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A CROWDED FIELD: COMPETITION AND COORDINATION IN INTERNATIONAL PEACE MEDIATION

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A Crowded Field: Competition and Coordination in International Peace Mediation

David Lanz and Rachel Gasser *

In recent years competition has emerged as a central theme in international mediation as an increasing number of mediation actors seek opportunities to engage in peacemaking. At the same time, mediation coordination mechanisms, such as Groups of Friends, have become standard practice in international peacemaking. This paper seeks to make sense of the dynamics of competition and cooperation in peace mediation today. To this end, it considers three case studies of post-Cold War peace processes: Sudan (North-South, 1994–2005), Kenya (2008) and Madagascar (2009, ongoing).

On the basis of interviews with experts directly involved in these processes, it identifies three forces that drive competition: clashing interests between states, overlapping mandates of mediation actors, and disagreements over the normative basis of international politics. These forces risk undermining peace processes unless the mediators take steps to prevent or mitigate the negative effects of competition. This can be done through 'hierarchical coordination', where a recognized authority takes the lead and allocates roles to other actors, or through 'networked-based cooperation', where partners decide on a division of labour.

Introduction

Mediation has become a crowded field. A multitude of states, international organizations and NGOs have become active as mediators between warring parties in various regions of the world. Generally speaking this is a promising trend. The Human Security Report Project (2011, chapter 4), for example, found that the increase in international activism to promote peace, which includes mediation, has directly contributed to the global reduction in violent conflict in the last 20 years. However, the growth of the mediation field is not unequivocally positive. One negative side effect is the increasing competition between mediators, which poses a serious challenge to the successful conduct of peace processes.

This paper aims to get to the heart of this issue. By examining three case studies, we investigate what drives competition between mediators and suggest how a multiplicity of mediators might be productively managed.

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We use the term 'mediation' to refer to a process of conflict management and resolution, where those in conflict accept the assistance of a third party as they engage in negotiations with each other in order to find mutually acceptable solutions (adapted from Bercovitch 2009, 343). We use the term 'mediation actors' to refer to the organizations that do mediation, such as the UN and the AU, as distinct from 'mediators', by which we mean the individuals involved in mediation processes. The paper focuses on official mediation, often called 'Track 1', which usually involves the conflict parties' decision-makers. We define 'competition' broadly as an attempt by actors to establish their dominance in a particular area – in our case, over the strategy and conduct of official peace negotiations.

The paper makes the following claims. Competition risks undermining peace processes, for example by encouraging 'forum-shopping' by the parties, by diluting resources or by making a common conflict resolution strategy impossible. It is fuelled in three ways: by clashing interests between states, by overlapping mandates of mediation actors and by disagreements over the normative basis of international politics. However, a multiplicity of mediators can be managed in such a way that competition becomes a positive factor in peacemaking. This can be done through 'hierarchical coordination', where a recognized authority takes the lead and allocates roles to other actors, or through 'networked-based cooperation', where partners decide on a division of labour.

The paper is structured as follows. We first formulate the problem and the questions to be asked. We then describe three case studies of post-Cold War peace processes – Sudan (North-South, 1994–2005), Kenya (2008) and Madagascar (2009, ongoing). The studies are based on the published literature and in-depth interviews with key informants.[2] From these studies we draw implications about what drives competition and how problems might be mitigated, and we conclude with policy recommendations.

Outlining the problem

The issue of mediation competition arises from the proliferation of mediation actors and efforts in the last 25 years. The end of the Cold War freed international organizations from bipolar constraints, allowing them to take on a more active role in collective security and global governance. One consequence was that peacemaking engagements grew exponentially: fivefold from the 1980s to the 1990s in the case of the UN (Human Security Report Project 2011, 67). After 1992 the number of mediation processes per year decreased but the number of mediation actors per process increased significantly (Mason & Sguaitamatti 2011, 17). The same period also witnessed the formation of informal coalitions of states, often called Groups of Friends, to provide support for particular peace processes (Whitfield 2007). Crocker et al. (2002) link the emergence of multiparty mediation to a more permissive international context after the end of the Cold War, which allowed for third-party interventions that would previously have been unacceptable. It was also fostered by the growing international recognition of mediation, which prompted many states, international organizations and NGOs to develop organizational capacities to do mediation (Lanz 2011, 277–80).

[2] Most of the informants (one for Sudan, three each for Kenya and Madagascar) were directly involved in the respective peace processes. The Sudan informant (A) served as a resource person to the lead mediator. The three Kenya informants (B, C, D) were all members of Kofi Annan's secretariat. Two Madagascar informants were UN officials (E,F) and the third was an NGO expert (G) who had not been directly involved but had closely followed the Madagascar talks. All informants agreed to be cited on condition that they remain anonymous. Owing to their institutional affiliations and obligations, they are not permitted to speak publicly about their mediation engagements.

The multiplicity of mediators is not in itself a bad thing; on the contrary, it can be helpful. In an ideal situation, different mediators bring their comparative advantages to bear as part of a joint effort to make peace. Smith and Smock (2008, 29) point out that mediators' specific skills or expertise make it possible for them to deal with 'particular facets of negotiations' and that multiple mediators working in cooperation 'can isolate spoilers, increase leverage, distribute burdens, divide tasks, create momentum, and provide credible guarantees'. Likewise, on the basis of several case studies of successful multiparty mediation, Crocker et al. (1999a, 33) propose the involvement of different types of mediators during different phases of conflict: for example, where there is low-level conflict it will be appropriate for NGOs working on the societal level and states or international organizations working with top decision makers to be simultaneously involved in order to avert further conflict.

However, not all cases of multiparty mediation have been successful. In some cases mediators launched inconsistent parallel processes or even openly competed with each other. Some scholars have therefore pointed out that clear leadership and coordination are preconditions for successful multiparty mediation (e.g. Kriesberg 1996). 'Coordination' has thus become a buzzword among mediation practitioners. For example, Crocker et al. (1999b, 57–8) posit that multiparty mediation requires the crafting of a coherent political strategy that all mediators adhere to. Likewise, McCartney (2006) identifies coordination as an essential component of third-party involvement, and Nan and Strimling (2004) highlight the need for coordination between mediators in official peace talks and those engaged with opinion leaders from civil society – a process often referred to as 'Track 2' .

In spite of this, coordination has remained elusive, in particular in high-profile conflicts, such as those in Darfur (Flint 2010) or the Middle East (Ghitis 2009), where the negative effects of competition have become increasingly apparent. Scholars and practitioners have highlighted two problems in particular, one pertaining to the conflict parties and the other to the mediators.

The first problem is mentioned by the UN Secretary-General in his 2009 report on mediation: 'Multiple actors competing for a mediation role create an opportunity for forum shopping as intermediaries are played off against one another. Such a fragmented international response reinforces fragmentation in the conflict and complicates resolution' (UN Secretary-General, 2009, 6). Along the same lines, Griffiths and Whitfield (2010, 11) deplore the fact that while mediators are eloquent about 'the benefits of strong leadership and a single negotiating effort', nevertheless 'most have a sorry tale to tell of competition, "poaching", or at least the damage done to a particular effort by the opportunities presented to conflict parties for "forum-shopping"'. The term 'forum-shopping' comes from legal studies and refers to defendants' invocation of competing jurisdictions in an attempt to evade justice. By analogy, in international mediation it refers to a process whereby parties 'shop around' for the mediator who offers them the best deal. This undermines the leverage of the lead mediator as the parties will be tempted to abandon the process when they are faced with tough decisions. The existence of competing parallel processes also distracts the parties. At worst, it degrades mediation to a meaningless exercise, where parties move from one process to another for tactical gain but are unwilling to genuinely work towards peace.

The second problem is that competition between mediators prevents a unified regional and international approach to peacemaking. As Crocker (2007, 6) notes, a crowded mediation field may be problematic 'because when mediators are unable to organize themselves with a sense of common purpose it suggests that there are different "outside" views about how the conflict should be resolved'. As a result, conflict parties will be unsure about what the international community expects of them. This means that the mediation process lacks a clear incentive structure pushing parties in the direction of peace. Moreover,

once the negotiations have commenced, the lack of unity among third parties translates into disagreement about how the process is to be run – where it should take place, which stakeholders it should include, what should go into a peace agreement, and so on. The UN Secretary-General (2012, 30) recognizes this problem in his *Guidance for Effective Mediation*, recommending that mediation actors should 'work together to agree on the degree of transparency and coordination mechanisms for information sharing' and 'cooperate based on a common mediation strategy, ensure consistent messaging to the parties and avoid duplication or overloading the parties with multiple competing processes'.

The scholarly literature and practitioners' accounts make two things clear. One, the involvement of multiple mediators can either be channelled in a productive fashion or lead to unhealthy competition. Two, when competition does occur, it poses problems for the peace process by fostering forum-shopping and by preventing a unified regional and international approach. Less understood are two related questions. First, why does competition still occur, given that most mediators have expressed a strong commitment to coordination? And second, since it appears that competition is difficult to avoid in some cases, how can the multiplicity of mediators be managed in order to make it support the peace process?

These are the two questions that we sought to answer. Our method was to develop three case studies of post-Cold War multiparty mediation. We selected three peace processes from the 1990s and 2000s, Sudan North-South (1994–2005), Kenya (2008) and Madagascar (2009, ongoing), because this is when the crowding of the mediation field began. The three cases happen to be from Africa but in principle the lessons drawn from them are valid more broadly: they are all typical of post-Cold War peace processes in terms of the range of mediation actors involved in the process, the strategic significance of the respective countries, and the level of violence and rate of escalation of the conflict. The cases also cover the types of crisis in which mediation is usually undertaken: a full-fledged civil war (Sudan), an outbreak of post-election violence (Kenya) and a coup (Madagascar). The paper relies on inductive analysis. This means that it generates theoretical insights and policy recommendations based on the empirical material in the case studies, as opposed to seeking to confirm or reject a predefined theoretical framework (George & Bennett 2005). We are not concerned with building a complete theory as the empirical basis is not sufficiently robust. We do, however, offer general propositions about the problem of competition in international mediation that other studies could elaborate on.

Case study of Sudan (North-South conflict)

Civil war broke out in Sudan in 1983 when a group of southern soldiers in the Sudanese army mutinied and formed the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) led by John Garang. Its aim was to re-establish the autonomy of South Sudan vis-à-vis the central government in Khartoum. The main axis of the conflict was North-South, although other peripheral areas, for example the Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile, were later drawn into the conflict. The early 1990s saw the first serious attempts to mediate between the SPLM and the Sudanese government in Khartoum, which had been dominated by Islamists since a coup in 1989 brought the National Islamic Front (later to become the National Congress Party, NCP) to power. However, the mediation initiative, led by Nigeria, did not bear fruit. It was only in 1994 that peace talks were revived by the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), an East African regional organization.[3] Under Kenyan leadership, IGAD organized four rounds of talks.

[3] Founded in 1986, IGAD includes the governments of Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia and, since 1993, Eritrea. Until 1996 it was officially called the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD). For simplicity, this paper only uses the acronym IGAD.

At the second round, in May 1994, the IGAD mediators presented the parties with a draft Declaration of Principles (DoP), which 'committed them to a peaceful resolution of the conflict and affirmed the right of the south to self-determination, while calling for priority to be given to unity on the basis of agreement on a secular, pluralist democratic polity' (El-Affendi 2001, 585).

For Khartoum, neither self-determination nor secularism was acceptable. It therefore rejected the DoP and eventually pulled out of the IGAD talks. This left the process in limbo, particularly since Sudan's relations with fellow IGAD member states progressively deteriorated. Uganda, Eritrea and to a lesser degree Ethiopia all armed and funded the SPLA. IGAD was therefore no longer a credible mediator. However, the IGAD process was revitalized three years later as the Sudanese government looked for a way to ease the increasing military pressure that both the SPLA and neighbouring countries were exerting. In October 1997 the IGAD talks resumed and in May 1998 the government accepted the DoP as the basis for negotiations (Young 2007, 10). At the same time, IGAD's capacity to mediate was enhanced as the IGAD Partners Forum, which included leading Western donor countries, established a permanent secretariat for the peace process and convinced IGAD to appoint a special envoy. In spite of this, the Sudan talks soon reached deadlock. This was partly due to the outbreak of the Eritrean-Ethiopian war as well as Uganda's military engagement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which lessened the pressure on Khartoum. At the same time, there was growing impatience with IGAD. Many perceived the organization as 'proprietorial' because it wanted to maintain control of the Sudan peace process (El-Affendi 2001, 592).

As a result of the lack of progress, a number of parallel processes were launched. Most importantly, in 1999 Cairo and Tripoli launched the Egyptian-Libyan Joint Initiative. Their proposal mirrored the DoP, with the notable exception of references to the referendum on self-determination and the relationship between religion and the state, which were deliberately omitted. It also proposed including the Northern opposition parties within the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in a transitional government. According to the International Crisis Group, the Egyptian-Libyan proposal 'was designed largely to undercut support for the IGAD Declaration of Principles' and it led to forum-shopping (ICG 2002, 160).

We might ask what prompted Egypt, which was in the lead, to embark on a competing process. Part of the reason is that it was concerned about the implications of a self-determination referendum, which it feared could lead to the secession of South Sudan. It did not want another country to make claims on the resources of the Nile, which it considers a matter of national security (Mason 2004, 178). The initiative also reflected a normative stance in line with the position of the OAU, which treated Africa's borders as inviolable. An Egyptian official stated that the self-determination referendum would be 'a contagious phenomenon that would spread to surrounding countries' (quoted in ICG 2002, 18). Moreover, Egypt saw the initiative as a way to keep the Sudanese government, whose Islamist agenda was a cause for concern, in check. It was also a way for Libya and Egypt to promote the NDA opposition parties, with which they had developed close ties (ICG 2002, 164–5).

The Libyan-Egyptian initiative became a serious counter-project to the IGAD process but it was ultimately eclipsed. In 2001 the context changed in such a way that Sudan's North-South conflict became ripe for resolution.[4] First, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 made Khartoum vulnerable vis-à-vis the US, given that it had hosted Osama bin-Laden in the 1990s. At the same time, Khartoum possessed valuable information about bin-Laden's terrorist network and was thus a potentially valuable partner

[4] This paragraph draws on a very useful overview provided by De Waal (2007, 15–22).

for Washington in its 'war against terror'. The US signalled to Khartoum that it was willing to normalize relations on condition that the government made peace with the SPLM. Second, the two top negotiators in the talks, the Sudanese Vice-President Ali Osman Taha and John Garang, consolidated their leadership within their own parties, which allowed them to make bold decisions and follow through on them. Third, the regional powers, in particular Ethiopia, acquiesced to a North-South peace deal and refrained from interfering in the process.

In this context the US assumed the leadership of the peace process, together with Norway and the UK, with which it formed the so-called 'Troika'. As a test of the parties' commitment, the US special envoy John Danforth initiated talks on a ceasefire agreement for the Nuba Mountains region. The talks took place in January 2002 on the Bürgenstock in Switzerland. Under the mediation of the US and Switzerland, the parties successfully concluded an agreement after one week of negotiations. According to Norway's representative Hilde Johnson (2011, 33), '[t]his was done without Troika consultation … taking the British and Norwegians by surprise'. However, the Bürgenstock talks did not compete with the main track but ended up being complementary. As they were merely a test run, it was sensible to hold the talks in a new setting. Moreover, the personal connections of the Swiss envoy Joseph Bucher to the inner circles of the SPLM and NCP leadership proved to be valuable in bringing the parties to the table (Mason 2006).

Subsequently, the US reverted to the IGAD process in Kenya, opting not to continue the talks in Switzerland or hold them in Norway or the UK. The rationale for this decision, according to our Sudan informant, was that 'after the Bürgenstock negotiations, the Americans wanted to have a go at full negotiations. They didn't want a new bazaar but preferred to reinforce an existing structure. IGAD was also useful because it allowed the US to tackle the regional dimension of the conflict and it addressed the "African solutions for African problems" issue' (informant A, April 2012). Consequently, the international partners rallied behind IGAD, resurrected a moribund mediation and made it clear that no competing process would be tolerated.

Three additional points of consensus further fostered a cohesive international approach. First, the international support would mainly be channelled through the Troika. Within the Troika, an implicit division of labour was established, based on the three countries' comparative advantages in Sudan. Johnson (2011, 27) describes the respective roles as follows. She says that '[a]s the former colonial power, Britain was important. The Foreign Office had extensive knowledge of Sudan and a lot of contacts among important people in Khartoum'. She observes that 'Norway had close relations with the Southerners', that Norwegian NGOs 'had been working in the South for decades' and that Norwegian involvement 'would give Southerners confidence in the role of the Troika and the peace process'. Finally, she points out that 'the US had the broadest and most powerful set of carrots and sticks at their disposal'.

Second, the international partners agreed on a 'hierarchy of concerns': the talks would primarily address the North-South conflict between the NCP and the SPLM, excluding other actors, for example Northern opposition parties, and other regions, for example Darfur (De Waal 2007, 19–20).

Third, there was consensus on the need to differentiate the roles of those supporting the process from the outside and those in charge of the process on the inside. The mediation was led by Kenya's special envoy to IGAD, General Lazaro Sumbeiywo. A mediation expert pointed out that 'Sumbeiywo's role was very clear: he defended the process. He wanted to have a team of mediators and experts but this expertise needed to be provided from within the process' (informant A, April 2012).

Sumbeiywo therefore formed a small team consisting of three senior experts who provided substantive inputs during the negotiations. Officials from the Troika and IGAD member states were permitted to observe the talks on condition that they respected certain ground rules: 'Sumbeiywo's golden rule was that they could come and take part, but they needed to be permanent members of the facilitation team under his orders' (informant A, April 2012). So he demanded that any consultations with the parties be transparent. At the same time, he drew on international partners to drive the process forward, for example by asking them to bring their influence to bear on the parties during crucial moments of the negotiations.

The talks officially started in May 2002 in Machakos, a town close to Nairobi. Six weeks later the parties signed the Machakos Protocol, which laid out the basic parameters of a future settlement: a referendum on self-determination for the South and the government's right to have sharia law in the North. The talks proceeded but soon reached a deadlock. They were relocated to a resort in Nakuru and in July 2003 the mediators tabled a proposal for a comprehensive agreement. This backfired as the government walked out of the talks and disparaged the mediators in public. The government subsequently tried forum-shopping, soliciting the AU and the League of Arab States as alternative mediators. However, the Troika's unity of purpose remained firm. They made it clear that IGAD was the only acceptable mediator and fended off attempts to create parallel processes.

At the same time the Troika, and in particular the US, sought to influence the mediation process more directly, for example by pushing the issue of religious freedom. As his authority over the conduct of the mediation was challenged, Sumbeiywo reacted harshly. Martin (2006, 148) says Sumbeiywo was convinced that '[t]he observers' drive to meet the demands of their own political constituencies back home … had tipped the balance of the process against the interest of the parties', and describes a famous episode in which Sumbeiywo 'threatened to shoot the American envoy … and then threw him out of his office'. Sumbeiywo's approach raised some eyebrows but it helped to prevent the process from being co-opted by the interests of the observers.

Subsequently, the parties returned to the IGAD process, with a new round of talks beginning in Naivasha in September 2003. The mediators progressively took more of a backseat role as Garang and Taha hammered out the details in private face-to-face meetings. Finally, in January 2005 the Sudanese government and the SPLM signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which officially ended Africa's longest civil war.

Case study of Kenya

In the aftermath of the December 2007 national elections in Kenya more than 1,000 people died and more than 350,000 were displaced (ICG 2008). The violence erupted when the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) announced that President Mwai Kibaki of the Party of National Unity (PNU) had won re-election. However, his main challenger, Raila Odinga from the opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), had won a substantial portion of seats in parliament. The opposition used this to build a case claiming that the presidential elections had been rigged. Indeed, international observers noted irregularities in the tabulation of the votes. The ODM's initial position was that Odinga had won the elections and nothing less than the position of president was acceptable. The PNU, on the other hand, relied on the ECK, and Kibaki was sworn in immediately after the announcement of the results. The ODM-PNU disagreement became

a significant factor fuelling the conflict. This conflict has often been analysed along ethnic lines but it was also driven by poverty, lack of employment and inequality (Human Rights Watch 2008).

Kofi Annan, who became the chief mediator for Kenya, cautions that 'sometimes, when things happen, lots of people rush in and sometimes different mediators come in and it leads to confusion' (quoted in HD Centre 2009, 3). This is precisely what happened in Kenya. Within days of the elections, several high-level personalities descended on Nairobi and offered to mediate between Kibaki and Odinga (Lindenmayer & Kaye 2009, 4–6). The first senior mediator to arrive in Kenya was Archbishop Desmond Tutu, on 2 January 2008. Despite his moral authority and commitment, however, the conflict was not ripe for mediation at that point. His visit was followed on 4 January by that of Jendayi Frazer, US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, but she was not accepted by the parties and left the country after 10 days. Next came four former heads of state from the Africa Leaders' Forum.[5] Their intervention was more acceptable, especially to the government, which was resisting the internationalization of the crisis. Nevertheless, because Kibaki was still exploring alternative options, and possibly also because the four leaders lacked time and resources, this initiative was not the definitive one. The fourth attempt was led by the AU Chairman John Kufuor. This was not welcomed by the government, which insisted that there was no crisis to be managed. However, Kufuor did get the parties to agree on the principle of ending the violence through dialogue and that this dialogue should be led by a Panel of Eminent African Personalities. Before the establishment of the Panel, yet another mediation attempt was started by the Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, who represented the East African Community.

The various initiatives were not sufficiently coordinated and they appeared to lack a coherent strategy. Also, the various personalities came to Kenya without making sure that both parties had agreed to their mediation. Once they were on the ground, they met with the parties separately and without coordination. This lack of planning, added to the lack of consensus on who was the best placed mediator, led to forum-shopping as the parties could pick and choose the mediator they thought suited their interests best at any given moment. The early mediation efforts showed the need for an integrated approach and this was the approach adopted by the Panel in the following weeks. The efforts may also have paved the way for the parties to accept mediation since they demonstrated the international community's concern about the situation in Kenya and its determination to help achieve a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

When Kufuor's efforts proved to be inconclusive, he wrote to Annan asking him to be the chief mediator and chair of the Panel. Annan accepted the request. We might ask why Annan was a suitable mediator for Kenya. In his words the answer was: 'I came with unique skills and attributes and also the ability to pick up the phone and speak to anyone around the world … I had the entire international community behind me' (quoted in HD Centre 2009, 17). Moreover, as a mediation expert closely involved in the process remarked, 'Annan had the right personality, the mandate, the network and broad support that were needed. Who could compete with him?' (informant B, May 2012).

On 10 January both the PNU and the ODM consented to the appointment of Annan as chair of the Panel and this choice was made public. In addition to Annan, the three-member Panel was composed of former President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania and former First Lady of South Africa and Education Minister of Mozambique, Graça Machel. The team received a mandate from the AU Peace and Security Council and it garnered worldwide diplomatic support. The Panel was fully supported by the UN Secretary-General,

[5] They were Benjamin Mkapa (Tanzania), Joaquim Chissano (Mozambique), Katumile Masire (Botswana) and Kenneth Kaunda (Zambia).

who immediately moved to establish a secretariat to support the Panel. Senior officials from the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) were deployed at an early stage to head the secretariat, which was composed of staff from the DPA, the AU and the HD Centre, all of whom provided technical and political expertise (Call 2012, 7). Administration and logistics were taken care of by UNDP and the UN Office in Nairobi. In addition, both the DPA and the HD Centre provided senior advisers with specific expertise to support the Panel. The collaboration at the working level functioned well and the three entities were able to work as a team serving the Panel. As one member of the secretariat noted, 'the team was small enough that we basically just cooperated. The political advisers would meet Annan and then tell us at working level what needed to be done and we mostly sorted it out between us'; moreover, 'Annan's previous position as UN Secretary-General as well as his close links with the HD Centre seemed to have helped this arrangement and boosted its efficiency' (informant C, May 2012).

On 22 January the Panel took over the leadership of the mediation. The Panel made it clear from the beginning that there would be one mediation process only, with the full support of the international community, and that the previous absence of coordination in the first weeks of the crisis would not be repeated. In Annan's words: 'we were going to need strong support from the international community and I felt I had to organize it before I got in: get them to understand how I was going to approach the problem, what sort of support I needed from them, and how we should coordinate' (quoted in HD Centre 2009, 3). Annan also insisted that there must be no interference in the mediation and that it was up to the mediator to decide whom to ask for support and when. According to one of our informants, 'there was a clear intention from Annan to "kill any competition" in order to move efficiently and rapidly toward restoring peace' (informant B, May 2012). Annan therefore imposed his leadership from the outset and maintained it throughout the five-week process.

When the Panel arrived in Nairobi, three of the four leaders from the Africa Leaders' Forum were still in town and Annan approached them directly to discuss their plans: 'They thought they could stay on … and deal with the social aspects by encouraging social cohesion … And I said "No, I think that will lead to confusion…". We will share our papers with you and maybe at some stage you will be able to help, but I don't think we can both be in town … And they understood, so they left town' (quoted in HD Centre 2009, 8). Not everybody agreed, however. According to a Panel secretariat member, 'at some point, people around Kibaki tried to use Museveni when Annan was too tough. So Museveni came again as Annan was already engaged. Annan stayed in the Serena Hotel while Museveni was in the Intercontinental. These things gave people the chance to shop for mediators' (informant D, March 2012). However, owing to the broad recognition he enjoyed, Annan managed to discourage such efforts and kept the process on track.

Throughout the mediation, Annan drew on various actors to support the process. There was a deliberate effort to support the work of local mediators who were active in peacemaking at the grassroots.[6] Annan also drew on international actors to provide leverage. The arrival in the region on 1 February of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon was a case in point: 'Ban was in regular contact with Annan and would provide any support he needed without interfering in [Annan's] mediation' (informant C, May 2012). In parallel, the US continued to put pressure on the parties by threatening to use 'alternative actions' if the parties failed to come to an agreement (Lindenmayer & Kaye 2009, 11). On 18 February US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice came to support the Panel's efforts. She emphasized that the world was waiting for an agreement. Annan said, 'I would call Condi to say: "Look, things are not going well and I have just suspended the talks and a statement would be in order"' (quoted in HD Centre 2009, 11).

[6] On grassroots peacemaking in Kenya, see swisspeace, Center for Security Studies & Berghof Foundation for Peace Support (2009).

Another supporter was AU Commissioner Jean Ping, who regularly encouraged all parties to work with the Panel. A member of his team summarized Annan's approach: 'If he needed someone or a country to do something, he would call them and invite them. But he would orchestrate who, when and how' (informant B, May 2012). Annan described his rapport with the international community as follows: 'They all said, "we know you and we trust you and are fully behind you", which was what I really wanted, and what I needed. And they said "tell us when you need something, tell us when we can help"' (quoted in HD Centre 2009, 4).

For the first month of the process, talks were held between representatives of Kibaki and Odinga at the Nairobi Serena Hotel. On 26 February Annan suspended these talks in order to engage directly with Kibaki and Odinga. By doing this, the Panel sought to make the point that the achievement of peace lay on the shoulders of the two leaders. For the final stage of negotiation, Annan asked President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania, who followed Kufuor as AU Chairman, to join the Panel, sending a clear message to the parties that the moment to sign an agreement was upon them. Thus on 28 February the parties signed the Agreement on the Principles of Partnership of the Coalition Government, which stipulated a number of power-sharing arrangements, including the creation of a prime minister post, to be filled by Odinga, while Kibaki remained president. The agreement led to the PNU-ODM grand coalition and paved the way for peace in Kenya.

Case study of Madagascar

A constitutional crisis arose in Madagascar in early 2009. The event that triggered it was Malagasy president Marc Ravalomanana's closure of the TV station owned by his main political rival, Andry Rajoelina, who was then mayor of Antananarivo. This led to mass demonstrations and strikes, in the course of which some 70 people died. At a big rally on 31 January Rajoelina announced the creation of the High Authority of the Transition (HAT)[7] and declared himself head of state. Ravalomanana's response was to order that Rajoelina be removed from office. This decision provoked unrest among the supporters of Rajoelina. The ensuing rallies were brutally suppressed by government forces, leaving about 30 demonstrators dead. As Ravalomanana gradually lost support, he announced his resignation as president on 17 March and handed over power to a group of army officers. A few hours later, as Rajoelina managed to garner the support of key figures in the military establishment, the officers handed power to him as the leader of the HAT – effectively facilitating a coup d'état (ICG 2010a, 2–12).

Many international bodies condemned the coup. The AU Peace and Security Council suspended Madagascar's membership of the organization on 20 March 2009. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) followed suit on 30 March. Some SADC members even talked of taking military action to restore democracy in Madagascar, although this never became a serious option (Cawthra 2010, 20). The actions of these two organizations were prompted by both principle and self-interest: on the one hand, a rejection of unconstitutional changes of government; on the other, the specific concerns of southern African leaders. The latter was particularly true for Swaziland, which held the Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation at the time. According to an informant, 'given the nature of the regime in Swaziland, there was a concern that something similar could happen in Swaziland. So there was a kind of solidarity between the leaders' (informant G, May 2012). It appears

[7] The original French term is *Haute Autorité de la Transition (HAT)*.

that other leaders in the region shared this concern (informant E, March 2012). The US government and the EU also condemned the coup, eventually cancelling their aid programmes in Madagascar. The French government joined the chorus of censure of Rajoelina. However, Paris's position was 'ambiguous' given that it had had strained relations with Ravalomanana, who was described as a 'Francophobe' and had challenged some of France's economic interests in Madagascar during his presidency (ICG 2010a, 6–7).

The UN took a different position. After the coup Ban Ki-moon did not openly condemn Rajoelina, but instead called for a 'peaceful and consensual solution in Madagascar' (UN, 2009) – which effectively meant negotiations between the two rivals. This reveals a normative difference, which is relevant for understanding the dynamics of the mediation process later on. In this regard one of our informants said: 'If you take it *sensu stricto*, there is no rule for us saying constitutionalism is sacrosanct. Having said this, our experience has shown that unconstitutional transfers of power rarely lead to stability, with all that this implies in terms of security, human rights and governance, and this is why we get involved. Of course politically it wouldn't be feasible for us to promote an agreement that regional organizations reject, so we have to be sensitive to the norms they endorse, but sometimes we can have a bit more flexibility' (informant F, March 2012).

From the outset the UN focused on mediation as a means to manage the crisis. After deploying a senior official, Haile Menkerios, in early February, the UN Secretary-General appointed Tiébilé Dramé as his Senior Political Advisor for Madagascar one month later. In the beginning, the UN primarily supported the Malagasy Council of Christian Churches (FFKM) in its attempt to mediate between the Ravalomanana and Rajoelina camps. A UN official said: 'At the time, some of us said that there are merits and dangers of having local people mediate. The danger is that it would be more difficult for local people to be impartial. But of course we supported the process' (informant E, March 2012). When the local mediation effort was aborted at the end of February, partly because of divisions within the FFKM, the UN was de facto in charge of the negotiations. At the same time, the AU and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) appointed special envoys.

The first talks after the coup took place from 9 to 11 April 2009 in the Senegalese Embassy in Antananarivo. In the absence of established political parties in Madagascar, the mediation, which was led by the UN with inputs from the other special envoys, decided to give seats to four 'movements' (*mouvances* in French). These represented the political camps of Rajoelina and Ravalomanana as well as those of two former presidents, Didier Ratsiraka and Albert Zafy, who were thus brought back into Malagasy politics. However, the talks failed. One of the reasons for the failure was the lack of a unified approach on the part of the international community: 'With SADC pushing for the return of the former president, even going as far as threatening military intervention, Ravalomanana saw the option of being brought back [to the position of President] and so he had little incentive to negotiate with the coup leaders' (informant G, May 2012). The failure of the talks showed the need for coordination among the international actors who sought a role for themselves in the process (ICG 2010a, 26). Partly in reaction to this, the AU Peace and Security Council established an International Contact Group that brought together a broad coalition of actors interested in the situation in Madagascar: it included representatives of the UN, the EU, the AU, SADC, the OIF, the Indian Ocean Commission, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the permanent members of the UN Security Council and African countries with seats on the Council.

At the first meeting of the International Contact Group on 30 April, the AU Commission took over the lead of the mediation process from the UN. The AU was keen on getting involved as it wanted to consolidate

its role in conflict management in Africa. The question is, why did the UN accept the takeover given that it was the de facto leader, had been involved from the outset, and was the only organization with a presence on the ground? Partly this had to do with the fact that Madagascar was not high on the list of UN priorities – as reflected by the fact that the special envoy was not a full-fledged Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Call 2012, 20). It also reflected the UN's position vis-à-vis peacemaking by regional organizations. As a senior UN official stated: 'The AU says these things are happening in Africa. [They say] "we are building our own standing and so we have to be involved". They are trying to grow, and that's fair and legitimate' (informant E, March 2012). However, while the deference to the AU was officially accepted, the UN team on the ground was sceptical about the AU's ability to manage the process.

Under the AU's leadership a second round of talks was held in the Carlton Hotel at Antananarivo on 22 and 23 May. This resulted in the signing of a Transitional Charter, although the parties remained divided on the main issues. For the first time SADC was present during the talks – which marked a change in its approach to the crisis, from confrontation to mediation (Cawthra 2010, 20). A new phase of the mediation started after the SADC Summit meeting on 21 June, which saw the appointment of former Mozambican president Joaquim Chissano as SADC mediator. As a former president, he was the highest-ranking official among the envoys to Madagascar and accordingly he assumed the leadership of the mediation process. However, this did not represent a decision at the strategic level and in fact the AU insisted that the talks would be carried out under its auspices. This gave rise to an awkward situation where the de facto mediation leadership (SADC), convening authority (AU) and substantive expertise (primarily the UN) were divided among three different organizations. Not surprisingly, the process was characterized by disagreements between the UN and the AU and, in particular, between the AU and SADC. It appears there were 'tensions from the beginning over who would lead the process. There was never a constructive relationship between the AU and SADC – there was a lot of competition between them' (informant G, May 2012). In spite of this, at the operational level coordination worked relatively well thanks to the establishment of the Joint Mediation Team, which included representatives of the UN, the AU, SADC and the OIF.

To drive the process forward Chissano organized a summit in Maputo, where on 9 August 2009 the parties signed a power-sharing deal. The Maputo Agreement foresaw a 15-month transitional period followed by elections, and the formation of a government of national unity with a president, prime minister, deputy prime ministers and two legislative bodies. The posts in the transitional institutions were to be divided equitably between the four movements, although the precise allocation was postponed to a later round of talks (ICG 2010a, 27–9). After the Maputo meeting a series of disagreements broke out between the negotiating parties over who should assume the presidency during the transitional period. A second round of talks in Maputo in late August failed to produce an agreement and it was only in early November that Chissano succeeded in reconvening the parties to discuss the allocation of posts. On 6 November 2009 the parties signed the Addis Ababa Additional Act, which made Rajoelina transitional president alongside two co-presidents from the other movements. A small number of ministerial appointments were left open.

The mediators had very different ideas on how to handle the aftermath of the Addis meeting. Dramé travelled to Antananarivo with the aim of ironing out the last differences between the parties, apparently in consultation with Chissano. The AU, however, considered that the mediation had ended. On 9 November the AU Peace and Security Council released a communiqué calling for the establishment of a follow-on mechanism for the implementation of the Maputo and Addis Ababa agreements (AU 2009, para. 6). At

the same time the AU sent a letter to the UN Secretary-General explaining that, since the process had moved into the implementation phase, there was no need for the UN to mediate (informant F, March 2012). This undermined Dramé's mediation efforts and he withdrew shortly afterwards. In spite of the AU's stance, Chissano organized another meeting between the parties in Maputo in December 2009. However, Rajoelina failed to show up and shortly thereafter abrogated the Maputo Accords.

It remains unclear why Rajoelina backed away from the peace process. However, the mixed messages that he received from the mediators, and the fact that the competition between them openly came to the fore, certainly did not help to keep him on track. In any case, the first phase of multiparty mediation in Madagascar ended in early 2010. The Joint Mediation Team was dissolved and the International Contact Group met for the last time in February 2010. Since the mediation process had stalled, France and South Africa stepped in and launched a bilateral mediation initiative by organizing a summit in Pretoria in April 2010. They attempted to revive the peace process but this initiative was poorly prepared and essentially created a parallel track undermining the official mediation. France's position, in particular, 'was perceived as opposing the mediation effort conducted by Chissano' (ICG 2010b, 16).

Since the failure of the Pretoria Summit, SADC has been in charge of the peace process in Madagascar in a more or less uncontested fashion. However, this has not stopped the turf battles between mediators, nor has it changed the intransigence of the parties. For months Chissano tried unsuccessfully to get the parties and the SADC heads of state to endorse his plan for resolving the Malagasy crisis. Even though SADC never officially cancelled Chissano's mandate, in August 2011 South Africa as the Chair of the SADC Organ effectively took charge of the process (informant G, May 2012). On 17 September the South Africans managed to get the parties to sign a roadmap, which provided for the unconditional return of Ravalomanana and the holding of national elections. However, the agreement has only been partially implemented. Most importantly, Ravalomanana is still in exile, leaving the Malagasy crisis unresolved as of August 2012.

Analysis of the factors that drive competition

Drawing on the material presented in the case studies, this section outlines three factors that drive competition: conflicting interests between states involved in mediation, turf battles between organizations with overlapping mandates and disagreements about the normative basis of international politics and conflict resolution.

Conflicting interests

The first factor driving competition in mediation processes relates to states' clashing interests in international politics. As states try to enhance their political influence, wealth and geopolitical position, they compete with other states. Such competition plays out in mediation processes when states have conflicting interests in a country in crisis. One way the discord may manifest itself is in disagreements over the strategy and conduct of a mediation, for example over the question of who gets a seat at the table. States want to afford a prominent role in the peace talks to those groups with which they have a privileged relationship and which they think will help them advance their interests in a post-

conflict setting. Another way is that conflicting interests may foster the instigation of competing parallel processes. This will happen when a state, concerned that an ongoing process might lead to an outcome that is incompatible with its interests, tries to sabotage the process or, what is often more promising, launches a parallel initiative. The aim is to assert control of the process and to re-route it in a direction that suits the state's interests.

The three case studies above provide ample evidence of how divergent interests between states can lead to competition in mediation. In Madagascar, France favoured Rajoelina over Ravalomanana, who had moved the country somewhat away from the French sphere of influence. France remained the most influential foreign country during Ravalomanana's rule but there was regular friction as he challenged the interests of French entrepreneurs in Madagascar, introduced English as an official language and expelled the French Ambassador in 2008. As noted above, the French government's position was ambiguous, but it seemed to favour Rajoelina. For example, Rajoelina was hosted for several days in the French embassy in early 2009 (ICG 2010a, 6–7). As far as the peace process is concerned, France's position meant that it did not fully support Chissano's mediation, presumably because it was concerned that the process could undermine their ally Rajoelina. Conversely, a number of SADC states were closer to Ravalomanana. Swaziland was his strongest advocate, especially at the beginning of the crisis – a position that seems to have been motivated primarily by regime solidarity (Cawthra 2010, 19). South Africa's stance is more moderate. However, the fact that Ravalomanana has lived in exile in South Africa and that the government insists that he has to be allowed back home suggests that Pretoria saw him as an opportunity, in the words of one observer, 'to wrestle some influence from the French' (informant E, March 2010). In any case, SADC's initial antagonism towards the HAT regime had the effect of compromising Chissano in the Rajoelina camp, making it difficult for the mediator to run an even-handed process.

The case of Sudan also exemplifies how conflicting state interests can generate competition in mediation. Thus, Egypt's launching of the Joint Initiative in 1999, which directly competed with the IGAD process, was primarily motivated by a concern that this process threatened the country's interests. In particular, the Mubarak regime feared that granting the SPLM a referendum on self-determination would lead to an independent South Sudan – as we now know it did – which would in turn affect Egypt's interests related to the Nile. Indeed, Egypt depends heavily on the Nile and it feared that Sudan's break-up could lead to conflict over the Nile waters (Mason 2006, 178). Moreover, IGAD's focus on the NCP-SPLM duo was worrisome for Mubarak because he distrusted the NCP Islamists and had closer ties with the opposition parties within the NDA, especially the Democratic Unionist Party around the Mirghani clan (ICG 2002, 53–6). Libya had similar interests: Gaddafi vacillated in his relations with the Khartoum Islamists but maintained strong ties with Saddiq al-Mahdi, Sudan's former prime minister and head of the Umma Party. Launching a parallel process was therefore a way for Egypt and Libya to bring back their partners, who they knew would see to the protection of their national interests.

Overlapping mandates

The second factor that drives competition operates at the inter-organizational level: turf battles between different mediation actors. It springs from the nature of global security governance, which is characterized by overlapping hierarchies and mandates. This is particularly true for the relationship between the UN and regional organizations. Although Chapter VIII of the UN Charter addresses this relationship, it remains

unclear whether the UN is superior or whether, by virtue of the principle of subsidiarity, the primary competence lies with regional organizations (Barnett 1995). This has become a problem in the field of mediation as the role and capacity of regional and sub-regional organizations in conflict management has grown since the end of the Cold War, in particular in Africa. At the same time, the UN has seen its mediation role strengthened. A range of private actors – NGOs and eminent individuals – have also become involved, claiming a specialist competence to be mediators. This results in a situation where, in a specific crisis, a multitude of organizations assert a mandate to mediate. In the absence of clear hierarchies, in particular between the UN and regional organizations, this leads to competition as the different organizations, by virtue of their mandate, assert their competence or jurisdiction vis-à-vis other actors.

The three case studies exemplify the problem of overlapping mandates. In Madagascar the UN, the AU and SADC all had mandates to mediate: the UN as the guardian of the global system of collective security, the AU as the foundation of the African security architecture, and SADC by virtue of the principle of subsidiarity. The problem was not bad intentions or hidden agendas; it was that all three organizations had a legitimate claim to lead the Madagascar peace process and there was no mechanism to clarify the hierarchy and division of labour between them. The competition did not, at first, openly come to the fore, but it resulted in extensive negotiations that delayed the process – indeed, Chissano was only appointed in June 2009, three months after Rajoelina's de facto coup. The organizations eventually settled on an awkward arrangement, where everybody was included in the process, but without agreeing on a common strategy and division of labour. The discord between the three organizations became evident after the Addis Ababa Additional Act of November 2009. This undermined the process as it lessened the pressure on Rajoelina to follow through on his commitments.

Competition as a result of overlapping mandates also affected the Kenyan mediation. In the weeks following the outbreak of violence, several high-level representatives of different organizations descended on Nairobi – Desmond Tutu as the Chairman of the Elders, Jendayi Frazer representing the US government, John Kuffour as the President of the AU, Yoweri Museveni as the Chairman of the East African Community and four former heads of state from the Africa Leaders' Forum. These actors either had a specific mandate, as in the case of the AU, or they possessed a special competence that qualified them as mediators: Tutu as a moral authority, Frazer representing Kenya's most powerful ally, Museveni as the leader of a friendly neighbouring state representing the region and the African leaders as the voice of the African continent. While considerations of prestige may have played a role, all the actors were genuinely interested in making peace. Good intentions notwithstanding, in the absence of a coordination mechanism their efforts resulted in an incoherent flurry of initiatives, which only stopped when Kofi Annan got involved and asserted his leadership.

Clashing norms

The case studies reveal a third factor that drives competition, which is related to the normative basis of world politics. It springs from states' conceptions of the principles and values underpinning world order and, related to this, their conceptions of what constitutes appropriate behaviour in international politics. Conflicts arise when states' normative frameworks clash. One example is the clash between sovereignty and humanitarian intervention, the former postulating non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, the latter calling for external intervention if a state is unable or unwilling to protect its

citizens (Ayoob 2002). Mediation processes are an arena where conflicts over norms play out, and such clashes foster competition between mediators. In one scenario, third parties fear that the outcome of a peace process will not accord with their commitment to certain norms, which leads them to undermine an existing process or launch a parallel initiative. In another scenario, third parties' clashing norms lead them to disagree about the overall strategy for managing conflict, for example with respect to the use of military force. This makes it difficult for a mediation process to start or undercuts mediators' leverage in a process that is underway.

The case studies provide evidence of both scenarios. In Sudan normative considerations contributed to the competition between mediators, even if they were not the primary driver. Thus one source of scepticism regarding the IGAD process, prompting Egypt to launch a competing initiative, stemmed from a normative commitment to sovereignty based on belief in the inviolability of borders – a norm that the OAU had long championed. The basic idea is that respect for existing borders helps to safeguard order and stability: if the international community allowed borders to be redrawn and new states to be created, the result would be chaos and conflict. Therefore, the creation of new states – a possibility that the referendum for the independence of South Sudan provided for – was not a legitimate outcome of a peace process.

The Madagascar process illustrates the conflict over norms more starkly. At the beginning of the crisis SADC took a strong stance against the HAT regime. It even contemplated using force to remove Rajoelina from power. As a result SADC did not support the early mediation effort by the FFKM and the UN, which, as mentioned above, meant that Ravalomanana had little incentive to negotiate. Among other factors, SADC's position was motivated by the belief that unconstitutional changes of government are unacceptable, a principle that both SADC and the AU are formally committed to. SADC later changed its position and came around to supporting mediation as a remedy for the crisis. However, its earlier stance had serious implications. It undermined SADC's impartiality in the eyes of the parties and it made other third parties, especially France and the UN, reluctant to accept SADC's ability to play a mediating role (informant G, May 2012). It also shaped SADC's substantive position as the organization insisted on the return to Madagascar of the former president Ravalomanana – indeed, in the last two years this has been the most contentious issue in the peace process.

Some ways to mitigate competition

The case studies shed light not only on the factors that drive competition but also on ways to manage multiple third party peacemakers in a productive fashion. Indeed, the studies provide several examples of cooperation between mediators. We can distinguish two types of cooperation, reminiscent of the two types of international intervention distinguished by Paris (2009, 61–4). One is a top-down approach where a lead agency, whose superior hierarchical position is recognized, coordinates other agencies by assigning specific tasks to them – we call this 'hierarchical coordination'. The other approach involves agencies operating on the same hierarchical level who form a network and, having a common objective, agree on a division of labour – we call this 'network-based cooperation'. As the evidence from the case studies suggests, both models can be used to deal with the multiplicity of third parties in mediation processes.

Hierarchical coordination

The personality and stature of the lead mediator are the decisive factors here. Hierarchical coordination becomes possible when the lead mediator commands sufficient respect to be able to direct the other mediators like an orchestra conductor. For hierarchical coordination to work, two conditions are necessary: the lead mediator's authority must be recognized by the international community, the parties involved and the society affected by conflict, and the mediator must be able to nip in the bud any challenges to his or her authority. These conditions enable the mediator to coordinate other third parties by assigning specific roles to them, by drawing on their expertise, by borrowing their leverage and by getting them to leave if their involvement is no longer useful.

Kofi Annan's mediation exemplified this approach in Kenya. As a former UN Secretary-General he was a respected leader with recognized moral authority and extensive experience in crisis management. He also had a mandate from the AU and the support of the UN Security Council and various governments. This meant that he enjoyed broad recognition, which allowed him to do two things that were essential for the success of the Kenya mediation. First, he was able to coordinate other third parties, including some of those in his mediation team, to provide specific expertise or bring leverage to bear on the parties when needed, and occasionally to draw on others, such as the US government, when the process needed a boost. Second, he was able to fend off attempts by third parties to interfere with his process by creating parallel tracks, Museveni's involvement being a case in point. By comparison, in Madagascar Joaquim Chissano never acquired the authority and recognition that Annan mustered in Kenya. As a result, he was unable to defend his process against other third parties challenging it: France and the AU in 2009 and South Africa in 2011.

Network-based cooperation

The case studies also provide evidence of the second type of collaborative approach, where third parties work together. They agree on the need to end conflict. They settle on an overall strategy for the mediation process and a rough division of labour: who runs the process, what its basic architecture is, who liaises with the parties to build confidence and who provides leverage. What fosters cooperation in this approach is not the presence of an overarching authority but a unity of purpose, compounded by willingness to invest political and financial capital in peacemaking. The lead mediator plays an important role in running the process but he or she is not as indispensable as in the case of hierarchical coordination. The unity of the process comes from a shared understanding among the third parties involved.

The peace process in Sudan after 2002 is a case in point. The collaboration within the Troika and the division of labour between the Troika and the IGAD mediation team are examples of network-based cooperation. Even if their relationship was contentious at times, the roles of the different actors were clear – IGAD ran the process and secured regional buy-in, and the Troika provided leverage and liaised with the parties to secure their commitment to the process. Two factors were crucial in this arrangement: the inclusion of the most influential actors in Sudan, the NCP and the SPLM, and their common objective of making peace. We can also see elements of network-based cooperation in the Madagascar process. For example, the third parties worked together in the Joint Mediation Team. However, since there was no agreement between these parties at the strategic level, the cooperation between them ultimately fell apart. Madagascar also saw the formation of the International Contact Group through which external

support for the mediation process was supposed to be coordinated. However, this Group was too broad and, most importantly, its members did not share a unity of purpose comparable with that of the Troika in Sudan.

Conclusion

In analysing the dynamics of competition and coordination in international peace mediation, we have advanced three arguments. First, competition between third parties is a serious problem in contemporary mediation processes. If left unaddressed, it risks undermining peace processes by fostering forum-shopping among the conflict parties and preventing a unified international approach. Second, competition and disagreement between third parties are fuelled by a multitude of factors, the importance of which depends on the context. These factors include states' diverging geopolitical interests, mediation actors' overlapping mandates, and conflict over norms. Third, the multiplicity of third parties can be an asset in mediation processes if it is effectively managed. This can happen where there is a top-down approach, with a lead mediator coordinating the actions of other actors, or where there is a network whose members agree on a division of labour based on the common goal of peace.

Our analysis has some implications for policymakers. But we must raise two caveats. First, coordination between mediators is not a panacea for resolving intractable conflicts. The agency of mediators, which includes decisions about whether or not to coordinate with other third parties, clearly matters. However, if the context is not conducive to peacemaking and the conflict parties have a preference for war over peace, then even the most elaborate coordination mechanism is unlikely to be effective. Second, competition between mediators is an inherently political phenomenon. Technical remedies, such as the establishment of a joint mediation team or a Group of Friends, can make a difference but they are unlikely to do away with competition completely if its driving factors remain in place.
That said, we can make five recommendations for policymakers involved in planning and conducting mediation processes:

- *The choice of the lead mediator matters*. To prevent competition, it is important that the lead mediator enjoys broad acceptance and support. Such acceptance and support are fostered by a high-level personality who commands respect and authority, has a proven track record in conflict resolution, is given a clear mandate and adequate resources by the relevant international or regional body, and is thoroughly prepared for his or her mission. The mediator also has to be accepted by all the conflict parties involved in the negotiations.
- Organizations that frequently engage in mediation, and whose mandates potentially overlap, should *establish standing inter-organizational coordination groups*. These groups can foster awareness of the need to collaborate and they can divide roles in specific peace processes. Where such groups have already been established – for example the UN-AU Joint Task Force on Peace and Security – it is important to secure the buy-in of the senior leadership of the respective organizations and to focus on operationalizing guidelines developed by the coordination group.
- To complement standing coordination groups, organizations with overlapping mandates should *devise specific procedures outlining how they will work together in mediation*. These procedures should divide roles and clarify issues such as political leadership, lead mediator, composition of the mediation team, logistics, finances and administrative matters. Two different sets of procedures

should be developed on the basis of the two models of cooperation in mediation processes: the subsidiarity model – where one organization is in charge and the others play supporting roles – and the partnership model – where two or more organizations lead the process on an equal footing.

- Mechanisms to institutionalize coordination among international actors in a given peace process, for example in *international contact groups or Groups of Friends*, are useful, provided that the members of such groups share a common agenda and wield significant influence over the conflict parties. Smaller groups that include only the key actors are therefore usually more effective than broad-based coalitions.

- Mediation organizations must learn from the past. Rather than identifying 'best practices' of coordination – which tend to be overly general and thus of limited utility in guiding action in specific cases – it is more promising to look at negative cases. To avoid past mistakes, it would useful to *devise a 'not to do' list* that outlines practices that have proven to fuel harmful competition in mediation processes.

- These recommendations are pertinent for policymakers and mediators at different levels, including the leadership of organizations carrying out mediation, staff at headquarters involved in the planning and support of mediation processes, and those active on the ground in making peace between conflict parties. While the mediation field will remain crowded, the chances of making peace will be enhanced if more is done to mitigate the harmful effects of competition between mediators.

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