

Coordinating collective resistance through communication and repeated interaction

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This paper presents a laboratory collective resistance (CR) game to study how different forms of repeated interactions, with and without communication, can help coordinate subordinates' collective resistance against a leader who transgresses against their rights or personal interests. The subordinates face a coordination problem in that their challenge against the leader's transgression will only succeed if both of them incur the cost to do so. The socially-efficient outcome without transgression can occur in equilibrium with standard moneymaximizing preferences with repeated interactions, but this outcome is not an equilibrium with standard preferences when adding non-binding subordinate "cheap talk" communication in the one-shot game. Nevertheless, we find that communication (in the one-shot game) is at least as effective as repetition (with no communication) in reducing the transgression rate. Moreover, communication is better than repetition in coordinating resistance, because it makes it easier for subordinates to identify other "altruistic punishers" who are willing to incur the cost to punish a violation of social norms.