

Collective Action

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НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИЙ
УНИВЕРСИТЕТ

- Arab Spring 2010, Revolutions: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen. Civil uprisings: Bahrain, Syria
- Eastern Europe 1989: Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Romania
- Iranian revolution 1978
- Russian Revolution February 1917
- French Revolution 1789
- Main shared feature: they were not anticipated

"..people who come to dislike their government are apt to hide their desire for change as long as the opposition seems weak. Because of the preference falsification, a government that appears unshakeable might see its support crumble following a slight surge in the opposition's apparent size, caused by events insignificant in and of themselves."

"Sparks and prairie fires: A theory of unanticipated political revolutions",
Timur Kuran, 1989

- Unidimensional conception of social order $p \in [0..1]$ (left-right, democracy-dictatorship)
- Government - $p = 0$, opposition - $p = 1$
- Activists belong and committed to government or opposition
- Non-activists, not publicly pre-committed to any order, can change their political positions based on incentives
- Individual i has private x_i and public y_i preferences
- Collective sentiment $Y \in [0..1]$, $\sum_i w_i = 1$

$$Y = \sum_i w_i y_i$$

- Power shifts with collective sentiment

- Individual utility

$$V_i(x_i, y_i) = R(y_i) + N(y_i, x_i)$$

- $R(y_i)$ - individual reputational utility from being known to have preference y_i

$$R(y_i) = \begin{cases} f(s), & \text{if } y_i = 0 \\ 0, & \text{if } 0 < y_i < 1 \\ F(S), & \text{if } y_i = 1 \end{cases}$$

s - weighted share of non-activists publicly supporting government

S - weighted share of non-activists publicly supporting opposition

$f(0) > 0$, $F(0) > 0$, $df/ds > 0$, $dF/dS > 0$

- No reputation utility if on middle grounds
- Utility positively related to the party share of support.
- Levels and shapes of $f()$ and $F()$ reflects incentives from each party

- Individual utility

$$V_i(y_i, x_i) = R(y_i) + N(y_i, x_i)$$

- $N(y_i, x_i)$ - individual integrity utility, suffering from compromise when publicly declaring a preference that diverges from his privately held

$$N(y_i, x_i) = N(1 - |x_i - y_i|)$$

$N \in [0..1]$ increasing function.

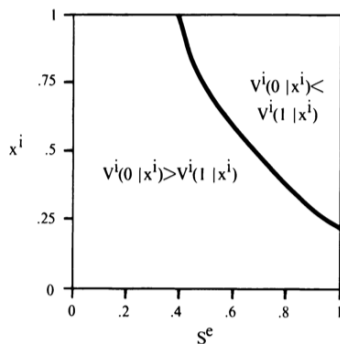
Preference falsification cost: $N(1) - N(1 - |x_i - y_i|)$

- Estimates of population support shares:
government - s^e , opposition - S^e , $s^e + S^e = 1$
- Individual levels of utility supporting

$$\text{government: } V_i(y_i = 0, x_i) = f(1 - S) + N(1 - x_i)$$

$$\text{opposition } V_i(y_i = 1, x_i) = F(S) + N(x_i)$$

The threshold function



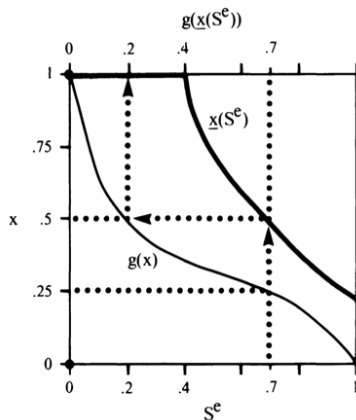
x_i - private preferences

S^e - expected share of people supporting opposition

$x(S^e)$ - line of equal utility y_i of any public preference declaration

$V(y_i = 0, x_i) = V(y_i = 1, x_i)$ on $x(S^e)$

Equilibrium

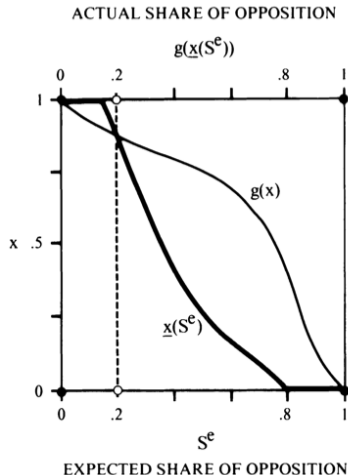
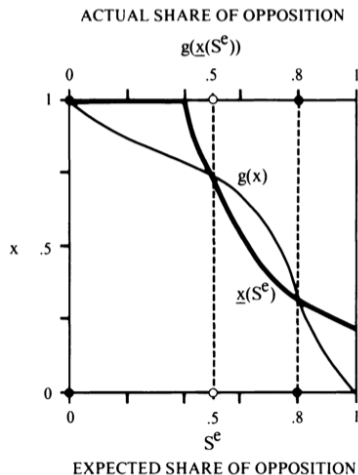


$g(x)$ - cumulative density function, share S of individuals with $x_i > x$
 $x(S^e)$ - threshold function

Equilibrium:

$$S = g(x(S^e))$$

Equilibrium



$g(x)$ shift: economic downturn, awareness changes

$\underline{x}(S^e)$ shift: better reputation utility from opposition, popularity, funding

- Revolution - is a sudden and massive shift in collective sentiment which induces a fundamental transformation of the social order.
- In the model, revolution is a shift of collective sentiment $|Y' - Y| > 0.5$
- Factors: threshold function, density of private preferences
- Start the revolution: expectation of collective sentiment

- Sparks and Prairie Fires: A Theory of Anticipated Political Revolution, Timur Kuran, Public Choice, V 61, N 1, pp 41-74, 1989
- Preference Falsification, Policy, Continuity and Collective Conservatism, Timur Kuran, The Economic Journal, 97, pp 642-665, 1987