

# Making Peace: Bias, Information, and Mediation

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# Central Puzzle

- What is the role of bias and information in the mediation of interstate conflict?

# Mediation

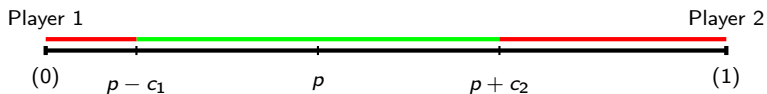
Mediation is the involvement of an outside actor in an international conflict with the aim of reducing hostility, upon the approval of both the disputing parties

Three Types of Mediation Strategies:

- Communication Facilitation
- Procedural
- Directive

# Crisis Bargaining and Mediation

Figure 1



# Cheap Talk: A Review

Cheap talk consists of costless, non-binding, non-verifiable messages

Cheap talk is generally thought to require some common interest

Cheap talk has a credibility problem in a bargaining situation- can a mediator solve this?

# An Honest Mediator

Suppose a mediator is always honest, and always believed

Is this an equilibrium result?

## Bias → Challenger

What happens if the mediator is biased in favor of the challenger?

The mediator benefits from telling the defender that it must concede in two ways

The mediator always wants to say “concede” and is never believed

# Unbiased

What happens if the mediator is unbiased?

The mediator *still* benefits from telling the defender that it must concede

The mediator always wants to say “concede” and is never believed



## Bias $\rightarrow$ Defender

What happens if the mediator is biased in favor of the defender?

This is the only possibility for information transmission

# Conclusion and Discussion

Biased mediators are more likely to succeed because unbiased mediators lack credibility

Are there reasons to be skeptical here?

# Information, Bias, and Mediation Success

Use data to find out what kind of mediator is successful

## Hypotheses

- The more relevant information a mediator has, the more likely mediation is to succeed.
- The more biased the mediator is towards one of the disputants, the more likely mediation is to succeed.

# Data

40 crises mediated by states from 1965 to 1995

67 uses of information provision strategies by mediators

54% of mediators produce a successful outcome

# Information

## Three Sources

- Military Intel
- Diplomatic Representation
- Institutionalized Alliance

# Bias- Relative vs. Absolute

## Three Sources

- Alliance Ties
- Trade Links
- Conflict History

# Results

The higher the degree of bias a mediator has toward one of the disputants, the higher the likelihood of mediation success

The higher the levels of information mediators have, the higher the likelihood of mediation success

# Policy Implications

Need to develop policies that encourage/facilitate the dissemination of information

Biased mediators should be encouraged to resolve disputes?