

International Mediation of Wars: A New Dataset and Instrumental-Variable Approach

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Research question

Does international mediation help settle wars?

Main finding

Evidence that post-Cold War mediation has worked, but only if we account for selection effects

Overview

Why does mediation appear ineffective?

Mediators most capable of conveying dispute-relevant information are also the ones most sensitive to fixed entry costs

Original data

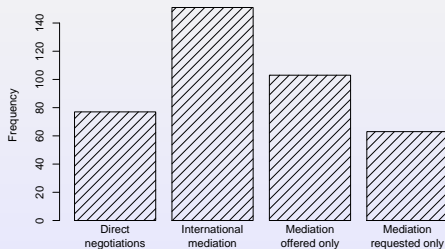
Information about more than 500 conflict management events in 35 wars since 1990, including about 150 mediation efforts

Identification strategy

Use the timing of talks as an instrument for mediation

Original data

- Covers conflicts with at least 1000 deaths in any year 1990–2005
- Provides information on conflict management events:
 - Negotiations without mediation
 - Internationally mediated talks
 - Offers of mediation
 - Requests for mediation



Strategy of data collection

- Data from 13 geographically diverse, English-language newspapers and wires
- Replicable search for news items/articles that contain
 - Name (or synonym) of at least one actor on each side
 - Any of the terms mediation, negotiation, or words of the same family
- About 15,000 articles, with detailed information on 520 events (including 151 mediation processes) in 35 conflicts
- Transparency in coding: Database identifies all articles used to code an event (with article title, publication date, news source, article text, and byline), and excerpts the relevant text

Empirical challenge

The problem

- Difficult to assume random mediator assignment in strategically complex environment
- Mediation initiation conditional on beliefs about where it is optimal to mediate (selection)
- Expectations of settlement shape intervention decision (endogeneity)
- Confidential processes conceal correlates (omitted variables)

One solution

- Can overcome these problems to the extent that we can recover random variation in our “treatment” variables
- Locate instruments that predict “treatment,” but are otherwise orthogonal to outcome

Probit regression

Settlement	Coeff.	First diff.
Mediation	.17 (.21)	.03 [-.05, .12]
Observations	226	226

Models incl. constant, indicators for fatality level, internal, and internationalized conflicts.
Std. err. adjusted for clustering on conflict.

Multinomial probit regression

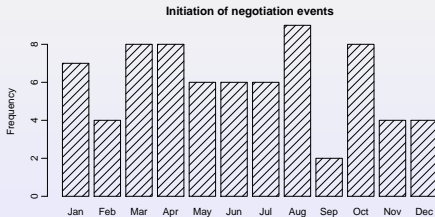
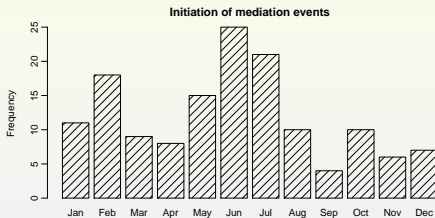
Event outcome	Coeff.	First diff.
Mediation	-.67**	-.09
on proc. agreem.	(.31)	[-.23, .00]
Mediation	-.29	-.04
on ceasefire	(.31)	[-.20, .09]
Mediation	.02	.04
on settlement	(.31)	[-.05, .12]
Observations	226	226

** Significant at the 95% level

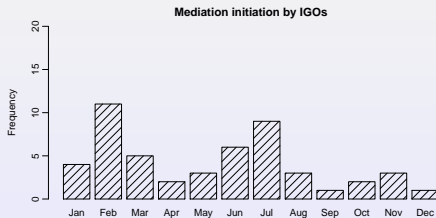
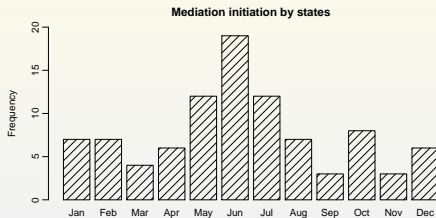
An instrument for mediation

- Mediation follows a seasonal pattern:
 - Rarely initiated right before or during the UN General Assembly in September or toward the end of the business year
 - More commonly initiated in the beginning of the year and in particular in May, June, and July, when many high-level politicians are on legislative holidays
- Negotiations do not follow this pattern to the same extent (although negotiations are rarely initiated in September or at the end of the year)

Seasonal initiation of talks



Seasonal initiation of mediation



An instrument for mediation

Use “summer” indicator as an instrument for whether talks were mediated or not

- Correlates well with whether non-mediated or mediated talks are initiated
- Appears reasonable to assume that the month in which a conflict resolution event is initiated is orthogonal to the error in our outcome equation

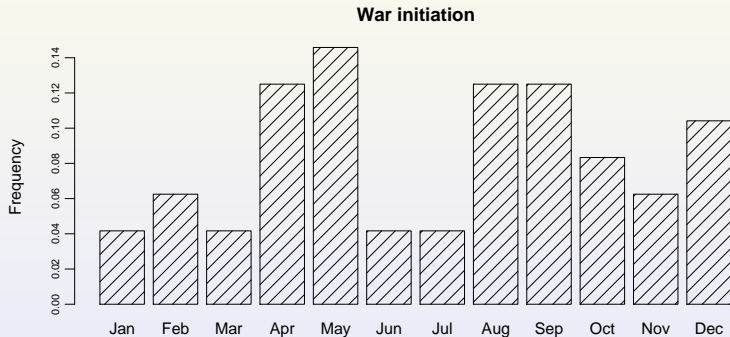
Instrumental-variable probit regression

	Coeff. (S. E.)	Coeff. (S. E.)	Coeff. (S. E.)
Second stage:			
Mediation on settlement	1.35*** (.44)	1.60*** (.15)	1.02** (.51)
First stage:			
Summer on mediation	.35** (.17)		.66*** (.18)
Month indicators on mediation		$\chi^2 = 48.1***$	
Observations	214	214	193
<i>F</i> -statistic for instrument	4.5	4.4	13.4
Significant at the ** 95% level, *** 99% level.			

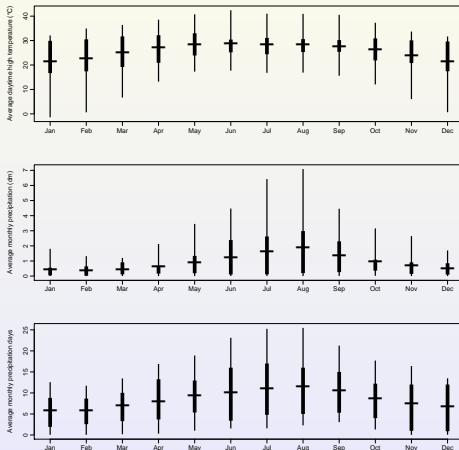
IV probit regression, with past mediation and negotiation

	Coeff. (S. E.)	Coeff. (S. E.)
Second stage:		
Mediation on settlement	1.19*** (.26)	1.12*** (.25)
First stage:		
Summer on mediation	.61*** (.16)	
Month indicators on mediation		$\chi^2 = 63.3^{***}$
Observations	214	214
<i>F</i> -statistic for instrument	14.5	5.8
Models include number of previous mediation and number of previous direct negotiation efforts.		
*** Significant at the 99% level.		

Timing of war initiation



Weather conditions across conflict locations



IV probit regression with climate measures

Second stage: Settlement			
Mediation	1.60*** (.19)	1.64*** (.17)	1.42*** (.30)
Temperature	-.00 (.01)		
Precipitation		.02 (.07)	
Precipitation days			-.03 (.03)
First stage: Mediation			
Summer	.35*** (.13)	.40*** (.12)	.46*** (.18)
Temperature	.01 (.01)		
Precipitation		.02 (.07)	
Precipitation days			-.01 (.03)
Observations	173	175	100
<i>F</i> -statistic for instrument	7.1	10.3	6.7

Table shows coefficients and standard errors.
 *** Significant at the 99% level.

Sensitivity tests for exclusion restriction

The model

$$Y^* = X\beta + Z\gamma + \varepsilon, \quad \text{with } Y = 1 \text{ if } Y^* > 0 \text{ and } Y = 0 \text{ otherwise,}$$
$$X^* = Z\delta + \nu, \quad \text{with } X = 1 \text{ if } X^* > 0 \text{ and } X = 0 \text{ otherwise,}$$

where $E[X\varepsilon] \neq 0$, i.e. ν and ε are correlated. Parameter γ measures the plausibility of exclusion restriction.

Key ideas (Conley et al. 2008)

- Propose some support for γ and estimate union of confidence intervals for β given any γ in that support
- Compute union of confidence intervals where critical values are endogenous to likelihood of observing a particular γ
- Here, assess 95% intervals given simulated draws of γ

Results of sensitivity analysis

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Mediation on settlement	1.35*** (.44)	1.60*** (.19)	1.64*** (.17)	1.42*** (.30)	1.19*** (.26)	1.38*** (.24)
Summer on mediation	.35** (.17)	.35*** (.13)	.40*** (.12)	.46*** (.18)	.61*** (.16)	.63*** (.22)
Temperature		✓				✓
Precipitation			✓			✓
Precip. days				✓		
Past mediation					✓	✓
Past negotiation					✓	✓
Max. support γ	[-1.07, .04]	[-1.03, .11]	[-1.41, .28]	[-1.30, .48]	[-1.45, .51]	[-1.52, .87]
Positive interval	56.4%	67.2%	88.8%	97.9%	97.8%	100%

All models include dispute characteristics. Significant at the ** 95% level, *** 99% level.

Conclusion

- Mediation facilitates agreement, once we adjust for selection bias
- In future research, investigate assignment process directly
- Survey experiment for high-level mediators:
 - What are mediators' perceptions of how difficult it is for disputes to end?
 - Which types of disputes are mediators most (or least) interested in being involved with?
 - Which types of mediation strategies do different mediators prefer, in general and in specific dispute situations?
- Collect data on respondent characteristics (e.g. age group, risk perception) and reactions to mediation scenarios, where attributes of dispute and mediation environment are randomly assigned

Descriptive statistics: Outcome variable

Outcome	Percent	95% C. I.
Conflict resolution events (N=228)		
No progress	58%	[52%, 65%]
Procedural agreement	8%	[4%, 12%]
Ceasefire	21%	[15%, 26%]
Full or partial settlement	13%	[8%, 17%]
Conflict-years (N=290)		
No progress	75%	[70%, 80%]
Procedural agreement	4%	[2%, 6%]
Ceasefire	12%	[8%, 16%]
Full or partial settlement	9%	[6%, 13%]
Conflicts (N=35)		
No progress	17%	[4%, 30%]
Procedural agreement	3%	[0%, 9%]
Ceasefire	31%	[15%, 48%]
Full or partial settlement	49%	[31%, 66%]

Descriptive statistics: Mediation variables

Variable	Percent	95% C. I.
Conflict resolution events (N=228)		
Mediation	66%	[60%, 72%]
Multi-party mediation	23%	[17%, 28%]
Mean number of mediators is 1.2 [1, 1.5]		
Conflict-years (N=290)		
Mediation	32%	[27%, 38%]
Multi-party mediation	19%	[14%, 23%]
Mean number of mediators is .6 [.4, .8]		
Conflicts (N=35)		
Mediation	77%	[62%, 92%]
Multi-party mediation	66%	[49%, 82%]
Mean number of mediators is 1.4 [.9, 2]		

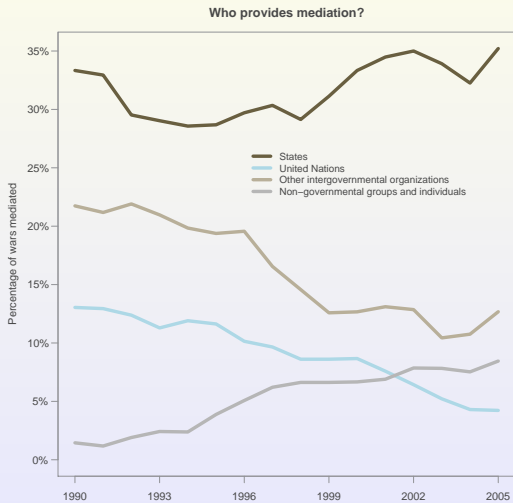
Descriptive statistics: Mediation variables

Variable	Percent	95% C. I.
Conflict resolution events (N=228)		
UN mediation	11%	[7%, 15%]
US mediation	9%	[5%, 12%]
Regional IGO	15%	[11%, 20%]
Conflict-years (N=290)		
UN mediation	13%	[9%, 17%]
US mediation	9%	[6%, 13%]
Regional IGO	15%	[11%, 19%]
Conflicts (N=35)		
UN mediation	57%	[40%, 74%]
US mediation	49%	[31%, 66%]
Regional IGO	54%	[37%, 72%]

Descriptive statistics: Control variables

Variable	Percent	95% C. I.
Conflict resolution events (N=228)		
Conflict intensity	66%	[60%, 72%]
Internal	71%	[65%, 77%]
Internationalized	14%	[9%, 18%]
Conflict-years (N=290)		
Conflict intensity	48%	[42%, 54%]
Internal	83%	[79%, 88%]
Internationalized	12%	[8%, 15%]
Conflicts (N=35)		
Conflict intensity	100% (by construction)	
Internal	74%	[59%, 90%]
Internationalized	43%	[26%, 60%]

Who mediates?



Mediation effectiveness by mediator type

DV:						
Settlement	Coeff.	First diff.	Coeff.	First diff.	Coeff.	First diff.
UN mediation	.42* (.24)	.07* (.05)	.49* (.26)	.06* (.05)	.52 [†] (.40)	.04 [†] (.05)
US mediation	.80*** (.31)	.16*** (.08)	.74*** (.28)	.11*** (.08)	.80* (.42)	.07* (.07)
Regional IGO mediation	.86*** (.29)	.18*** (.08)	.67** (.29)	.09** (.07)	1.12*** (.37)	.12*** (.08)
Region indicators			✓	✓		
Conflict indicators					✓	✓
Observations	226	226	226	226	226	226

IV probit regression for UN mediation

	Coeff. (S. E.)	Marg. eff. (95% C. I.)
Second stage:		
UN mediation on settlement	.65 (1.11)	.17 [-.53, .87]
First stage:		
February on UN mediation	1.27*** (.16)	.39 [.26, .52]
Observations		214
<i>F</i> -statistic for instrument		62.5
*** Significant at the 99% level.		

Probit regression

Settlement	Coeff.	First diff.
Multi-party mediation	.92*** (.21)	.21 [.06, .40]
Observations	226	226

*** Significant at the 99% level.

Multinomial probit regression

Event outcome	Coeff.	First diff.
Multi-party mediation on proc. agreem.	.28 (.27)	-.00 [-.06, .07]
Multi-party mediation on ceasefire	.06 (.27)	-.06 [-.16, .04]
Multi-party mediation on settlement	1.22*** (.28)	.23 [.11, .37]
Observations	226	226

*** Significant at the 99% level.

A pseudo-instrument for multi-party mediation

- Look at data in terms of a panel, where the unit of observation is the conflict-year and explanatory variable of interest is the average number of third parties mediating a conflict in a given year
- Use lagged levels of third-party involvement as (pseudo-)instruments of the current level of involvement
- Valid in the sense of high correlation with current number of mediators involved
- Assume last year's multi-party mediation affects this year's chance of a settlement only through continued multi-party mediation
- Still less heroic than assuming that *this* year's multi-party mediation is strictly exogenous to this year's chance of a settlement

Panel regression

Settlement	Panel probit regression	IV panel regression	Panel probit regression
Second stage:			
Mediator count, t on settlement	.38*** (.08)	.02 (.07)	.30*** (.10)
First stage:			
Mediator count, $t - 1$ on mediator count, t		.14* (.09)	
Mediator count, $t - 2$ on mediator count, t		.21** (.09)	
Mediator count, $t - 3$ on mediator count, t		-.13 (.13)	
Observations	285	154	154
Unit of observation is conflict-year. Regression includes random effects. Significant at the *** 99% level, ** 95% level, * 90% level.			