

Mediation as politics: How nations leverage peace engagements?

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(preprint not for quotation)

Introduction

This study is concerned with the mediation engagements of middle powers in world politics. Its main assumption is that mediation is one of many foreign policy strategies available to international actors, not only in their attempts to end violent conflict, but in conducting their world affairs in general. Furthermore, the paper focuses on middle power mediation within an alliance system, and elaborates the role of mediation in this particular context. It argues that once mediation is conceived of as a viable political option in the conduct of middle power foreign policy, engaging in mediation activity enables middle powers to create an extra space of political power not otherwise available to them. This leverage in turn, is available to middle powers to use in conducting their domestic and international relations. As will be explained in the next section, the mediation-as-foreign policy perspective does not take the solution of international disputes as the primary analytical unit. Instead, its main focus is the new political dynamics that emerge with the onset of mediation. Therefore, the general issue this study addresses is the role mediation has in a broader foreign policy perspective. More specifically, it is concerned with the mechanisms through which this engagement is translated into foreign policy leverage. Accordingly, the article initially discusses international mediations as a foreign policy perspective. Then, it presents a theoretical debate concerning the foreign policy roles of middle powers within an alliance system, and introduces an analytical model which explains mediation engagements of middle powers as a foreign policy strategy. Finally, to illustrate the main argument, the paper focuses

on aspects of Turkish mediation efforts conducted by the ruling AK Party government between 2002 and 2011¹ with respect to its relations with Turkey's major strategic allies: the United States and the EU.

Mediation as foreign policy

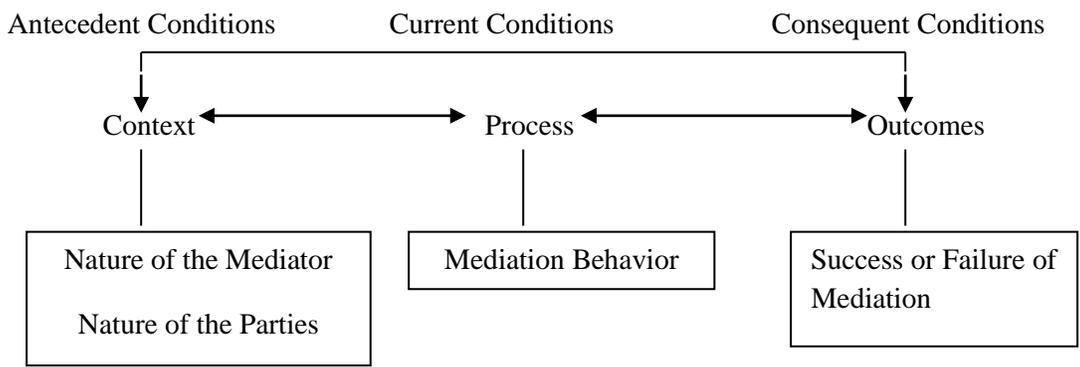
The literature on international mediation has been growing considerably over the past two decades.² Most studies consider mediation as a means to end armed conflicts, and entail research that elaborates the antecedents and processes of mediation and their impact on the outcome of mediation intervention. The relevance of this particular engagement to actors' foreign policies, however, is an understudied area. Initial insights regarding mediation as a foreign policy approach have been valuable in this respect and have highlighted political considerations associated with the decision to engage in mediation. Beriker (1995), for example, notes that the decision of world powers to mediate and the outcomes of such initiatives in pre-Dayton Bosnia were closely related to sets of foreign policy evaluations and interactions of Trans-Atlantic Allies on other crucial post-cold war issues, e.g., the US-European relationship, the future of European security systems, and the fragile balances between members of the EU. Similarly, elaborating on Qatari mediation activism, Barakat (2014) emphasizes the foreign policy aspects of Qatari mediation initiatives, presenting the strategic considerations of Qatari officials in employing mediation as "to reduce the risk of threats such as terrorism and population displacement... to promote a business environment conducive for Qatari investments, and ... to allow international diplomatic efforts to focus on the Palestinian question" (p.11). Regarding the Zairian mediation in 1991 between the Hutu-dominated government of Rwanda and the

¹ Analyses do not cover the third AK Party administration's foreign policy activities. The 2011- 2014 period could be described as an era of political polarization in domestic politics, and unilateralism (instead of soft multilateralism) in international relations - where conditions for and leverage of peace mediation have pretty much eroded.

² For an overview, see Wallenstein and Svensson (2014), Greig and Dielh (2012).

Rwanda Patriotic Front, Maundi et al. (2006) characterize it as an effort by the Zairian president Mobutu to improve relations with the Bush administration. In this view, the Zairian president portrayed himself as peacemaker in order to counterbalance the US pressures stemming from increased criticism of human rights abuses in Zaire. Except for these occasional case-based observations, conceptualization of international mediation as part of the foreign relations has been limited. Touval (2003) initiated a discussion on this matter, and highlighted the difference between mediation as part of foreign policy and the common approach to mediation theory. Touval claimed that the mediation-as-foreign-policy approach is different than mediation theory, which is basically interested in factors that affect the process and outcome of mediation, and which treats political considerations as a systemic variable affecting the process and efficiency of mediation (Figure1).

Figure 1. A Contingency Model of Mediation*



*Bercovitch and Houston (1996).

The mediation-as-foreign-policy approach considers the onset of mediation as one of the strategies to pursue a broadly conceived foreign policy goal. As mentioned before, few studies in the literature have attempted to conceptualize this understanding. Among them, Beriker's (2009,

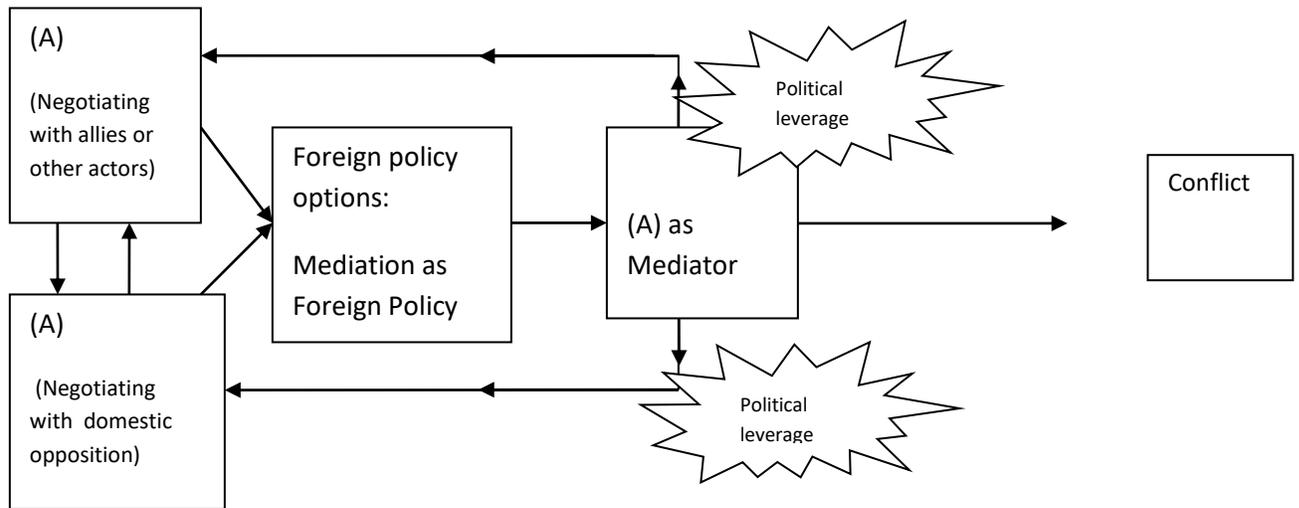
2014) typology of third-party and partisan foreign policy roles of international actors presents mediation as one of many foreign policy strategies. Moreover, Melin (2015) explains a state's decision to escalate its third-party peace engagement strategies by relying on escalation and change in foreign policy. Apart from these works, a related literature views political interests or incentives as playing a role in mediation. Greig and Regan (2008) suggest that a mediator is more likely to mediate when its private interests are at stake. Beardsley (2011) highlights the interests of the mediator and offered two categories of interests. Beardsley identifies the mediator's collective interests as achieving a more stable international system and decreasing negative externalities of conflict. Private interests, however, are explained as reducing spillover effects and meeting humanitarian concerns. Similarly, Melin (2014) claims that states engage in mediation activity if they expand their influence, resources and power. In this view, establishing a reputation as a peacebuilder, influencing the dispute outcome, and redesigning the political environment according to the states' interest are some the "strategic benefits" states gain in return. Although this stream of research resembles the mediation-as-foreign policy approach, Touval (2003) argues that this is not really the case. He suggests "...after stating that mediation is initiated for political purposes, mediation theory takes over. Analyses usually do not follow up on the premise that political purposes generate mediation, instead, they proceed to discuss and evaluate it in terms of a prescriptive theory of mediation" p. 91.

The present study expands on Touval's mediation-as-foreign-policy perspective by arguing that once mediation is conceived of as a viable political option in the conduct of foreign policy, engaging in mediation activity enables middle powers to create an extra political power space not otherwise available. It further suggests that this generated leverage in turn either bolsters the position of middle powers on the same conflict issue, or on other policy items at both the level of domestic and international politics. In order to strengthen this perspective

theoretically, additional issues need to be addressed. These include the type of leverage generated with the onset of mediation, the mechanisms through which this leverage is generated, and how this additional power is employed or transferred to foreign and domestic affairs. Figure 2 illustrates the dynamics of a regional power's engagements in mediation.

Figure 2: Middle powers and Mediation as Foreign policy approach

International Politics



Domestic Politics

(C)

(A)

(B)

Middle Powers as Mediators (A)*

The above discussion of the mediation-as-foreign policy approach applies to the peace interventions of middle powers as well. The literature on middle powers in world politics often attributes a foreign policy role to mediation when it's practiced by regional powers. Early literature on middle power³ foreign policy defined regional powers by taking into consideration

*This section has been heavily borrowed from Beriker (2016).

³ The term "middle power" is often used interchangeably with "intermediate states," "would be great power," "second-tier powers" (Flemes D. 2007 Emerging middle powers, soft balancing strategy). "Secondary power," "emerging power," and "regional power" are other related concepts. For a critical review, see David Cooper (2011) Challenging contemporary notions of middle power influence: Implications of the Proliferation Security Initiative for "middle power theory." Foreign Policy Analysis, 2 317-336.

their military, economic capabilities and demographic base. Later, however, this approach was replaced by studies that concentrated on middle power third-party behaviors (Cooper, Higgott and Nossal 1993), foreign policy constraints and options (Higgott 1997, Cooper 1997), motives (Neack 2008), cycles of middle power activism (Ravenhill 1998), roles in achieving regional security (Miller 2005, Frazier and Steward-Ingesol 2010), and variance in regional powerhood (Prys 2010). What is common in this literature is the emphasis on the cooperative roles of the middle powers as mediators, facilitators and peacekeepers. This literature mostly relies on mediation theory, and depicts power restrictions as a causal variable in explaining middle power motivation to mediate; they do not examine, however, how mediation could be a tool to overcoming such power restrictions.

Middle powers and great power alliance dynamics

Middle powers are rarely independent actors when they engage in mediation. Very often their foreign policy conduct takes place within the limits of an alliance system. However, depending on the changing global power configurations, the relationship of middle power with major powers varies. Neack (2000) notes

The only middle powers that do act independently of the great powers are the non-aligned middle or regional powers, for example, India and Brazil... The traditional middle powers will resort to multilateralism when there are no other safe foreign policy options available to them. In the absence of great power rivalry, middle powers are no longer needed to play the role of loyal supporters; these states can be expected to forego multilateralism for the more immediate payoffs of bilateralism (p. 4).

Similarly, Holbraad (1984) differentiates three power configurations in the world system - the unifocal, dualistic and multiple systems, and argues that in a unifocal world system, the role of middle powers is very much bound by the preferences of the great power. Diffused systems, however, offer middle powers more flexibility in the execution of their foreign policies. In such

environments, middle powers can decide to be part of the major alliance system, or direct their energies to sub-systemic issues (Holbraad, in Sook-Jong Lee, 2012). In summary, this literature suggests that different global structures affect the nature of transactions. In a unifocal world order, middle power foreign policy options are often limited to bandwagoning with key allies. In return, middle powers are often provided some security benefits from their key partner. In a diffused system, however, this relationship is more complicated than simple bandwagoning. Given that middle powers do not have much positional power in shaping world politics, each international transaction might be an opportunity for them to harness positional power, which can be used to influence event, actors, and processes, both at home and abroad. In such environments, for the middle power, staying in the alliance system or leaving it, is the critical strategic decision. Staying in the system, securing the alliance benefits, and maximizing interests with occasional independent policies may be another policy option. Engaging in mediation activity as an alliance member or taking independent initiatives may be smart strategies to achieve most of these goals. In this case, both competition and cooperation describes the nature of the relationship between alliance partners.

Therefore, one could conclude that in times of global transition a junior partner's peacemaking efforts which converge with the superpower may signal its commitment to the alliance system, and, therefore, be seen as an attempt to enhance trust and assure alliance securities. Independent mediation initiatives that do not complement dominant alliance power's interests, however, might help junior partners build new BATNA's, vis-à-vis its partner, and, therefore, provide the junior partner with an environment to extract concessions (Figure 3). Bargaining theory and network theory offer valuable insights in formulating the ways in which middle powers harness leverage from this complexity through mediation.

Mediation as a source of political leverage

Building strong BATNA's

The “negotiation-as-diplomatic politics” metaphor of Druckman (1997) depicts negotiations as microcosms of international relations, “where parallel interactions or cross-linkages among many types of diplomatic activities occur, each influencing the other” (p. 89). The same approach allows the negotiation analyst to investigate international affairs as negotiated interactions and offers valuable insight into the mechanisms through which middle powers could broker leverage with their mediation involvements. BATNA is a term in the negotiation literature standing for the Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement. Fisher and Ury in 1981 explains the term as the most advantageous alternative course of action a party can take if negotiations fail. This literature suggests that a strong BATNA translates into bargaining power. It enables the party to hold to its asking price and, therefore, to give small concessions. Moreover, a party with good BATNA may be in a position to extract concessions from the other party, and/or may implicitly or explicitly threaten it for leaving the table, which represents a competitive negotiating stand. The study by McKibben (2013) elaborates this understanding in the context of international negotiations. She studies variations in state’s bargaining strategies, and concludes that bargaining strategies of the states are mostly influenced by the bargaining structure. In other words, Mc Kibben suggests that structural incentives and constraints (decision rules, strong BATNA, issue linkages, the degree of constraint placed on negotiator) better explain international actors’ cooperative or competitive negotiating behavior than standard factors such as states’ power and socialization. In this view, weaker states may have a structural advantage that enables them to obtain concessions from a more powerful state (414). A similar observation could be made for mediation efforts of the junior partner in an alliance system. An independent mediation that is outside the alliance system

may help the middle powers to strengthen their BATNA with respect to their relations within the alliance. As will be explained in detail in the next section, Turkey's mediation between Iran and Brazil in 2010 might be considered as Turkey's attempt to create a BATNA (new partnerships in the Americas) with respect to its relations with US. Similarly, all mediation efforts that involved Iran, Syria, Hamas (Table 1) might also be interpreted as an initiation by the middle power establish a strong BATNA (a Sunni alliance) vis-à-vis its traditional partner. The same initiative could also be considered as establishing new links to network power, another source to harness political leverage for the middle power.

Issue linkages:

Integrative agreement (Pruitt, 1994) is another prominent concept in the negotiation literature. It refers to those creative agreements that are mutually satisfactory to all parties. Logrolling is one type of integrative agreement. It occurs when the parties have different priorities regarding different issues on the table. Such an environment enables parties to exchange concessions on those issues they value differently. Let's consider a situation where, while the onset of mediation does not represent a huge cost for middle powers, ensuring welfare and security in domestic politics is a challenge for them. For the powerful state, while regional peacemaking is a priority, it is an arduous activity. Nevertheless, offering financial and political support to the junior ally is a regular practice. In such situations, the middle power's mediation, which complements the senior partner's interests, may be exchanged to safeguard existing political and financial support from the senior partner or to enhance trust and commitment for future deals. It is also important to note that, this strategy, unlike strong BATNA, is a cooperative approach that is used when the interests of the parties are convergent. Again, a good illustration of such a symbiotic relationship is Turkey-US relations. In the post 9/11 period, some of Turkey's mediation roles

have contributed to US interests in different geographies. As will be explained further in the next section, Turkey was an active peace broker between Afghanistan-Pakistan, the Palestinians and the Israelis, Syria and Israel, Pakistan and Israel, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and in conflicts in Transcaucasia. During the Iraqi war, the Turkish government mediated differences between Iraqi Shiites and Sunnis over their conflict in forming a broad-based government. Similarly, the government acted as a facilitator between Lebanon and Israel after the war in 2006 and, later, among different political sects in Lebanon⁴ (Table 1).

Links to network partners

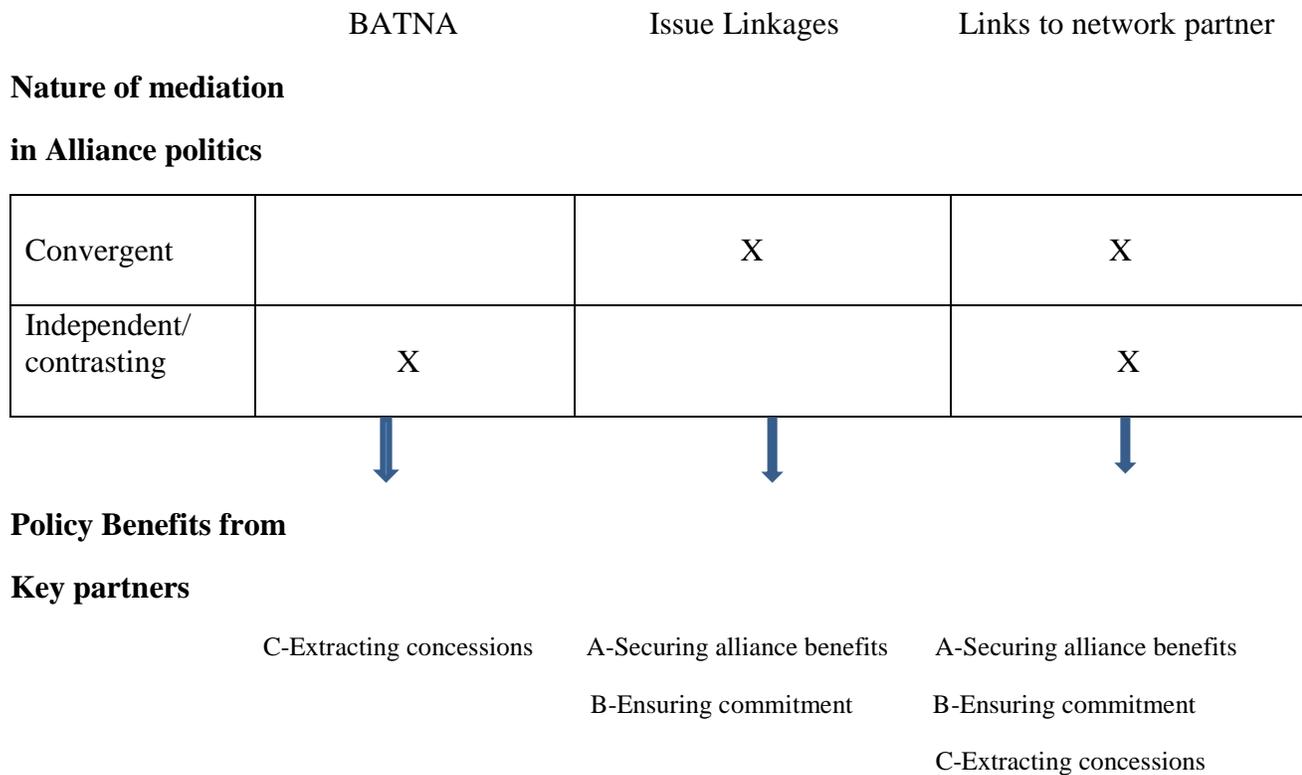
(Kahler, 2009) argues that the consolidation of connectedness within a network may increase the middle power's social power. He further elaborates, "Bargaining power or leverage, in contrast to social power, may increase with links to network partners that are otherwise weakly connected or those that have few outside options. States that are the sole link between clusters of highly connected states might gain influence as brokers within the networks" (p.21). This role could be adopted regardless of whether parties within an alliance have convergent interests or contrasting ones. In a situation where the relationship between alliance partners converges, the junior partner may be able to harness extra political power through mediation by securing alliance benefits, and ensuring commitments, and, therefore, by enhancing trust. In such situation, establishing links to network power could be considered as a cooperative strategy as in the case of issue linkages. In other occasions, however, for instance, when there are competing interests, mediation might trigger the same mechanism but this time allowing the middle power to extract concessions from its alliance partner, a competitive strategy. Moreover, cultural ties play a role in building linkages. Crocker et al. (2003) point to important elements of a mediation relationship such as

⁴ Given the political environment of the time, in most of these areas, the US mediation role was limited.

cultural and geographical links and the identity and image of the mediator, which assure a “good fit” for mediation. They suggest that this may grow out of historical relationship, prior engagements in developmental or religious activities, colonial legacies, institutional linkages, spheres of influence and long standing presence in a country or region, and common educational language or cultural ties. Turkey’s Ottoman past in the Middle East helped Turkey to serve as a link to network powers, including to the EU and the United States. The mediation roles Turkey assumed in the EU-Iran, IAEA-Iran, and the British Navy-Iran crises (Table 1) are ones that helped Turkey establish networks with the two separate communities. In these interventions, Turkey was one of the few links between Iran and the West.

In sum, the mediation-as-politics approach suggests, as illustrated in Figure 2, that once mediation is conceived of as a viable political option in the conduct of foreign policy (A in Figure) , engaging in mediation activity makes it possible for middle powers to create an extra policy space not otherwise available (B in Figure 2). Engagement in mediation helps junior parties build strong BATNAs, new issue linkages, and ties to network powers, which are mechanisms to generate leverage (Figure 3). This generated leverage, in turn, either strengthens the position of middle powers on the same negotiated issue or on other unrelated policy items, again at both the level of domestic and international politics (C in Figure 2).

Figure 3: Mediation and mechanisms to harness leverage



Mediation and Turkish Foreign Policy*

Turkey and the US are long-time strategic partners. Turkey is a NATO member, as well as an EU-candidate country with a Muslim population, hosting the second largest army of the security organization. The roles the two allies had during the Cold War changed with the end of the Soviet era. US authorities probably perceived the AK party government, which came to power in 2002, as a familiar and, therefore, predictable regional partner. This assumption, however, later proved to be wrong. The AK party government’s failure in 2003 to win parliamentary approval for US forces to move through Turkey to Iraq was a major crisis, which signaled the beginning of a tense

future relationship between the two strategic partners. Paradoxically, Turkey's peacekeeping activities were in overdrive especially the first and second terms of the AK party government (2002-2011), a state of affairs that mostly complemented the US interests in the region. The interplay between these two features, the relatively strained allied relations, and increasing mediation engagements of the junior partner offers an interesting empirical base for the current research.

The FPC Dataset (Beriker 2014) contains information on the role of mediation in Turkish Foreign policy within overall foreign policy activism of the Turkish state between 2002 and 2011. It shows that during the 2002-2007 period, 8% of foreign policy actions were as a third party. This rose to 14% in the second term (2007-2011). Data show that in the first term of the AK Party government, 77% of these third-party roles were "relational" in nature, whereas 23% were "structural." During 2007-2011, these figures were 99% and 1%, respectively. The geographical distributions of these actions are particularly revealing. Third-party interventions were mostly exercised in the Middle East (20% and 27% in the first and second term, respectively). This was followed by the Balkans (16% and 18%), Africa (3% and 8%) and the Caucasus (5% and 1%). Data show that peace interventions in Iran and Syria increased in the second term of the AK Party government. During this period, both cooperation and competition characterized the nature of the US/Turkey relationship.

A summary of the AK Party mediation involvements for the period of 2001-2011 are presented in Table 1 (Beriker, 2016).

Table 1**Turkey's mediation attempts during the AK Party governments (2002-2011)**

MIDDLE EAST	
Iraq Crisis	January-March 2003
Israel-Syria	December 2003
Israel-Palestine	May 2005
Pakistan-Israel	September 2005
Shiites and Sunnis in Iraq	February 2006
IAEA-Iran	April-June 2006
EU-Iran	April 2007
Israel-Hamas (kidnapped soldier)	July-August 2006
Israel- Lebanon	July 2006
Parties in Lebanon	January 2007
British Navy crisis with Iran	April 2007
Afghanistan-Pakistan	May 2007
Israel-Syria	May 2008
THE BALKANS	
Serbia – Bosnia-Herzegovina	October 2009
Croatia – Bosnia-Herzegovina	October 2009
CAUCUSUS	
Azerbaijan-Armenia	May 2004
Georgia-Adjaria	March-May 2004
Georgia-Abkhazia	June 2005
AFRICA and ASIA	
Philippine-Moro Islamic Lib. Front MILF	2009
Afghanistan-Pakistan (Istanbul Process)	2011
Buddhist and Arakan Muslims (Myanmar)	2013
Somalia and Somaliland	2013
OTHERS	
Religious tension between Islamic world and the West (Alliance of Civilizations with Spain)	September 2005
Friends of mediation initiative with Finland	2011-2012

During 2011-2015, however, Turkey’s mediation interventions were minimal. The AK Party government’s third-party involvements were mostly in the form of humanitarian aid and peacebuilding efforts.⁵ In fact, the AKP government conducted only two “actual mediations.” Mediation between Somali and Somaliland is one of the peacemaking efforts that have evolved in multiple rounds. Another third-party attempt is related to Turkey’s continuing role in the two negotiation tracks⁶ between the Philippines and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Other than these engagements, there were one-shot and discontinued policy moves which were mostly executed in the Africa and Asia regions. There are almost no actual mediation efforts in the Middle East (Table 2).

Table 2: Mediation attempts of the Turkish government (2011-2015)

Africa-Asia	
Philippines and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)	Continues form the previous terms
Somalia-Somaliland	2012
Eritrea-Ethiopia**	2012
Eritrea- Somali**	2012
Buddhist and Arakan Muslims (Myanmar)*	2013
Mali *	2013
Sudan and South Sudan *	2012, 2015
Libya**	2014
Ethiopia-Ogaden*	2015
Middle East	
Saudi Arabia and Iran*	April 2015

* Beriker (2016)

*Declaration of intention to mediate by Turkey (no actual mediation)

*This section has been partially borrowed from Beriker (2016).

⁵ In this term, the Turkish government, acted as one of the leading humanitarian actors in the world, by contributing more than \$1billion in aid in 2012.

⁶ Turkey has been a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Peace Committee for Southern Philippines since 2007 and the International Contact Group since 2009.

** Invitation by the parties (no actual mediation)

How the above-mentioned peace initiatives helped Turkey enhance its political power, both internationally and domestically, remains a crucial question. The following section sheds light on this issue by offering a general evaluation of Turkey's foreign and domestic policy priorities and goals in this period.⁷

Building strong Batna

This paper argues that independent mediation outside the alliance system might help the middle powers strengthen their BATNA's with respect to their relations within alliances. Turkey's ambition to be a player in the Middle East and to act as the leader of the Islamic community are the two goals that are often pronounced by policy experts as parts of Turkey's long-term foreign policy strategy. Furthermore, the actions of the AK Party government in its second term in power provide some clues as to what its future partisan and independent policies would be like (Beriker, 2016). Therefore, some mediation efforts in this region could be considered as an attempt by the Turkish government to build a strong BATNA vis-à-vis its relations with its strategic allies in order to achieve its long term goals. Furthermore, developing strong Latin America ties and/or cultivating relations with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are some policy options that have been explicitly pronounced by Turkish government officials. In this context, Turkey meditating between Iran and Brazil and all mediation efforts involving Iran, Syria, and Hamas could also be interpreted as an effort by the middle power to establish a strong BATNA vis-à-vis

⁷ A more nuanced analysis of the mechanisms and their policy consequences, however, would require elite interviews with those who were in policy planning positions in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Unfortunately, at the time of this writing, due to rapid political developments in Turkey and related unforeseeable appointments in the Turkish bureaucracy it was not possible for the author to conduct elite interviews. Therefore, the following analysis should be read as a bold empirical analysis of what could have been shown otherwise.

its traditional allies.⁸ However, the extent to which these pursuits have been perceived as a credible signal by the major alliance partners is not clear. Nevertheless, Turkey is aware that its NATO membership is important to the US and Europe, and such initiatives could help to extract concessions in negotiating other key issues for Turkey, such as the use of Incirlik military base, the role and status of The Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) in Syria, and arms deals with its NATO partners.

Issue linkages

As stated earlier, “logrolling” occurs when the parties have different priorities regarding different issues on the table. Such environments enable parties to exchange concessions on those issues they value differently. The policy priorities of Turkey and the US and related mediation initiatives by Turkey provide insight into how such initiatives have helped the junior partners to secure alliance benefits and guaranteed commitments.

Turkey’s priorities

The 2002 general election in Turkey resulted in the clear victory of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party). The AK Party received 34.5% of the general votes and secured 363 seats in parliament. The 58th government was formed by Abdullah Gul, the president, and a couple of months later, was handed over to Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the prime minister. The 59th government, also headed by Erdogan, governed Turkey until the next general elections in July 2007, when AK Party won 46.58 % of the votes, a figure that grew to 49.9% in 2011. AK Party is a religious conservative party with strong Islamic roots. Erdogan, the founder of the party, however, in 2005 claimed that the party could not be referred to as an Islamic party and refused

⁸ The same initiative could also be considered as establishing new links to network power, another source to harness political leverage for the middle power. However, given the political background of these engagements the author concludes otherwise.

such labels as Muslim-Democrat. The AK Party leader described the party's agenda as "conservative democracy" (Taspinar, 2012). In this period, the AK Party government was unsuccessfully challenged by domestic secular forces on several occasions, over the election of Abdullah Gul, as president of the republic in 2007 and over the attempt to ban the AK Party judicially in 2008, among others. All Islamist parties in Turkish history had previously been shut down by either military interventions or rulings by the Constitutional Court (Taspinar 2012). Therefore, when Erdogan took office, his priority had been the consolidation of his political power - or avoiding a fate similar to his ideological predecessors - through increasing his governments' international recognition, ensuring economic prosperity, assuring large-scale support from diverse interest groups in the domestic arena, changing and reshaping domestic institutions - especially the military, to secure a stable political order. This also meant getting a support on its struggle with the PKK.

US priorities

The international climate of this era was marked by a challenge to American ascendancy, which appeared in the form of two major events. The first was the 9/11 attacks, which were perceived by US authorities as an open provocation against the status quo. The second was the US military engagements in Afghanistan and the Middle East, which were signature engagements of the US-launched "war on terrorism." Another major systemic challenge was the global financial crisis that started in 2007. These developments had two consequences. The role of American-EU diplomatic power as a peace broker in Muslim geographies began to deteriorate. In addition, managing the financial crisis required both the US and the EU to direct their energies to domestic problems instead of adopting an active multilateralism in world affairs. The US foreign policy of off-shore balancing envisions regional solutions to regional problems and encourages key followers to take an active role in conflict management. Turkey's active

mediation role, therefore, in practice, complemented the US interest in the Middle East region. Despite initial bumpy relations with the Bush administration, the AK Party government engaged in numerous peacemaking efforts that were also of interest to the US. As mentioned before, in this period Turkey was an active peace broker between the Palestinians and the Israelis, Syria and Israel, Pakistan and Israel, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and in conflicts in Transcaucasia. During the Iraqi war, the Turkish government mediated differences between Iraqi Shiites and Sunnis over their conflict in forming a broad-based government. Similarly, the government acted as a facilitator between Lebanon and Israel after the war in 2006 and, later, among different political sects in Lebanon.

The exchange

Turkey's adoption of the role of peace broker complemented US interests in an era where the military engagements of the Bush administrations had caused resentment and suspicion in the Muslim world and resulted in a decline in the diplomatic leverage of the US as a problem solver in the Muslim-dominated geographies. In return, the Islamist party in Turkey, at minimum, assured the continuation of existing economic and political ties, if not reassurance of them, with its ally. More specifically, by offering mediation services elsewhere, Turkey signaled its loyalty to the Alliance and hoped to consolidate US support in a number of areas, including Turkey's membership negotiations with the EU, resolution of the Cyprus issue and Turkey's struggle with Kurdish insurgencies, and in preventing the "Armenian bill" from being passed in the US congress. Similarly, Turkey aimed to receive the US's support on new pipeline projects and other financial matters. As a result, the increase in the level of foreign direct investment between 2002

and 2011 enabled the Turkish economy to grow by an average rate of 7.5 percent annually.⁹ Similarly, increasing international recognition and credibility of the AK Party government helped it to gain an upper hand in its political struggle with the secular domestic political opposition parties and institutions, including the Turkish Army. Lastly, active international presence increased Turkey's popularity in the Islamic world. In addition, to these initiatives, "Between 2002-2005 Turkey adopted several harmonization packages to comply with the Copenhagen Criteria, which led to substantial democratization of the Turkish political system and the opening of formal accession negotiations in 2005" (Linden et al. 2012 p.7). Inclusive policies and enlarged democratic space generated wide-range support from different sectors of society, which in turn resulted in the AK party's election victories in 2007 and 2011. Political stability in Turkey attracted foreign investors. The average per capita income rose from \$2,800 in 2001 to around \$10,000 in 2011 (Taspinar 2012).

Links to network ties

As stated before, states that are the only link between groups of highly connected states might gain influence within those communities through their mediation engagements. Turkey's mediation role between the EU-Iran, IAEA-Iran, British Navy-Iran crises could qualify as initiations of this genre. In 2002-2003, reports related to Iran's nuclear enrichment program produced a crisis between the West and Iran. Ahmadinejad's hard liner position on the issue increased worries among the Trans-Atlantic partners. In 2006 the IAEA declared the country in noncompliance with its obligations. This was followed by the UN Security Council decision that declared Iran's nuclear program to be a threat to international security. The subsequent series of

⁹This made Turkey more integrated with the global economy, also making Turkey more vulnerable to global changes. Sustainability of such growth heavily depends on the continuation of financial and investment flows. Technological and informational globalization allows the world to closely monitor what is happening in Turkey

sanctions and isolation measures taken by the West in turn increased Iran's determination to continue its nuclear program. In this crisis period, Turkey was one of the few connections between Iran and the Trans-Atlantic partners. Mediating between the European Atomic Agency and Iran, the EU and Iran, the Turkish government contributed into an environment that was suitable for enhancing Turkey's relations with the Trans-Atlantic partners, and tried to secure commitments regarding membership negotiations and ensure the benefits brought by the existing alliance, e.g., support for its financial affairs and energy deals.

Conclusion

In the mediation-as-foreign policy approach, the main analytical focus is not on the process, success or failure of mediation. Actors assume this role ultimately to increase their bargaining power. Thus, theoretically, this approach does not stress the factors affecting the process and the outcome of third-party intervention. Instead, its analytical focus is on complex trade-offs that emerge as a result of the mediation initiative, and their impact on domestic and international politics. This said, the current approach does not oblige the analyst to refrain from making assessments on the process and outcome of mediations. Touval (2003) argues that the mediation-as-foreign policy perspective requires a different type of debate regarding the process and outcome of mediations. This is because the selection of mediation technique and the desired outcome will be a function of the larger policy considerations/ negotiations taking place outside the core conflict issue that requires mediation.

The study suggests that there are three mechanisms through which mediation helps parties to harness political power. Another assertion is that, in times of transition, the relation of middle powers with their key allies comprises both cooperative and competitive aspects. Therefore, the relational attributes of the three mechanisms - strong BATNA, issue linkages, and network link,

change in different political environments. While strong BATNA may be used for competitive reasons, e.g., extracting concessions, the other two mechanisms are mostly employed in pure cooperation or mixed (cooperation and competition) situations for ensuring commitments and alliance benefits or for attaining long-term concessions.

The current study focuses on mediation behavior as its primary variable in explaining political gains of the peace brokers. That said, it does not suggest a mono-causal explanation or parsimony at the expense of understanding. It considers mediation as one of the foreign policy instruments and draws attention to a less studied function of international mediation under certain special conditions: when the middle power is a member of a strategic alliance, and when there is an urgent need for the middle power to harness additional bargaining power to be used in both international and domestic politics. Therefore, the model may not have a direct relevance to a non-alliance middle power with loose ties in the global system, or to a globally well connected middle power that benefits from the continuation of the status quo.¹⁰ Similarly, the current research fails to distinguish the impact of mediation from the influence of other foreign policy instruments in explaining leverage generating mechanisms for middle powers. In other words, how much of the policy gains were due to Turkey's mediation engagements, and how much of them were achieved because of other policy initiatives, such as investing in multilateral institutions, easing travel restrictions, improving regional transportation, is still not clear. Similarly, the impact of conventional strategic exchanges, such as military aid, sanctions, energy investments, financial and trade agreements on changing the structure of the relations may have a more powerful predictive value in understanding the creation of extra power space than of mediation. This said, mediation, which is mostly considered by the analyst as a source of "soft power" in international politics could be part and parcel of "hard" power depending on the

¹⁰ Such as Norway, Sweden and Canada.

strategic importance of peace for both senior and junior partners. The current research highlights this neglected aspect of peace mediation. In the Turkish case, the AK Party government had to use mediation, among other policy tools, to harness additional political power in its relations with its allies and elsewhere. In return, at least for the periods under study, its primary goal, consolidation of its power, has been achieved.

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