victory rhetoric, subtract the m_2 participation equation from the m_1 partic-

ipation equation and add $K\beta\overline{V}^s(m_1)T$ to both sides:

$$\big(C - K\beta\overline{V}^s(m_1)\big)\big[A^s(m_1) - T\big] = P[\overline{V}^s(m_1) - v^L] - [\overline{R}^s(m_1) - \rho].$$

Let $q^s = \mathbb{P}^s[m_1]$. Note that $q^s[\overline{V}^s(m_1) - v^L] = \overline{V}^0 - v^L = D/2$ and $q^s[\overline{R}^s(m_1) - \rho] = \overline{R}^0 - \rho$. Multiplying by q^s and using LIE gives

$$q^s\big(C - K\beta\overline{V}^s(m_1)\big)\big[A^s(m_1) - T\big] = X.$$

Since $A^s = T + q^s[A^s(m_1) - T]$, we obtain

$$A^s = T + \frac{X}{C - K\beta\overline{V}^s(m_1)}.$$

The same argument for regime-weakness rhetoric gives

$$A^w = T + \frac{X}{C - K\beta\overline{V}^w(m_1)}.$$

It remains to compare the posterior expected value after m_1 in the two equilibria. For value-of-victory rhetoric,

$$q^s = \frac{2+\pi}{4} = \frac{4\rho - r - 3}{4(\rho - 1)}, \qquad \overline{V}^s(m_1) = \frac{2v^H + \pi v^L}{2+\pi} = \frac{2v^H - 2v^L + 4v^l q^s}{4q^s} = v^L + \frac{D}{2q^s}.$$

For regime-weakness rhetoric,

$$q^w = \frac{2+\alpha}{4} = \frac{3(v^H - \lambda) + v^L - \lambda}{4(v^H - \lambda)} = 1 - \frac{D}{4(v^H - v^L - x/P)} = \frac{3PD - 4x}{4(PD - x)},$$

$$\overline{V}^w(m_1) = \lambda + \frac{\overline{V}^0 - \lambda}{q^w} = v^L + \frac{D(2PD - 3x)}{3PD - 4x}.$$

A direct comparison yields

$$\overline{V}^s(m_1) - \overline{V}^w(m_1) = \frac{D(r-\rho)[2PD - 3r + 4\rho - 1]}{(4\rho - r - 3)[3PD - 4(r-\rho)]}. \tag{15}$$

The key step for this result is

$$2(\rho - 1)(3PD - 4x) - (4\rho - r - 3)(2PD - 3x) = x[2PD - 3r + 4\rho - 1].$$

We show this by grouping the PD terms and x terms.

Expression (15) is strictly positive. Indeed, $D > 0$ and $r - \rho > 0$. Also, $\rho > (1+r)/2$ implies $4\rho - r - 3 > r - 1 > 0$. The condition $\lambda < (v^L + v^H)/2$ is equivalent to $PD > 2(r-\rho)$, which implies $3PD - 4(r-\rho) > 0$ and

$$2PD - 3r + 4\rho - 1 > 4(r-\rho) - 3r + 4\rho - 1 = r - 1 > 0.$$

Thus $\overline{V}^s(m_1) > \overline{V}^w(m_1)$.

Using the representation above,

$$A^s - A^w = \frac{XK\beta[\overline{V}^s(m_1) - \overline{V}^w(m_1)]}{[C - K\beta\overline{V}^s(m_1)][C - K\beta\overline{V}^w(m_1)]}.$$

The denominator is positive by Lemma 1. Since $X > 0$ and $\overline{V}^s(m_1) > \overline{V}^w(m_1)$, it follows that $A^s > A^w$ whenever $\beta > 0$. If $\beta = 0$, then $A^s = A^w$. Proposition 3 then gives $A^s = A^w = A^0$. *Q.E.D*

Proof of Proposition 5. For regime-weakness rhetoric,

$$\alpha = \frac{v^L + v^H - 2\lambda}{v^H - \lambda} = \frac{PD - 2x}{PD - x}.$$

Since $dx/dr = 1$,

$$\frac{d\alpha}{dr} = -\frac{PD}{(PD-x)^2} < 0.$$

Thus the leader's probability of sending the mobilizing message in state (v^H, r) decreases as repression increases.

Let $V_1^w(r) \equiv \overline{V}^w(m_1; r)$. From the posterior formula, it turns out

$$V_1^w(r) = v^L + \frac{D(2PD-3x)}{3PD-4x}.$$

Differentiating with respect to r gives

$$\frac{dV_1^w(r)}{dr} = -\frac{PD^2}{(3PD-4x)^2} < 0.$$

Thus repression reduces the value content of the mobilizing message.

From the proof of Proposition 4, ex ante turnout under regime-weakness rhetoric is

$$A^w(r) = T + \frac{X(r)}{C - K\beta V_1^w(r)},$$

where

$$X(r) = \frac{PD}{2} + \rho - \frac{1+r}{2}.$$

Therefore $X'(r) = -1/2$. Differentiating gives

$$\frac{dA^w(r)}{dr} = \frac{-\frac{1}{2}[C - K\beta V_1^w(r)] + K\beta X(r)\frac{dV_1^w(r)}{dr}}{[C - K\beta V_1^w(r)]^2}.$$

The denominator is positive. The first term in the numerator is strictly negative, and the

second term is negative because $X(r) > 0$ and $dV_1^w(r)/dr < 0$. Hence

$$\frac{dA^w(r)}{dr} < 0.$$

Q.E.D

Proof of Proposition 6. For value-of-victory rhetoric,

$$\pi = \frac{2\rho - r - 1}{\rho - 1} = 1 - \frac{x}{\rho - 1}.$$

Since $dx/dr = 1$,

$$\frac{d\pi}{dr} = -\frac{1}{\rho - 1} < 0.$$

Thus the leader's probability of sending the mobilizing message in state $(v^L, 1)$ decreases as repression increases.

Maintain the notation $V_1^s(r) \equiv \overline{V}^s(m_1; r)$. Since $q^s = (2 + \pi)/4$, the posterior formula gives

$$V_1^s(r) = v^L + \frac{D}{2q^s} = v^L + \frac{2D(\rho - 1)}{3(\rho - 1) - x}.$$

Differentiating gives

$$\frac{dV_1^s(r)}{dr} = \frac{2D(\rho - 1)}{[3(\rho - 1) - x]^2} > 0.$$

Thus repression increases the value content of the mobilizing message.

From the representation established in the proof of Proposition 4, ex ante turnout under value-of-victory rhetoric is

$$A^s(r) = T + \frac{X(r)}{C - K\beta V_1^s(r)},$$

where

$$X(r) = \frac{PD}{2} + \rho - \frac{1 + r}{2}.$$

We have $X(r) > 0$; and $X'(r) = -1/2$. Differentiating gives

$$\frac{dA^s(r)}{dr} = \frac{-\frac{1}{2}[C - K\beta V_1^s(r)] + K\beta X(r)\frac{dV_1^s(r)}{dr}}{[C - K\beta V_1^s(r)]^2}.$$

The denominator is positive. Therefore, $dA^s(r)/dr > 0$ if and only if

$$K\beta\left[V_1^s(r) + 2X(r)\frac{dV_1^s(r)}{dr}\right] > C.$$

Define

$$M(r) \equiv V_1^s(r) + 2X(r)\frac{dV_1^s(r)}{dr}.$$

Then repression increases ex ante turnout whenever

$$\beta > \underline{\beta}(r) \equiv \frac{C}{KM(r)}.$$

The full-participation restriction requires

$$C > K[S(0) + \beta]v^H - 1,$$

or equivalently

$$\beta < \overline{\beta} \equiv \frac{C + 1 - KS(0)v^H}{Kv^H}.$$

Thus any

$$\beta \in \left(\underline{\beta}(r), \overline{\beta}\right)$$

satisfies the full-participation restriction and yields $dA^s(r)/dr > 0$, provided this interval is nonempty.

It remains to show that this interval can be nonempty. The interval is nonempty if and

only if

$$\frac{C}{KM(r)} < \frac{C+1-KS(0)v^H}{Kv^H},$$

which is equivalent to

$$Cv^H < M(r)\big[C+1-KS(0)v^H\big].$$

A transparent sufficient condition is

$$M(r) > v^H$$

and

$$C > \frac{M(r)\big[KS(0)v^H-1\big]}{M(r)-v^H}.$$

Under these two inequalities, $\underline{\beta}(r) < \overline{\beta}$, so the set of admissible values of β is nonempty.

This sufficient condition is compatible with the information-compensation condition. To see this, write $a \equiv \rho - 1$. Since $x = r - \rho$, the condition $0 < x < \frac{1}{2}(r-1)$ implies $a > x > 0$. Also,

$$X(r) = \frac{PD + a - x}{2}.$$

Using the formulas for $V_1^s(r)$ and $dV_1^s(r)/dr$, we obtain

$$M(r) - v^H = D\left[\frac{2a}{3a-x} + \frac{2a(PD+a-x)}{(3a-x)^2} - 1\right] = \frac{D\left[2aPD-(a-x)^2\right]}{(3a-x)^2}.$$

Therefore $M(r) > v^H$ if and only if

$$2(\rho-1)PD > \big[(\rho-1)-x\big]^2.$$

This inequality can hold while the information-compensation condition

$$0 < x < \frac{1}{2}\min\{r-1, PD\}$$

also holds. Hence the information-compensation condition does not collapse the admissible set for β. When the value gap, scaled by the success probability at the threshold, is large enough relative to the remaining compensation gap, there are values of β that are strong enough to amplify the credibility effect but small enough to satisfy the full-participation restriction.

Consequently, for every $\beta \in (\underline{\beta}(r), \overline{\beta})$, the full-participation restriction holds and

$$\frac{dA^s(r)}{dr} > 0.$$

This proves that repression can increase ex ante turnout under value-of-victory rhetoric when the coordination multiplier is strong enough to amplify the credibility effect, but not so strong that the full-participation restriction is violated. *Q.E.D*

Proof of Proposition 7

Consider any equilibrium $j \in \{s, w\}$. To simplify notation, write

$V_1 = \overline{V}^j(m_1)$, $V_2 = \overline{V}^j(m_2)$; $A_1 = A^j(m_1), A_2 = A^j(m_2)$. Hence, we always have $A_1 > A_2$ and $V_1 > V_2$. With $q = q^j$,

$$A^j = qA_1 + (1-q)A_2.$$

A citizen who participates obtains $kS(A(m))\overline{V}(m) - \overline{R}(m) - c_i$. Since $K = k - 1$, this can be written as

$$S(A(m))\overline{V}(m) + \left[KS(A(m))\overline{V}(m) - \overline{R}(m) - c_i\right].$$

Using the cutoff condition, $KS(A(m))\overline{V}(m) - \overline{R}(m) = CA(m)$. Therefore, conditional expected citizen welfare after message m is

$$\mathcal{W}(m) = S(A(m))\overline{V}(m) + \frac{1}{C}\int_0^{CA(m)} [CA(m) - c]\, dc.$$

Thus,

$$\mathcal{W}(m) = S(A(m))\overline{V}(m) + \frac{C}{2}A(m)^2.$$

Using the linear success function $S(A) = S(0) + \beta A$, citizens' ex ante welfare under communication can be written as

$$\mathcal{W}^j = S(0)\overline{V}^0 + \beta\left[qV_1A_1 + (1-q)V_2A_2\right] + \frac{C}{2}\left[qA_1^2 + (1-q)A_2^2\right].$$

Without communication,

$$\mathcal{W}^0 = S(0)\overline{V}^0 + \beta\overline{V}^0A^0 + \frac{C}{2}(A^0)^2.$$

Subtracting,

$$\mathcal{W}^j - \mathcal{W}^0 = \beta\left[qV_1A_1 + (1-q)V_2A_2 - \overline{V}^0A^0\right] + \frac{C}{2}\left[qA_1^2 + (1-q)A_2^2 - (A^0)^2\right].$$

Add and subtract $\overline{V}^0A^j$ in the first bracket. Since by expression (13),

$$qV_1A_1 + (1-q)V_2A_2 - \overline{V}^0A^j = q(1-q)(V_1 - V_2)(A_1 - A_2),$$

and

$$qA_1^2 + (1-q)A_2^2 = (A^j)^2 + q(1-q)(A_1 - A_2)^2,$$

we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{W}^j - \mathcal{W}^0 &= \beta q(1-q)(V_1 - V_2)(A_1 - A_2) + \beta \overline{V}^0 (A^j - A^0) \\ &+ \frac{C}{2} q(1-q)(A_1 - A_2)^2 + \frac{C}{2}(A^j - A^0)(A^j + A^0).\end{aligned}$$

Hence, $\mathcal{W}^j - \mathcal{W}^0 > 0$ because $A_1 > A_2$, $V_1 > V_2$ and $A^j \geq A^0$.

If $\beta = 0$, then $A^j = A^0$, but the difference reduces to

$$\mathcal{W}^j - \mathcal{W}^0 = \frac{C}{2} q(1-q)(A_1 - A_2)^2 > 0.$$

Thus communication raises citizens' ex ante expected welfare even when it does not raise ex ante turnout. This proves the result for $j = s$ and $j = w$. *Q.E.D*

Proof Proposition 8

Maintain the notations $V_1^s(r) \equiv \overline{V}^s(m_1; r)$, and $V_1^w(r) \equiv \overline{V}^w(m_1; r)$; $q^s(r) \equiv \Pr^s[m_1]$, $q^w(r) \equiv \Pr^w[m_1]$. From the turnout analysis, $V_1^s(r) > V_1^w(r)$.

From the proof of Proposition 4 and expression (14), recall

$$X(r) \equiv \frac{PD}{2} + \rho - \overline{R}^0 = \frac{PD}{2} + \rho - \frac{1+r}{2}.$$

The information-compensation condition implies $X(r) > 0$.

For $j \in \{s, w\}$, define

$$y_j(r) \equiv A^j(r) - T.$$

Using the turnout representation,

$$y_j(r) = \frac{X(r)}{C - K\beta V_1^j(r)}.$$

Therefore, if $\beta > 0$, $V_1^s(r) > V_1^w(r)$ implies $y_s(r) > y_w(r)$. Since

$A^j(m_2) = T$, we can write $A^j(m_1) = T + \frac{y_j}{q^j}$.

Using the welfare expression (11)

$$\mathcal{W}^j = q^j \left[S(A^j(m_1))\overline{V}^j(m_1) + \frac{C}{2}(A^j(m_1))^2 \right] + (1-q^j) \left[S(A^j(m_2))\overline{V}^j(m_2) + \frac{C}{2}(A^j(m_2))^2 \right].$$

and the law of iterated expectations,

$$\mathcal{W}^j = S(T)\overline{V}^0 + \frac{C}{2}T^2 + \left[CT + \beta V_1^j\right] y_j + \frac{C}{2q^j}y_j^2.$$

Therefore,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{W}^s - \mathcal{W}^w = CT(y_s - y_w) + \beta \left[V_1^s y_s - V_1^w y_w\right] \\ + \frac{C}{2}\left[\frac{y_s^2}{q^s} - \frac{y_w^2}{q^w}\right]. \end{aligned} \tag{16}$$

We sign each term. Since $V_1^s > V_1^w$ and $\beta > 0$,

$$y_s = \frac{X}{C - K\beta V_1^s} > \frac{X}{C - K\beta V_1^w} = y_w.$$

Therefore, $CT(y_s - y_w) > 0$. Also, $V_1^s > V_1^w$ and $y_s > y_w$ imply $\beta \left[V_1^s y_s - V_1^w y_w\right] > 0$.

It remains to sign the last term in (16). Let $x \equiv r - \rho$. The probability of the mobilizing message in the value-of-victory equilibrium is

$$q^s = \frac{4\rho - r - 3}{4(\rho - 1)} = \frac{3(\rho - 1) - x}{4(\rho - 1)}.$$

The probability of the mobilizing message in the regime-weakness equilibrium is

$$q^w = \frac{3PD - 4x}{4(PD - x)}.$$

A direct calculation gives

$$q^w - q^s = \frac{x[PD - (r-1)]}{4(\rho - 1)(PD - x)}.$$

Since $x > 0$, $\rho > 1$, and $PD - x > 0$, the condition $PD \geq r - 1$ implies $q^w \geq q^s$. Because $y_s > y_w > 0$, we have $\frac{y_s^2}{q^s} > \frac{y_w^2}{q^w}$. Therefore, the final term in (16) is positive. Hence, $\mathcal{W}^s - \mathcal{W}^w > 0$. Combining this with Proposition 7 gives

$$\mathcal{W}^s > \mathcal{W}^w > \mathcal{W}^0.$$

$Q.E.D$

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