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International Mediation: A Specific Diplomatic Tool For Emerging Countries?

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Abstract: It is widely acknowledged that emerging countries are characterised by active foreign policies. This article intends to shed light on a specific and unaddressed domain of emerging countries' foreign policies by reflecting on the use of international mediation. Two major questions will be addressed. Has international mediation become a 'niche diplomacy' for emerging countries, meaning that mediation is particularly targeted for diplomatic activity? Do emerging countries really develop specific mediation strategies in comparison to developed countries?

By studying international mediation at the conceptual and practical levels and in relation with the countries' foreign policy goals, this work will show that Turkey stands out for having gone further in making international mediation a 'niche diplomacy', with an evident will to institutionalise this practice. South Africa, Brazil and China use this non-coercive tool on a more *ad hoc* basis – even if with a varied frequency – while India is not yet involved in this field of activity. It will also highlight the fact that emerging countries have so far not brought about substantial change in the practice of mediation. Where the specificity of emerging countries' approach is more evident is in the mediating role they intend to play, on a more global scale, between the developed and the developing world.

Keywords: international mediation; conflict resolution; emerging countries; diplomacy; foreign policy

Introduction

Categorising states and powers is always a difficult and controversial task. The recent upsurge in the literature to determine which countries should be considered as emerging countries[1] echoes an earlier debate on the distinction between great, middle or small Powers.[2] Beyond this mere intellectual debate, what is at stake is a reflection on the modalities under which a state interacts with its environment and its ability to shape specific desired outcomes both at the national, regional and international levels.

1 See for example the debates in Hélène Thiollet, (ed.), 'Les "émergents" et les transformations de la gouver nance globale', *Critique Internationale,* Vol. 56 (July-September 2012), pp. 7–74.

2 See for one early example: Robert O. Keohane, 'Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics', *International Organization*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (1969), p. 296.

In this regard, it is often acknowledged that emerging countries – sometimes referred to as would-be great Powers[3] – are characterised by active foreign policies. Indeed, the notion of emergence itself suggests "a state that is growing dynamically and undergoing a transformation; a state whose rising power causes it to question its established place in the system and to assert itself more ambitiously in international politics".[4]

If the strategies developed to gain influence on the international stage can be manifold, this article intends to shed light on a specific and unaddressed domain of emerging countries' foreign policies by reflecting on the use of international mediation. This question is of interest not only in thinking more comprehensively about the tools used by emerging countries' to assert their status but also to get a better understanding of the various types of actors involved in mediation activities. Indeed, numerous debates have taken place within the mediation literature on the degree of leverage or power that a state should possess in order to be an effective mediator. Attention has been paid both to the role that super Powers and great Powers can play[5], as well as to the comparative advantage that middle Powers or small states might bring to a mediation process.[6] But no general investigation has been undertaken to analyse if and how emerging countries are involved in the field of international mediation, despite the fact that some mediation activities – such as the joint initiative of Turkey and Brazil in 2010 to mediate in the conflict between Iran and the international community on the nuclear issue – where highly commented upon and given a large media coverage.

This specific example raises several questions that will drive our argumentation: is this initiative indicative of a global commitment of emerging countries to play a role in international mediation activities? Or to state it differently, has international mediation become a 'niche diplomacy' for emerging countries, meaning that mediation is considered as a specific issue particularly targeted for diplomatic activity?[7] And is there a substantial difference between mediation carried out by emerging countries or by the so-called developed countries?

Taking for granted that it is impossible to have a consensus on the countries that should be considered as emerging ones and considering that this notion is in fact a constructed social category, China, Brazil, India, Turkey and South Africa will here be the five countries under examination. They constitute in any case the 'usual suspects'[8] when thinking about countries asserting themselves on the international stage, especially through an active foreign policy.

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3 Andrew Hurrell, 'Hegemony, Liberalism and Global Order: What Space for Would-Be Great Powers?', *International Affairs,* Vol. 82, No. 1 (2006), pp. 1–19.

4 Neil MacFarlane, 'The "R" in the BRICs: Is Russia an Emerging Power?', *International Affairs,* Vol. 82, No. 1 (2006), p. 43.

5 Saadia Touval, 'The Superpowers as Mediators' in Jacob Bercovitch and Jeffrey Rubin (eds.), *Mediation in International Relations: Multiple Approaches to Conflict Management* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 231–247; or Marieke Kleiboer, 'Great Power Mediation: Using Leverage to Make Peace?' in Jacob Bercovitch (ed.), *Studies in International Mediation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 127–140.

6 On middle Powers as mediators see Alan K. Henrikson, 'Middle Powers as Managers: International Mediation within, across and outside Institutions' in Andrew Cooper (ed.), *Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers after the Cold War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 46–72; on small states see Boussetta Allouche, 'La médiation des petits États: Rétrospective et perspective', *Études internationales*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1994), pp. 213–236.

7 Andrew Cooper, 'Niche Diplomacy: A Conceptual Overview' in Cooper (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 6.

8 Detlef Nolte, 'How to Compare Regional Powers: Analytical Concepts and Research Topics', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (October 2010), p. 883.

A quite general definition of international mediation – linking the methods of mediation with its objectives – will be used. Following the definition of Jacob Bercovitch, international mediation is considered as "a process of conflict management, related to but distinct from the parties' own negotiations, where those in conflict seek the assistance, or accept an offer of help, from an outsider (who may be an individual, an organization, a group, or a state) to change their perceptions or behavior, and to do so without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of law".[9]

We shall extend Jacob Bercovitch's definition slightly while reflecting on the potential mediating, intermediary or "bridging" role[10], that emerging countries can play between developed and developing countries, or to put it more broadly, between the North and the South.

To assess the constitution of a 'niche diplomacy' in mediation by emerging countries, we shall break down our argument into two main parts. Firstly, international mediation will be assessed by looking at its frequency of use and by highlighting the way mediation is conceived and embodied in practice. We will then analyse how international mediation interacts with emerging countries' foreign policy goals both at the regional and international levels.

All in all, this work will show that Turkey stands out for having gone further in making international mediation a 'niche diplomacy', with an evident will to institutionalise this practice. South Africa, Brazil and China still use this non-coercive tool on a more *ad hoc* basis – even if with a varied frequency – while India has not yet contributed to this field of activity. The main argument defended is that emerging countries have so far not brought a substantial change in the practice of mediation, while this tool has not necessarily been very effective in attaining the countries' foreign policy goals.

An 'Emerging' Practice and Conception of Mediation?

In order to question the idea of an 'emerging' approach to international mediation, this section will present a general panorama of emerging countries' involvement in mediation. Some empirical data on the use of mediation is provided as well as a reflection on how mediation is conceived and embodied in practice. To get a more comprehensive view of the significance of the data, mediation is at times compared with other conflict resolution mechanisms, such as United Nations (UN) peace operations.

9 Jacob Bercovitch, 'Introduction: Putting Mediation in Context' in Bercovitch (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 23.

10 Sunil Khilnani, 'India as a Bridging Power', (London: Foreign Policy Centre, 2005), available: http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/23655/ichaptersection_singledocument/940d37c2-b1f6-4468-a522-eaa7f0530d2d/en/01_Bridging.pdf (accessed 1 March 2013).

A varied mediation activism among emerging countries

Based mainly on the Uppsala conflict dataset[11], we have located the principal mediations undertaken by the five countries under examination, taking the end of the Cold War as a starting point.[12]

Table: Principal mediations undertaken since the end of the Cold War, with the mention of the president or prime minister in exercise at the time of the mediation

Countries	Period considered	Location of the PRINCIPAL mediations	
		In the Region/ Continent	ELSEWHERE
India	Not any known example		
China	Presidency of H. Jintao (2002–2013)	North Korea Myanmar	Sudan
Brazil	Presidency of F. H. Cardoso (1995–2003)	Ecuador-Peru	
	Presidency of L. I. Lula (2003–2011)	Bolivia Paraguay Colombia Venezuela	Iran Middle East
Turkey	Prime Minister R. T. Erdoğan (Since 2003)	Caucasus Iraq Israel Syria Palestine Iran	Afghanistan-Pakistan Bosnia-Herzegovina
South Africa	Presidency of N. Mandela (1994–1999)	Angola Lesotho Burundi	
	Presidency of T. Mbeki (1999–2008)	Democratic Republic of Congo Burundi Sudan The Comoros Zimbabwe Ivory Coast Kenya	Middle East
	Presidency of J. Zuma (Since 2009)	Madagascar Zimbabwe Libya	

11 Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Uppsala University, Sweden. The various datasets are available at http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ (accessed 6 March 2013).

12 The reference to 'principal' mediations highlights the difficulty in listing exactly all mediation activities, especially as some initiatives deliberately remain secret. Therefore, the table should not be considered as exhaustive.

The table highlights some important preliminary features regarding the use of international mediation by emerging countries.

The most evident lesson is that the degree of involvement in international mediation activities varies greatly among the five countries. South Africa is by far the most active mediator – in terms of the number of mediations – followed then by Turkey and Brazil. China is more rarely involved in mediation activities, and there is not any known example of India acting as a mediator since the end of the Cold War. It is worth noting that the absence of India in the mediation field is particularly at odds with its involvement in UN peace operations. In March 2014, India was the third major contributor in uniformed personnel – after Pakistan and Bangladesh – with 7,923 personnel deployed.[13] China is also constantly increasing its participation in UN peace operations. With 2,177 personnel deployed in March 2014, China's involvement was similar to South Africa's and more important than Brazil's.[14] Therefore, emerging countries that are not, or not a lot, involved in mediation activities can nonetheless contribute to other types of international conflict resolution mechanisms such as peace operations.

Secondly, it is noticeable that South Africa has used mediation on a regular basis since the end of *Apartheid* in 1994, whereas all other countries have been engaged more recently in mediation activities, mainly since the year 2000. This track record can be linked both to the coming to power of different political personalities and to a general reorientation of the countries' foreign policies, bringing to the fore the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Finally, we see that except for a few cases, emerging countries are above all acting as mediators in civil conflicts taking place in their regional setting. The regional dimension is thus a common important feature that seems to be independent of the degree of involvement in mediation. South Africa is by far the most striking illustration of this regional focus, with all but one case of mediation taking place on the African continent and even predominantly in central and southern Africa. This is also consistent with the country strategy of deployment in UN missions. In March 2014, South African troops were engaged in three African operations: the missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Darfur and South Sudan. With the military command of the operation and more than 80% of its total uniformed personnel engaged in Haiti in March 2014, Brazilian engagement in the MINUSTAH also highlights a concentration of efforts in the country's more or less direct regional environment. Furthermore, what Brazilian and South African engagement in UN operations tells us is that one can be active in mediation but also devote resources to the development

13 Data for March 2014 are available at: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2014/mar14_1.pdf (accessed 30 April 2014). It is necessary to keep in mind that contributions in troops by country and missions vary on a monthly basis. This is the reason why the UN Peacekeeping Department reports the actual deployment of troops every month. However, the general proportions of troops deployed and the hierarchy between the countries do not vary at such a rapid pace. For more information on Indian involvement in UN peace operations, see: Yeshi Choedon, 'India and the Current Concerns of UN Peacekeeping: Issues and Prospects', *India Quarterly*, Vol. 63, *No. 2*, (2007), pp. 150–184.

14 In March 2014, Brazilian uniformed personnel amounted to 1,748 and the South Africans to 2,188. For more details on Chinese participation in peace operations, see Bates Gill and Chin-Hao Huang, 'China's Expanding Role in Peacekeeping', *SIPRI Policy Paper* No. 25, (Sweden: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, November 2009), available: http://books.sipri.org/files/PP/SIPRIPP25.pdf (accessed 7 March 2013); and Stefan Stähle, 'China's Shifting Attitude towards United Nations Peacekeeping Operations', *China Quarterly*, Vol. 195 (2008), pp. 631–655.

of other diplomatic tools. Mediation is therefore targeted as an activity but within a broader strategy of influence, visible above all at a regional level.

A generally cautious official discourse on mediation

As an organisation, the United Nations has been engaged in mediation activities since its inception in 1945. However, only more recently has it tried to systematise its knowledge, gather some lessons learned from past experiences and reach out to other actors involved in mediation.

Reports and resolutions dedicated specifically to mediation were only adopted in the years 2010's[15]. The UN General Assembly resolution A/66/811 of the 25th June 2012 entitled 'Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution' is particularly helpful in order to get a sense of the conception of international mediation by different countries. Member states had indeed the opportunity to express their points of view on mediation, by answering five questions related for example to the qualities of a good mediator or the conditions necessary for an effective mediation process.[16]

Out of the five countries considered, Brazil, India and Turkey gave written responses to the UN. Each country put an emphasis on a different focal point. Interestingly, India, even if not engaged in mediation, provided a short answer in order to highlight its conception of mediation. Without evoking much surprise, India emphasises the need for mediation to respect the legal setting provided by the UN, especially the proscription of interference in domestic matters. The explicit consent of the parties and the total unbiased stance of the mediator are stressed several times. An interesting point is also made that "mediation is not a merely technical or logistical exercise. It involves political and sometimes uniquely legal questions".

This statement contrasts with the general perspective of Turkey on mediation. The first point given salience is that "a successful mediation process requires solid analysis of the issues at hand, as well as a sound understanding of the broader regional context", therefore enhancing the importance of expertise and knowledge and not the legal setting. Mention is also made of the necessary impartiality of the mediator. However, impartiality is not established in absolute terms, as "mediators need to be guided by certain values and principles which should not be compromised under any circumstances". Whereas India states that the "most important element for a successful peace agreement is the cessation of violence", a mediation should address, according to Turkey, the core issues of conflicts and create a sound "normative environment" allowing for cooperation between the former conflicting parties. Such a position is consistent with the view developed by some mediation practitioners, for whom mediation should not only aim at stopping violence but should also engage

15 United Nations, Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary-General on enhancing mediation and its support activities', S/2009/189, 8 April 2009; United Nations, General Assembly, 'Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution', A/RES/65/283, 28 July 2011; United Nations, General Assembly, 'Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution', A/66/811, 25 June 2012.

16 The five questions proposed were: 1. "What are the qualities of a good mediator?" 2. "What are the key attributes of an effective mediation process, including during the design and implementation stages?" 3. "What considerations are important for the effective cooperation between different third-party actors involved in a mediation process?" 4. "What are the vital elements of a successful peace agreement?" 5. "How can continuous mediation efforts contribute to the effective implementation of a peace agreement?".

the parties towards reconciliation.[17] This is also the general official line defended by some other states engaged in mediation activities – such as Norway or Finland. As an example, Finnish officials stated when answering the UN questions that a good peace agreement "can be considered successful if all relevant issues and the root causes of the conflict have been addressed". This illustrates how the conception on the aim of mediation by emerging and some developed countries can at times converge.

As for Brazil, its statement lies somewhere halfway between India and Turkey. Independence, neutrality and impartiality are the first qualities attached to a good mediator. But just like Turkey, emphasis is made on the necessary skills, expertise and knowledge of the mediator. The specificity of Brazil's statement rests in the attention paid to the cultural setting in which mediation is carried out, echoing the viewpoints of some scholars in the international mediation field.[18] This point can be interpreted as a warning against the application of conflict resolution's methods from the 'North' to countries facing different internal conditions, thus not taking into account that, as stated in the Brazilian answer, "different cultures communicate and negotiate differently".

Even if China and South Africa did not provide written inputs to the UN, other sources allow us to get a sense of the two countries' official ways of approaching international mediation.

China's position is rather similar to that of India. Indeed, it is generally acknowledged that Chinese official discourse is characterised by a "relatively static interpretation of sovereignty" leading to an opposition of principle against intervention.[19] This position is connected historically to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence the first of which is the respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty.[20] Therefore, the legal setting is stressed in any intervention. For example, the "endorsement by the UN Security Council" is an important precondition for the deployment of peace operations, along with the "consent by the government of the host country".[21] "The non-interference principle" is also the first element put to the fore by Cheng Qian, fellow at the Harvard Law School, when reflecting on "China's relative absence from contemporary international mediation initiatives since its founding in 1949"[22], despite the fact that the language of peace is often emphasised by Chinese officials.[23]

It is more difficult to get a sense of the conception of mediation developed by South Africa. Official documents often mention mediation but without defining the concept itself.[24] The general idea is clearly to get rid of the mistakes of the *Apartheid*

17 See for example, Diana Francis, *From Pacification to Peacebuilding: A Call for Global Transformation* (London and New York: Pluto Press, 2010).

18 See for examples, Kevin Avruch and Peter W. Black, 'The Culture Question and Conflict resolution', *Peace and Change,* Vol. 16, No. 1 (January 1991), pp. 22–45, and John Paul Lederach, *Preparing For Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

19 Allen Carlson, 'Helping to Keep the Peace (Albeit Reluctantly): China's Recent Stance on Sovereignty and Multilateral Intervention', *Pacific Affairs,* Vol. 77, No. 1 (Spring 2004), p. 10.

20 Shaun Breslin, 'China and the Global Order: Signalling Threat or Friendship?', *International Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 3 (May 2013), p. 631.

21 Stähle, *op.cit*., p. 652.

22 Cheng (Jason) Qian, 'The Culture of China's Mediation in Regional and International Affairs', *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Fall 2010), p. 56.

23 See the article written by Jean-Pierre Cabestan, 'La montée en puissance de la diplomatie chinoise' in Sophie Boisseau du Rocher (ed.), *Asie: Dix ans après la crise* (Paris : La Documentation Française, 2007), pp. 57–79.

24 See for example, Republic of South Africa, Department of International Relations and Cooperation, *Strategic Plan 2011–2014*, available: http://www.dfa.gov.za/department/strategicplan 2011-2014/strategic plan 2011.pdf (accessed 12 March 2013).

South Africa during which the country, according to Nelson Mandela, "disastrously conducted its international relations".[25] Therefore, non-coercive means of intervention are stressed as well as the necessity to respect international law. The criticism following the military intervention in Lesotho in 1998, by recalling previous interventionist behaviour, led to a framework guiding the use of South African Defence Force in which the responsibility of the Department of Foreign Affairs in "the prevention, management and settlement of conflict through negotiation and mediation"[26] is stated. In this context, the consent of the parties in conflict seems to be a necessary official pre-condition for mediation initiatives. However, as will be illustrated later on, contradictory principles characterise the use of mediation by South Africa, a fact that might explain this absence of a clear conceptualisation of mediation.

All in all, it seems that the Turkish position can be distinguished from the other four, as mediation is first assessed through a technical angle, enhancing the necessity of developing a general expertise on the subject and downplaying the political component of mediation activities. This contrasts with the global stance of the other emerging countries stressing foremost the legal setting and the non-interference principle as well as developing a case-by-case approach to mediation interventions. Official statements on mediation by emerging countries are therefore very cautious, a fact that can be understood as a resistance against the inclination of some international organisations and developed countries to favour intervention despite the sovereignty principle.

From official discourses to mediation practice

How are such official statements translated into the effective practice of mediation? For China and above all India, the cautious official position can quite easily explain the limited involvement in mediation initiatives. The situation is less straightforward for the other countries.

While scholars devote more and more time to assessing the role of non-state actors in diplomacy and international mediation activity[27], mediation performed by emerging countries is characterised by a rather traditional and statist approach, as presidents or foreign ministers are quasi exclusively the ones acting as mediators. What is more, mediation is often highly personalised – except for China which is often playing a much more behind-the-scene mediating role.[28]

South Africa is certainly the most telling example of this personalisation of mediation. Indeed, one cannot understand the mediation activities of presidents Man-

25 Nelson Mandela, 'South Africa's Future Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 5 (November-December 1993), p. 87.

26 South African Defence Review 1998, chapter 4 'Regional security co-operation', available: paragraph 10: http://www.dod.mil.za/documents/defencereview/defence review1998.pdf (accessed 24 October 2013).

27 See for examples, Louise Diamond and John McDonald, *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace* (West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1996) or the different contributions of Pamela Aall and Diana Chigas in the USIP collection, for example in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall (eds.), *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007).

28 It is the case especially for its action in the Sudan. See Dan Large, 'China's Role in the Mediation and Resolution of Conflict in Africa', *Session 2: Background Paper*, Oslo Forum, (Geneva: Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2008) pp. 35–41, available: http://www.osloforum.org/sites/default/files/Dan Large China in Africa WEB_0.pdf, (accessed 1 March 2013).

dela, Mbeki and Zuma, without taking into account their involvement in the liberation struggle to end *Apartheid*. Due to this political record, they often appear as 'natural mediators' with a presupposed legitimacy. As Chris Landsberg and David Monyae put it, "policymakers subscribed to the idea that the Republic's transition from apartheid and white minority domination to democracy gave it a 'special niche in world diplomacy'".[29] What is more, South Africa has often duplicated its own political transition strategy – from informal talks to a truth commission, with a peace agreement, a new constitution and elections as intermediary steps – to the countries in which it has mediated. Mo Shaik, former Head of Policy Planning at the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, has explained clearly that "our experience of political transition is the core pillar of our foreign policy and of our efforts to help resolve conflicts and international disputes".[30]

If this unique political record cannot be shared by other emerging Powers, South Africa is not an exception with regard to the personalisation of mediation or diplomatic activities more generally. Brazilian diplomacy under the presidencies of Cardoso and Lula was unanimously considered as highly personalised, some scholars even talking about a "routinized presidential diplomacy".[31] In this "active presidential diplomacy"[32], personal relations with political leaders were primordial, even if supported by a well-established and trained Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Turkish mediation is also intrinsically attached to the person of Ahmet Davutoğlu, major designer, actor and promoter of Turkish foreign policy and more precisely of Turkish mediation activism.[33]

In this regard, emerging countries share similar patterns with some developed countries, where mediation is carried out by well-known personalities and highly publicised. For example, the mediation of the United States Secretary of State John Kerry between July 2013 and April 2014 seeking to help to bridge the divide between Israelis and Palestinians has been scrutinised and widely commented upon, while the personal involvement of John Kerry in this mission was stressed. On the contrary, middle Powers or some small states' initiatives are generally more discreet and supported by non-state actors or informal networks. As an example, Malaysia was acting as a mediator between the Filipino government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front from 2011, leading to the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement on 27 March 2014. It received backing from a hybrid coalition of actors made up of four states – the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Japan and Turkey – and four non-governmental organisations.[34]

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29 Chris Landsberg and David Monyae, 'South Africa's Foreign Policy: Carving a Global Niche', *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Winter-Spring 2006), p. 133.

30 Quoted in Peter Kagwanja, 'An Encumbered Regional Power? The Capacity Gap in South Africa's Peace Diplomacy in Africa', *Occasional Paper No. 6*, (Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council, 2009), p. 4, available: http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/product.php?productid=2260&cat=0&page=1&freedownload=1 (accessed 12 March 2013).

31 Jeffrey W. Cason and Timothy J. Power, 'Presidentialization, Pluralization, and the Rollback of Itamaraty: Explaining Change in Brazilian Foreign Policy Making in the Cardoso-Lula Era', *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2009), pp. 121–122.

32 Denise Gregory and Paulo Roberto de Almeida, 'Brazil and the G8 Heiligendamm Process' in Andrew F. Cooper (ed.), *Emerging Powers in Global Governance: Lessons from the Heiligendamm Process* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), p. 151.

33 See for example, Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Turkey's Mediation: Critical Reflections from the Field', *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XX, No. 1 (Spring 2013), pp. 83–90.

34 The four non-governmental organisations involved were: the Humanitarian Dialogue Center (Geneva); Muhammadiyah (Jakarta); Conciliation Resources (London) and the Asia Foundation (San Francisco). For more

Beyond the general personalisation of mediation, emerging Powers' activism in mediation has nonetheless led to a varying degree of institutionalisation of mediation activities at different levels. Whereas Brazil has used mediation on an *ad hoc* basis, South Africa has intended to foster regional mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of conflict notably with the Southern African Development Community and the African Union (AU).[35] This willingness to strengthen regional multilateral institutions, starting under the presidency of Mbeki, rested on the belief that this was a more effective way of asserting the South African role as a peacemaker than resting solely on South Africa's individual capacity.[36] President Mbeki, for example, was appointed as the AU mediator in Ivory Coast in November 2004.

As for Turkey, its activism has gone one step further with an important involvement in fostering mediation capacity at an international level, notably within the UN. As an example, Turkey acted as the co-president with Finland of the UN Group of Friends of Mediation, leading to the adoption of resolutions on the subject.[37] The general aim of the initiative is to "raise awareness of the need for the peaceful settlement of disputes through mediation, encourage relevant actors, including regional arrangements, to undertake mediation …".[38] Turkey has hosted several retreats on mediation in Istanbul since 2010[39] and has also proposed the establishment of a permanent UN mediation centre, a project currently under discussion.[40] This shows that actions are undertaken by Turkey in order to foster mediation within international institutions. Its role in mediation within the UN system seems to have been recognised, as visible with the fact that a Turkish diplomat, Levent Bilman, has been the Director of the Policy and Mediation Division, at the United Nations Department of Political Affairs since February 2011.

These observations demonstrate that emerging countries particularly active in mediation still share a rather statist and personalised practice of mediation, leading to a highly political and publicised mediation process. But an evolution seems to be underway at least with the willingness of Turkey, and to a lesser extent South Africa, to appear as mediator promoters on the international stage. Therefore, and if this institutionalisation succeeds, a more de-personalised approach to mediation activity is to be expected.

However, one should keep in mind that it is not a linear and straightforward process. This general trend is dependent on the internal conditions faced by the country – the degree of political and social stability, the availability of adequate resources

details see Emma Leslie, 'Widening the Table: Hybrid Support Groups in Conflict Mediation', *World Politics Review*, Vol. 17 (December 2013), pp. 9–13.

35 This is not to imply that regional integration is not an important item on the Brazilian foreign policy agenda. Brazil is highly committed to enhancing regional organisations as illustrated by Lula's active support for the creation of the Union of South American Nations. However, peace initiatives and more precisely mediation activities are not targeted as such.

36 Kagwanja, *op.cit*., p.5.

37 See for more information: http://peacemaker.un.org/friendsofmediation (accessed 24 October 2013).

38 United Nations, General Assembly, 'Strengthening the Role of Mediation in The Peaceful Settlement Of Disputes, Conflict Prevention and Resolution', A/66/811, 25 June 2012, para. 60.

39 See for more details, 'Strengthening Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation: Istanbul Retreat of the UN Security Council', (New York: International Peace Institute, April 2012), available: http://peacemaker.un.org/node/1429 (accessed 5 May 2014).

40 Bülent Aras, 'Turkey's Mediation and Friends of Mediation Initiative', *Turkey Policy Brief Series No. 6*, (Turkey: International Policy and Leadership Institute and Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey, 2012), p. 2, available: http://policyleadershipinstitute.org/documents/Turkeypolicybrief6-ArasEN12-11-21.pdf (accessed 1 March 2013).

and the like – and on the shifting regional and global dynamics, a point that we shall explore in the second section of this article.

An Effective Tool For Achieving Foreign Policy Goals?

Mediation cannot be viewed in isolation from the more global political context. Following Saadia Touval's argument that mediation is "part of foreign policy"[41], it is therefore indispensable to analyse the way this non-coercive means of conflict resolution interacts with emerging countries' foreign policy goals, both at the regional and international levels.

Emerging countries as controversial regional peace agents

Mediation can be apprehended as a concrete tool through which emerging countries seek to be recognised as indispensable peace actors, giving to the country a specific "status and social esteem".[42] This can be linked to the 'zero-problem with the neighbour policy', which is not only a common denominator of Brazilian, Turkish, South African but also Chinese official regional policy.[43] The rationale behind this policy is the following: fostering good relationships with the neighbours will logically enhance the country's credibility as a mediator and its image of a responsible player. In addition, acting as a peace agent is a means to preserve regional prerogatives, by "ensur[ing] that it cannot be excluded from forms of crisis management that are undertaken by outside players."[44] Even more pragmatically, mediation is also presented as an effective tool to foster economic development within the region as a whole.

Turkey has explicitly recognised mediation as one of the two pillars of its foreign policy[45]. International mediation is acknowledged on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website as an independent foreign policy issue, along with major items such as the Armenian question or the relationship with the European Union.[46] Mediation is presented both as having an intrinsic value – the most effective method to settle conflict – and a more instrumental one: through its stabilisation effect, mediation "will help the region to develop as a whole together with Turkey".[47] This "proactive peace

41 Saadia Touval, 'Mediation and Foreign Policy', *International Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (2003), p. 91.
42 Philip Nel, 'Redistribution and Recognition: What Emerging Regional Powers Want', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (October 2010), p. 963.
43 On China, see Jean-Pierre Cabestan, *La politique internationale de la Chine* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2010) and for a more concise view on Chinese foreign policy, Zhao Suisheng, 'Chinese Foreign Policy under Hu Jintao: The Struggle between Low-Profile Policy and Diplomatic Activism', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 5 (2010), pp. 357–378.
44 Hurrell, *op.cit.*, p. 8.
45 Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Les principes phares de la politique étrangère turque dans une région en mutation', *Turkey Policy Brief Series No. 3* (Turkey: International Policy and Leadership Institute and Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey, 2013), p. 1, available: http://policyleadershipinstitute.org/documents/Turkeypolicybrief3DavutogluFR.pdf (accessed 1 March 2013).
46 To have the whole list of the principal issues making Turkish official foreign policy, see Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, available: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.en.mfa?395d59f6-c33c-4364-9744-cff90ec18a3e (accessed 7 March 2013).
47 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, available: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/resolution-of-conflicts-and-mediation.en.mfa (accessed 7 March 2013).

diplomacy"[48] is therefore presented as having positive consequences for the parties in conflict, the mediator and the region.

The same line of argument is developed by South Africa and others. Political leaders often reiterate the link between development and peace in the region in order to legitimise in this case South Africa's "role of peacemaker and negotiator in Africa".[49] Likewise, during his inaugural ceremony, President Lula asserted that the main priority of the government's foreign policy was "to construct a South America that is politically stable, prosperous and united, based on democratic ideas and on social justice", adding that "if called upon … we will contribute towards finding peaceful solutions to resolve these situations of crises, based on dialogue, democratic principles and on the constitutional precepts of each country".[50] In another speech, peace was presented "not just a moral objective" but also an "imperative for rationality".[51]

But is international mediation an effective tool for emerging countries to assert their regional status? One is bound to recognise that mediation activities are far from always being welcomed within their respective regions. Regional rivalries are numerous such as between Brazil and Argentina[52], or between South Africa and Nigeria. For example, Nigeria did not appreciate the mediation of South Africa in Ivory Coast, as Nigeria considers West Africa as a part of its sphere of influence and is therefore usually the state intervening in the sub-region.[53] These regional rivalries have led to a situation in which emerging countries' leadership is sometimes more recognised and more acceptable on the global stage rather than on the regional one.[54]

Even more than rivalries, emerging countries can in fact be themselves engaged in conflicts, clearly damaging their image as regional peace agents and showing the discrepancy between the official 'zero-problem with neighbour policy' and the actual state of the relationships within the region. The two countries which are less prominent in mediation activities, China and India, are experiencing highly sensitive political conflicts within their own borders or with their neighbours. China faced at least two major conflicts – Taiwan and Tibet – leading to contentious relationships with Japan and India respectively.[55] As for India, the Kashmir issue and more generally the relationship with Pakistan is certainly the most fundamental one.

However, the case of Turkey shows that an active mediation promoter can also have to deal with internal conflicts – such as the unresolved Kurdish issue – and international conflicts, such as the long-standing Cyprus conflict. The Arab Spring

48 Resat Bayer and E. Fuat Keyman, 'Turkey: An Emerging Hub of Globalization and Internationalist Humanitarian Actor?', *Globalizations*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2012), p. 84.

49 Expression used by Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, quoted in Chris Alden and Maxi Schoeman, 'South Africa in the Company of Giants: The Search for Leadership in a Transforming Global Order', *International Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 1 (2013), p. 116.

50 President Lula da Silva, Inaugural Ceremony, National Congress, Brasilia, 1 January 2003.

51 President Lula da Silva, 33rd Economic World Forum, Davos, 26 January 2003.

52 An analysis of the different regional rivalries in South America is provided in Andrés Malamud, 'A Leader without Followers? The Growing Divergence between the Regional and Global Performance of Brazilian Foreign Policy', Latin American Politics and Society, Vol. 53, No. 3 (2011), pp. 1–24.

53 Garth Le Pere, 'L'action diplomatique sud-africaine pour la paix en Afrique', *Transcontinentales,* Vol. 2, No. 3 (2006), p. 14, online, http://transcontinentales.revues.org/395 (accessed 11 March 2013)

54 This point is made in the case of Brazil by Andrés Malamud, in Malamud, *op.cit*., or for South Africa by Daniel Flemes when stating that "while South Africa's leadership is fully accepted on the global stage, acceptance in Africa is lower." In Daniel Flemes, 'Regional Power South Africa: Co-operative Hegemony Constrained by Historical Legacy', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2009), p. 149.

55 On past and current Chinese territorial disputes, see M. Taylor Fravel*, Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict In China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

and the continuing war in Syria have also hindered Turkey's capacity as a regional peace agent. Initially willing to negotiate with Bashar el-Assad in March 2011 to encourage socio-economic and political reforms, Turkey finally officially supported the opposition. This siding in favour of one of the parties in conflict therefore makes it impossible for Turkey to have any mediatory role and explains why the UN has become the lead mediator through its special envoys Kofi Annan and then Lakhdar Brahimi. More generally, some argue that instead of a peaceful regional environment, "Turkey seems to be facing 'zero neighbors without problems'".[56]

In addition, contradictions between discourses on peace and some realities of states' behaviour are numerous, especially when national economic interests are at stake. As an example, Chris Landsberg and David Monyae in their study of South Africa stress the fact that "while the Republic's leaders have sought to play an active mediation and peacemaking role in the continent, its strategic interests have seen it becoming a major arms exporter".[57] It is also worth noting that China, India, Brazil and Turkey were among the fifteen largest military spenders in 2013.[58] Therefore, being active in international mediation does not imply that a country renounces expanding its military capabilities. Even if mediation comes to be seen as a 'niche diplomacy', it is not necessarily at the expense of other means of influence, and mediation should therefore not be considered as an exclusive foreign policy orientation.

Inconsistency can also appear between the discourse on the promotion of democracy and human rights and some long-standing political relationships. The general support of South Africa for the Robert Mugabe regime – visible for example in its unwillingness to apply economic sanctions – has been widely criticised by the Movement for Democratic Change, the main opposition party in Zimbabwe. This "sympathy for incumbent regimes" has of course some consequences for the countries' mediation activities as it leads to "questions about its neutrality in many mediation ventures".[59] Morgan Tsvangirai, the main Zimbabwean opposition leader, therefore judged Thabo Mbeki's mediation efforts in October 2005 as "partisan"[60].

Thus, emerging countries when using mediation do not escape the traditional criticism of being inconsistent or of being biased towards one or other of the parties. Even if emerging countries often highlight the high degree of proximity – geographically and politically – with the countries in which they intervene, they wrongly assume that it will naturally confer legitimacy to the mediation process. What is more, in entering a field that is above all dominated by Western actors, emerging countries have some difficulty in avoiding the accusation of sharing with developed countries an imperialist attitude or at least of being motivated by purely national interests.

56 Ömer Taşpinar, 'Turkey's Strategic Vision and Syria', *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Summer 2012), p. 135. The failure of Turkey in dealing with the Syrian war is also assessed in Bayram Balci, "Le rêve arabe de la Turquie brisé par la crise syrienne", *Les études du CERI*, No. 188 (November 2012), available: http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr.ceri/files/Etude%20188.pdf (accessed 7 May 2014). For more details on the consequences of the Arab Spring in Turkish foreign policy, see Siret Hursoy, 'Changing Dimensions of Turkey's Foreign Policy', *International Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (2011), pp. 139–164.

57 Landsberg and Monyae, *op.cit*., p. 143. This point is also mentioned in Kagwanja, *op.cit*., p. 21.

58 China was the second largest military spender after the United States, India the ninth, Brazil the twelfth and Turkey the fourteenth. For the whole list see Sam Perlo-Freeman and Carina Solmirano, 'Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2013', *SIPRI Fact Sheet*, Sweden: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, (April 2014), available: http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1404.pdf (accessed 5 May 2014).

59 Landsberg and Monyae, *op.cit*., p. 143.

60 Kagwanja, *op.cit*., p. 25.

Mediation: a tool for achieving greater autonomy?

At the international level, emerging countries' foreign policy goals are often related to the ideas of carving out greater political autonomy from 'traditional Powers' and promoting reforms within international institutions, especially in the United Nations Security Council. This willingness to change the international *status quo* is what distinguished, according to Eduard Jordaan, traditional middle Powers – such as Canada or European countries – from emerging ones.[61]

Acknowledging the fact that Western actors are still predominant in the mediation field – both in terms of the production of knowledge and in the actual practice of mediation – some initiatives are taken to reverse these trends. As an example, a Global South Unit for Mediation has been launched in November 2013 in Rio de Janeiro.[62] The structure is envisaged as a "learning, research and training platform, intending to promote the diffusion of knowledge and expertise on international mediation" with the idea of putting "an emphasis on experiences and contributions of the Global South".[63]

Greater autonomy is also pursued through ensuring a diversification of partnerships, notably through the development of South-South relations.[64] This general stance is also visible in some mediation initiatives. Brazil and Turkey's initiative towards Iran or Turkey's negotiation with the Hezbollah are two demonstrations of the willingness to foster states' autonomy, by talking to countries or groups that are considered as non-partners by major developed countries or multilateral organisations.

However, it is questionable whether mediation is really the most appropriate tool in order to carve out autonomous diplomatic positions. Emerging countries constantly ponder the consequences of asserting autonomy with the necessity of preserving good relationships with major partners. Potential political reactions of important developed countries are thus also taken into consideration. China's active mediation role in the six-party talks related to Pyongyang's nuclear programme is caught between its traditional alliance with North Korea and its willingness to appear as a responsible Power, notably *vis-à-vis* the United States.[65] This dilemma can also explain the uncertainty of president Dilma Rousseff's policy towards Iran. Indeed, Brazil has hesitated between a general opposition to sanctions – in agreement with its image as a country favouring a more balanced international system – and a condemnation of human rights violation – more in line with the United States' position.[66]

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61 Eduard Jordaan, 'The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations: Distinguishing between Emerging and Traditional Middle Powers', *Politikon*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2003), pp. 165–181.

62 The Global South Unit for Mediation is the result of a partnership between the Institute of International Relations of the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (IRI/PUC-Rio), the BRICS Policy Center (joint initiative of the City of Rio de Janeiro and PUC-Rio) and the Royal Embassy of Norway in Brazil.

63 See the official presentation of the Unit at: http://www.iri.puc-rio.br/g-sum (accessed 8 May 2014). For more information, see also the final report of the international seminar held in December 2013: http://www.iri.puc-rio.br/uploads/downloads/Seminar_Report_Final_29_01_14.pdf (accessed 8 May 2014).

64 On South-South cooperation see Chris Alden and Marco Antonio Viera, 'The New Diplomacy of the South: South Africa, Brazil, India and Trilateralism', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 7 (2005), pp. 1077–1095 or Matthew D. Stephen, 'Rising Regional Powers and International Institutions: The Foreign Policy Orientations of India, Brazil and South Africa', *Global Society,* Vol. 26, No. 3 (2012), pp. 289–309.

65 For more details on the negotiations taking place between 2003 and 2005, see Samuel S. Kim, 'China and the Six-Party Talks: The New Turn to Mediation Diplomacy', *International Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Fall-Winter 2005), pp. 117–144.

66 On this issue see Elodie Brun, 'Le Brésil au Moyen-Orient: un engagement hésitant', *Moyen-Orient*, Vol. 16 (October-December 2012), pp. 66–71.

The Iranian case also brings to the fore the limits of using mediation as a way of asserting a country's diplomatic capacity. Indeed, getting to an agreement does not in any case ensure its endorsement by the international community or guarantee its implementation. The Tehran Declaration brokered by Brazil and Turkey, even if "demonstrat[ing] Turkey and Brazil's active diplomacy"[67] was not considered as comprehensive enough and was ultimately rejected, while new sanctions were adopted by the United Nations Security Council despite Turkish and Brazilian opposition.[68]

Against this backdrop, it is thus not surprising that emerging countries have also envisaged international mediation as a way of promoting North-South dialogue and resolving potential conflicts between the developed and the developing world, granting them a pivotal role in world affairs. This ability to bridge the North and the South is commonly stressed by emerging countries and justified above all by making references to what are considered as unique historical or geographic characteristics.

Turkey highlights its geographical position between Europe and Asia and its history as specific assets for playing the role of bridge builder. According to Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey has the unique character as a country which has simultaneously nurtured long standing partnerships with the West while sharing common civilizational and cultural affinity with many other parts of the world".[69] The absence of a history of conquest is also an integral part of the official discourse making of Brazil a "prototypical bridge-builder working diligently to ensure stability and predictability in the face of rising tensions between major powers as well as the North and the global South".[70] The strategic plan 2011–2014 of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa equally stresses the necessity to foster South-South dialogue but also North-South cooperation.[71] The Minister Nkoana-Mashabane explicitly highlights "the country's continued role as 'bridge builder'"[72], as embodied during the negotiations on climate change at Durban in 2011. Some scholars argue that even India, not yet involved in mediation, has a high potential as a bridging Power between the rich and the poor or between the United States and China, that will preserve India's autonomy while rendering the country indispensable.[73]

Even if contested as being more wishful thinking than political reality[74], this presentation of emerging countries as bridge builders shows that mediation is not

67 Aylin Gürzel, 'Turkey's Role in Defusing the Iranian Nuclear Issue', *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Summer 2012), p. 147. For a Brazilian view on the deal, see Diego Santos Vieira de Jesus, 'Building Trust and Flexibility: A Brazilian View of the Fuel Swap with Iran', *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Spring 2011), pp. 61–75.

68 United Nations, Security Council, 6335th meeting, "Security Council imposes additional sanctions on Iran", SC/9948, 9 June 2010, available: http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sc9948.doc.htm (accessed 7 May 2014).

69 Aras, *op.cit*., p. 2.

70 Sean W. Burges, 'Brazil as a Bridge Between Old and New Powers?', *International Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 3 (May 2013), p. 577.

71 Republic of South Africa, Department of International Relations and Cooperation, *Strategic Plan 2011–2014*, available: http://www.dfa.gov.za/department/strategicplan 2011-2014/strategic plan 2011.pdf (accessed 12 March 2013).

72 Quoted in Alden and Schoeman, *op.cit.,* p. 118.

73 Khilnani, *op.cit.,* p. 9.

74 This argument is made in the case of India by Christophe Jaffrelot, 'Les quatre points cardinaux de la diplomatie indienne: Le régional et le global, l'idéalisme et le réalisme', in Christophe Jaffrelot (ed.), *New Delhi et le monde* (Paris: Autrement, 2008), p. 28.

only seen as a tool used to bring peace within a specific region or as a means to justify specific reforms in international institutions. What is at stake here more generally is to gain a "greater global influence".[75] More precisely, emerging countries seek to be recognised as constructive mediators on the international stage, this recognition – based on an inter-subjective process – reinforcing the image of emerging countries as "respected and esteemed members of [the] society of states".[76]

Conclusion

The occurrence of mediation initiatives clearly highlights that the five countries under consideration do not use international mediation with the same frequency. South Africa, Turkey and Brazil are the more active ones – explaining also that less attention was paid to China and India – and share a common willingness to appear as peaceful agents of change within their respective region. However, this common involvement in mediation does not mean that their consideration of mediation is similar.

Turkey stands out as having gone further in making international mediation a 'niche diplomacy'. Indeed, even if a latecomer in the field – when compared with South Africa for example – Turkey has nonetheless engaged itself as an active promoter of mediation on the international stage, officially recognising mediation as a practice necessitating knowledge and expertise. Turkey therefore clearly seeks to impose itself as a recognised international 'professional mediator'.

South Africa, on the other hand, benefits from its unique historical record that tends to present the country as a 'natural mediator' since the end of *Apartheid*. In that sense, mediation seems to be less strategically used as a specific area targeted for activity, but as part of a more diversified toolbox of peaceful resolution mechanisms. In line with this statement is the absence of clear conceptualisation of mediation, as well as the country's participation in peace operations. The more *ad hoc* nature of the initiatives undertaken by Brazil and China can justify that we grant these countries the qualification of 'occasional mediators'.

Beyond these differences, these emerging countries share commonalities in the actual practice of mediation. Despite their emphasis on non-intervention and their supposed higher shared experience with the parties in conflict, countries are also accused, like many developed countries, of being partial mediators and of defending purely national interests, thus making emerging countries controversial regional peace agents.

Until now, emerging countries have thus not brought substantial change in the practice of mediation when compared to developed countries, even when a country, such as Turkey, seeks to make of mediation a 'niche diplomacy'. Indeed, they have mainly used a traditional style of mediation by favouring a statist and highly personalised approach. In addition, international mediation has so far not necessarily been very effective in achieving the countries' foreign policy goals. Where the specificity of emerging countries' approach can be more evident is in the mediating role they

75 Gürzel, *op.cit.*, p. 147.
76 Nel, *op.cit.*, p. 953.

intend to play, at a more global scale, between the developed and the developing world.