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A rationale for unanimity in committees

Research Area
Markets and Choice

Research Unit
Economics of Change

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Abstract

*A rationale for unanimity in committees**

Existing theoretical and experimental studies have established that unanimity is a poor decision rule for promoting information aggregation. Despite this, unanimity is frequently used in committees making decisions on behalf of society. This paper shows that when committee members are exposed to "idiosyncratic" payoffs that condition on their individual vote, unanimity can facilitate truthful communication and optimal information aggregation. Theoretically, we show that since agents' votes are not always pivotal, majority rule suffers from a free-rider problem. Unanimity mitigates free-riding since responsibility for the committee's decision is equally distributed across all agents. We test our predictions in a controlled laboratory experiment. As predicted, if unanimity is required, subjects are more truthful, respond more to others' messages, and are ultimately more likely to make the optimal decision. Idiosyncratic payoffs such as a moral bias thus present a rationale for the widespread use of unanimous voting.

Keywords: committees, incomplete information, decision rules, cheap talk, information aggregation, laboratory experiment

JEL classification: D71, D72, C90

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1   Introduction

Committees are a ubiquitous institution for making social decisions in the presence of uncertainty. Ideally, committees aggregate the private information of their members and thus make more informed decisions than could be made by any one individual in isolation. This intuition was first formalized by de Condorcet (1785), who showed that if all individuals hold private information that is more likely to be "right" than "wrong," and if all individuals vote according to their private information, then a sufficiently large committee that votes via a majority rule will choose the "right" option with arbitrary precision. However, in many real-world settings, committee members may face payoffs that are tied to their individual vote in addition to the payoffs associated with the committee decision. For example, FDA experts may seek to avoid blame for approving a drug that proves to have severe side-effects, members of parliament may wish to signal their ideological position to the electorate, and members of criminal-trial juries may be exposed to ex-post guilt for voting to convict a defendant who is later shown to be innocent. In these cases, the assumption that individuals will vote sincerely may fail since, relative to decisions made by a single agent, decision-making by majority dilutes individual responsibility for the committee's decision, making committee members more likely to vote according to their idiosyncratic biases.

In this paper, we explore the optimal decision rule for information aggregation in a setting where committee members deliberate prior to voting and where, in addition to payoffs based on the accuracy of the committee decision, committee members are exposed to payoffs that condition on their individual vote (idiosyncratic payoffs). In practice, committees use a wide range of rules to reach decisions: For example, FDA committees use a majority rule when deciding whether to approve a new pharmaceutical drug for general use, while convictions in many criminal trials require a unanimous jury. Based on the findings of the existing theoretical and experimental literature, however, the use of a unanimity rule to aggregate information is puzzling – existing studies have shown that unanimity is a uniquely poor decision rule for promoting information aggregation (see Feddersen and Pesendorfer, 1998, Guarnaschelli et al., 2000, Persico, 2004, Austen-Smith and Feddersen, 2006, and Bouton et al., 2017a), and at best produces the same results as majority (Coughlan, 2000, Guarnaschelli et al., 2000 and Goeree and Yariv, 2011).[1]

In contrast, our analysis suggests a novel rationale for the use of unanimity in committees: We show, theoretically and experimentally, that unanimity can facilitate truthful communication of private information and optimal voting behavior in committees when its members are

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[1]One important exception is a recent paper by Chan et al. (2017), who consider the impact of the decision rule on the length of the committee's deliberation process – they show that a unanimity rule can promote information aggregation by committees, since it gives more patient members control over when to terminate deliberation. In contrast, the mechanism we present here operates via the committee member's communication and voting behavior, rather than the length of deliberation.

exposed to idiosyncratic payoffs. By holding all members equally responsible for the committee decision, unanimity avoids the coordination problems that occur when the committee votes via majority.

Our analysis builds on two largely independent strands of literature. On one hand, the lack of robustness of information aggregation when committee members face idiosyncratic payoffs has been well-documented by a number of theoretical studies, and payoffs linked to a committee member's vote are relevant across a range of settings: committee members may face expressive or moral biases (Brennan and Buchanan, 1984, Tyran, 2004, Huck and Konrad, 2005, Feddersen et al., 2009, and Morgan and Várdy, 2012), career concerns (Visser and Swank, 2007 and Levy, 2007), and guilt or blame for supporting an incorrect decision (for an application concerning FDA committees see Friedman and Friedman, 1990, p. 208, and Midjord et al., 2017). Additionally, idiosyncratic payoffs are highly relevant for committee members that face electoral pressures: e.g., individual voting records affect the reelection chances of legislators (Canes-Wrone et al., 2002) and reelection concerns affect the decisions of elected judges on state supreme courts (Hall, 1992).

On the other hand, a similarly comprehensive literature analyzes information aggregation and decision rule design when voting is preceded by open discussion. Deliberation can significantly improve a committee's ability to aggregate information in equilibrium under any decision rule (for a theoretical argument, see Coughlan, 2000 and Gerardi and Yariv, 2007; for experimental evidence, see Guarnaschelli et al., 2000, and Goeree and Yariv, 2011). Pre-vote deliberation has also been widely studied in the case where committee members have conflicting preferences over the committee decision (that is, when agents disagree about the optimal committee decision). For example, Li (2001) and Austen-Smith and Feddersen (2006) show that, theoretically, heterogenous preferences lead to the non-existence of truthful communication as an equilibrium strategy. Experimentally, however, Goeree and Yariv (2011) show that in committees with heterogeneous payoffs, deliberation results in a high degree of truthful communication and information aggregation despite theoretical predictions to the contrary.[2]

Our paper merges these two strands of the literature and shows that the impact of idiosyncratic payoffs on the effectiveness of pre-vote deliberation and information aggregation is fairly drastic, implying a strong rationale for the widespread occurrence of unanimous voting. We set up a simple model of information aggregation in committees with pre-vote deliberation and a uniform voting bias that is independent of the committee's decision or the realized state of the world – commonly referred to as an "expressive" bias.[3] First, we show that under majority,

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[2]In contrast, the impact of idiosyncratic payoffs on the effectiveness of pre-vote deliberation is an understudied topic – to the best of our knowledge, communication and idiosyncratic payoffs in committees has only been addressed within the context of career concerns, and has focused on the optimal level of transparency. We review this literature below.

[3]We consider the case of a uniform expressive bias because it is the simplest realization of an idiosyncratic bias, and thus represents a minimal deviation from the standard model. However, as we discuss in more detail below,

such idiosyncratic payoffs introduce a free-rider problem that eliminates equilibria where committee members truthfully communicate their private signals and vote informatively. Under unanimity, however, there always exists a symmetric equilibrium with truthful communication and committee-optimal information aggregation.

To clarify the intuition, assume committee members may vote for either an "expressive" option or a "nonexpressive" option. Depending on the unknown state of the world, either option may be optimal. As in related models, the committee members first receive mildly informative signals about the state of the world and, prior to voting, publicly share binary messages that, either truthfully or falsely (cheap talk), indicate their signal. If the committee chooses the committee-optimal option all members benefit equally regardless of their vote, but members voting for the expressive option additionally obtain the expressive payoff.

Under majority, the expressive payoff invites committee members to free-ride on the majority vote by voting expressively themselves when they are not pivotal. Therefore, agents' basic objective in the cheap talk stage is to maximize the chances that the nonexpressive option is selected by a majority when it is optimal. Potential free-riders do so by sending nonexpressive messages to strengthen their co-players beliefs that voting for the nonexpressive option is optimal, while personally free-riding and voting for the expressive option. As a result, communication is strategic rather than truthful, information aggregation is compromised, and social efficiency declines. Under unanimity, however, all agents must forgo their idiosyncratic payoff for the committee to select the nonexpressive option. This eliminates both the possibility of free-riding and the incentive to misreport the nonexpressive option, resulting in an equilibrium where agents communicate truthfully and uniformly vote for the option that maximizes the committee's expected payoffs.

From a more general perspective, we show that homogeneous preferences over the committee outcome is not a sufficient condition for the existence of an equilibrium with truthful communication and committee-optimal information aggregation. Rather, a sufficient condition is that all agents receive *homogeneous payoffs*. Accordingly, the novel insight of our theoretical analysis is that, given homogeneous preferences over the committee outcome and idiosyncratic payoffs, unanimity strictly dominates majority *because unanimity ensures homogeneous payoffs*, while the heterogeneity of payoffs under majority can result in the non-existence of an equilibrium with truthful communication and committee-optimal information aggregation.

While the theory is suggestive, there is some ambiguity regarding the prediction that unanimity dominates majority. In general, there are multiple equilibria under both voting rules; for example, there always exist so-called babbling equilibria where communication is random. Additionally, behavioral biases due to lying aversion, incorrect Bayesian updating, or level-k reasoning may also interfere with the theoretical prediction. In such cases, a controlled lab-

the main insight applies to a broader class of idiosyncratic payoffs.

oratory experiment can be a useful tool to generate insights about observed behavior in an analogous choice environment.

In the second part of our paper, we present the results of a laboratory experiment that compares committee behavior under majority and unanimity in the presence of expressive payoffs. In a 2×2 design, we compare the two decision rules for two different levels of expressive payoffs. Across all four treatments, the effects are highly consistent with the theory: Under majority, subjects systematically misreport their messages in a pre-vote round of binary cheap talk and, indeed, this effect is mitigated under unanimity. As predicted, unanimity also outperforms majority in terms of information aggregation — to the best of our knowledge, this finding constitutes the first experimental evidence of a setting where unanimity rule is strictly preferable to majority (previous experiments in settings with pre-vote deliberation, such as Guarnaschelli et al., 2000, and Goeree and Yariv, 2011, find either no significant difference between unanimity and majority, or less information aggregation under unanimity). Thus, we conclude that idiosyncratic payoffs substantially enhance the comparative efficiency of unanimity voting and may help explain its widespread use.

Finally, we analyze the behavioral mechanism underlying this result. First, we find that the private signal and co-players' messages have a similar impact on a subject's vote under unanimity, but that subjects are relatively less likely to respond to co-players' messages under majority. Second, we classify agents into distinct strategy types using a finite mixture modeling approach and find that under majority rule 20–26 percent of subjects pursue a "free-rider" strategy that is biased towards falsely reporting the non-expressive option and personally voting for the expressive option. In contrast, the proportion of subjects classified as free-riders under unanimity is not significantly different from zero (with point estimates at 0). In all, these findings provide strong evidence supporting the hypothesis that unanimity produces a higher degree of truthful communication and thus has a positive causal effect on information aggregation.

Next, we review the related literature. Section 2 introduces the theoretical model, and Section 3 presents the theoretical analysis. Section 4 describes our experiment testing the predictions of the model. Section 5 presents the analysis of the experimental results and Section 6 concludes. The formal proofs, the experimental instructions and a number of robustness checks of the econometric results are provided in the Appendix.

1.1   Literature

The issue of optimal voting rules in committees was first addressed in Austen-Smith and Banks (1996), who show that for committees of finite size, information aggregation is only achieved

under the decision rule that features sincere voting as an equilibrium strategy.[4] Next, Feddersen and Pesendorfer (1998) went on to show that as the size of the committee approaches infinity, all *q*-rules *other* than unanimity aggregate information. The reason for the failure of information aggregation under unanimity is that an agent's individual vote is only pivotal when all other agents have voted for the non-veto option, implying that it is not optimal for an agent to veto based on their private information only. This reluctance to "veto" under a unanimity rule has also been observed experimentally by Guarnaschelli et al. (2000), who find that majority rule outperforms unanimity in the standard setting. More recently, Bouton et al. (2017a,b) demonstrate that a voting mechanism that allows agents to vote for either option, *or* to veto, can outperform both majority and the standard unanimity rule.

The results referenced above, however, pertain only to settings where committees do not deliberate prior to voting. Coughlan (2000) finds that if voting is preceded by a round of cheap-talk communication, then both majority and unanimity admit equilibria with perfect information aggregation (also see Gerardi and Yariv, 2007 for a comprehensive analysis of communication and voting). Experimentally, Guarnaschelli et al. (2000) and Goeree and Yariv (2011) find that allowing subjects to either conduct a "straw poll" or communicate via chat prior to voting largely eliminates the discrepancy found between majority and unanimity absent communication.

One strand of this literature has focused on the efficacy of communication when agents have conflicting preferences over the committee outcome (see Li, 2001 and Austen-Smith and Feddersen, 2006). In this case, agents have an incentive to deviate from truthful communication in an attempt to bias the committee outcome towards their preferred option. In contrast, the mechanism we highlight here does not rely on heterogenous preferences — preferences over the committee outcome are perfectly homogeneous in our setting. Instead, agents have an incentive to misreport their signal to persuade other agents to vote for the non-expressive option, while personally free-riding and voting to obtain the expressive payoff. We show that this mechanism induces some subjects to adopt a free-riding strategy, which may explain why we find evidence for strategic communication with idiosyncratic payoffs, while Goeree and Yariv, 2011 find that the rate of truthful communication is not significantly affected by heterogeneous preferences.

Lastly, our paper is related to the literature on reputation payoffs in committees, which considers the Holmstrom (1999) model of career concerns applied to a committee setting. Here, reputation payoffs depend on the agent's vote relative to the aggregate voting profile, as agents seek to maximize the principal's ex-post belief that the agent is of high ability. This literature primarily considers the question of the optimal level of transparency (see Fehrler and Hughes, 2017 for a review). Visser and Swank (2007), however, consider the optimal decision rule in a setting with communication and reputation payoffs (additionally, Levy, 2007 analyzes the

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[4]For comprehensive overviews of the literature on information aggregation in voting, see Li and Suen (2009), Gerling et al. (2005), and Palfrey (2016).

optimal decision rule in a setting without communication). They find that, similar to the setting analyzed in the literature on conflicting preferences, an agent's incentive to misreport their private information stems from heterogeneity in preferences over the committee outcome.[5]

In contrast, we demonstrate that with idiosyncratic payoffs, committee heterogeneity can be a function of the underlying decision rule: With majority, the committee can always achieve the optimal decision even when some committee members vote for the expressive option, which results in heterogeneous payoffs and a free-rider problem. Unanimity, however, holds all members equally responsible for the committee decision, which facilitates committee-optimal behavior by enforcing homogeneous payoffs.

2   Framework

We consider a standard Condorcet setting with pre-vote communication (cheap talk): An odd-numbered committee of N experts, $i \in \{1, 2, ..., N\}$ with $N \geq 3$, chooses between two options $\{R(ed), B(lue)\}$. The committee decision, denoted by $X \in \{R, B\}$, is made via a vote, where each committee member submits a vote, $v_i \in \{R, B\}$, simultaneously with no abstentions. If q or more members of the committee members vote in favor of B, then outcome B is chosen, and otherwise the outcome is R.

The committee members' payoffs are a function of the committee decision, an underlying state of the world $\omega \in \{R, B\}$, and the expert's vote v_i. Payoffs consist of a common-value component and an idiosyncratic component. For the common-value component, each candidate receives a payoff of 1 if the committee chooses the decision that matches the underlying state of the world, and a payoff of zero otherwise. For the idiosyncratic component, each candidate has a *voting bias*, and receives an payoff of $K < 1$ conditional on voting for option R. This voting bias is unconditional on the state of the world and the decision of the committee – such an idiosyncratic payoff is commonly referred to as an expressive bias. To summarize, terminal payoffs as a function of outcome $X \in \{R, B\}$, state $\omega \in \{R, B\}$, and the own vote $v_i \in \{R, B\}$ are equal to:

$$\pi_i(X, \omega, v_i) = \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if } X \neq \omega \text{ and } v_i = B \\ 1, & \text{if } X = \omega \text{ and } v_i = B \\ K, & \text{if } X \neq \omega \text{ and } v_i = R \\ 1 + K, & \text{if } X = \omega \text{ and } v_i = R \end{cases}$$

All committee members have a common prior over the state of the world, denoted $P_R = \Pr(\omega = R)$, which is uninformative, i.e. $P_R = 1/2$. Additionally, prior to voting each com-

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[5]Fehrler and Hughes (2017) also provide a theoretical and experimental analysis of communication and reputation payoffs; in their setting, committee members misreport the *precision* of their signal when they have a low-precision signal and communication is observed by the principle.

mittee member receives a private signal, $s_i \in \{R, B\}$, which are identically and independently distributed across members with $\Pr(\omega = x | s_i = x)$ equal to $\alpha \in (1/2, 1)$. Also prior to voting, committee members deliberate, which we model as costless cheap-talk with a binary message space. That is, committee members simultaneously submit messages $m_i \in \{R, B\}$.

We denote this game by $\Gamma = \langle K, P_R, \alpha, q, N \rangle$. The timing of the game is as follows:

1. Nature draws state $w \in \{R, B\}$ and sends private signals $(s_i) \in \{R, B\}^N$.
2. Committee members observe s_i and simultaneously send messages $(m_i) \in \{R, B\}^N$.
3. Committee members observe (m_i) and simultaneously submit votes $(v_i) \in \{R, B\}^N$.
4. Votes are counted and payoffs accrue.

The decision rules we consider are Majority and Unanimity. Majority is defined by $q = (N + 1)/2$. To approximate a consensus, or two-sided unanimity rule, we operationalize Unanimity as follows: outcome $X = B$ iff $v_i = B$ for all i; otherwise (if $v_i = R$ for any i), $X = R$ and $v_i = R$ for all i. That is, under Unanimity, no agent forgoes the expressive payoff when $X = R$. This assumption is consistent with the real world setting we are interested in modeling: e.g. in criminal trials, consensus is required for any decision to be made. Also, when it comes to the theoretical predictions, this assumption is largely without loss of generality in the sense that the equilibria we highlight below are also equilibria in the model with one-sided unanimity and a status quo of R.

The equilibrium concept we consider is symmetric Bayesian Nash. By symmetry, we mean that agents with the same information sets take the same strategies. Agents' strategies are duples (σ, τ), where:

- $\sigma(s_i)$ is the probability of message R after signal $s_i \in (R, B)$,
- $\tau(s_i, m_i, M)$ is the probability of vote R after signal s_i, own message m_i, and overall $M = \#\{j | m_j = B\}$ players sending message B (including i).

3 Truthful Communication and Information Aggregation

In this section, we present a partial characterization of the equilibria of the model under Majority and Unanimity. Our aim here is not to be exhaustive – games with communication generally admit a multitude of equilibria – rather we focus on characterizing the conditions under which the model supports equilibria with truthful communication and optimal voting outcomes.

Definition 1 (Committee-Optimal Information Aggregation)**.** *We define* Optimal Information Aggregation *as replicating the decision taken by a single decision-maker who maximizes aggregate expected payoffs of the committee,* $\sum^N E[\pi_i]$*, and has access to the complete profile of signals,* $\{s_i\}^N$*.*

Note that there is a distinction between optimal information aggregation and perfect information aggregation: perfect information aggregation implies that the committee selects the option with the highest number of signals since this option is most likely to coincide with the state of the world; (committee) optimal information aggregation, however, takes into account the idiosyncratic payoff, K, which implies that option R may be optimal even when $\omega = B$ is more likely. We acknowledge that in cases where a committee takes a decision on behalf of society, the appropriate social welfare function may be perfect information aggregation since the committee members' idiosyncratic payoffs may be small relative to the social impact of choosing the more likely option. Therefore, while we focus on committee-optimal information aggregation in the theoretical analysis, we will consider both perfect and optimal information aggregation when interpreting our experimental results.

3.1 Voting Stage

We begin by characterizing the equilibria in the voting stage given truthful messaging. Note that given $m_i = s_i$ for all i, all agents are at the same information set, which implies that the symmetric equilibrium prescribes a uniform strategy for all agents in the voting stage. Accordingly, we simplify the notation of $\tau(s_i, m_i, M)$ to $\tau(M)$ for this section.

First, we state a well-known result in games of information aggregation through voting, which specifies that all agents voting R is an equilibrium strategy under both majority and unanimity for any profile of messages. This equilibrium is commonly referred to as the "babbling equilibrium" (we refer to equilibria other than the babbling equilibrium as "non-babbling").

Lemma 1 (Babbling Equilibrium). *It is a symmetric equilibrium strategy for all agents to set* $\tau(M) = 1$ *for all M, under both Majority and Unanimity.*

The rationale for Lemma 1 is that when $\tau(M) = 1$ for all $i \neq j$ then i's vote cannot be pivotal, which implies that $v_i = R$ is a best response. Note that, for $K > 0$ there is no babbling equilibrium with $\tau(M) = 0$, since if i's vote is not pivotal, then i has a best response of voting for R and receiving the expressive payoff.

Next, we introduce some additional notation. Take S to be the aggregate number of signals of B ($S = \sum_i I_{s_i=B}$ where $I_{s_i=B}$ takes a value of 1 if the argument, $s_i = B$, is satisfied and 0 otherwise), and M to be the aggregate number of messages of B ($M = \sum_i I_{m_i=B}$). Also, take $piv(x) = \frac{(N-1)!}{[(N-1)/2!]^2} x^{(N-1)/2} (1-x)^{(N-1)/2}$ for $x \leq 0.5$, which is equal to the probability that i's vote is pivotal when all other agents vote R with probability x. The following values will be

helpful in the analysis:

$$\bar{S} = \min\{S|\Pr(\omega = B|S) - \Pr(\omega = R|S) \geq K\},$$
$$S^{piv} = \min\{S|piv(0.5)[\Pr(\omega = B|S) - \Pr(\omega = R|S)] \geq K\}.$$

Optimal information aggregation prescribes that the committee play strategies such that they select option R when S is smaller than $\bar{S}$, and option B when S is greater or equal to $\bar{S}$. Also, note that if S is smaller than $\bar{S}$, then voting B is a dominated strategy, since i maximizes their expected payoff by voting R even when they are pivotal.

The following lemma characterizes all non-babbling equilibria of the voting stage given truthful messaging and a majority rule.

Lemma 2 (Voting Stage: Majority). *Given truthful messaging ($m = s$) and $K > 0$, consider the voting stage following M messages for B:*

- *If $M < S^{piv}$, then the unique symmetric equilibrium strategy is to vote R with probability $\tau^*(M) = 1$.*
- *If $M \geq S^{piv}(\geq \bar{S})$, then the set of non-babbling symmetric equilibrium strategies is equal to $\{\tau^*(M), (1 - \tau^*(M))\}$ with $\tau^*(M) \in (0, 0.5)$.*

We focus on the equilibrium $\tau^*(M)$, since $(1 - \tau^*(M))$ is unstable. This non-babbling symmetric voting strategy is the mixed strategy that equalizes the benefit of choosing B over R, multiplied by the probability of being pivotal, and the forgone expressive payoff. Rearranging the equilibrium condition gives:

$$piv(\tau^*(M)) = \frac{K}{\Pr(\omega = B|S) - \Pr(\omega = R|S)}. \tag{1}$$

This equation also shows that $\tau^*(M)$ is increasing in M, since $\Pr(\omega = B|S) - \Pr(\omega = R|S)$ is increasing in S and $piv(\tau^*(M))$ is increasing in $\tau^*(M)$ (since $\tau^*(M) \leq 0.5$).

More generally, Lemma 2 shows that Majority introduces a coordination/free-rider problem in the voting stage. Given $M \geq (N+1)/2$, all agents would prefer that the committee select option B. Under Majority, however, only a strict subset of the committee members are required to forgo the expressive payoff and vote for B for the committee to select B. Accordingly, each committee member would prefer that a majority vote for B, but to individually belong to the minority of agents that vote for R. This incentive to free-ride implies that there is no symmetric strategy where all agents vote for B, and that the only non-babbling symmetric equilibrium involves a mixed strategy in the voting stage (for $M \geq S^{piv}$). This mixed strategy equilibrium introduces an aggregate bias toward option R, since there is a positive probability that the committee will select R even when $M \geq S^{piv}$.[6]

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[6]For some K, there exists a plausible asymmetric equilibrium where agents with $m_i = R$ set $\tau_i(M) = 1$ for all M. In

In contrast, the following lemma characterizes the non-babbling equilibrium of the voting stage under Unanimity.

Lemma 3 (Voting Stage: Unanimity). *Given truthful messaging ($m = s$) and $K > 0$:*

- *If $M < \bar{S}$, then $\tau(M) = 1$ is the unique symmetric equilibrium strategy.*
- *If $M \geq \bar{S}$, then $\tau(M) = 0$ is the unique non-babbling symmetric equilibrium strategy.*

That is, under Unanimity, the unique non-babbling equilibrium optimally aggregates information.[7] The reason for this difference between Unanimity and Majority is that under Unanimity, the committee can only select option B if all committee members forgo the expressive payoff of K. Due to this the uniform enforcement of responsibility, the free-rider problem that occurs under Majority is mitigated, and optimality in the voting stage is restored.

3.2 Truthful Messaging

We now characterize, conditional on the equilibrium strategy in the voting stage, when truthful messaging is supported in equilibrium. We begin with the babbling equilibrium.

Lemma 4 (Truthful Messaging under Babbling). *Given $\tau(M) = 1$ for all M, truthful messaging ($m = s$) is an equilibrium under both Majority and Unanimity.*

That is, given babbling in the voting stage, agents are indifferent between sending a message of R and a message of B. Therefore, any messaging strategy is an equilibrium.

Take $\bar{K}$ to be equal to the following value:

$$\bar{K} = \left[\Pr\left(\omega = B | S = \tfrac{N+1}{2} \right) - \Pr\left(\omega = R | S = \tfrac{N+1}{2} \right) \right]$$

Note that for $K = \bar{K}$, the corresponding $\bar{S}$ is equal to $(N+1)/2$, implying that $\bar{S} > (N+1)/2$ for $K > \bar{K}$.

Also, take $K' = piv(0.5)\bar{K}$. The following proposition gives a necessary condition for truthful messaging and the non-babbling voting strategy to be an equilibrium under Majority.

Proposition 1 (Truthful Messaging under Majority). *Given that agents play the non-babbling equilibrium in the voting stage, truthful messaging ($m = s$) is an equilibrium only if $K \leq K'$.*

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this case, a non-babbling equilibrium exists where agents with $m_i = B$ set $\tau_i((N+1)/2) = 0$ and $\tau_i(M) = \tau^{**}(M)$ with $\tau^{**}(M) \in (0, 0.5)$ for $M > (N+1)/2$. As we show in the Supplementary Appendix, however, this equilibrium only exists for small values of K.

[7]There is no mixed-strategy equilibrium since, given a positive probability of being pivotal and $M \geq \bar{S}$, i will strictly prefer voting B.

Proposition 1 shows that the coordination/free-rider problem in the voting stage has a knock-on effect on the messaging stage, and that given K sufficiently high, there is no equilibrium with truthful messaging and non-babbling voting.

An intuition for this result is as follows: independently of their own vote, each agent would prefer that the committee select option B when there are more signals for B than R (information aggregation). However, as detailed in Lemma 2 under truthful communication the expressive payoff biases the committee's decision toward R, since agents play mixed strategies in the voting game given $M \geq S^{piv}$. This bias is decreasing in M since the higher the likelihood that the state is equal to B, the higher the probability that agents vote for B. Therefore, for low levels of K ($K \leq K'$) an agent with signal $s_i = R$ faces the following tradeoff when considering a deviation from truthful messaging: (1) for $S \geq (N+1)/2$, deviating to $\sigma(R) = 0$ will increase the probability that the committee 'correctly' selects option B; (2) for $S = (N-1)/2$, deviating to $\sigma(R) = 0$ results in a positive probability that the committee incorrectly selects option B since given $S = (N-1)/2$ ($M = (N+1)/2$) all committee members other than i will vote B with positive probability. Given this tradeoff, truthful messaging can still be an equilibrium strategy for K low enough, since the benefit of deviating to $\sigma(R) = 0$ and decreasing the bias of the committee (1) can be offset by the cost of incorrectly aggregating information when i's information is pivotal (2).

However, by Lemma 2, if $K > K'$ it is not an equilibrium strategy for agents to vote for B with positive probability when $M = (N+1)/2$. Therefore, the cost of deviating from truthful messaging (2) disappears, which implies that when all other agents play truthfully, deviating to $\sigma(R) = 0$ is a best response. Additionally, an agent with a signal of R who deviates from truthful reporting has a best response to vote R in the voting sub-game given that other agents now play $\tau^*(S+1) < \tau^*(S)$. This shows that truthful communication cannot be an equilibrium under Majority when $K > K'$, since agents have a best response to deviate to falsely reporting B while personally voting R (the "free-riding" strategy).[8]

In contrast to Majority, the following proposition shows that truthful messaging remains an equilibrium for all voting strategies under Unanimity.

Proposition 2 (Truthful Messaging under Unanimity). *Under Unanimity, truthful messaging ($m = s$) and committee-optimal voting ($\tau(M) = 1$ for $M < \bar{S}$; $\tau(M) = 0$ for $M \geq \bar{S}$) is an equilibrium of any game Γ.*

The existence of an equilibrium with optimal information aggregation under Unanimity follows from Lemma 3: given that agents efficiently aggregate information in the voting stage, agents have no incentive to deviate from truthful communication.

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[8]By the same logic, with the asymmetric voting strategy where agents with $m_i = R$ set $\tau_i(M) = 1$ for all M (see Footnote 6), truthful messaging is not an equilibrium for $K > \bar{K}$.

Independently, both Proposition 1 or Proposition 2 relate to results in the existing literature and thus concur with the general understanding of information aggregation. As discussed in the introduction, it is well-known that idiosyncratic payoffs can cause information aggregation to fail. Additionally, Proposition 2 follows from the same reasoning behind Theorem 1 in Austen-Smith and Feddersen (2006), who analyze communication in a setting with heterogenous preferences over the committee outcome (also see Gerardi and Yariv, 2007).

However, Proposition 1 demonstrates that homogeneous preferences over the committee outcome, conditional on the aggregate profile of signals, is not a sufficient condition for the existence of an equilibrium with truthful communication and committee-optimal information aggregation. Instead, in a more general setting that allows for idiosyncratic payoffs, the sufficient condition requires that agent receive homogeneous *payoffs*. Accordingly, the novel insight provided by the combination of Propositions 1 and 2 is that the committee's decision rule is relevant for efficiency, even in settings with communication and homogeneous preferences over the committee outcome, since *the homogeneity of payoffs is a function of the decision rule*.

This intuition points to the generality of the results of Propositions 1 and 2. As long as agents have homogeneous preferences over the committee outcome, Unanimity dominates Majority since Unanimity ensures homogeneous payoffs even with idiosyncratic payoffs, while the heterogeneity of payoffs under Majority can result in the non-existence of an equilibrium with truthful communication and committee-optimal information aggregation.

3.3   Discussion

Propositions 1 and 2 allow us to compare the Pareto optimal equilibria under Unanimity and Majority. Jointly, they show that when committee members are exposed to idiosyncratic payoffs that condition on their individual vote, then the Pareto optimal outcome under Unanimity always weakly dominates the Pareto optimal outcome under Majority in terms of information aggregation, and Unanimity strictly dominates Majority for idiosyncratic payoffs of intermediate size.

To be more precise, take K'' to be defined as follows:

$$K'' = \left[\Pr\left(\omega = B | S = N \right) - \Pr\left(\omega = R | S = N \right) \right]$$

When K is large enough so that $\bar{S} > N$, i.e., for all $K > K''$, then the unique equilibrium is for the committee to always select R under both Majority and Unanimity. Fixing all parameters of the game other than K (N, P_R, α), take the following set of games:

$$\{\Gamma\}^K = \{\Gamma | K \in (K', K'']\}.$$

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This definition allows us to define a set of games where Unanimity strictly dominates Majority in terms of information aggregation.

Corollary 1 (Summary). *Under Majority, for any game* $\Gamma \in \{\Gamma\}^K$*, there are no symmetric equilibria with truthful communication and informative voting, or any symmetric equilibria that optimally aggregate information.*
Under Unanimity, for any game $\Gamma \in \{\Gamma\}^K$ *there exists a symmetric equilibrium with truthful communication that optimally aggregates information.*

In contrast, without idiosyncratic payoffs, voting outcomes are weakly optimal under Majority. That is, idiosyncratic payoffs precisely reverse the findings in the existing literature on information aggregation in committees. This follows from the fact that the committee can only efficiently aggregate information when playing symmetric strategies if (1) all agents vote their signal, or (2) agents play voting strategies that perfectly condition on S. When K is large, (1) is precluded by Lemma 5 (stated and proved in the Appendix), and (2) is precluded by Proposition 1.[9] To be clear, our results do not imply that Unanimity dominates Majority in all committee decision-situations – our model considers a decision-situation that is specifically designed to isolate the role of idiosyncratic payoffs. However, it does suggest that uniformly enforcing responsibility for the committee's decision may mitigate a voting bias that occurs in many real-world settings where committee members can be held accountable, formally or informally, for their individual voting decisions.

While Corollary 1 is suggestive, it does not provide a satisfactory answer as to which decision rule is optimal in a setting with idiosyncratic payoffs. For example, both decision rules admit multiple equilibria, even under the assumption of symmetric strategies, leading to ambiguity regarding the theoretical predictions. Moreover, there are well-documented issues with the lack of robustness under Unanimity: e.g., a single agent voting naively is enough to destroy the efficiency of information aggregation under Unanimity. Additionally, there are more subtle ambiguities: if we allow for asymmetric strategies, note that if $(N-1)/2$ agents play a fixed strategy $\tau(M) = 1$ for any M, then the remaining $(N+1)/2$ agents face an effective decision rule of Unanimity, allowing for optimal information aggregation.

This indeterminacy of the theoretical predictions leave scope for further exploration. In such a setting, where the theoretical predictions are suggestive but not definitive, laboratory experiments can be a useful tool to generate insights on observed behavior in an analogous choice environment. In the following section, we explain how our experimental design may help us to detail the differences in communication and voting under Majority and Unanimity,

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[9]The above analysis has focused on characterizing the existence/non-existence of equilibria with truthful communication and optimal information aggregation. In the Appendix we provide a broader characterization of equilibria for the specific case we analyze in our experiment (including asymmetric equilibria that consider the case where agents condition their vote on their signal and message).

and to explore the mechanisms behind the observed differences in aggregate behavior under the two decision rules.

4 Experiment

4.1 Experimental Design

The experiment closely implements our model of voting with expressive payoffs, using a 2×2 design with "High" and "Low" expressive payoffs under Majority and Unanimity. The experimental implementation closely follows the related experiments of Guarnaschelli et al. (2000) and Goeree and Yariv (2011). In particular, we use neutral language, communicate probabilities and signals to subjects using balls drawn from urns, and provide feedback about the actual state of world and composition of payoffs after each round. A detailed description follows and a translation of the instructions and a screenshot are provided as supplementary material. The experiments were conducted at the WZB/TU experimental laboratory in Berlin in May, June and November of 2016. Subjects were recruited using ORSEE (Greiner, 2015) and the experiment was programed in Z-Tree (Fischbacher, 2007).

The four treatments are summarized in Table 1. The sum of the expressive payoff K, which committee members get after voting R, and social payoff P_c, which committee members get after voting in line with the state of the world, is always equal to to 50 points. In the treatments with "low" expressive payoffs, we set $K = 10$ and $P_c = 40$, and in the treatments with "high" expressive payoffs, we set $K = 15$ and $P_c = 35$. The payoffs were calibrated such that $K > \bar{K}$ in both the Low and High treatments, and we discuss the theoretical predictions in detail in the following subsection. In both cases, we conduct sessions with both unanimity and majority voting. The precision of each subject's signal was constant across treatments and equal to $\alpha = 0.6$. Subjects were paid according to the sum of points accumulated across all 50 games, and one point corresponded to one euro cent in all treatments. The experiment lasted between 75 and 105 minutes and subjects earned between 19 and 22 Euros on average across sessions.

Table 1: Overview of experimental treatments

Label	Decision rule	P_c	K	#Subjects	#Sessions	#Games
Majority-Low	Majority	40	10	48	4	50
Majority-High	Majority	35	15	45	4	50
Unanimity-Low	Unanimity	40	10	45	4	50
Unanimity-High	Unanimity	35	15	48	4	50

For each treatment, we ran four sessions with either 9 (two sessions) or 12 (fourteen sessions) participants. In all cases, two sessions were run simultaneously to increase anonymity.

Upon arrival at the laboratory, subjects were seated randomly. An experimental assistant then handed out printed versions of the instructions and read the instructions out loud. Subsequently, subjects filled in a computerized control questionnaire verifying their understanding of the instructions, and the experiment did not start until all subjects had answered all questions correctly. The subjects then played 50 voting games in committees of size three ($N = 3$), with random rematching after each game (see Figure 3 in Appendix B for a composite screenshot). After each game, the subjects received feedback on payoffs, aggregate behavior and the aggregate signal profile. Under Majority, the timing of each round was as follows.

Majority Observe private signal $\{R,B\}$. Send a public message to their group $\{R,B\}$. Observe message profile. Submit vote $\{R,B\}$. Observe state, votes, outcome, and payoffs for this game.

Under Unanimity, the timing of each round was identical to Majority aside from the voting stage. Subjects were given three chances to reach a unanimous decision, after which all subjects were assigned a default vote of R. We choose to operationalize unanimity rule in this manner to replicate a consensus decision rule (two-sided unanimity) as closely as possible.

Unanimity The only difference to Majority is in the voting stage: Submit vote $\{R,B\}$. If vote is unanimous proceed to Outcome Stage. Otherwise, again submit a vote $\{R,B\}$. If vote is unanimous proceed to Outcome Stage. Otherwise, submit a final vote $\{R,B\}$. If vote is not unanimous, all subjects are assigned the vote $v_i = R$. Proceed to Outcome stage.

Additionally, the format of allowing for multiple straw polls is similar to the procedure used in many jury deliberations. It is possible, however, that subjects use the multiple rounds of voting as additional communication. We address this concern in a robustness section in the Appendix. Upon completion of the experiment, subjects left the laboratory and were paid individually in a separate room by an experimental assistant.

4.2 Theoretical Predictions and Experimental Research Questions

Corollary 1 shows that for a wide range of expressive payoffs, truthful communication is ruled out in non-babbling equilibria under Majority voting.[10] The expressive payoffs induced in the experiment, 10/40 and 15/35, are comparably small in the sense that they do not dominate the social payoffs from making the socially optimal decision, but are large enough to suppress truthful communication in Majority. That is, both Majority treatments satisfy $K \in \{\Gamma\}^K$ as referred to in Corollary 1, which yields the following research question.

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[10]To reiterate, in non-babbling equilibria, committee members do not ignore the information contained in the messages. There always exist babbling equilibria with truthful communication in Majority, namely equilibria where subjects always vote R regardless of messages, where unilateral attempts to respond to the messages are payoff irrelevant, see Lemma 4.

Question 1. *Are messages more likely to be truthful under Unanimity than under Majority, and does it depend on the private signal being R or B?*

We predict *yes* to both parts. More specifically, Proposition 1 shows that Majority may induce asymmetric misreporting since agents best-respond to truthful reporting by sending truthful messages given a signal of *B*, and misreport given a signal of *R* to induce their co-players to vote for *B*. Additionally, Lemma 2 predicts that agents who receive a signal of *R* and misreport will vote *R*, given that their co-players vote for *B* with a higher probability. We refer to this as the free-rider problem.

As a result of this free-rider problem, Corollary 1 predicts that Unanimity will outperform Majority in terms of information aggregation. Additionally, we predict that information aggregation will disproportionately fail when the aggregate profile of signals indicates that the committee should select *B*: If a majority of subjects receive *B* signals, then the free-rider problem implies that *R* will be selected with positive probability. If a majority of subjects receive *R* signals, however, then the committee will select *R* with high probability since subjects playing a free-rider strategy will vote *R* regardless of the messages. Therefore, our model suggests the following research question.

Question 2. *Is information aggregated more efficiently under Unanimity, and does it depend on the committee-optimal decision being R or B?*

Conditional on a positive finding for Questions 1 and 2, theoretically, the channel for the increased level of information aggregation under Unanimity could be twofold. On the one hand, committee members may anticipate and account for the more truthful messages under Unanimity. On the other hand, even if subjects hold the belief that their co-players' messages are truthful, Lemma 2 shows that Majority induces a coordination problem in the voting stage that may still prevent optimal information aggregation.

Therefore, we continue our analysis by identifying the mechanisms behind any relative decrease in information aggregation under Majority. First, we consider the question of whether subjects account for the average level of truthful reporting in their voting decisions.

Question 3. *Do subjects anticipate and respond to more truthful messages under Unanimity?*

Second, Lemma 2 and Proposition 1 predict that agents will best-respond to truthful reporting by free-riding, misreporting *B* to free ride on the *B* votes of their co-players, while personally voting for *R*. This prediction provides us with an opportunity to verify the causal mechanism predicted by our model.

Question 4. *Do subjects strategically misreport under Majority to free-ride?*

If the findings of the experiment negate this prediction, then subjects may be falsely reporting their signals for reasons other than what we predict, and hence our model would be falsified.

5 Analysis of the experiment

We address the four research questions successively. Table 2 provides a first overview of the experimental results, delineating the truthfulness of messages and the level of information aggregation by decision rule, expressive payoffs and signal.

Table 2: Average treatment effects in relation to Questions 1 and 2

| Expressive payoff | Low | | High | |
Decision Rule	Majority	Unanimity	Majority	Unanimity
Truthful message if R signal	90%	96%***	79%	94%***
Truthful message if B signal	84%	86%	87%	86%
Committee-optimal decision R	80%	79%	88%	86%
Committee-optimal decision B	61%	83%***	60%	83%***

Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test (Unanimity = Majority); * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

5.1 Are messages more truthful under Unanimity?

The upper two lines of Table 2, and similarly Figure 1, provide information on the truthfulness of communication, disaggregated by treatment and signal as required to answer Question 1. The asymmetric prediction is satisfied for both signal R and signal B: Given a signal of R, in both the Low and High expressive payoff conditions, messages are significantly more truthful under Unanimity than under Majority. That is, with a signal of R, misreporting increases from 4% to 10% given Low expressive payoffs, and from 6% to 21% given High expressive payoffs.

In contrast, truthful reporting given a signal of B is very stable across all conditions: The differences between Unanimity and Majority are very small (at most two percentage points) and far from being significant, confirming the second part of Question 1. Across all treatments, the average rate of truthful reporting, roughly 85 percent, is lower than might be expected given the results of Guarnaschelli et al. (2000) (their experiment considers homogeneous payoffs, but is otherwise comparable). Focusing only on Unanimity, however, the relative frequency of truthful messages is comparable with Guarnaschelli et al. (2000).

Result 1. *As predicted (Question 1), messages are more truthful in Unanimity after R signals and equally truthful after B signals.*
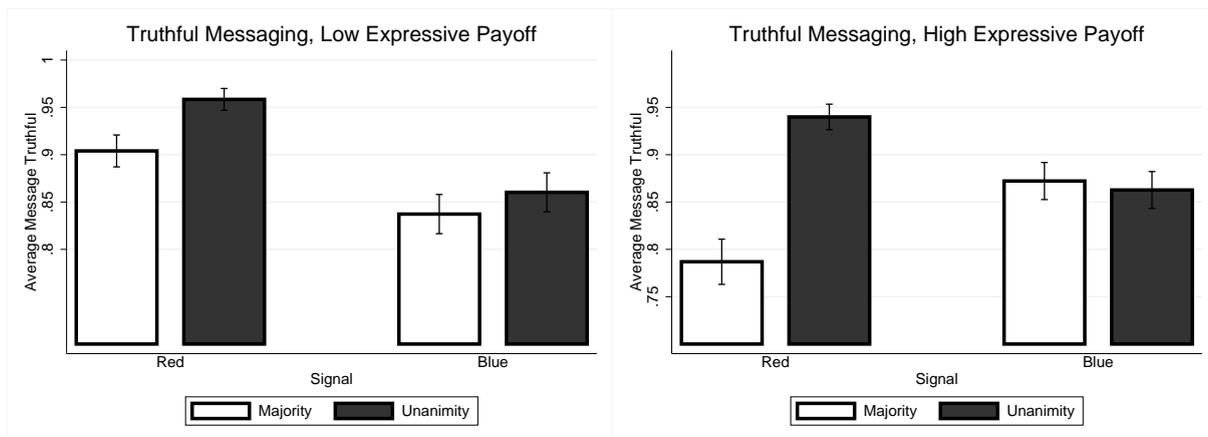
Figure 1: Average levels of truthful messaging ($m_i = s_i$) by signal and treatment.

A related point apparent in Figure 1 is worthy of mention. Under Majority, the level of misreporting given a signal of *R* more than doubles for the High idiosyncratic payoff treatment, from 10% to 21%. This finding is consistent with the quantitative increase in the incentive to strategically misreport given a signal of *R*. In contrast, the average level of truthful reporting by signal is stable across the Low and High treatments under Unanimity. This finding corroborates Result 1 and suggests that, under Majority, the level of truthful communication is sensitive to the size of the incentive to engage in strategic misreporting. Section B in the Appendix further shows that the results are highly robust to experience.

5.2   Is information aggregated more efficiently under Unanimity?

While truthful communication is a necessary condition for the committee to behave optimally, the most pertinent comparison between Majority and Unanimity is the ability of the committee to efficiently aggregate the private information of its members. Figure 2 shows the committee decision as a function of the aggregate profile of signals, and the lower two lines in Table 2 provide the relative frequencies of committee-optimal decisions, disaggregated by whether *R* or *B* is optimal — across all conditions examined here, the committee-optimal decision is *B* if and only if all subjects have received *B* signals. As detailed in Question 2, our prediction is that there is no difference between Unanimity and Majority if the expressive option, *R*, is committee-optimal, but that under Unanimity the committee will be more likely to select the non-expressive option, *B*, when it is optimal.

The experimental results are very sharp. If *R* is committee-optimal, there is virtually no difference in the probability that the committee selects *R* between Unanimity and Majority: 80% versus 79% for Low, and 88% versus 86% for High expressive payoffs. If *B* is committee-optimal, the difference is large and highly significant: 22 percentage points (61% versus 83%)
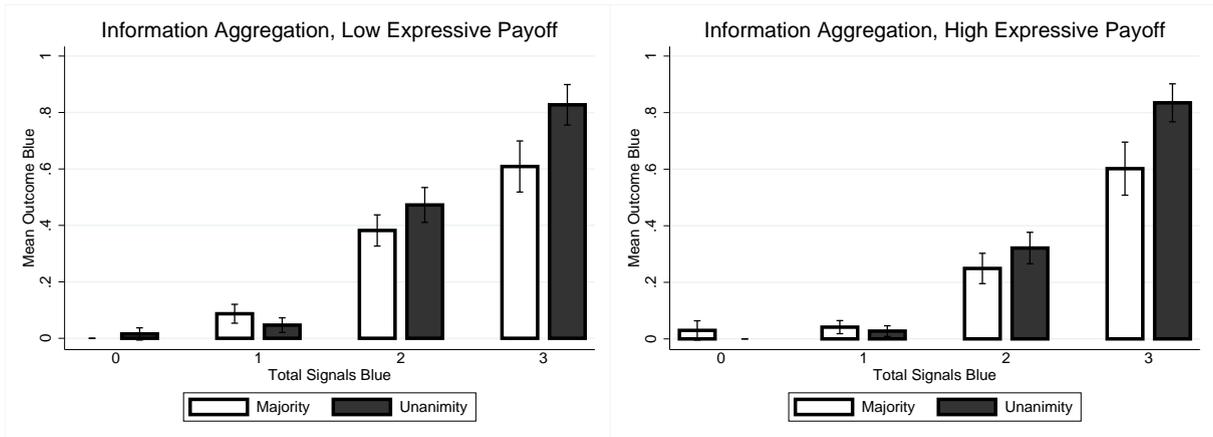
Figure 2: Average levels of outcome *B* as a function of the aggregate profile of *signals* (not messages) by treatment.

for Low expressive payoffs, and 23 percentage points (60% versus 83%) for High expressive payoffs. In all, the probability that the committee correctly aggregates information given three signals for *B* increases by over a third under Unanimity.[11]

Result 2. *As predicted (Question 2), the committee is significantly more likely to select the optimal option under Unanimity if the non-expressive option, B, is committee-optimal, and the difference between the two decision rules is negligible if R is optimal.*

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[11] The difference between the two decision rules is also slightly larger in the 2nd half of the experiment (see Section B in the supplementary appendix). Additionally, note that subjects are more likely to select *B* given two signals of *B* under Unanimity, although this difference is attenuated in the second half of the experiment.

5.3 Do subjects anticipate more truthful messages under Unanimity?

Having established that Unanimity results in more truthful messaging and increased information aggregation (Questions 1 and 2) we now turn to the more subtle questions regarding mechanism (Questions 3 and 4). For a first pass at exploring the effect of messages under the different decision rules, we estimate a discrete choice model that considers each individual's voting decision as a function of the voting rule, and the information known by the subjects at the time they take their voting decision. Table 3 summarizes the estimation.

The regression results indicate that subjects respond to both an own signal of B and to co-player's messages for B by voting for B with a higher probability. Moreover, under Unanimity, the impact of a message for B from a co-player has a similar the impact on voting behavior as an own signal for B. Under Majority, however, subjects are significantly less likely to respond to co-players' messages of B, relative to their own signal (see the negative coefficient on the interaction of "Majority" and "Other's messages"). This strongly suggests that the higher proportion of misreporting observed under Majority negatively impacts the committee's ability to efficiently aggregate the information of its members.

Table 3: Probit estimations to explain individual votes for B

Vote B	(1) Low	(2) High	(3) Joint
Own signal B	0.299 *** (0.0246)	0.282 *** (0.0174)	0.291 *** (0.0148)
Number of other's messages B	0.361 *** (0.0128)	0.298 *** (0.0112)	0.328 *** (0.00910)
Majority	0.0884** (0.0262)	0.0624* (0.0252)	0.0732*** (0.0185)
Majority $\times$ own signal	−0.0121 (0.0373)	0.00908 (0.0361)	−0.00168 (0.0256)
Majority $\times$ other's messages	−0.138*** (0.0255)	−0.109*** (0.0218)	−0.121*** (0.0171)
High			−0.0689*** (0.0171)
Constant	−0.163*** (0.0109)	−0.171*** (0.00893)	−0.132*** (0.0107)
N	4650	4650	9300

Subject-level clustered standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

This direct comparison between the decision rules is suggestive of the predicted result. However, we can make the analysis more precise by controlling for differences in expected payoffs from voting B under the two decision rules. That is, while we see an increased responsiveness to co-players' messages under Unanimity, the choice environment in the voting stage is not directly comparable to Majority. Therefore, we supplement the finding of the dis-

crete choice model by investigating the impact of co-player's messages on the subjects' implied beliefs, taking into account the actual differences in expected payoffs.

In line with Question 3, our hypothesis is that subjects' beliefs are more responsive to co-players' messages under Unanimity. We test this hypothesis by estimating a simple structural equation model of the decision making process.[12] The equation system directly implements the strategic game played by the subjects. First, a subject's belief about the true state $\omega \in \{R,B\}$ is a function of the own signal $s \in \{R,B\}$ and the opponents' messages $m_2, m_3 \in \{R,B\}$,

$$\Pr(\omega = R | s, m_2, m_3) = \frac{1}{1 + \exp\{\alpha_1(I_{s=B} - 0.5) + \alpha_2(I_{m_2=B} + I_{m_3=B} - 1)\}} \tag{2}$$

with belief parameters α_1, α_2. Here we use the indicators $I_{s=B}, I_{m_2=B}, I_{m_3=B}$ to indicate whether the own signal (s) or the opponents' messages (m_2, m_3) are equal to B (value 1) or not (value 0).

Second, a subject's belief about the voting outcome $X \in \{R,B\}$, conditional on the own vote $v \in \{R,B\}$ and the number of B messages, is[13]

$$\Pr(X = R | v_i) = \frac{1}{1 + \exp\{\beta_1 \cdot I_{v=B} + \beta_{2|m_1+m_2+m_3}\}} = 1 - \Pr(X = B | v_i). \tag{3}$$

Here, β_1 captures the weight of the own vote, and $\beta_{2|\cdot}$ captures the expectation about the opponents' votes as a function of the message profile. Specifically, $\beta_{2|\cdot}$ is a vector of four values, where $\beta_{2|0}$ denotes the expectation in the case where there are zero B messages, and $\beta_{2|1}$, $\beta_{2|2}$, $\beta_{2|3}$ concern the cases of one, two, or three B messages. In conjunction, these two beliefs define the probability that the voting outcome X is equal to the true state ω,

$$\Pr(X = \omega | v_i) = \Pr(\omega = R) \cdot \Pr(X = R | v) + \Pr(\omega = B) \cdot \Pr(X = B | v).$$

Finally, using P_c and K to denote the payoff from the voting outcome being correct ($X = \omega$) and the expressive payoff from voting R, respectively, voting for R has probability

$$\Pr(v = R) = \frac{1}{1 + \exp\{-\lambda \cdot P_c \cdot (\Pr(X = \omega | v_i = R) - \Pr(X = \omega | v_i = B)) - \lambda \cdot K\}},$$

allowing for logistic errors (with precision parameter $\lambda \geq 0$). Note that this model is fairly general. Depending on how the belief parameters $(\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \beta_1, \beta_{2|\cdot})$ relate to their empirical counterparts, the model is compatible with (ir)rational expectations, overshooting in Bayesian updating, cursed beliefs and level-k beliefs. The empirical counterparts $(\hat{\alpha}_1, \hat{\alpha}_2, \hat{\beta}_1, \hat{\beta}_{2|\cdot})$ can be

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[12]An arguably simpler approach would be to plainly ask subjects about their beliefs, but in the context of beliefs underlying strategic decisions, the elicited beliefs have been found to be incompatible with the chosen actions (Costa-Gomes and Weizsäcker, 2008). Even without such obstacles, robustly incentive-compatible elicitation of beliefs, prior and after revelation of messages, is not simple either and may distract or appear obtrusive to subjects.

[13]Slightly abusing notation, we use $m_1 + m_2 + m_3$ as shortcut for $I_{m_1=B} + I_{m_2=B} + I_{m_3=B}$.

estimated simply by logit regressions. The rational signal and message weights $\hat{\alpha}_1$ and $\hat{\alpha}_2$ are estimated by regressing the true state of the world ω on the signal and messages, using Eq. (2), and the rational outcome weights $\hat{\beta}_1$ and $\hat{\beta}_{2|\cdot}$ are estimated by regressing the probability that the correct decision is made ($X = \omega$) on the own vote and the message profile, using Eq. (3).

We control for expected payoffs as observed in the experiment, while still allowing for two forms of behavioral biases, by requiring (1) the belief weights α_1, α_2 to be jointly proportional to their rational expectation counterparts, which allows for overshooting (base rate fallacy) or conservative belief formation as observed in many experiments, and (2) the vote weights $\beta_{2|\cdot}$ to be jointly proportional to their empirical counterparts, which allows for over- or underestimating the predictability of the co-players' votes. In the extreme case, $\beta_{2|\cdot} = 0$, subjects believe their co-players are perfectly unpredictable (level-1, Stahl and Wilson, 1995). If $0 < \beta_{2|\cdot} < \hat{\beta}_{2|\cdot}$, subjects underestimate the predictability of others as observed by Weizsäcker (2003), Goeree and Holt (2004) and Eyster and Rabin (2005), and if $\beta_{2|\cdot} = \hat{\beta}_{2|\cdot}$, subjects hold rational expectations of the mapping from their co-players' messages to votes. We report on two robustness checks invoking rational expectations in either dimension below, but the results are very robust in general.

We find that subjects overshoot in belief formation, given signals and messages, and therefore hold rather strong beliefs. To see this effect as clearly as possible, it is best to look at cases where the co-players' messages contradict the own signal. That is, we look at beliefs about the true state ω after a private B signal and two R messages of co-players, and after a private R signal and two B messages of co-players. Given the above notation, we hypothesize that beliefs react more strongly to the co-players' messages under Unanimity, since messages are more truthful in this case; i.e.,

$$\text{Pr}_{\text{Maj}}(\omega = R | s = B, m_2 = m_3 = R) < \text{Pr}_{\text{Una}}(\omega = R | s = B, m_2 = m_3 = R),$$
$$\text{Pr}_{\text{Maj}}(\omega = R | s = R, m_2 = m_3 = B) > \text{Pr}_{\text{Una}}(\omega = R | s = R, m_2 = m_3 = B).$$

Based on the estimates of the structural equation models, namely α_1, α_2 in conjunction with Eq. (2), these beliefs can be computed straightforwardly. Since the beliefs are based on estimates of α_1, α_2, we bootstrap their distributions to test our hypotheses (resampling at the subject level to account for the panel character of the data, stratifying to acknowledge the treatment structure). Parameters are estimated by maximum likelihood[14] and both the standard errors of the parameters as well as the p-values of the null hypotheses are also bootstrapped.

The results are reported in Table 4. First, looking at the empirically true probabilities, we can see that in all cases, subjects should tend to follow the opponents' messages when both are the same despite contradicting the own signal. For example, in the second halves of the

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[14]To maximize the likelihood, we first use the gradient-free NEWUOA approach (Powell, 2006), which is comparably robust (Rios and Sahinidis, 2013), and secondly a Newton-Raphson algorithm to ensure convergence.

Table 4: Structural equation analysis of beliefs ($\omega = Red$) as function of signals and messages

	Empirical	Baseline	Rational 1	Rational 2
First halves of sessions				
Beliefs after A signal and two B messages from others				
$\Pr_{Maj}(\omega = R \| s = R, m_2 = m_3 = B)$	0.476 (0.033)	0.407 (0.011)	0.478 (0)	0.394 (0.012)
$\Pr_{Una}(\omega = R \| s = R, m_2 = m_3 = B)$	0.452 (0.031)	0.328^{--} (0.018)	0.461^{--} (0)	0.361^{-} (0.011)
Beliefs after B signal and zero B messages from others				
$\Pr_{Maj}(\omega = R \| s = B, m_2 = m_3 = R)$	0.505 (0.03)	0.593 (0.011)	0.522 (0)	0.606 (0.012)
$\Pr_{Una}(\omega = R \| s = B, m_2 = m_3 = R)$	0.559 (0.029)	0.672^{++} (0.018)	0.539^{++} (0)	0.639^{+} (0.011)
Log-Likelihood		-2021.5	-2280.2	-2312.4
Robustness checks				
Rational state beliefs			✓	
Rational voting beliefs				✓
Second halves of sessions				
Beliefs after A signal and two B messages from others				
$\Pr_{Maj}(\omega = R \| s = R, m_2 = m_3 = B)$	0.435 (0.029)	0.397 (0.012)	0.465 (0)	0.378 (0.013)
$\Pr_{Una}(\omega = R \| s = R, m_2 = m_3 = B)$	0.37 (0.035)	0.321^{--} (0.016)	0.422^{--} (0)	0.336^{--} (0.009)
Beliefs after B signal and zero B messages from others				
$\Pr_{Maj}(\omega = R \| s = B, m_2 = m_3 = R)$	0.527 (0.031)	0.603 (0.012)	0.535 (0)	0.622 (0.013)
$\Pr_{Una}(\omega = R \| s = B, m_2 = m_3 = R)$	0.551 (0.027)	0.679^{++} (0.016)	0.578^{++} (0)	0.664^{++} (0.009)
Log-Likelihood		-1850.2	-2019.6	-2075.5
Robustness checks				
Rational state beliefs			✓	
Rational voting beliefs				✓

Note: In the baseline model we allow for mistakes in Bayesian updating when forming state beliefs and voting beliefs. That is, the respective belief parameters (α_1, α_2) and $\beta_{2|\cdot}$ are allowed to be arbitrarily scaled vectors of their rational expectation counterparts $(\hat{\alpha}_1, \hat{\alpha}_2)$ and $\hat{\beta}_{2|\cdot}$ as estimated from logistic regressions. The robustness checks enforce rational expectations by equating the respective belief parameters with their rational expectation counterparts. The respective likelihoods are significantly worse than that of the baseline model (showing that subjects do actually not hold rational expectations), but the main result that implicit beliefs differ between majority and unanimity treatments is robust nonetheless. As before, significance of differences between majority and unanimity estimates is indicated by plus and minus signs ($^{++/--}$ at $p < .05$ and $^{+/-}$ at $p < .1$ using bootstrapped p-values), next to the unanimity treatment estimates. All standard errors are bootstrapped.

sessions, after an *R* signal and two *B* messages from the opponents, the empirical probabilities that the state is *R* are 43.5% and 37% under Majority and Unanimity, respectively. This shows that messages should be given weight—and more so under Unanimity treatments than under Majority, as the empirical probabilities deviate relatively more from 50-50 under Unanimity. The remaining columns of Table 4 show that, in all cases, subjects' beliefs indeed deviate more from 50-50, in the direction of the messages, in unanimity treatments than in majority treatments. The differences are significant, obtain robustly in both the first and the second halves of the sessions, and the robustness checks assuming rational expectations forming either state or outcome beliefs confirm the result. Based on this, we conclude that subjects anticipate and account for the higher probability of truthful messages under Unanimity.

Result 3. *Subjects' beliefs react more strongly to co-players' messages under Unanimity, showing that they respond to the increased truthfulness of messages.*

5.4 Do subjects strategically misreport to free-ride?

Lastly, we explore the theoretical prediction that subjects will best-respond to truth-telling by misreporting and free-riding. For suggestive evidence regarding free-riding, it is instructive to consider the average voting strategy of subjects the case of three messages for *B* ($M = 3$). In this case, for the Majority/High expressive payoff treatment where misreporting is the most common, subjects who misreport their signal vote for *B* just 16 percent of the time, relative to 69 percent for subjects who sent a truthful message of *B* (this is also much lower to the analogous rate under Unanimity/High, which is 54 percent; see Table 5 in the appendix). This low rate of voting for *B* is consistent with the free-riding strategy of misreporting *B* and then voting for *R*.

To identify whether Majority causes subjects to play the "free-riding" strategy, however, we need to link messages and voting at the individual level. Moreover, free-riding is not the only reason to misreport signals. Subjects may hold different beliefs as to which option maximizes expected payoffs conditional on a given set of signals. Accordingly, a subject with a bias for *B*, for example, may choose to misreport their signal to increase the probability that the committee chooses *B* given two signals for *B* (*persuasive misreporting*).

Overall, it is easy to think of at least five classes of individual strategies, summarized in Table 5a. In addition to the three strategic types outlined above, "strategic Red/Blue" as persuasive misreporting and "free-riding" as strategic misreporting, we also allow for subjects who are honest in the messaging stage and believe that other agents message honestly ("honest/naive"), and subjects with noisy behavior as a residual family to collect the players that do not fit into either of the other four classes ("noisy"). Such apparently noisy behavior may result from either misunderstanding the game or, more likely, from playing inconsistently over

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the course of the session. The inclusion of the noisy type thus serves as a robustness check of both the statistical classification and of the adequacy of the experimental set-up more generally. Our objective will be to evaluate our prediction that subjects more frequently use honest/naive strategies in unanimity treatments and free-riding strategies in majority treatments.

The voting strategies we assign to the honest/naive type follow from the theoretical predictions of Lemma 2. Specifically, the honest type will vote for R given two or more messages/signals for R. With two messages/signals for B, the honest type will vote for B with an intermediate probability, and with three messages/signals for B they will vote for B with a high probability. The messaging and voting strategies of the strategic types are then assigned relative to the honest type: The strategic Red type is more likely to message and vote R, while the strategic Blue type is more likely to message and vote B. The free-rider type, on the other hand, is more likely to message B and vote R.[15] The detailed definitions are provided in Table 5a. We allow for $\{\pi_{Lie}, \pi_{Low}, \pi_{Medium}, \pi_{High}\}$ to be free parameters in the estimation to avoid an inadequate specification.

A statistically efficient approach to determine the latent weights of the strategy classes is finite mixture modeling (MacLachlan and Peel, 2000). Such mixture models have been commonly used in behavioral analyses since Stahl and Wilson (1994, 1995), and have more recently been used, for example, to study individual heterogeneity in dictator games (Cappelen et al., 2007) and individual behavior in repeated games (Dal Bó and Fréchette, 2011; Fudenberg et al., 2012; Breitmoser, 2015). Finite mixture modeling is a general approach allowing for probabilistic assignment of subjects to strategy classes, which resolves a number of concerns with deterministic assignments,[16] but is otherwise comparable to cluster analyses.[17]

We assume that ex-ante, a subject plays strategy $k \in K$ with probability ρ_k, and that each subject sticks with the chosen strategy throughout the analyzed interactions. The statistical model is fully described by the ex-ante strategy weights $\rho = (\rho_1, \rho_2, \dots)$ and the strategy parameters $\pi = (\pi_{Lie}, \pi_{Low}, \pi_{Med}, \pi_{High})$ discussed above. Formally, given a subject pool S and our set of observations $O = \{o_s\}_{s \in S}$, let $P(o_s|\pi, k)$ denote the probability of the choices o_s made by subject $s \in S$ assuming s plays strategy of type k with parameters π. Then, the likelihood func-

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[15]While the relative comparisons follow from the theory, the exact division into the strategy classes was calibrated using the aggregate voting strategies reported in Table 6 in the Appendix.

[16]Deterministic approaches that assign each subject to a strategy class based on some distance measure are sensitive to the distant measure chosen, are ambivalent near the boundaries of each class, and do not reflect the degree of (un)certainty about a subject's classification. Furthermore, deterministic classification requires the distances to be reliably measured. In our case, however, they would be based on only few observations per information set.

[17]In most behavioral cluster analyses, each data point (subject) is represented by vectors with few elements. In such cases, we can plot the individual estimates and "mark" the cluster areas. This approach is inadequate here, as each subject is characterized by choices in many different information sets (namely, fourteen) with comparably few observations in each case. Loosely speaking, the finite mixture analysis determines a common denominator across information sets with regards to strategies.

Table 5: Do subjects play more honest strategies in unanimity voting? Results of the mixture analysis

(a) Definition of the classes of strategies

	Messages		Voting											
	$\mu(A)$	$\mu(B)$	$\pi(A,A,0)$	$\pi(B,A,0)$	$\pi(A,A,1)$	$\pi(A,B,1)$	$\pi(B,B,1)$	$\pi(B,A,1)$	$\pi(A,A,2)$	$\pi(A,B,2)$	$\pi(B,B,2)$	$\pi(B,A,2)$	$\pi(A,B,3)$	$\pi(B,B,3)$
Noise	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5
Honest	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	π_{Med}	1	π_{Med}	π_{Low}	π_{Med}	π_{Low}
StratRed	1	π_{Lie}	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	π_{Med}	1	π_{Med}
StratBlue	$1-\pi_{Lie}$	0	1	1	1	1	1	π_{Med}	π_{Med}	1	π_{Med}	π_{Low}	π_{Med}	π_{Low}
Freeride	$1-\pi_{Lie}$	0	1	1	1	1	1	π_{High}	π_{High}	1	π_{High}	π_{Med}	π_{High}	π_{Med}

Note: $\mu(s)$ is the probability of sending message A given the signal $s \in \{A, B\}$. $\pi(s, m, M)$ is the probability of voting A as a function of one's signal s, message m, and the number M of B messages overall (i.e. in aggregate over all players). The parameters $(\pi_{Lie}, \pi_{Low}, \pi_{Med}, \pi_{High})$ allow adaptation to subjects' behavior, with the theoretical ex-ante hypothesis $\pi_{Low} < \pi_{Med} < \pi_{High}$.

(b) Strategy weights and parameters across treatments (bootstrapped standard errors in parentheses)

	Strategy weights in population					Strategy parameters					ICL-BIC
	Noise	Honest	StratRed	StratBlue	FreeRide	ε	π_{Lie}	π_{High}	π_{Med}	π_{Low}	
All games per session											
Majority 35 15	0.12 (0.05)	0.44 (0.11)	0.19 (0.07)	0 (0.01)	0.26 (0.09)	0.04 (0)	0.42 (0.11)	0.73 (0.06)	0.35 (0.04)	0.08 (0.03)	6368.79
Majority 40 10	0.07 (0.04)	0.45 (0.12)	0.25 (0.08)	0.03 (0.03)	0.2 (0.07)						
Unanimity 35 15	0.07 (0.04)	0.78^{++} (0.06)	0.11 (0.05)	0.04 (0.03)	0^{--} (0)						
Unanimity 40 10	0.04 (0.03)	0.75^{++} (0.07)	0.18 (0.06)	0.02 (0.03)	0^{--} (0.02)						
Majority	0.09 (0.03)	0.44 (0.1)	0.22 (0.06)	0.01 (0.02)	0.23 (0.06)	0.04 (0)	0.41 (0.11)	0.72 (0.05)	0.35 (0.04)	0.08 (0.03)	6345.24
Unanimity	0.06 (0.03)	0.77^{++} (0.05)	0.15 (0.04)	0.03 (0.02)	0^{--} (0.01)						
Robustness check 1: 1st halves per session											
Majority	0.13 (0.04)	0.59 (0.11)	0.12 (0.06)	0.05 (0.04)	0.12 (0.08)	0.04 (0)	0.61 (0.13)	0.79 (0.13)	0.36 (0.04)	0.14 (0.05)	3304.43
Unanimity	0.1 (0.03)	0.78^{++} (0.04)	0.12 (0.03)	0 (0.01)	0^{--} (0)						
Robustness check 2: 2nd halves per session											
Majority	0.1 (0.03)	0.48 (0.15)	0.19 (0.06)	0.01 (0.02)	0.22 (0.11)	0.03 (0.01)	0.41 (0.2)	0.86 (0.06)	0.38 (0.09)	0.06 (0.05)	3009.04
Unanimity	0.07 (0.03)	0.71^{++} (0.08)	0.17 (0.06)	0.04 (0.02)	0^{--} (0.02)						

Note: This table provides the statistical support for our observation that subjects use more honest/naive strategies in unanimity treatments and more freeriding strategies in majority treatments. The table reports the weights of the five predicted strategies in the population, the estimated strategy parameters $(\pi_{Lie}, \pi_{Low}, \pi_{Med}, \pi_{High})$, the bootstrapped standard errors, and the goodness-of-fit measures ICL-BIC. The upper panel provides the estimates for the entire sessions, the lower panel provides robustness checks focusing on either first halves and second halves of the sessions. In the upper panel, we report estimates distinguishing either all treatments or only majority and unanimity treatments. Plus and minus signs indicate significant differences ($^{++}$ at $p < .05$ and $^{+}$ at $p < .1$ using bootstrapped p-values) of the strategy weights in the unanimity treatments compared to weights in the respective majority treatments. The ICL-BICs show that the latter more parsimonious approach is statistically more adequate, but the main results are robust in either case. They also hold robustly if we focus on either the first or the second halves of the sessions, as shown in the lower panel.

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$$LL(\rho, \pi \mid O) = \sum_{s \in S} \log \sum_{k \in K} \rho_k \cdot P(o_s \mid \pi, k)$$

is maximized over (ρ, π) to estimate the ex-ante strategy weights ρ we are interested in. The strategy parameters π are not of direct interest for our research hypothesis, but allow us to test whether the estimates align with our ex-ante predictions, which also serves as a robustness check. Given the observed choices O, we can determine the posterior class assigment of each subject $s \in S$ simply by applying Bayes Rule.

This approach does not require us to commit to distance functions and expresses the degree of (un)certainty as a function of behavior by implying probabilistic posterior beliefs. As usual, we maximize the likelihood by the expectation-maximization (EM) algorithm (see e.g. Arcidiacono and Jones, 2003), and in the maximization step we again first use the gradient-free NEWUOA approach and secondly a Newton-Raphson algorithm to ensure convergence. Model adequacy is measured using ICL-BIC (Biernacki et al., 2000), which penalizes both superfluous model components and excessive parametrization. ICL-BIC has been shown to enable reliable estimation of the number of components (in our case, strategy classes) in the population (Fonseca and Cardoso, 2007). Finally, standard errors are bootstrapped by replacement at the subject level to account for the panel character of the data, using stratified resampling acknowledging the treatment structure.

Table 5b presents the estimated strategy weights and strategy parameters, alongside the bootstrapped standard errors and statistical tests of our hypothesis. The main results are that 44 and 45% of the subjects use honest/naive strategies in the Majority treatments, compared to 78 and 75% in the Unanimity treatments, and that 26 and 20% of the subjects free-ride in the Majority treatments but no subjects free-ride in the Unanimity treatments.

The respective differences between Majority and Unanimity treatments are all highly significant and as hypothesized. The result is robust to pooling the Majority treatments and Unanimity treatments, respectively, and robust to focusing on either the first halves or second halves of each session, as shown in the lower panel of Table 5b. Further, the strategic parameters satisfy $\pi_{\text{Low}} < \pi_{\text{Med}} < \pi_{\text{High}}$, showing that the subjects use the strategies as predicted, and the share of unclassified ("noisy") players is around or below 10%, showing that subjects use their respective strategies consistently throughout the session. Finally, in our robustness checks reported in Table 8 (see Appendix B), we find that none of the strategy classes are superfluous, although some weights are small, in the sense that eliminating either classe increases the ICL-BIC measure of model adequacy. With these robustness checks in mind, we conclude as follows.

Result 4. *Subjects use honest/naive strategies more frequently in Unanimity and strategically misreport to free-ride in Majority.*

5.5 Discussion

Our experimental results show that expressive payoffs lead to strategic communication and inefficient information aggregation when committees take decisions via Majority rule. Additionally, relative to Unanimity, we demonstrate that subjects are less responsive to other subjects' messages under Majority, both in terms of the voting decision and their implicit ex-post beliefs regarding the state of the world. We find evidence that this decrease in the effectiveness of communication is due to the fact that, under Majority, a subset of subjects adopt a "free-riding" strategy, falsely reporting the non-expressive option to encourage other subject to vote for this option, while personally voting for the expressive option.

It is important to note, however, that both a coordination and a free-rider problem exist under Majority even with truthful communication—the coordination problem may contribute to the decrease in information aggregation relative to Unanimity. This raises the question of how our results might change in an environment with a richer communication set. For example, Goeree and Yariv (2011) show that given access to free-form communication, the most prevalent (endogenous) procedure by which subjects take decisions is to (1) share their private signals, (2) coordinate on a committee outcome, and (3) unanimously vote for the outcome decided on in (2). In contrast, we constrain subjects to a binary message, effectively ruling out the coordination stage (2).

Generally, communication has been shown to be an effective tool for coordination (see Ledyard, 1995 for an overview), and one might expect that a richer message space may improve the committee's ability to select the committee-optimal option. However, in contrast to the setting analyzed in Goeree and Yariv (2011), a unanimous vote for the non-expressive option is not an equilibrium with expressive payoffs, since subjects can deviate to the expressive option while leaving the committee decision unchanged. Therefore, the impact of a richer communication space on *information aggregation* is ambiguous in our setting: On one hand, a richer communication space may aid in coordinating on choosing the non-expressive option when the profile of messages indicates that this option is optimal. On the other hand, greater coordination increases the incentive to behave strategically: if the probability that other subjects vote for B given three messages of B increases, then the incentive to deviate from truthful communication to the free-riding strategy increases (moreover, our experiment shows that the severity of free-riding increases with incentives). That is, with increased coordination, a subject with signal R who deviates from an honest strategy to free-ride (message B and vote R) faces a higher probability that the committee chooses B given only two signals for B.[18] These conflicting mechanisms highlight richer communication in a setting with expressive payoffs as a

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[18]Note that a similar concern emerges when considering an increase in the committee's size: A larger committee gives access to more signals, potentially increasing the accuracy of the committee's decision. However, given voting B is a public good, consistent with the evidence on free-riding and population size (see Isaac and Walker, 1988), a larger committee may induce more subjects to adopt a free-riding strategy.

promising area for further research.

6   Conclusion

In this paper, we consider information aggregation through voting with committee members who receive idiosyncratic payoffs tied to their individual votes. Using a theoretical model, we show that when the committee aggregates votes via a majority rule, truthful communication and informative voting is not an equilibrium despite the fact that committee members have homogeneous preferences over the committee outcome. In contrast, an equilibrium with truthful communication and committee-optimal voting strategies is an equilibrium under a unanimity rule as long as committee members have homogeneous preferences over the committee outcome conditional upon the aggregate profile of signals. This suggests a novel rationale for the use of unanimity: in settings with idiosyncratic preferences, efficiency can only be achieved under a decision rule that uniformly enforces responsibility for the committee decision across all committee members.

We test the predictions of the model using laboratory experiments. Our experimental results broadly support for the theoretical predictions. We find that, relative to unanimity, subjects are more likely to falsely report their signal and committee decisions are less likely to aggregate private information under majority rule. Moreover, we identify that this decrease in information aggregation can be attributed to subjects adopting a "free-rider" strategy under majority, which leads to less effective communication and sub-optimal committee decisions.

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A   Proofs for Section 3

Proof of Lemma 1: Given that $\tau_j(,,,) = 1$ for $j \neq i$, the committee outcome is independent of v_i, which implies that $E(p_i | v_i = R, M, m_i, s_i) = E(p_i | v_i = B, M, m_i, s_i) + K$. Therefore, $\tau_i(,,,) = 1$ is a best response. ∎

Proof of Lemma 2: First, note that $piv(x)$ is equal to zero for $x = 0, 1$, and is maximized at $x = 0.5$. Moreover, $piv(x)$ is strictly increasing over the domain $[0, 0.5]$ and strictly decreasing over $(0.5, 1]$. Therefore, if $M = S < S^{piv}$, then the following expression holds for all $x \in [0, 1]$:

$$piv(x)[\Pr(\omega = B|S) - \Pr(\omega = R|S)] \leq piv(0.5)[\Pr(\omega = B|S) - \Pr(\omega = R|S)] < K.$$

This implies that $E(p_i | v_i = R, M, m_i, s_i) > E(p_i | v_i = B, M, m_i, s_i)$ for any $\tau(M)$ and that there is no equilibrium in which $\tau(,,,) < 1$. Second, if $M > S^{piv}$, then there exists a unique $\tau^*(M) \in [0, 0.5]$ such that the equilibrium condition, $piv(\tau^*(M))[\Pr(\omega = B|S) - \Pr(\omega = R|S)] = K$, holds. By the symmetry of $piv(x)$ about 0.5, $piv(1 - \tau^*(M))[\Pr(\omega = B|S) - \Pr(\omega = R|S)] = K$, and $1 - \tau^*(M)$ is the unique equilibrium in $[0.5, 1]$. ∎

Proof of Lemma 3: For $M < \bar{S}$, $v_i = B$ is a strictly dominated strategy since $\Pr(\omega = B|S) - \Pr(\omega = R|S) < K$. For $M > \bar{S}$, however, $v_i = B$ is a best response to any $\tau < 1$ since $\Pr(\omega = B|S) - \Pr(\omega = R|S) > K$. ∎

Proof of Lemma 4: Given $\tau(M) = 1$, the committee outcome is independent of m_i, which implies that any messaging strategy is an equilibrium. ∎

Proof of Proposition 1: We prove the result by contradiction. Assume an equilibrium exists with truthful messaging in the deliberation stage, and that all agents play strategy $\tau^*(M)$ in the voting stage. Note that the formulation of the proposition implies that given K, $\tau^*(M) > 0$ for $M = N$ (that is, $S^{piv} < N$, otherwise the only equilibrium is the babbling equilibrium).

The proof stems from the following two observations: (1) since $K > K'$ implies that $S^{piv} > (N+1)/2$, when $M = (N+1)/2$, the unique equilibrium in the voting subgame is for all agents to vote for R; (2) as shown by equation 1, $\tau^*(M)$ is increasing in M.

Now, consider the expected payoff of an agent, i', who has a signal of R, but who deviates to $m_{i'} = B$. Also, assume that i' plays strategy $\tau^*(M-1)$ – that is, conditional on S, i' continues to play the same strategy as under truthful communication. This implies that i''s expected expressive payoff is unchanged conditional on S, and i''s expected payoffs change only due to the change in the probability that $X = B$ given S. First, note that by (1), $\tau^*(M) = 0$ for $M \leq (N+1)/2$, $\Pr(X = B|S < N/2, m_{i'} = B) = 0$. Second, by (2), $\Pr(X = B|S > N/2, m_{i'} = B) \geq \Pr(X = B|S > N/2, m_{i'} = R)$, and $\Pr(X = B|S > N/2, m_{i'} = B) > \Pr(X = B|S > N/2, m_{i'} = R)$ for $S > S^{piv} - 1$.

Therefore, since i''s expected utility is strictly higher given an increase in $\Pr(X = B|S > N/2)$, setting $m_{i'} = B$ is a best response. (Note, however, that the strategy $(\sigma(R) = \sigma(B) = 0, \tau^*(M-1))$ is not a best reply – given that other agents play the mixed strategy $\tau^*(S-1)$, i' has a best reply of voting R for all M $(\sigma(R) = \sigma(B) = 0, \tau(M) = 1)$.) ∎

Proof of Proposition 2: Lemma 3 shows that given truthful messaging, it is an equilibrium for agents to unanimously vote for B if and only if selecting and voting for option B is optimal

given the expressive cost. Next, we show that truthful messaging is an equilibrium given this voting strategy.

Consider the expected payoff of an agent, i', who has a signal of R, but who deviates to $m_{i'} = B$. Given $M < \bar{S}$, all agents $i \neq i'$ will vote $v_i = R$ and i' has a best reply to also vote for R, which implies that the outcome is unchanged relative to truthful reporting. Given $M \geq \bar{S}$, all agents $i \neq i'$ will vote $v_i = B$, which implies that i''s vote is pivotal. This implies that for $M > \bar{S}$, i' has a best reply of voting for B. Lastly, for $M = \bar{S}$, i' has a best reply to vote for R, since $S = M - 1 < \bar{S}$.

Taken together, this shows that the committee outcome, X, and i''s voting behavior, conditional on S, is unchanged by i''s deviation in the messaging stage. Therefore, i''s expected payoffs are not changed by the deviation to $m_{i'} = B$. Similarly, i' with $s_{i'} = B$ is made strictly worse off by deviating from truthful messaging, since the committee outcome will select R when $S = \lceil \bar{S} \rceil$. This shows that truthful messaging and optimal information aggregation is an equilibrium under Unanimity for all parameter values. ∎

Sincere Voting Before comparing information aggregation under Majority and Unanimity, we first consider whether there are equilibria under Majority that optimally aggregates information without truthful messaging. Note that under Unanimity, truthful messaging is a necessary condition for optimal information aggregation since, to achieve efficiency, each agent needs to condition their vote on the aggregate signal profile. Under Majority, however, optimal information aggregation can be achieve without communication as long as each agent votes their signal ($v_i = s_i$). Therefore, we consider conditions under which $v_i = s_i$ is an equilibrium voting strategy.

First, we define K'' as follows:

$$K'' = \Pr(S = 2 | s_i = B)[\Pr(\omega = B | S = 2) - \Pr(\omega = R | S = 2)].$$

The following lemma characterizes when perfectly informative voting is an equilibrium under Majority, given uninformative messaging.

Lemma 5 (Informative Voting: Majority). *Babbling at the message stage, e.g. $\sigma(s_i) = 1$ for all i, and informative voting, $v_i = s_i$, at the voting stage is an equilibrium strategy if and only if $K \leq K''$.*

Proof: Assume i receives a blue signal, $s_i = B$. Since messaging is uninformative and since, given a strategy of $v_i = s_i$, i's vote is pivotal only when $S = 2$, i's expected relative payoff of voting B is equal to:

$$\Pr(S = 2 | s_i = B)[\Pr(\omega = B | S = 2) - \Pr(\omega = R | S = 2)] - K,$$

which is positive iff $K < K''$. ∎

Similar to Proposition 1, Lemma 5 shows that perfectly informative voting is only an equilibrium when K is small. Also, note that there are no equilibria with partially informative messaging and perfectly informative voting for $K > K''$: if messaging is partially informative, then there exists some M such that $\Pr(S = 2 | s_i = B, M) \leq \Pr(S = 2 | s_i = B)$, in which case it is not an equilibrium for i to vote B for all M.

B   Additional Material and Robustness Analyses

Additional graphs and tables   Figure 3 provides a composite screen-shot that displays all queries and all pieces of information that were available to subjects at some point during the experiment. Table 6 describes the relative frequency and number of votes for *B* across all information sets in all four treatments.

Learning   In this subsection we show that the qualitative results presented in above are robust to excluding the first 25 rounds of the experiment (learning). Figures 4 and 5 replicate the Figures refered to when discussing Questions 1 and 2 for the restricted data set comprising only the second halves of all sessions. The patterns are virtually indistinguishable. Table 7 replicates the probit regression refered to in the discussion of Question 3, including a dummy "Late" distinguishing whether subjects are in the first or second halves of their sessions. With only two exceptions, "Late" again is insignificant. The remaining statistical results relied upon in the discussion of Questions 3 and 4 in the main text distinguish first and second halves of sessions explicitly, thus establishing robustness to learning explicitly.

Multiple voting rounds under Unanimity   As we discuss in the main text, there is an asymmetry in our operationalization of Majority and Unanimity. In particular, to replicate a consensus decision rule, we allowed for up to three rounds of voting in the Unanimity treatment. While we do not have data on subjects' decisions if the status quo had been implemented following a non-unanimous first round of voting, we can consider this counterfactual by looking at the first-round votes. Figure 6 shows the committee outcome that would occur given the first-round votes and a counterfactual first-round Unanimity rule (left graph), and a counterfactual first-round Majority rule (right graph).

Focusing on the case of $S = 3$, we see that information aggregation remains higher under Unanimity under both counterfactual assumptions. Moreover, previous research has shown that under one-sided unanimity, subjects are less likely to exercise their veto and vote for the status quo (again, see Guarnaschelli et al., 2000 and Goeree and Yariv, 2011). If one-sided unanimity were to influence subject's behavior is a similar fashion in our experiment, then this would imply that the counterfactual first-round Unanimity rule results are a lower bound for information aggregation (for the case of $S = 3$). Together, these results suggest that the finding of higher information aggregation under Unanimity is not due to the multiple rounds of voting.

Figure 7 also includes the results for both counterfactual treatments for the second half of the experiment. Interestingly, the difference between the two counterfactual treatments remains high, suggesting that subject do not converge to a first-round consensus.

**Finite mixture model: robustness checks**   Table 8 shows that eliminating components (strategy classes) from the analysis leads to worse values of the information criterion ICL-BIC, suggesting that no component should be eliminated.

Table 6: Proportion and number of votes for B

Treatment		High		Low	
M	s_i/m_i	Majority	Unanimity	Majority	Unanimity
0	red/red	0.02 (198)	0.00 (399)	0.02 (304)	0.00 (404)
0	blue/red	0.08 (24)	0.00 (63)	0.23 (53)	0.00 (43)
1	red/red	0.05 (464)	0.01 (487)	0.07 (523)	0.02 (511)
1	red/blue	0.09 (46)	0.00 (17)	0.14 (36)	0.12 (17)
1	blue/blue	0.08 (218)	0.02 (258)	0.08 (276)	0.01 (276)
1	blue/red	0.22 (64)	0.06 (63)	0.18 (101)	0.03 (75)
2	red/red	0.25 (228)	0.35 (240)	0.36 (237)	0.62 (192)
2	red/blue	0.06 (110)	0.19 (42)	0.32 (57)	0.47 (19)
2	blue/blue	0.40 (456)	0.41 (516)	0.56 (507)	0.63 (435)
2	blue/red	0.31 (55)	0.62 (39)	0.49 (45)	0.66 (35)
3	red/blue	0.16 (85)	0.54 (13)	0.45 (20)	0.83 (12)
3	blue/blue	0.69 (302)	0.93 (263)	0.69 (241)	0.96 (231)

Proportion of votes for B as a function of the aggregate message profile (M) and the individual signal/message (number of observations are reported in parentheses). We use first-round votes for the unanimity treatments.

Figure 3: Composite screenshot (translated; the original version is provided in the supplementary material)
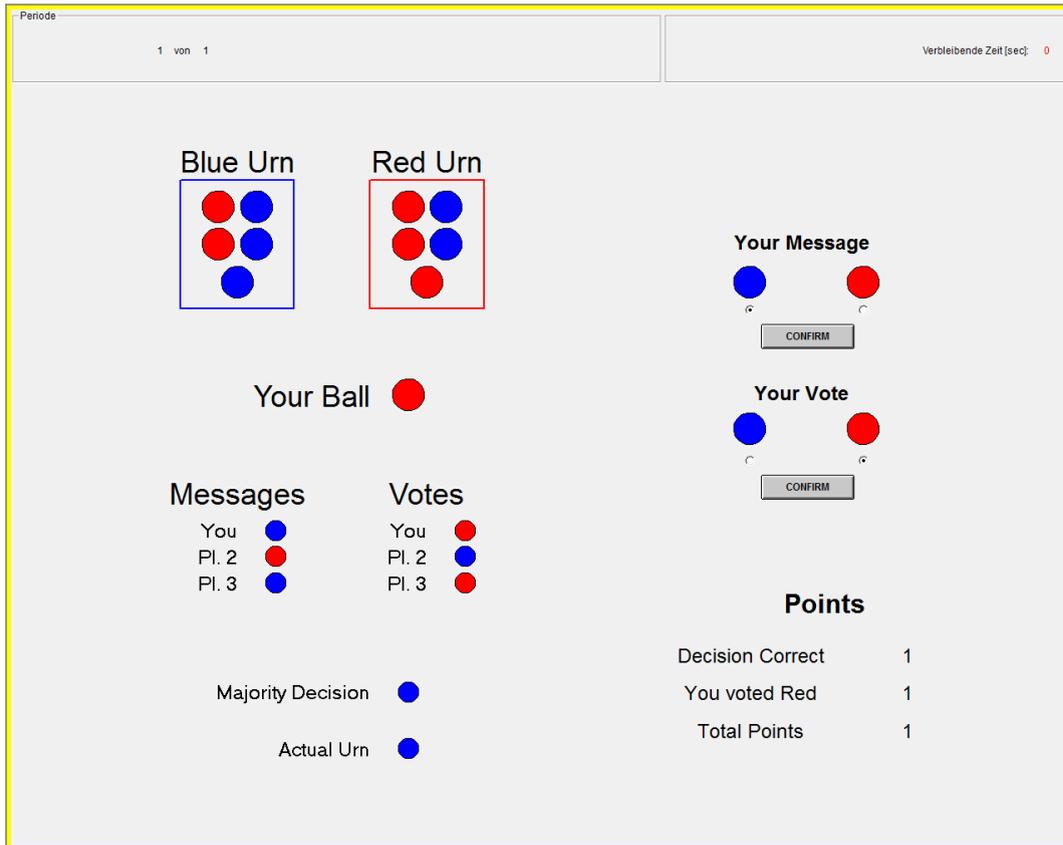
Note: This screenshot simultaneously displays all queries and all pieces of information that were available at some point during the experiment. All items are in the positions they had been displayed, and they were displayed in the following order.

1. Show urns and drawn ball (displayed for the entire game)
   Shows the two jars ("Blue Urn" and "Red Urn") and the ball drawn ("Your ball"). These items remain on the screen for the entire game.

2. After five seconds, query for message (no time limit)
   Now the box "Your Message" appears with the two balls underneath to choose from. Subjects submit the message by clicking "OK", there is no time limit. Once the message is submitted, the box disappears.

3. When all messages are submitted, they are displayed (displayed for the remainder of the game)
   Now the box "Messages" on the left appears, displaying the messages of all three subjects. These items remain on the screen for the rest of the game.

4. After five seconds, query for vote (no time limit)
   Now the box "Your Vote" appears with the two options to choose from. Subjects submit their vote by clicking "OK", there is no time limit. Once the vote is submitted, the box disappears.

5. When all votes are submitted, they are displayed (displayed for the remainder of the game)
   Now the box "Votes" on the left appears, displaying the votes of all three subjects. These items remain on the screen for the rest of the game (in Majority or in Unanimity if decision unanimous or the third vote was taken) or disappear (in Unanimity otherwise, where the voting stage is restarted).

6. After five seconds, the decision taken by the committee ("Majority Decision"), the urn originally chosen by Nature ("Actual Urn") and the payoff information is displayed ("Points"). The majority decision and numbers displayed here are entirely artifical. The information remains on the screen for 10 seconds, after which a new game starts.
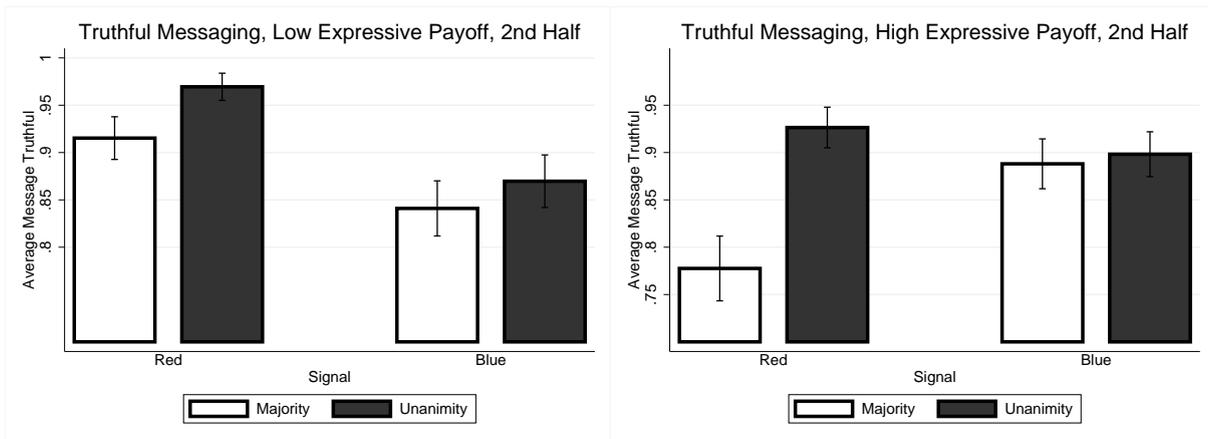
37
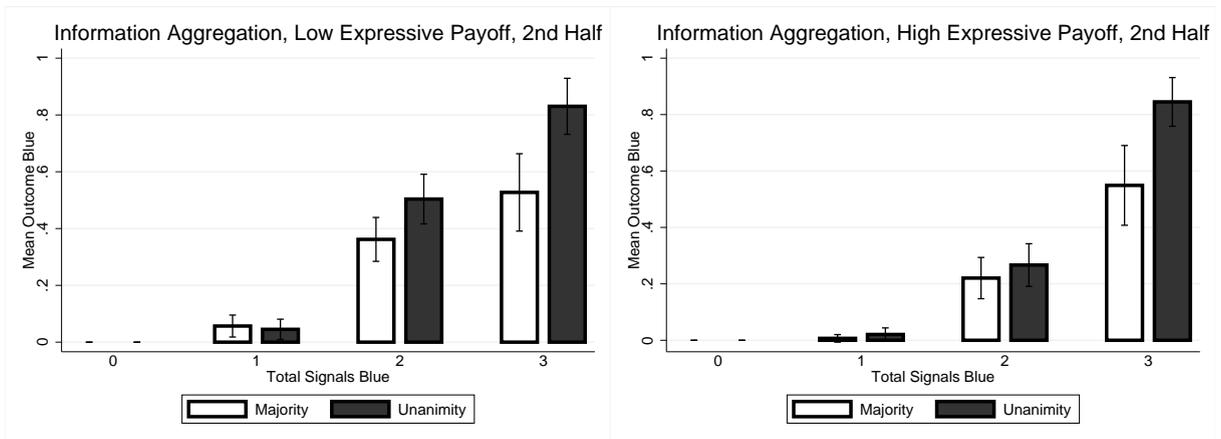
Figure 4: Truthful reporting for rounds $26 - 50$.

Figure 5: Information aggregation for rounds $26 - 50$.

Figure 6: Average levels of outcome *blue*, assuming a counterfactual first-round Unanimity rule (left graph) and a counterfactual first-round Majority rule (right graph), as a function of the aggregate profile of signals.

Table 7: Probit estimations to explore subject learning

Vote *Blue*	(1) Low	(2) High	(3) Joint
Own signal *B*	1.477***	1.627***	1.544***
	(0.168)	(0.158)	(0.111)
Number of other's messages *B*	1.692***	1.622***	1.656***
	(0.136)	(0.129)	(0.0928)
Majority	1.372***	1.357***	1.329***
	(0.284)	(0.330)	(0.209)
Majority*own signal	-0.510**	-0.513*	-0.493***
	(0.198)	(0.216)	(0.140)
Majority*other's messages	-0.902***	-0.905***	-0.890***
	(0.162)	(0.161)	(0.112)
Late	-0.250	-0.611**	-0.341*
	(0.252)	(0.228)	(0.166)
Late*own signal	0.180	0.0851	0.105
	(0.132)	(0.141)	(0.0939)
Late*other's messages	0.215	0.168	0.128
	(0.173)	(0.144)	(0.110)
Late*majority	-0.110	0.0482	-0.0738
	(0.249)	(0.266)	(0.175)
Late*majority*other's messages	-0.147	-0.00879	-0.0322
	(0.191)	(0.179)	(0.127)
High			-0.322***
			(0.0833)
Constant	-3.264***	-3.447***	-3.186***
	(0.240)	(0.258)	(0.168)
N	4650	4650	9300

Subject-level clustered standard errors in parentheses, "late" indicates round > 25.

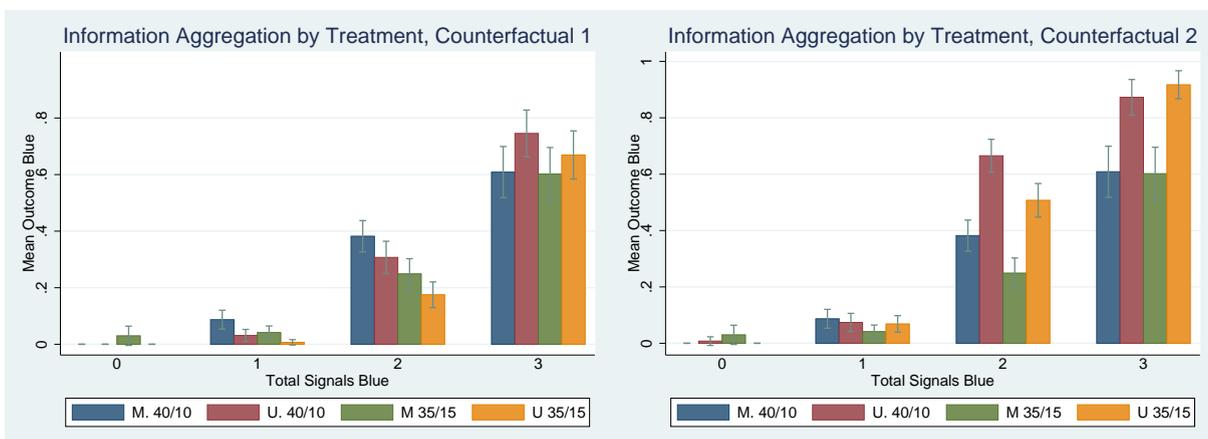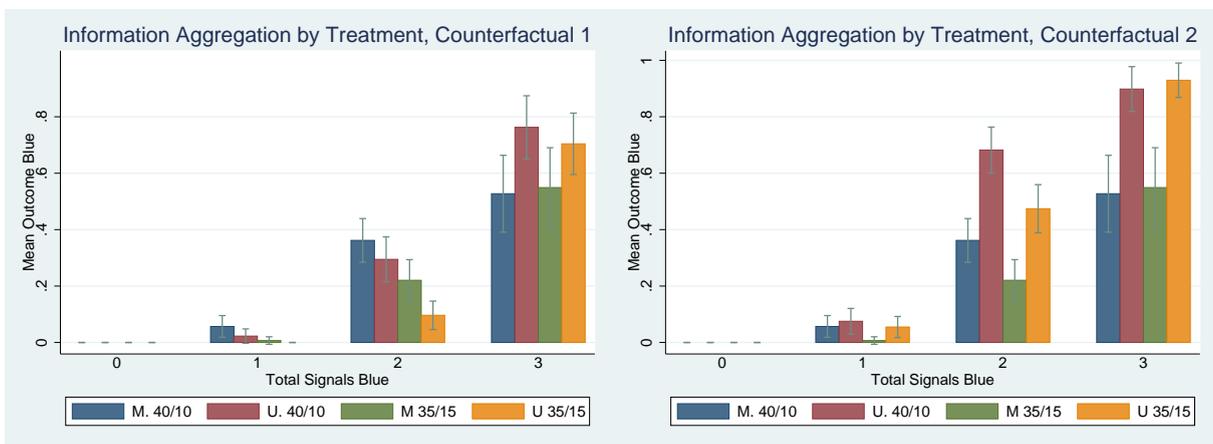* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 7: Average levels of outcome *blue*, assuming a counterfactual first-round Unanimity rule (left graph) and a counterfactual first-round Majority rule (right graph), for rounds $26 - 50$.

Table 8: Robustness check on estimated strategy weights, testing whether all strategy classes have significant weight. The test based on ICL-BIC (less is better), and we find that no strategy class may be eliminated without increasing ICL-BIC. Format is equal to Table 5b

	Strategy weights in population					Strategy parameters					ICL-BIC
	Noise	Honest	StratRed	StratBlue	FreeRide	ε	π_{Lie}	π_{High}	π_{Med}	π_{Low}	
All games per session											
Majority 35 15	0.12	0.44	0.19	0	0.26	0.04	0.42	0.73	0.35	0.08	6368.79
Majority 40 10	0.07	0.45	0.25	0.03	0.2						
Unanimity 35 15	0.07	0.78	0.11	0.04	0						
Unanimity 40 10	0.04	0.75	0.18	0.02	0						
Majority 35 15	0.12		0.2	0.18	0.51	0.05	0.14	0.62	0.23	0.04	6746.9
Majority 40 10	0.11		0.25	0.22	0.42						
Unanimity 35 15	0.1		0.13	0.7	0.06						
Unanimity 40 10	0.06		0.21	0.53	0.19						
Majority 35 15	0.16	0.21		0.05	0.58	0.05	0.13	0.75	0.25	0.05	6770.39
Majority 40 10	0.18	0.25		0.05	0.53						
Unanimity 35 15	0.13	0.8		0	0.07						
Unanimity 40 10	0.09	0.52		0.11	0.27						
Majority 35 15	0.12	0.44	0.19		0.26	0.04	0.42	0.72	0.35	0.08	6368.55
Majority 40 10	0.07	0.48	0.25		0.21						
Unanimity 35 15	0.11	0.78	0.11		0						
Unanimity 40 10	0.04	0.78	0.18		0						
Majority 35 15	0.13	0.57	0.13	0.16		0.04	0.54	0.5	0.44	0.17	6468.46
Majority 40 10	0.07	0.62	0.11	0.2							
Unanimity 35 15	0.07	0.81	0.08	0.04							
Unanimity 40 10	0.04	0.79	0.15	0.02							
Majority 35 15	0.13		0.22		0.64	0.05	0.13	0.35	0.19	0.25	6948.35
Majority 40 10	0.11		0.32		0.57						
Unanimity 35 15	0.1		0.13		0.76						
Unanimity 40 10	0.06		0.27		0.67						
Majority 35 15	0.16	0.25			0.59	0.05	0.13	0.74	0.25	0.05	6766.47
Majority 40 10	0.18	0.3			0.53						
Unanimity 35 15	0.13	0.8			0.07						
Unanimity 40 10	0.09	0.64			0.27						
Majority 35 15	0.23	0.66	0.11			0.05	0.67	0.68	0.43	0.15	6677.39
Majority 40 10	0.16	0.75	0.09								
Unanimity 35 15	0.11	0.82	0.07								
Unanimity 40 10	0.04	0.82	0.14								
Majority	0.09	0.44	0.22	0.01	0.23	0.04	0.41	0.72	0.35	0.08	6345.24
Unanimity	0.06	0.77	0.15	0.03	0						
Majority	0.11		0.23	0.19	0.47	0.05	0.14	0.62	0.22	0.03	6728.42
Unanimity	0.08		0.17	0.61	0.14						
Majority	0.17	0.23		0.05	0.55	0.05	0.13	0.75	0.25	0.05	6758.34
Unanimity	0.11	0.66		0.06	0.17						
Majority	0.09	0.46	0.22		0.23	0.04	0.42	0.72	0.35	0.08	6349.6
Unanimity	0.08	0.78	0.15		0						
Majority	0.1	0.6	0.12	0.18		0.04	0.54	0.5	0.44	0.17	6448.95
Unanimity	0.06	0.8	0.12	0.03							
Majority	0.12		0.27		0.61	0.05	0.13	0.35	0.19	0.25	6934.63
Unanimity	0.08		0.2		0.72						
Majority	0.17	0.27			0.56	0.05	0.13	0.75	0.25	0.05	6754.68
Unanimity	0.11	0.72			0.17						
Majority	0.19	0.71	0.1			0.05	0.67	0.67	0.43	0.15	6663.68
Unanimity	0.08	0.82	0.1								

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