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# Summary of comments

The most useful positive comments were (1) how this paper brought together theories of conflict from Econ/IR and theories of prejudice reduction from Psych/American Politics. People thought this was huge and a big contribution. The psych/econ ideas clearly work together well but very few papers bring them together like this. And (2) the first three paragraphs of the intro, using the story of farmers protecting pastoralists, really brought people into the paper.

The most useful “negative/constructive” comments were about moving the framing one more step up. Specifically, the framing should be about solving the trust problems of intergroup bargaining, not about types of international interventions. Focusing on trust problems is great for us. It fits much better into most PS literature about intergroup conflict as a trust problem. And it fits much better with the theory section bringing ideas from psychology to help solve trust problems. Trust problems are the bigger phenomenon that international interventions seek to address, so that stuff isn’t totally off topic, but should not be the focus.

I think this was most the most useful set of comments overall because it solves most of the framing problems I’d been thinking about after taking a day off from the paper: (i) The awkwardness of talking about international interventions (in the intro) before talking about intergroup bargaining (was first section of theory); (ii) Framing with a literature on intervention that concerns organized groups and applying it to communities (solved if we frame it around trust problems that the communities have, and use interventions as examples of these trust problems); (iii) The semi antagonistic “top-down” vs “bottom-up” comparison that we don’t want to make and that our theory is not about; (iv) the focus being on other interventions instead of the theory of prejudice reduction helping solve bargaining problems that lead to conflict.

All around just a huge win to make our pitch about the bigger “trust” phenomenon. Everyone’s main comments were some flavor of this, and after discussion the group had consensus on “trust” framing. Which is a great framing for us!

## Set 1 – Primary

* Make this less about intervention/peacekeeping and more about the trust/bargaining problems that cause violence. And how prejudice reduction alleviates trust/bargaining problems (our major contribution). Not a big change, just moving things around and talking less about interventions.
  + Focus on trust/bargaining problems also makes intergroup trust the center of the analysis, with security/violence-reduction like a behavioral implication/downstream outcome.
  + peacekeeping/building frame is narrower than this needs to be; trust issues are a huge issue in lots of aspects of political science.
* Like the two ways reducing prejudice decreases bargaining problems: (1) increasing trust directly, and (2) “cleaning the pipes” – prejudice “clogs pipes” and biases information processing, which decreases trust by changing how we interpret the behavior of others. Reducing prejudice these two ways helps *all* bargaining. That is huge.
* Don’t want to set up paper as a “top-down” vs “bottom-up” study because it’s not. That’s not the theory, not the design, not the point. We are not comparing two types of interventions. The language right now is too “substitute” and needs to be more “complement”.
  + Also, both “top-down” and “bottom-up” deal with information and commitment problems to resolve conflict. Solving information and commitment problems is the point.
  + Contrast with top-down interventions is weird because those are targeted to organized states/groups, where a state leader and a rebel leader bargain. That is not the case here.
  + Strategies of removing prejudice help “top-down” interventions, as well, since less biased information processing helps all bargaining.
* Focus on complementarity of “improve bargaining through prejudice reduction” with other ways of improving bargaining (mediation, punishing defection, etc…). A way this type of “prejudice reduction” intervention complements other ways to improve bargaining: lots of conflicts are not big enough for international community to mediate and/or lack unified groups where 1 leader can speak for the group. These “lower level” conflicts can be resolved with bottom-up approaches, whereas it is hard to think of a “top-down” approach to lower-level conflicts. How can we even do intervention/mediation without unified groups? A way to solve it from bottom-up is intergroup contact/contact hypothesis/prejudice reduction and building trust.
  + If framing this paper more about trust, then civil wars and international intervention (most lit cited in intro) are one example of trust issues, and Nigeria stuff is another example. Not a problem that most of the international intervention is about civil wars! Civil wars and the intercommunal conflict are an example of the same larger problem.
* Some very useful papers about intergroup trust and intergroup bargaining. Those papers can complement fearon/powell about “intergroup conflict as a bargaining problem” for framing the initial stuff. The papers have models where individual people within different groups are randomly interacting. Overall trust between these groups determines the outcomes of these individual pairings. What each individual does has an effect on the overall trust these groups have for each other. Trust FOR your group is a public good. Look at these trust relationships and how these can lead to vicious/virtuous cycles for community relationships.
  + In our paper, the intervention/mediation stuff should come after this bigger trust stuff. Intervention/mediation is second-level, an example of these bigger trust problems.
* **To implement**: move up section 2.1 to the intro, cut some of the intro about interventions, and be more general/bundled with motivating literature (less specific = less space = more space for the good theory stuff). This also has the benefit of getting the contribution earlier in the intro, and keeping the theory focused on the prejudice reduction and not reviewing other interventions. It gets the theory about prejudice earlier, too.
  + Maybe: Lay out commitment problem/information problem, maybe how weak states (like Nigeria) cannot solve the problem the way it is typically solved (mediation/intervention). So how can the communities solve this themselves? Reputation to overcome commitment problems. Then discuss contributions about that underlying stuff. “We already have a way to think about solving these problems (reputation/trust, mediation, intervention). Here is a thing that (1) makes those things work better. And (2) where those things are too costly/not feasible, we can still do this anti-prejudice stuff.”

## Set 2 - Secondary

* People love how this takes two literatures that do not talk to each other (Bargaining from Econ/International relations and prejudice reduction from Psych/American politics) and shows how much we can learn from both.
* Intro is too long. Definitely keep first three paragraphs. Keep discussion of contributions at end of intro. Streamline sections between first three paragraphs and description of study by talking less about international intervention/mediation.
  + Intro should be short story from Nigeria, stuff about trust/bargaining issues, summary of paper (theory, experiment, results, and contributions). Things about international intervention stuff is a nice contribution, but not main point.
* 2/5 of the group perceived this as overly negative about top-down interventions, which takes away from the paper, is unnecessary for the paper’s argument, is not what we believe, and will make enemies.
* More about how the material improvements in the program (boreholes, buildings) translates to the psychological stuff in the theory (this maybe goes into the “intervention design” section that comes before the “research design” section).
  + Maybe talk about “spillover” as positive externalities from contact & superordinate goals. 10 people from each group get together and everyone gets water (superordinate goal achieved). The water could make everyone less prejudiced, especially if they know the other side helped bring it. That is good for a program trying to reduce prejudice and produce positive spillovers.
    - also not clear why superordinate goals make contact more successful. And the role of elites/leaders in contact is not clear.

## Set 3 - Writing

* Theory is less developed/edited than the intro. Often “statement 1, statement 2” but no logical connection between that. When finishing the intro, remember to connect the statements.
* A primary audience for this paper will be people who are not well versed in commitment/information/reputation problems. So need to make those connections *very* clear and clearly tied to theory/intervention.