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Peaceful alternatives to asymmetric conflict

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Propositions

1. Conflicting parties will use peaceful alternatives for wealth generation if they are provided.
2. The availability of peaceful alternatives for wealth generation significantly reduces the intensity of aggression and conflict.
3. Successful defense requires both higher and more consistent investment than attack. While both conflicting parties benefit from peaceful alternatives for wealth generation, the attacking party can take greater advantage of such opportunities and benefits disproportionately.
4. As groups experience (or perceive) resource stress on productive club goods, they will shift from in-group cooperation to out-group aggression if the opportunity is present.
5. The existence of decision and game theory as a comprehensive and unifying theoretical framework is a distinct advantage of using experimental games to study social behavior.
6. While theoretical models and agent-based simulations are valuable, their assumptions and conclusions should be rigorously grounded in and validated by empirical observations.
7. Experimental games excel at uncovering the psychological and motivational underpinning of social behavior, but caution is needed when transferring experimental models to complex societal phenomena.
8. The study of conflict is a multidisciplinary endeavor that should combine theory, field observation and data, and experimental evidence.
10. While full objectivity and “value-free” science is impossible, the scientific project should nonetheless aspire to these values. A scientific ecosystem that prioritizes intellectual openness and appreciates contention is key for this endeavor.