


Camouflage: A dominant reaction to worsening conditions

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Bruno S Frey 

CREMA- Center for Research in Economics, Management and the Arts, Zurich, and University of Basel, Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract

Individuals choose *camouflage* as a dominant response when a state's political conditions worsen, particularly when a democracy turns authoritarian. Individuals hide their private preferences to survive under oppressive regimes. This paper argues that in many circumstances camouflage is the most rational, cost-minimizing reaction to oppression. The paper identifies five kinds of costs that induce individuals to resort to four different ideal types of camouflage: (1) avoidance of contact, (2) minimal participation, (3) restricted cooperation, and (4) full engagement with the oppressive regime. Camouflage is particularly advantageous as the costs of exit or voice are often high. Therefore, a large majority of citizens disagreeing with the ideology and policies of a regime are likely to camouflage.

Keywords

Camouflage, exit, voice, citizens, authoritarian, institutions

What is camouflage?

Benito Mussolini, in 1922, and Adolf Hitler, in 1933, took over power rather unexpectedly and immediately imposed oppressive regimes. Today, Putin in

Corresponding author:

Bruno S Frey, CREMA-Center for Research in Economics, Management and the Arts, Zurich, and Department of Economics, University of Basel, Suedstrasse 11, CH-8008, Zurich, Switzerland.

Email: bruno.frey@bsfrey.ch