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Partnering to make peace: The effectiveness of Joint African and Non-African mediation efforts

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**Partnering to Make Peace: The Effectiveness of Joint African and non-
African Mediation Efforts¹**

Introduction

From Africa's early post-colonial period onwards, a strong preference for African solutions to African conflicts has consistently been recognised in the African state system.² Yet, paradoxically, African third parties have consistently and typically been referred to as ineffective in the academic literature. In the introduction to an edited volume on foreign involvement in civil wars in Africa, Smock and Gregorian argue that the US and the former colonial powers seem to have a better record of successful mediation than either the OAU or African leaders, and further claim that the "very significant role of the United States and the European states seems related to the assets, resources, and leverage available to these

¹ I am grateful to Alex de Waal, Neil MacFarlane, and Sophia Dawkins for providing excellent comments on an earlier version of this article. Any errors are my own.

² I. W. Zartman, "Africa as a Subordinate State System in International Relations," *International Organization* 21, no. 3 (1967); S. N. MacFarlane, "Intervention and Security in Africa," *International Affairs* 60, no. 1 (1983); W. J. Foltz, "The Organization of African Unity and the Resolution of Africa's Conflicts," in *Conflict Resolution in Africa*, ed. F. M. Deng and I. W. Zartman (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution, 1991); P. D. Williams, "From Non-Intervention to Non-Indifference: The Origins and Development of the African Union's Security Culture," *African Affairs* 106, no. 423 (2007): 261; S. A. Dersso, "The Quest for Pax Africana: The Case of the African Union's Peace and Security Regime," *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 12, no. 2 (2012).

powers.”³ In his study on African mediation in Eastern African civil conflicts, Khadiagala makes the claim that proximity to the adversaries and deeper knowledge of the conflicts does not substitute for concrete diplomatic and political tools that make for effective mediation; and further argues that “by intervening with only limited tangible and material resources, African interveners have contributed to the widespread perception of being meddlers rather than mediators.”⁴

The problem with these claims about the ineffectiveness of African third parties is that the claims are based on only a few cases or anecdotal evidence. Studies in which it is claimed that non-African mediation is more effective than African mediation do not provide any systematic evidence to support this claim. This is particularly problematic since the modal outcome of international mediation efforts is failure. Since mediation is far more likely to fail than to succeed, it is likely that only looking at a few cases leads to biased conclusions.

In addition to the need of a systematic assessment of the effectiveness of African and non-African third parties, it is important to examine how the involvement of African and non-African third parties in mediation combine to affect outcomes. While one would expect African mediators to limit the involvement of non-African third parties in mediation processes in Africa – because of the strong preference for African solutions to African conflicts – in practice African and non-African third parties are frequently involved in joint mediation efforts. As early as 1967, Zartman put forward an explanation for this seemingly paradox: “Many of Africa’s foreign policy troubles are found in the dilemma posed by the two functions: The desire to solve problems, which often exceeds system capabilities and requires outside help, clashes with the desire to maintain the autonomy of the system.”⁵ In other words, African third parties sometimes have no other option than to accept non-African involvement in peace processes, because they lack the resources to successfully resolve the conflict by themselves. Zartman’s observation that African third parties often lack the material resources to effectively mediate is typical for the academic literature on conflict resolution in Africa.⁶

³ D.R. Smock and H. Gregorian, "Introduction," in *Making War and Waging Peace: Foreign Intervention in Africa* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993), 12.

⁴ G. M. Khadiagala, *Meddlers or Mediators? African Interveners in Civil Conflicts in Eastern Africa* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2007), 6.

⁵ Zartman, "Africa as a Subordinate State System in International Relations," 550.

⁶ Smock and Gregorian, "Introduction; Khadiagala, *Meddlers or Mediators? African Interveners in Civil Conflicts in Eastern Africa*; D. S. Rothchild, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation* (Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997).

Contrary to much of the literature on peacemaking efforts in Africa, I argue that African third party involvement in peacemaking efforts is essential in order to resolve civil wars in Africa. While African third parties are indeed relatively weak in terms of the material resources they command, a crucial source of mediation success is usually overlooked when discussing the effectiveness of African third parties: third party legitimacy. This article shows that African third parties are effective in mediating civil wars in Africa because of a high degree of legitimacy flowing from the African solutions norm. This norm prescribes that mediation by African third parties in conflicts in Africa is more preferable than mediation by non-African third parties.

I further argue that third party legitimacy and third party capacity supplement each other rather than supplant. For this reason, mixed mediation efforts – in which African and non-African third parties jointly mediate – are highly effective. African and non-African third parties have complementary strengths: while African third parties generally provide mediation efforts with a high degree of third party legitimacy, non-African third parties can provide material incentives to the conflict parties in order to move them towards making peace.

I measure mediation success in this article by looking at whether a mediation effort leads to the conclusion of a peace agreement. The conclusion of a peace agreement is arguably the most common way of measuring mediation success, because it provides an objective benchmark that is clearly observable.⁷ Indeed, it is relatively easy for researchers to code the conclusion of a peace agreement, since they are often made publically available when the peace talks end. Even when peace agreements are not published, they usually attract much international attention.

This article adds to the literature on both an empirical and theoretical level. Several studies have previously examined the effectiveness of different types of mediation, including whether the third parties are African or not.⁸ As observed by Franke and Esmenjaud, the concepts of African ownership and Africanization have a “virtual omnipresence throughout the proliferating literature on peace and security in Africa.”⁹ However, the effectiveness of African and non-African third parties has not yet been explicitly compared in a large-n study.

⁷ See:

⁸ For instance, see: A. Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002); Khadiagala.A. Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002).

⁹ B. Franke and R. Esmenjaud, "Who Owns African Ownership? The Africanisation of Security and Its Limits," *South African Journal of International Affairs* 15, no. 2 (2008): 137.

I present systematic evidence in this article that shows that African third parties outperform non-African third parties, but that mixed mediation efforts are the most effective. On a theoretical level, this article shows that the material resources of a third party are not the main determinant of mediation success. Many studies within the current international mediation literature are based on the idea that leverage in the form of economic and military resources is the ticket to mediation success.¹⁰ The findings in this article suggest that ideational factors – such as the norm of African solutions to African challenges – also have a strong impact on mediation success.

This article proceeds as follows. The first section briefly discusses the different comparative advents of African and non-African third parties. Next, I explain the methodology used to test the argument that African third party involvement is essential in order to resolve civil wars in Africa. The subsequent section provides the findings, after which the final section concludes.

A Division of Labour: The Complimentary Strengths of African and Non-African Third Parties

In one of the first comparative case studies on international conflict resolution in Africa, Zartman argues that a mediator needs to materially manipulate the conflict parties, through threats and inducements, in order to mediate effectively.¹¹ From this perspective, mediation success is simply the product of the use of economic and military capabilities in order to move the conflict parties from fighting to negotiating an end to the conflict. I refer to this way of understanding mediation success as a capacity-based perspective.

The vast majority of subsequent studies on mediation have followed this capacity-based perspective. In one of the first quantitative studies on international mediation, Bercovitch argues and finds that the “possession of resources and an active strategy provide the basis for successful mediation.”¹² In his comparative study of several ethnic conflicts in Africa, Rothchild argues how providing material incentives to conflict parties can move them towards compromise. This leads Rothchild to conclude that only mediators with “muscle”

¹⁰ A. Duursma, "A Current Literature Review of International Mediation," *International Journal of Conflict Management* 25, no. 1 (2014); J. M. Greig and P. F. Diehl, *International Mediation, War and Conflict in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012).

¹¹ I. W. Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

¹² J. Bercovitch, "International Mediation and Dispute Settlement: Evaluating the Conditions for Successful Mediation," *Negotiation Journal* 7, no. 1 (1991): 28.

can move peace process ahead through “a combination of pressures, incentives, enforcement, and guarantees.”¹³ Based on the current literature, it is thus not surprising that in one of the most extensive literature reviews of international mediation to date, Greig and Diehl assert that mediation by a weak mediator is not effective as it is “limited in the resources that can be brought to bear in the talks as a means of pushing the parties to make concessions and leverage an agreement between the two sides.”¹⁴ A third party with a high degree of material resources can provide side payments or promise side payments to one or both of the conflict parties, which may induce them to make peace.¹⁵ Previous research has also found that a third party guaranteeing nondefection with agreements is a strong determinant of mediation success – and credibly guaranteeing non-defection requires military capacity.¹⁶ In summary, it follows from the capacity-based mechanisms of mediation success that the more economic and military resources a third party possesses, the more incentives the mediator can provide to the conflict parties in order to move them towards signing a peace agreement.

Based on the current mediation literature – and because of the resource constraints African third parties typically face – one would thus expect African third parties to be less effective than non-African third parties in mediating civil wars in Africa. Indeed, Rothchild argues that “African regional initiatives, based largely on states with limited economic resources, cannot be expected to achieve their conflict management objectives unassisted.”¹⁷ Similarly, Jackson claims that African initiatives are likely to prove less strong in conflict containment and even weaker in conflict termination than peacemaking efforts undertaken by powerful mediators who can exercise leverage such as the US, the UN, or other key actors.¹⁸

Yet, I argue that African third parties have a comparative advantage in what I label legitimacy-based mediation when mediating civil wars in Africa. In contrast to capacity-based mediation, which is based on providing material incentives to make peace, legitimacy-based mediation denotes power being conferred by the adversaries upon the mediator based on a normative belief by the adversaries that complying with the mediator is the right thing to do. Although third party legitimacy has received little attention, the idea that the success of third parties is also based on ideational sources of social control is not new. As early as 1967,

¹³ Rothchild, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation*, 249.

¹⁴ Greig and Diehl, *International Mediation*, 71.

¹⁵ Rothchild, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation*, 99-100.

¹⁶ B. F. Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (1997).

¹⁷ Rothchild, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation*, 279.

¹⁸ R. Jackson, "The Dangers of Regionalising International Conflict Management: The African Experience," *Political Science* 52, no. 1 (2000): 59.

Young described both tangible and intangible characteristics of a third party that he deemed necessary for effective intervention in international crises.¹⁹ Aall has asserted that the legitimate power of a mediator arises “from the parties’ perception that the mediator has the right to act as a third party and to ask for changes in behaviour or compliance”²⁰

The legitimacy of African third parties is rooted within Africa’s normative environment, which is characterised by strong a commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of African states, as well as a strong inclination towards non-alignment and anti-colonialism. Clapham catches the essence of Africa’s normative environment when he argues that “the African state [as it emerged in the early post-colonial era] was the expression of an African identity and autonomy which were to be cherished and defended, against the attacks especially of the forces associated with Western imperialism.”²¹ Resolving conflicts in Africa without the involvement of non-African third parties is often perceived by African leaders as maintaining African autonomy. Indeed, commenting on the Algerian-Moroccan border dispute of 1963, Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie stated in his opening speech at the first extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers of the OAU, held in Addis Ababa from 15 to 18 November 1963, that “Any misunderstandings which arise among brotherly members of this organization must be essentially considered a family affair in which no foreign hand can be allowed to play any role whatsoever.”²² That Selassie’s sentiment was shared by most other African leaders is reflected in the resolution adopted by this meeting, which considered “the imperative need of settling all differences between African states by peaceful means and within a strictly African framework.”²³

I argue that the African solutions norm results in a normative pull towards compliance with African third parties. Franck points out that an actor or rule that is perceived as legitimate “exerts a pull toward compliance on those addressed normatively because those

¹⁹ O. R. Young, *The Intermediaries: Third Parties in International Crises* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), 80-91.

²⁰ P. Aall, "The Power of Nonofficial Actors in Conflict Management," in *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*, ed. C. A. Crocker, Hampson F. O., and P. R. Aall (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), 481.

²¹ C. S. Clapham, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 246.

²² Z. Červenka, *The Unfinished Quest for Unity: Africa and the Organisation of African Unity* (London: J. Friedman, 1977), 66, endnote 6.

²³ Organisation of African Unity, "Resolution Adopted at the First Extra-Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers Held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 15 to 18 November 1963, Ecm/Res. I (I)." An ad hoc commission was formed, since the Commission of Mediation, Conciliation & Arbitration provided for in Article I9 of the OAU Charter had not yet been set up. I. M. Wallerstein, "The Early Years of the Organization of African Unity: The Search for Organizational Preeminence," *International Organization* 20, no. 4 (1966): 781.

addressed believe that the rule or institution has come into being and operates in accordance with generally accepted principles of right process”²⁴ In the context of African civil wars, Červenka noted already in 1977 that the search for compromises is “regarded as a moral obligation on the conflicting parties to settle their dispute in the interests of African unity.”²⁵ Similarly, Gomes argues that the conflict resolution efforts of African third parties rely heavily on moral persuasion predicated on similar values.²⁶

An example of the pull towards compliance mechanism can be found in the Kenyan post-2007 election crisis. At the tenth ordinary summit of the AU, the Chair of the AU Commission and former President of Mali, Alpha Oumar Konaré, stressed the importance of finding a diplomatic way out of the crisis by stating that “Kenya is a country that was a hope for the continent. If Kenya burns there will be nothing for tomorrow. We cannot sit with our hands folded.”²⁷ Moreover, when Graça Machel arrived in Nairobi to mediate Kenya’s Post-2007 Electoral Crisis as part of Kofi Anan’s mediation team and told the conflict parties that her husband, Nelson Mandela, sent his best wishes and sought to remind them that all of Africa was watching the process.²⁸ Almost one month later the conflict parties signed an agreement, which had been mediated by Kofi Annan in his capacity as the leader of the AU Panel of Eminent African Personalities. This agreement would lay the basis for a Grand Coalition Government that successfully mitigated the conflict. In order to reach this agreement, Annan did not use any coercion or inducements. As observed by Beardsley, “Annan possessed no authority to promise aid or threaten sanctions against the intransigent parties, nor did he have better access to information about the capabilities and resolve of the respective parties than they had themselves.”²⁹ Instead, Anan relied on the legitimacy of the AU, which allowed the mediation team pull the conflict parties towards formulating a way out of the conflict.³⁰

I argue that the legitimacy of African third parties makes African third parties more effective than non-African third parties. The reason why legitimacy, far more than capacity, determines mediation success is that if a mediator has legitimacy, it can pull the conflict

²⁴ T. M. Franck, *The Power of Legitimacy among Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 24.

²⁵ Červenka, *The Unfinished Quest for Unity: Africa and the Organisation of African Unity*, 65.

²⁶ S. Gomes, "The Peacemaking Role of the Oau and the Au: A Comparative Analysis," in *The African Union and Its Institutions*, ed. J. Akokpari, A. Ndinga-Muvumba, and T. Murithi (Sunnyside: Fanele, 2008), 120.

²⁷ M. K. Juma, "African Mediation of the Kenyan Post-2007 Election Crisis," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 27, no. 3 (2009): 408.

²⁸ R. Cohen, "How Kofi Annan Rescued Kenya," *New York Review of Books* 55, no. 13 (2008): 5.

²⁹ K. Beardsley, "Intervention without Leverage: Explaining the Prevalence of Weak Mediators," *International Interactions* 35, no. 3 (2009): 273.

³⁰ Juma, "African Mediation of the Kenyan Post-2007 Election Crisis," 408.

parties towards compliance, but if a mediator loses its legitimacy, material resources will rarely prove sufficient in mediating the conflict. In short, mediation by African third parties is more likely to lead to the conclusion of a peace agreement than mediation by non-African third parties.

Furthermore, the comparative advantage of African third parties in legitimacy-based mediation and non-African third parties in capacity-based mediation supplement each other. Hence, while I expect African third parties to outperform non-African third parties, I expect that mixed mediation efforts in which both types of third parties cooperate are the most effective type of mediation. The Naivasha peace process that led to the conclusion of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A illustrates how the comparative advantages of African third parties and the comparative advantage of non-African third-parties can supplement each other. The US applied crucial pressure on the conflict parties on several occasions and held out the promise to normalise relations with Sudan, while Norway and the EU shouldered the financial burden of the mediation process. Yet, the pressure from the non-African third parties only had effect because a mutually acceptable solution to the civil war had already been reached at Machakos on 20 July 2002. This solution was the product of a problem-solving process led by a highly committed IGAD, which enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy. The US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Charles Snyder, noted in this regard that “one of the keys to success in Sudan is actually falling in behind the work already done by the Africans, reinvigorating it, and taking it further.”³¹

In short, I argue that African third parties outperform non-African third parties, but that the most effective type of mediation efforts are peacemaking efforts in which African and non-African third parties cooperate to make peace.

Cultural Similarly

Before testing the central argument put forward in this article, I briefly discuss alternative arguments for why African third parties may be more effective at mediating African conflicts than non-African third parties. The first relates to the influence of culture on mediation processes, the second to the issue of biased mediation, and the third to the ineffectiveness of

³¹ D. Rothchild, "Conditions for Mediation Success: Evaluating Us Initiatives in Sudan and Liberia," in *Conflict Management and African Politics: Ripeness, Bargaining, and Mediation*, ed. T. Lyons and G. M. Khadiagala (London: Routledge, 2008), 101.

the UN. With regard to the role of culture, it might be the case that the African identity of the chief mediator rather than the legitimacy of the third party that mandates the mediator explains mediation success. Several studies have found that cultural similarities between the mediator and the disputants have a positive impact on mediation success.³² These studies typically highlight that a mediator that shares a similar culture with the disputants understands the complex social, political, and economic dynamics that underlie armed conflicts. This greater understanding allows the mediator to more effectively resolve the conflict. While it is acknowledged that African third parties are more likely to be similar to African conflict parties in terms of language, religion, and race than non-African third parties, making it necessary to control for these variables in the empirical analyses, a high degree of cultural variation nevertheless exist in Africa, both between countries and within countries.³³ I therefore argue that culture similarities alone cannot explain why African third parties are more effective than non-African third parties.

Biased Mediation

Since conflicts in Africa have strong regional dimensions, it is reasonable to surmise that African third parties are more likely to be biased when mediating in civil wars in Africa. African states have frequently openly supported incumbent governments or provided covert support to rebel parties prior or simultaneously to their mediation attempt. There is a substantial literature in which it is argued that biased mediation is more effective than unbiased mediation.³⁴ Following these studies in favour of biased mediation, the higher likelihood of African third parties of being biased might, in turn, be the reason why African third parties are more effective than non-African third parties.

However, I argue that biased African third parties are ineffective. Biased African third parties are less likely to enjoy a high degree of legitimacy, which significantly undermines the prospects for African mediation success. In the statistical analysis, I will empirically assess to what extent biased mediation influences African mediation.

³²J. Bercovitch and O. Elgström, "Culture and International Mediation: Exploring Theoretical and Empirical Linkages," *International Negotiation* 6, no. 1 (2001); P. J. Carnevale and D. W. Choi, "Culture in the Mediation of International Disputes," *International Journal of Psychology* 35, no. 2 (2000).

³³ A. A. Mazrui, "On the Concept of 'We Are All Africans'," *The American Political Science Review* 57, no. 1 (1963): 88; E. Green, "Explaining African Ethnic Diversity," *International Political Science Review* 34, no. 3 (2013).

³⁴ See: A. H. Kydd, "Which Side Are You On? Bias, Credibility, and Mediation," *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 4 (2003); I. Svensson, "Bargaining, Bias and Peace Brokers: How Rebels Commit to Peace," *Journal of Peace Research* 44, no. 2 (2007).

Mediation by the UN and Major Powers

The ineffectiveness of the UN when it comes to mediation has been highlighted frequently in previous studies. For instance, Touval has argued that the UN lacks the economic and military resources to successfully mediate.³⁵ However, the UN commands greater resources than any organisation in Africa.³⁶ Moreover, there are few states or organisations that have a greater capacity to deploy a peacekeeping force than the UN. Accordingly, the ineffectiveness of the UN is best explained through its lack of legitimacy as a result of the African solutions norm, as well as its relatively lack of financial and military resources compared to major powers.

Indeed, several studies have shown that major powers are effective mediators. When explaining the effectiveness of these states, particularly of the US and the Soviet Union, observers usually point to their high degree of third party capacity. For example, Touval primarily refers to the “vast military and economic resources” of the superpowers.³⁷ According to Rothchild, successful conflict resolution becomes more likely when great powers press the disputants to reach a compromise.³⁸ In line with the capacity-based mediation perspective, I argue that among the non-African third parties, the major powers are the most effective in mediating civil wars in Africa. In addition, I argue that while the UN is by an large ineffective at mediating civil wars in Africa, the ineffectiveness of non-African third parties is not solely driven by non-African third parties. The next section outlines the research methodology to examine test the central argument, as well as the alternative arguments.

Methodology

To statistically study the likelihood of the conclusion of peace agreements, this article draws on data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP).³⁹ The unit of analysis in the dataset is conflict dyad-years. A conflict dyad consists of a government and an organized

³⁵ For example, see: S. Touval, "Why the U.N. Fails: It Cannot Mediate," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 5 (1994).

³⁶ A. Layachi, "The Oau and Western Sahara: A Case Study," in *The Organization of African Unity after Thirty Years*, ed. Y. El-Ayouty (London: Praeger, 1994), 35.

³⁷ S. Touval, "The Superpowers as Mediators," in *Mediation in International Relations: Multiple Approaches to Conflict Management*, ed. J. Bercovitch and J. Z. Rubin (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 232.

³⁸ Rothchild, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation*, 250.

³⁹ L. Themnér and P. Wallensteen, "Armed Conflict, 1946-2012," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 4 (2013).

rebel party. The use of conflict-dyad-years makes it possible to determine the different effects of African and non-African mediation efforts within mediation episodes that may take several years.

These conflict data are supplemented with unique data on all mediation efforts in civil wars in Africa between 1960 and 2012. I use Bercovitch's broad and frequently employed definition to code mediation efforts in conflict dyad-years identified by the UCDP. Bercovitch understands international mediation as a "process of conflict management, related to but distinct from the parties' own efforts, where the disputing parties or their representatives seek the assistance, or accept an offer of help from an individual, group, state or organization to change, affect or influence their perceptions or behaviour, without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of law."⁴⁰ Accordingly, this definition differentiates mediation from other types of conflict resolution such as bilateral negotiations without the involvement of a third party, international arbitration, and coercive intervention. I translate Bercovitch's definition into three coding criteria to identify mediation efforts in the dataset: (1) the activity undertaken by the third party should be specifically aimed at achieving a compromise or a settlement of issues between the adversaries; (2) the adversaries have to give their consent to the involvement of the third party; and (3) the adversaries have to give consent to the final outcome of the mediation process.⁴¹

The dataset relies on several sources, including most frequently the UCDP Conflict Encyclopaedia's category of third party involvement. This category also includes information on third party efforts like peacekeeping and humanitarian involvement, which are not coded as mediation since these type of third party activities are not aimed at resolving or regulating the conflict through negotiations. In addition, the data on mediation is drawn from news media, monographs, and journal articles. The online appendix of this article includes a codebook and comprehensive narratives of the conflict and mediation efforts, including all the relevant sources that have been used to compile the dataset.

The mediation efforts included in the dataset are all aimed at making peace between the primary conflict parties in civil wars. Conflict resolution workshops involving civil society representatives are thus excluded. While it is impossible to determine the exact level of inclusivity of the dataset, even instances of lesser-publicized mediations are included in the

⁴⁰ J. Bercovitch, "The Structure and Diversity of Mediation in International Relations," in *Mediation in International Relations: Multiple Approaches to Conflict Management*, ed. J. Bercovitch and J. Z. Rubin (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 7.

⁴¹ See: *ibid.*

dataset. Mediation efforts aimed at ending civil wars usually attract a lot of attention; yet even in those instances in which mediation was conducted secretly, the mediation effort is usually documented at a later point in time. For instance, the dataset records that Algeria mediated some secret meetings aimed at ending the civil war in Mali in 2012, in parallel to official peace process led by the AU. Other telling examples include the peacemaking efforts of Tiny Rowland in Mozambique and a secret mediation effort conducted by the Community of Sant'Egidio between the CNDD-FDD leadership and the Government of Burundi in Rome in September 1996.

In order to measure the types of mediation under study, four mutually exclusive dummy variables have been created: no mediation, African mediation, non-African mediation, and mixed mediation. No mediation indicates a conflict dyad-year in which no third party was involved in mediation. African mediation is measured by examining whether at least one African third party was involved in mediation in a given dyad-year, without the involvement of any non-African third parties. Non-African mediation is, conversely, defined as the involvement of at least one non-African third party in mediation without the involvement of African third parties. Finally, mixed mediation takes place when at least one African and one non-African third party were involved in the mediation. The focus is on the organizational identity of the mediator rather than the personal identity, meaning that when an African mediator is mandated by a non-African third party, as for example by the United Nations, the mediation effort is understood to be non-African. It is acknowledged that in some instances the personality of the mediator affects the prospects for success to a great extent, but the individual efforts of a mediator are connected to, and therefore greatly influenced by the standing, legitimacy, and leverage of the mandating agencies they represent.⁴²

In order to assess the alternative explanations put forward in the theory section, I rely on several dummy variables. I understand a state to be a major power if they are defined as such in the Correlates of War project.⁴³ To code whether an African third party is biased, I follow Svensson's operationalization by looking at whether a given third party has previously provide external support to one of the conflict parties.⁴⁴ Culture is inherently difficult to

⁴² M. Kleiboer, "Understanding Success and Failure of International Mediation," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40, no. 2 (1996).

⁴³ This means that the US, France, the UK, the Soviet Union, and China are listed as the major powers during the Cold War period. Russia replaces the Soviet Union and Germany and Japan are added to the list from 1991 onwards. See: <http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/SystemMembership/2008/System2008.html>.

⁴⁴ Svensson, "Bargaining, Bias and Peace Brokers: How Rebels Commit to Peace."

define, let alone measure in a statistical analysis, but an approximation is put forward by Inman et al., who operationalise culture by measuring religion, ethnicity, and language.⁴⁵ The shared culture dummy variable used in the empirical analysis is coded as 1 if the chief mediator shares the same religion, ethnicity, and language with at least one of the conflict parties.

Mediation success is assessed in terms of the conclusion of peace agreements. The conclusion of a peace agreement is measured as a dichotomous variable. I draw on the UCDP to code whether a peace agreement has been concluded in a given dyad-year.⁴⁶ In order to be included in the dataset, a peace agreement should address the incompatible goals of the conflict parties by settling all or part of the conflict issues. A document that solely stipulates the implementation of a ceasefire is thus not considered to be a peace agreement.

Although this study assumes that mediation is a general phenomenon with many similarities from setting to setting, it is acknowledged that there are always contextual circumstances specific to any individual effort. In order to control for the factors that influence both the likelihood of mediation and the prospects for mediation success, several contextual factors are included in the analysis. First of all, I include a dummy variable taken from the UCDP that measures whether the conflict is fought over a piece of territory, because previous research shows that these type of conflicts are harder to resolve.⁴⁷ Since previous research shows that civil war episodes in which many battle-related deaths occur are less likely to be resolved, the models also include a dummy variable that measures the intensity of the conflict. Conflict intensity is measured by coding conflict dyad years in which more than 1,000 battle-related deaths are recorded as 1.⁴⁸ In order to control for the impact of the duration of the conflict, a variable is include that measures the number of years. A squared version of conflict duration is also included to control for curvilinear effects.⁴⁹ Since previous research has found that peace agreements are more likely to be concluded in conflicts with stronger rebel parties, a variable is included that measures the strength of the rebel movement

⁴⁵ M. Inman et al., "Cultural Influences on Mediation in International Crises," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2013).

⁴⁶ S. Höglbladh, "Peace Agreements 1975-2011: Updating the Ucdp Peace Agreement Dataset," in *States in Armed Conflict 2011*, ed. T. Pettersson and L. Themnér (Uppsala University: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, 2012).

⁴⁷ M. D. Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory* (Princeton Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁴⁸ T. D. Mason and P. J. Fett, "How Civil Wars End: A Rational Choice Approach," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40, no. 4 (1996).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

in comparison to the government.⁵⁰ Finally, I also include a control variable in the models that is coded as 1 when the conflict parties receive financial support, military equipment, or are allowed to use safe havens in another country.⁵¹

In order to avoid perfect multicollinearity in the explanatory variables, the dummy variable measuring no mediation is excluded from the analyses in each of the models. No mediation thus serves as the reference category by which the coefficients of the different mediation types are interpreted. This means that if a variable measuring mediation has a statistically insignificant effect, then this type of mediation is not statistically significant more or less likely to lead to the conclusion of a peace agreement than when no mediation takes place in a given conflict dyad-year.

Finally, the data used in this study entail observations on the same unit of analysis over a series of time points, which may bias the findings as a result of temporal dependence. Following Beck et al., I use binary time-series cross-section correction to account for this potential bias.⁵² Accordingly, all models are run using cubic splines. A variable that measures the time since a value of 1 was observed for the dependent variable in the regression is also included in all models.

Findings

Africa has experienced 938 conflict dyad-years between 1960 and 2012. Of this total of 938 conflict dyad-years, 334 have experienced mediation. This constitutes almost 36 percent of the total number of conflict dyad-years, from which it follows that international mediation is a standard approach to end armed violence in Africa.

African third parties have been involved in mediation in 241 conflict dyad-years in Africa between 1960 and 2012. In 129 of these conflict-dyad-years, African third-parties were involved in mediation simultaneously or jointly with non-African third-parties. This means that African-third parties have been involved in mediation without the involvement of any non-African third-party in 112 conflict-dyad-years. Non-African third-parties have mediated in 222 conflict dyad-years, but non-African mediation without the involvement of

⁵⁰ G. Clayton, "Relative Rebel Strength and the Onset and Outcome of Civil War Mediation," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 5 (2013).

⁵¹ T. Pettersson, "Pillars of Strength: External Support to Warring Parties," in *States in Armed Conflict 2010, Research Report No. 94*, ed. T. Pettersson and L. Themnér (Uppsala: Universitetsstryckeriet, 2011).

⁵² N. Beck, J. N. Katz, and R. Tucker, "Taking Time Seriously: Time-Series-Cross-Section Analysis with a Binary Dependent Variable," *American Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 4 (1998).

African third-parties has taken place in only 93 conflict dyad-years. Mixed mediation is thus the most common type of mediation in civil wars in Africa, followed by African mediation, and non-African mediation respectively.

It follows from Figure 1 below that mixed mediation has become increasingly common in relation to mediation efforts conducted solely by African or non-African third parties. During the Cold War, between 1960 and 1989, both coordinated and uncoordinated mediation were far less common than African and non-African mediation. Yet, between 1990 and 1999, coordinated mixed mediation was as common as African mediation and only slightly less common than non-African mediation.⁵³ In the period from 2000 onwards, coordinated mixed mediation has been the most common type of mediation.

<< *Insert figure 1 here* >>

Moreover, Figure 2 shows the number of mediation dyad-years as a percentage of the total number of conflict dyad-years in a given conflict. The graph clearly shows that mediation has increased in importance as a conflict management tool.

<< *Insert figure 2 here* >>

Figure 3 shows in how many conflict dyad-years a given African third party has been involved. The OAU and its successor the AU have been involved in 101 conflict dyad-years. Of all sub-regional African organisations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has mediated in most conflict dyad-years. The top three of African states most involved in mediation in Africa includes Kenya, South Africa, and Ethiopia,

<< *Insert figure 3 here* >>

⁵³ The prevalence of non-African mediation in the 1990s reflects the efforts non-African third parties to resolve civil wars following the end of the Cold War, as for example in Angola or Mozambique.

Figure 4 shows in how many conflict dyad-years a given non-African third party has been involved. Of all third parties involved in mediation in civil wars in Africa, the UN has mediated in most conflict dyad-years, namely 127 conflict dyad-years. After the UN, the Community of Sant'Egidio is the non-African organization that has mediated most often in Africa. The top three of non-African states involved in mediation in Africa includes the US, France, and the UK.

<< *Insert figure 4 here* >>

In the 1960-2012 period, 127 peace agreements were concluded in Africa. Out of these agreements, 17 were concluded without third party involvement. A further 49 were concluded with only African third parties involved in the dyad-year, only six with solely non-African third parties involved in the dyad-year, and 55 were concluded with a combination of African and non-African third parties involved in the dyad-year. Table 1 shows how effective third parties are in reaching peace agreements. The significant values of the likelihood ratio chi-square tests suggest that all models included in Table 1 have a good fit.

<< *Insert table 1 here* >>

Model 1 in Table 1 shows the results for the comparison between the effectiveness of the different types of third parties. All three types of mediation have a positive impact, though the effect of non-African mediation is statistically insignificant. Since the reference category is conflict dyad-years with no mediation, it follows from Model 1 in Table 1 that dyad-years in which African and mixed mediation take place are significantly more likely to experience the conclusion of a peace agreement. By contrast, conflict dyad-years in which non-African mediation takes place are not statistically significant more or less likely to lead to the conclusion of a peace agreement than dyad-year in which no mediation takes place.

The difference between the coefficients of each type of mediation reported in Model 1 in Table 1 are substantial. Based on the logit estimates of Model 1 in Table 1, Table 2 shows that when all variables are held at mean value, the probability of the conflict parties concluding a peace agreement in a given conflict-dyad-year is only 2.0 percent. All else

equal, the probability of the conclusion of a peace agreement increases by 1356 percent when an African third-party is involved in mediation. For non-African mediation this probability increases by only 100 percent and for mixed mediation this is 1138 percent. Hence, African mediation is much more likely to lead to the conclusion of a peace agreement than non-African mediation.

<< *Insert table 2 here* >>

As a robustness test, the observations in Model 2 in Table 1 are restricted to conflict dyad-years which experienced mediation. When restricting the observations to this sub-set of cases, the finding that African and mixed mediation efforts are more effective than non-African mediation efforts still holds.

Model 3 includes a dummy variable that measures whether the chief mediator shares a similar culture with one or both of the conflict parties. A chief mediator that shares a similar ethnicity, religion, and language with at least one of the conflict parties is relatively rare. Only 8.9 percent of all African mediation efforts were conducted by a chief mediator that shared a similar culture with at least one of the conflict parties. This figure is 7.8 percent for mixed mediation and 3.2 percent for non-African mediation. Hence, African mediation is indeed more likely to be conducted by a chief mediator that shares a similar culture with at least one of the conflict parties. However, it follows from Model that the effectiveness of African and mixed mediation remain when controlling for the impact of a chief mediator that shares a similar culture with one of the conflict parties. There are indeed many examples of mediation efforts in civil wars in Africa where culture did not seem to play any role. For instance, Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie mediated between the Government of Sudan and the Southern based rebel movement Anya Nya in 1972. Selassie shared his Christian faith with most of the Anya Nya fighters, though he belonged to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo. Yet, Selassie's native language was Amharic and he did not share the same ethnicity with the conflict parties either. In spite of the cultural difference, Selassie successfully mediated the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972. What Selassie did have in common with both of the conflict parties, however, was a strong commitment to pan-Africanism.

Model 4 includes a control variable that is coded as 1 if a biased African third party is involved in mediation in a given conflict dyad-year. Model 4 thus shows that the involvement of a biased African third party in a given conflict dyad-year has a negative and statistically significant effect on mediation success; yet, crucially, the negative effect of African biased mediation does not wipe out the positive impact of African mediation. The dataset includes 49 conflict dyad-years in which biased African mediation has taken place. There is a wealth of anecdotal evidence that is in line with the finding that the involvement of a biased African third party has a negative impact on mediation success. For instance, the involvement of ECOWAS in the second civil war in Liberia from 1999 to 2003 alternated between mediation, peace enforcement, and peacekeeping. The involvement in peace enforcement efforts, which directly targeted Charles Taylor's forces, undermined ECOWAS' neutrality.⁵⁴ According to Anthony Nyakyi, the former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Liberia, this lack of neutrality was the main obstacle to peace, as it made Charles Taylor hesitant to become involved in peace talks led by ECOWAS.⁵⁵

In line with the capacity-based perspective of mediation success, Model 5 in Table 1 shows that major power mediation is a type of non-African mediation that has a positive and statistically significant impact on the likelihood that a peace agreement is concluded. Mediation by the UN has a negative impact, but this effect is insignificant. The mediation efforts of the Soviet Union and the US in the civil war between the Government of Angola and UNITA illustrate how the economic and military power of superpowers can lead to the conclusion of peace agreements. The MPLA government had paid for the Soviet Union's military support by oil and diamonds revenues, but Angola still had a total external debt of close to \$9 billion by 1991, of which 65 percent owed to the Soviet Union.⁵⁶ This gave the Soviet Union leverage over the MPLA government. The UNITA leadership was also provided with incentives to comply with the mediator, particularly through the involvement of the US, which was the main provider of military support to UNITA. Commenting on the conclusion of the Bicesse Accords, UNITA leader Savimbi expressed that without the Americans and the Soviets the mediation process would not have gotten anywhere.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ L. Nathan, "When Push Comes to Shove: The Failure of International Mediation in African Civil Wars," *Track Two* 8, no. 2 (1999): 4.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ C. Pycroft, "Angola: 'the Forgotten Tragedy'," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20, no. 2 (1994): 248.

⁵⁷ D. Rothchild and C. Hartzell, "Great- and Medium-Power Mediations: Angola," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 518(1991): 56.

It follows from Table 1 that just like African mediation, mixed mediation also significantly increase the prospect for conflict resolution. Table 3 therefore further explores the positive impact of mixed mediation. Previous research has found that mixed peacemaking efforts can be frustrated if there is a lack of coordination.⁵⁸ Table 3 further explores the positive impact of mixed mediation by comparing coordinated and uncoordinated efforts. The uncoordinated mixed mediation category includes both competing efforts undertaken simultaneously and uncoordinated separate mediation efforts that are conducted sequentially over time in the same conflict dyad-year.

<< *Insert table 3 here* >>

A further distinction is made between coordinated mixed mediation led by an African third party and those that are led by a non-African third party. Although several third parties can be involved in a mediation process, there is usually one third party that takes the lead. Often this is the country or organization to which the chief mediator belongs. Those coordinated mixed mediation efforts which were conducted jointly are also considered. The mediation in Darfur conducted by Special Envoy Jan Eliasson and his AU counterpart Salim Ahmed Salim in 2007 and 2008 serves as an example of a joint mediation effort.

It follows from Table 3 that uncoordinated mediation has a negative, though statistically insignificant, impact on mediation success. Since conflict dyad-years in which no mediation takes place is the reference category of the mediation types under study, it follows from Table 3 that a peace agreement is not statistically significant more or less likely to be concluded in a conflict dyad-year in which uncoordinated mixed mediation takes place than in a conflict dyad-year in which no mediation takes place. By contrast, if coordinated mediation takes place in a given conflict-dyad year, the conclusion of a peace agreement is much more likely than if no mediation would take place in this dyad-year. The lack of coordination between Portugal, France, and ECOWAS in their peacemaking efforts in the civil war in Guinea-Bissau between 1998 and 1999 illustrate how competing interests can undermine the potential effectiveness of mixed mediation.⁵⁹ The mediation effort conducted

⁵⁸ C. A. Crocker, F. O. Hampson, and P. Aall, "A Crowded Stage: Liabilities and Benefits of Multiparty Mediation," *International Studies Perspectives* 2, no. 1 (2001).

⁵⁹ S. Massey, "Multi-Faceted Mediation in the Guinea-Bissau Civil War," *South African Journal of Military Studies* 32, no. 1 (2004).

by the Community of Sant'Egidio between the CNDD-FDD leadership and the Government of Burundi in Rome in September 1996 serves as another example of uncoordinated mixed mediation. The negotiations mediated by the Community of Sant'Egidio were not intended to complement the regional initiative, rather to substitute it.⁶⁰

By contrast, all three types of coordinated mediation have a positive and significant effect. Yet, Table 4 below shows that coordinated mixed mediation that is led by an African third party is by far the most effective, making the conclusion of a peace agreement 1766 percent more likely than when no mediation takes place. The finding that African led mixed mediation has been found to be the most effective type of mediation resonates with the peace and security polices developed as part of the partnership for peace.⁶¹

<< *Insert table 4 here* >>

The final phase of the Abuja peace process, which was aimed at ending the civil war in Darfur, illustrates that non-African third parties taking over the mediation process can supplant the positive impact of African mediation. While the AU mediators had made some progress towards resolving the underlying conflict issues, an externally imposed deadline and an intrusive mediation strategy pursued by the US terminated the peace process prematurely. Instead of building on the work already done by the AU, the US and the UK relied on a strategy based on coercion and inducements to move the conflict parties towards compromise. Hence, the final days of the Abuja talks to end the war in Darfur show the importance that African third parties maintain the lead when mediating civil wars in Africa.

Conclusion

The statistical analyses suggest that African third parties outperform non-African third parties in terms of concluding peace agreements. In 2011, the AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping pointed out that: "Lasting peace on the continent can only be achieved if efforts to that

⁶⁰ M. O. Maundi, "Preventing Conflict Escalation in Burundi," in *From Promise to Practice: Strengthening Un Capacities for the Prevention of Violent Conflict*, ed. C. L. Sriram and K. Wermester (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 339-40.

⁶¹ See: Dersso, "The Quest for Pax Africana: The Case of the African Union's Peace and Security Regime; P. D. Williams and A. Boutellis, "Partnership Peacekeeping: Challenges and Opportunities in the United Nations–African Union Relationship," *African Affairs* 113, no. 451 (2014).

end are based on the full involvement of Africa and a recognition of its leadership role because, as stressed by the Summit in August 2009, without such a role, there will be no ownership and sustainability; because we understand the problems far better; because we know which solutions will work, and because, fundamentally, these problems are ours, and our peoples will live with their consequences.”⁶² The statistical analyses employed in this article supports this statement. African third parties are generally more effective in resolving civil wars in Africa than non-African third parties.

However, a major caveat regarding the finding that African third parties outperform non-African third parties is that the involvement of a biased African third party in mediation processes has a negative and statistically significant effect on mediation success. Since conflicts in Africa have strong regional dimensions, African states have frequently openly supported incumbent governments or have provided covert support to rebel parties prior or simultaneously to their mediation attempt. The statistical analysis employed in this article suggests that the involvement of biased African third parties that are supporting or have supported one of the conflict parties undermines the prospects for mediation success.

In terms of theory development, the findings in this article suggest that ideational factors influence the effectiveness of a third party. A capacity-based perspective of mediation success cannot adequately explain why African third parties, which often face resource constraints, are more effective in mediating civil wars in Africa than non-African third parties. Future research should be devoted to examining why and how third party legitimacy matters.

Finally, while mediation by African third parties is more effective than non-African mediation, most effective are mixed mediation efforts in which African and non-African third parties mediate jointly. Particularly effective are mixed mediation efforts in which there is coordination between African and non-African third parties, but in which African third parties take the lead. The phrase, ‘African solutions to African challenges’ should be understood as a division of labour and responsibilities, rather than an excuse for non-African third parties to ignore Africa’s problems or African third parties acting on their own. Indeed, while African third parties should take the lead in mediation processes in African armed conflicts, non-African third parties should support these processes by lending additional strength. Through supplementing each other’s comparative advantages legitimacy-based and

⁶² Ping quoted in: Dersso, "The Quest for Pax Africana: The Case of the African Union's Peace and Security Regime," 44.

capacity-based mediation respectively, African and non-African third parties can more effectively resolve civil wars in Africa.

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