Forcing Them to Therapy:
The Effect of Veto Players on Mediation Incidence

Author: Lukas Hegele
Supervisor: Isak Svensson
Submitted: 22nd of May 2017
Word Count: 22,775

Department of Peace & Conflict Research
Uppsala University
Spring Semester 2017
Abstract

Do conflict parties’ characteristics influence mediation onset? Using the veto player theory, this study addresses the question why and under what circumstances mediation occurs. The predictions made by veto player theory correspond with why conflicts are, or become more intense and longer (Cunningham 2006). I argue that the number of veto players influences the cost-benefit calculations of conflict actors, as low numbers of veto players limit concession making, while high numbers of veto players exacerbate information asymmetries. Therefore, I test the hypothesis that the relationship between the number of veto players and mediation onset probability is curvilinear, with medium numbers of veto players increasing mediation incidence likelihood. Using data on mediation onsets in civil conflicts for the period 1946-2003, I find across different statistical model specifications that low and high numbers of veto players impede mediation onset. The models explain and predict mediation occurrence well, but are sensitive to model specifications, i.e. the exclusion of observations does not allow the model to reproduce the same results. The findings confirm the explanatory value of conflict costs and the benefits of a dyadic conflict analysis approach, yet suggest that more research on conflict actors’ characteristics is necessary to understand mediation.

Keywords

Mediation Onset, Veto Players, Conflict Management, Armed Conflict
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Department of Peace and Conflict Research for establishing an excellent master programme in which personal and intellectual growth are spurred and equally important. By the same token, the structure for writing the master thesis did not leave anything to wish for, thank you Kristine Eck and Lisa Hultman. I would like to thank all the Research Assistants, PhDs, Professors and Student Colleagues for the warm environment you create. Getting to know you was a pleasure. Special thanks go to Isak Svensson for his moral and academic supervision: the words of encouragement and insightful comments have contributed greatly to the success of this paper. Thank you Kristina Petrova and Dino Krause for your invaluable comments and feedback on this thesis. I would like to thank Susan and Günther Hegele, my parents for your unwavering support without which none of this would have been possible. What would this master programme have been without my dear friends: Ana Paula, Dino, Edin, Lindsey, and Marcellina – you made this a memorable experience and I am sure we will see each other many times in the future. Lastly, thank you, again, Kristina: you have been the emotional and intellectual backbone of this process. Without you it would not have been such a challenging, fun, and most of all terribly precious learning experience.
List of Figures

Figure 1. Winset with Three Veto Players .......................................................... 12
Figure 2. Causal Diagramme, Supply (Top) and Demand (Bottom) Side .................. 20
Figure 3. Marginal Effect of Number of Veto Players on Mediation Onset Probability ........ 37
Figure 4. Predictive Margins of Multiveto, Civil Wars, Conflict Intensity and Conflict Duration at 95% CI ................................................................. 38
Figure 5. Predictive Margins of Strict Veto players, War, Conflict Intensity and Conflict Duration ........................................................................ 39
Figure 6. In-Sample vs. Out-of-Sample Cross Validation ........................................... 40
Figure 7. Separation Plot Mediation Onset ................................................................ 41
Figure 8. ROC Curve Comparison ............................................................................. 42
Figure 9. Predictive Margins of Lenient (left) vs. Strict (right) Veto Players .................. 47

List of Tables

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables .................................................................. 30
Table 2. Crosstabulation of Numbers of Strict Vetos and Mediation Onset ..................... 31
Table 3. Logit Models 1-5, The Effect of Veto Players on Mediation Onset Likelihood, DV: Mediation Onset (Yes/No) ...................................................................... 35
Table 4. Marginal Effects of Number of Veto players .................................................. 36
Table 5. Crosstabulation of Numbers of Lenient Vetos and Mediation Onset ..................... 47
Table 6. Additional Findings, Bivariate Probit DV1: Mediation Onset(Yes/No) DV2: Different Mediation Outcomes) ................................................................. 51
Table of Content

Abstract
List of Figures
List of Tables

Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 1

Previous Research .................................................................................................................... 4
  The Bargaining Perspective on Mediation ........................................................................... 4
  The Rational Choice Perspective on Mediation ................................................................. 6

Theory ...................................................................................................................................... 12
  Veto Player Theory .............................................................................................................. 12
  Veto Player Theory and Civil War .................................................................................... 13
  Veto Player Theory and the Supply Side of Mediation ..................................................... 15
  Veto Player Theory and The Demand Side of Mediation ................................................. 17
  Veto Players and Mediation: A Curvilinear Relationship ................................................ 19

Research Design ...................................................................................................................... 22
  Data ...................................................................................................................................... 22
  Operationalization of Veto Players ...................................................................................... 24
  Operationalization of Mediation Onset .............................................................................. 26
  Control Variables ................................................................................................................. 27
  Model .................................................................................................................................... 29
  Limitations ........................................................................................................................... 29

Results & Analysis .................................................................................................................. 30
  Mediation Onset .................................................................................................................. 32
  Diagnostics and Robustness ............................................................................................... 37
  Leverages .............................................................................................................................. 44
  Country-Year, Count Model and Different Veto Measures ................................................. 45
  Additional Findings............................................................................................................... 48

Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 53

Bibliography ............................................................................................................................. 56

Appendix .................................................................................................................................. 61
Introduction

Mediation does not occur at random. Cambodia experienced rapid political changes between 1989 to 1991, with a new government, a fleeing Khmer Rouge (KR) and interventions by China, the disassembling Soviet Union and the US (Vuković 2012, 279). At the time, the conflict in Cambodia was driven by the government, the KR, the Khmer People’s National Liberation Front (KPNLF) and the United National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), 4 conflict parties that shared three characteristics: cohesive, autonomous and able to continue fighting without the support of another party. Numerous mediation efforts commenced in 1990 and 1991, by numerous actors, in parallel tracks and as multi-party joint effort (Vuković 2012, 278-279; DeRouen et al. 2011). One reason why mediation occurred after 1989 was that Vietnam was eliminated from the political landscape of Cambodia, leaving domestic actors the main actors defining the conflict, and opening up the opportunity for external mediators to apply inducements without the risk of angering other key political figures and therefore jeopardizing the peace processes (Vuković 2012, 280). The Soviet Union no longer subsidized Vietnam, and could no longer sustain challenging China in South East Asia, leaving the US and China now in a position to commence win-win political efforts – as partners with different interests (Vuković 2012, 279). Mediation is a strategic consideration, and in the case of Cambodia, the conflict parties’ characteristics, and more importantly, the elimination of a player who could have vetoed any type of peace process, enabled mediators and conflict parties to engage in peace talks.

Yet, academic literature on mediation onset has focused on conflict characteristics, such as conflict complexity, conflict intensity, conflict longevity¹ and found that they are good predictors of mediation occurrence, together with other variables such as geographic proximity, and past mediation efforts (Böhmelt 2016; Clayton and Gleditsch 2014; Böhmelt 2013; Melin 2013; Beardsley 2010; Melin and Svensson 2009; Greig and Regan 2008; Gartner and Bercovitch 2006). Previous research used the characteristics of a conflict, i.e the body count, the duration and so forth, to argue why mediation occurs, but neglected the producers of these very observations: the conflict parties. Still, the study of conflict actors can help identify conditions that are conducive to mediation incidence and a successful mediation outcome before we observe the escalation of

¹ Conflict complexity: a measure indicating a conflict of high intensity, in a culturally or ethnically fragmented environment, regarding intangible issues and a high level of power disparity (see Bercovitch and Jackson 2001).

Conflict intensity: a measure indicating how many battle-related deaths were counted in a conflict. The more battle-related deaths, the more intense the conflict.

Conflict duration: a measure indicating how many month or years a conflict has lasted until continuously fulfilling the battle-related deaths threshold that identifies armed conflicts, usually with a minimum of 25 battle-related deaths per year.
conflict. Identifying explanatory characteristics of actors who are likely to be the main conflict actors driving the violence, thus improves early warning systems and conflict prevention or mitigating tools used by academics, mediators and policy makers. In fact, the added value of this study is to identify ripe moments. Regan and Stam (2000) show that intervention at the right moment can shorten conflict and therefore prevent the loss of life. Therefore, adding a new perspective that identifies new ripe moments is why we need to know when mediation occurs.

Noteworthy exception to the study of conflict characteristics in the mediation literature is the study by Clayton (2013) which investigates how the strength of rebel groups relative to the government’s strength influences the onset and outcome of mediation. The importance of knowing when mediation occurs is linked to the fact that the conditions that determine mediation onset are those conditions that determine the outcome of mediation (Clayton and Gleditsch 2014; Svensson and Lindgren 2013; Melin and Svensson 2009; Gartner and Bercovitch 2006). Clayton and Gleditsch (2014) investigate the predictive power of statistical models for mediation onset and outcome, and find that our explanatory variables fair relatively well in predicting when mediation occurs, although predictions of outcomes still need improvement (Clayton and Gleditsch 2014, 278). Therefore, we still need to better understand the political processes that determine when mediation occurs and how it affects the outcome (Beardsley and Greig 2009).

This study will take off where Clayton (2013) left, and focus on all those conflict actors, or players that make the conflict what it is: long or short, intense or less intense. Veto players (VPs) are those players who can unilaterally block a shift from a status quo (Tsebelis 2002, 36). Cunningham (2013) states that mediators should include all veto players in peace negotiations, a prescription based on his article (2006) “Veto Players and Civil War Duration” which found that the more veto players there are in a civil war, the longer it will last (Cunningham 2013; Cunningham 2006, 887). Cunningham (2013), therefore provides a theoretical lense through which research can focus on conflict actors and their impact on conflict dynamics and mediation efforts, but falls short of providing a systematic investigation on how veto players influence mediation incidence and outcome (Cunningham 2013, 42).

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the literature on mediation incidence by adopting and adapting the veto player theory (VPT), and therefore providing a novel way of identifying ripe moments in conflicts for mediation. The study of actors and their characteristics in relation to mediation incidence remains a research gap within the mediation literature. I attempt to make a first step in filling this gap, and focus on the characteristics of conflict actors and their explanatory value to answer the research question: why and under what circumstances does mediation occur? To answer the research question, I test the hypothesis in which I state that the relationship between the number
of veto players and mediation onset probability is likely to be curvilinear, with low and high numbers of veto players decreasing mediation onset probability.

This hypothesis is deduced from the VPT which provides an avenue of argumentation for why mediators and conflict parties engage in mediation. An increase in numbers of veto players is associated with an increase in policy position diversity which causes the possible agreement space on a policy dimension to decrease. Furthermore, third parties’ determination of conflict parties’ policy positions are inherently uncertain due to private information held by conflict parties. Subsequently, any agreement must account for the underlying uncertainty by negotiating larger agreement spaces than would be necessary in an environment of perfect information. This requires mediators to use costlier leverages and inducements to move conflict parties’ policy positions, as costs increase per inducement, leverage and unit of change of policy positions. Considering that each veto player requires applying leverage by a mediator and an incentive to move towards an agreement, increases in veto players cause increases in costs for mediators. As a result, costs for a mediator to achieve an agreement space within all veto players’ acceptable range of policies increase. Due to cost aversion, mediators will thus avoid mediation in conflicts with high numbers of veto players.

I further argue, that the inability of conflict actors to collect reliable data on each other and make inferences regarding the costs endured by each actor, and more importantly the experienced hurt, impedes the establishment of a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS). Thus, the shared perception of mediation being a less costlier option than fighting, is unlikely to be established. This is an extension of Cunningham (2006) who argues, that the number of veto players in a conflict directly affects the cost-benefit calculations of the veto players themselves, because private information of individual actors becomes increasingly valuable, thus uncertainty of the actors about each other’s resolve and regarding the probability to win the conflict increases (Cunningham 2008, 879). Lastly, I theorize that with an increasing amount of veto players, the balance of power between veto players becomes increasingly volatile. Veto players thus have incentives to reject mediation, because the involvement of mediators, especially “mediators with muscle”, can tip the sensitive balance of power in a direction unfavoured by any number of veto players (for a similar yet distinct argument, see also Clayton 2013, 612).

This paper is situated in the civil conflict mediation onset literature, with a bargaining and rational choice perspective. The following chapter will give an overview on the existing mediation literature.

---

2 An agreement space is the the overlapping space of demands. For example and simplified, party A wants communism, party B wants capitalism and both parties could agree to a regulated market economy: market economy would represent the agreement space.
Building on the existing literature, the third part of this paper contains the development of the theoretic framework and the hypothesis deduced from it. The predictions will then be tested quantitatively using a unique data set that incorporates DeRouen et al. Civil War Mediation dataset (2011) and Cunningham’s (2006) veto player data, covering the period 1946 - 2003 (DeRouen and Bercovitch and Pospieszna 2011; Cunningham 2006). The initial results from the applied logit model are confirmed by different model specifications and support the hypothesis that the number of veto players conditions mediation onset probability. The study, however, finds that the effect is marginal. Lastly, the various robustness tests reveal that the model is specification sensitive and fails to reproduce findings when other measures are used. Future research should draw from research on policy decision-making processes to investigate how the policy positions of conflict parties determine onset probability of mediation and its outcome.
Previous Research

The following section reviews the literature on international mediation, particularly the quantitative literature. Mediation literature is vast, and distinct fields of research have emerged. One division of mediation is limited to mediation within a state and is called domestic mediation. Competing businesses and private persons can opt for mediation to circumvent costs caused by a binding legal process (Wall and Dunne 2012). International mediation on the other hand deals with disputes between states and with violent disputes between political actors within states. Mediation literature started with descriptive and prescriptive approaches aimed at a practitioner audience. The explanatory, empirical research which focuses on the causalities and mechanisms of mediation has steadily developed since the 1990s and now the three perspectives are increasingly converging (Wallensteen and Svensson 2014; Vuković 2014; Wall and Kressel 2012). Lastly academic and practitioner accounts increasingly complement each other (Lindgren 2016; Svensson and Wallensteen 2010).

A frequently used definition of mediation geared towards the study of mediation in the international arena is provided by Bercovitch et al. (1991) who define mediation as “a process of conflict management where disputants seek the assistance of, or accept an offer of help from, an individual, group, state or organization to settle their conflict or resolve their differences without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of the law (Bercovitch and Anagnoson and Wille 1991, 8).” This definition delimits mediation from non-voluntary third-party negotiation modes with binding results such as arbitration and bilateral forms of negotiations not involving a third-party (for comparison of arbitration and mediation see Beardsley and Lo 2013). Three questions are central to the study of mediation. Why do we see mediation when we see it (Böhmelt 2016; Bercovitch and Jackson 2001)? Why do we see a particular style of mediation when we see it (Lindgren 2016; Bercovitch and Houston 2000)? Why do we see a mediated outcome when we see it (Beardsley 2008; Bercovitch and DeRouen 2004; Kleiboer 1996)? These questions have been answered in tandem, too, most prominently the links between mediation style and mediation outcome (Gartner 2014; Beardsley 2006), and mediation onset conditions (including timing) and outcome (Melin and Svensson 2009; Gartner and Bercovitch 2006; Regan and Stam 2000).

The Bargaining Perspective on Mediation

The mechanisms of how mediation works when it occurs, and how these mechanisms bring about certain outcomes are usually the subject of the bargaining literature on mediation. The bargaining perspective argues that mediators alleviate the common sources of bargaining failures: private information and commitment problems. Information held by a respective conflict party is
called private information. Adversaries cannot be certain about the other side’s resolve regarding a conflict or the avoidance thereof, therefore both parties have an incentive to misrepresent their resolve to deter the other side (Fearon 1995, 381). Commitment problems are the condition under which a party fears that the respective other party will capitalize on a current perceived weakness (Fearon, 381).

Mediators can provide credible information to each party about each party’s resolve, especially when mediators hold a party bias, or issue bias, and therefore reduce uncertainty or at least reduce the risk of bargaining failure due to private information (Svensson 2007; Rauchhaus 2006; Kydd 2006; Kydd 2003; Wilkenfeld et al. 2003). The commitment problem, on the other hand, can be solved in the presence of a third-party security guarantee, which can allow both parties to adopt cooperative strategies. Another way mediators can help address these causes of bargaining failure, is changing the game that is played. In other words, mediators can change the payoffs of strategies of a given game, by altering the incentive structures that are behind the preferences of parties that motivate the adoption of strategies of fighting or cooperation (Terris and Maoz 2005, 569; Smith and Stam 2003, 131). This crucially depends on the versatility of a conflict, meaning how amenable conflict parties payoffs are to alternative incentive structures provided by the mediators (Terris and Maoz 2005, 571).

The veto player theory, which this paper builds upon, is a bargaining theory. While previous bargaining frameworks typically argued using two rational actors in an environment of information asymmetry, the VPT allows for more than two players and gains explanatory value from it. The other large field is the rational choice literature on mediation and negotiation. The bargaining literature is distinct from the rational choice literature, albeit the bargaining literature uses rational actors as a core assumption. Yet both perspectives are commonly used interdependently. While bargaining can help explain why and under which conditions concessions between parties are made, i.e. how mediation brought about which mediated outcome, the rational choice perspective is commonly used to illustrate the conditions under which mediation occurs. In a sense, the bargaining perspective is not used to explain structural changes, or a change of the parties’ preference from fighting to not fighting, but how conflict parties come to an agreement. Noteworthy exceptions are Smith and Stam (2003) and Terris and Maoz (2005) who adopt a game theoretic approach to explain mediation onset rather than limit themselves to mediation outcome. Proponents of the rational choice perspective, however, borrow from the insights won from bargaining theory to illustrate how conflict parties utilize mediation as it is theoretically less costly than continued fighting.
The Rational Choice Perspective on Mediation

The rational choice perspective argues with cost benefit considerations. Mediation is voluntary due to the lack of a coercive mechanism in the absence of power monopoly. For mediation to occur, conflict parties need to perceive that mediation as necessary, i.e. less costly than continued fighting and bilateral peace negotiations. Conflict costs are usually argued to be comprised of fatalities, economic costs, or audience costs. Furthermore, most empirical research on mediation is based, or revolves around a notion of ripeness found in Ripeness Theory developed by I. William Zartman. Objective costs and the subjective evaluation of them determine the presence or absence of opportunity. Windows of opportunities are represented by especially costly episodes in the conflict, for example in the presence of a Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS), a situation in which conflict parties perceive that they cannot escalate to victory unilaterally. An MHS is associated with costs that do not produce any alteration of the status quo (Zartman 2001). Numerous articles have confirmed the idea that the costlier conflicts become, the more likely conflict parties will seek help from actors external to the conflict.

Moreover, mediation is not the only game in town. Parties engage in mediation, rather than other modes of intervention or mere bilateral negotiations when, disputes are especially costly, conflict parties’ efforts fruitless, a mediation opportunity coincide with the availability of a mediator, and a mediated agreement will yield better results than their own efforts. These conditions are typically met in more complex conflicts with multiple conflict parties (Bercovitch and Jackson, 62). The study of veto players shows that more ethnically fragmented countries are also those countries that are more likely to experience multi-veto player conflicts, i.e. conflicts with more than 2 conflict parties capable of unilaterally continuing the fighting (Cunningham 2006). If multi-veto conflicts are also those conflicts of higher complexity, it reasonable to expect that these conflicts will experience more mediation than dual-veto player conflicts, and that multi-veto player conflicts experience mediation rather than negotiations.

The mutually hurting stalemate, as a description and an explanation of ripe moments, cannot on its own explain why parties seek mediation. Greig (2005) offers an addition to the MHS an argues that mediators act as political cover. Disputant parties face a bargainer’s dilemma: “Although disputants tend to fear that a willingness to make concessions signals weakness, disputants must make concessions in order to reach an agreement (Greig 2005, 250).” Mediators are face savers by providing “political cover” for concessions, alleviating the domestic costs and costs by signaling that incur from making concessions (Greig 2005, 250). The first adaptation of the veto player theory to civil conflicts (Cunningham 206) found that the more veto players there are in a conflict, the longer the conflict, all else equal, will last. If mediation occurs, on average, in longer conflicts,
it would be a first indication that the number of veto players and mediation onset likelihood are correlated. High numbers of veto players may exacerbate the bargainer’s dilemma, as there are more parties receiving a signal that can possibly interpreted as weakness, and therefore possibly be taken advantage of by more parties. Hence, mediation may be less likely in multi-veto conflicts, regardless of length, due to the cost players pay when signaling their willingness to mediate, which can be interpreted by other veto players as waning resolve.

Before Gartner and Bercovitch (2006) the puzzle was that mediation is relatively unsuccessful in more than 50% of the cases, meaning no partial or full settlement was achieved. Yet, mediation continues to be observed, and mediation shortens conflicts: if mediation is relatively unsuccessful compared to the times it occurs, why do mediators still choose to mediate, and why do disputants seek mediation? Gartner and Bercovitch show that the conditions that make mediation more likely, are also the conditions that make mediation success less likely and a mediated settlement less durable. In their study, short-lived settlements are dependent on 1) selection effects, which “identify the conflicts we observe” and 2) process effects, internal and external that influence the course of a conflict (Gartner and Bercovitch 2006, 820). In other words, mediation “signals the type of conflict we observe and it affects the underlying factors that shape its course (Gartner and Bercovitch 2006, 820).”

The extension from a universal to a supply-demand perspective, is central to the application of the veto player theory to the study of mediation. There are two sides to a conflict that need to agree to mediation: the mediators as supply side and the disputants as demand side. Greig and Regan (2008) investigate civil war mediations and which mechanism explain when we see offers of mediation and when these are accepted (Greig and Regan 2008). They argue that mediation is costly, and therefore third-parties must have sufficient interest to act as a go-between. For example, mediators act according to moral imperatives and economic interests, and successful mediation ensures the continuation of trade relationships (Greig and Regan, 762). In contrast, the disputants’ interests must warrant the acceptance of mediation offers. The MHS helps to explain the perceived hurt of parties, but the request for mediation can be interpreted as a signal that the resolve of the requesting party is waning, leading the other party to the conclusion that they can escalate in their favour (Greig and Regan 2008, 767). This potential negative repercussion of requesting mediation will theoretically be counter-acted in the presence of a perceived way out. Moreover, governments fear that a mediation process will transfer legitimacy to the rebel group, and that a mediation process resulting in concessions made by the government can result in a precedence, motivating other parties to rebel (Greig and Regan 2008, 766). Melin and Svensson (2009) find that governments pay higher costs than rebel groups in mediation process, because legitimacy is transferred to the
rebels and it serves as a precedence for other possible uprisings (see also Clayton 2013; Melin and Svensson 2009, 254). In addition, due to the nature of mediation, it infringes on the sovereignty of the state by identifying that a state cannot rule sovereign and requires outside support to resolve a conflict. “It is primarily the government that suffers the costs of accepting external mediation (Melin and Svensson 2009, 254).” Taking on the perspective of either the supply and the demand side of mediation, brings about different mechanisms of how the number of veto players influence mediation onset.

Govinda Clayton’s provides a theoretical shift in the mediation literature with his study of relative rebel strength, as he focuses on conflict party characteristics (Clayton 2013). Clayton (2013) examines whether the rebel strength relative to a government in a civil war conditions the likelihood of a third-party to intervene as go-between. Governments typically have incentives to remain sovereign and be perceived as such, and thus do not want to concede any decision-making authority to third parties, nor do governments want to experience domestic audience costs and an increase in support for the rebels (Clayton 2013, 610). Relatively weak rebel groups do not have the power to cause the same costs as relatively strong rebel groups. In the presence of a weak rebel group, the government considers a unilateral escalation to victory with relatively low costs more likely than when fighting a strong rebel group (Clayton 2013, 611). Weak rebel groups will try to cause incremental costs over time to get to the table (Clayton 2013, 613).

From the government’s perspective, the presence of a strong rebel group incentivizes mediation. The strong rebel group, however, will see the opportunity to challenge on the battlefield. Clayton argues, that strong rebel groups will only seek mediation in order to gain legitimacy internally and externally, with the relative strength of them being the source of such a claim of legitimacy (Clayton 2013, 612). With regards to the outcome of mediation, strong rebel groups do not need third party security guarantees, Clayton argues, whereas weak rebel groups desire third party security guarantees but lack the leverage to demand them (Clayton 2013, 613). This circumstance causes a decrease in possible incentives for a rebel group to settle, but leaves the mediator with the option to raise the perception of precipice in the case that a strong rebel group chooses to defect from a mediation process. Clayton finds that the stronger a rebel group vis-à-vis the government, the more likely mediation will occur and mediation processes with stronger rebel groups have a significantly higher probability of achieving a settlement. When reaching power parity reaching at least a partial settlement doubles in its probability (Clayton 2013, 618). Interestingly, the stronger a rebel group, the more likely that they will initiate a mediation process (Clayton 2013, 618). In addition, the veto player measure includes a measure of military strength and therefore builds on and extends Clayon’s analysis by drawing attention to the relative strength of all actors.
Mediation is a deliberate and strategic choice by conflict parties and mediators motivated by several requirements: 1) pressures, in the form of a strong rebel group, 2) pain in the form of a costly and lengthy war, and 3) opportunity, in the form of shielding from audience costs for governments and gaining legitimacy for rebel groups. Social sciences have contributed to the understanding of mediation by identifying the patterns of pain, pressures and opportunities, making ex post explanations of mediation onset and evaluations of ripeness for interventions increasingly precise. Yet, ex ante assessments of conflicts’ viability for third-party interventions can gain from insights won by focusing on conflict actors. Building on the summarized literature, and adjacent to Clayton’s study, I adapt the veto player theory to provide another avenue of explaining mediation onset and identifying ripeness by focusing on conflict parties’ characteristics.
Theory

Mediation does not occur randomly but is a product of the potential mediator’s and the conflict parties’ rational considerations (Melin and Svensson 2009; Greig and Regan 2008; Zartman 2001). Based on the assumption of rational actors, I argue, that the number of veto players influences the cost-benefit calculation of both conflict parties and the mediator. The predictions made by VPT and the insights won in previous research, however, help to explain mediation onset and can be used for a statistical analysis. First, I will illustrate the veto player theory and its previous adaptation to civil war, and secondly I will lay out the theoretic framework for the supply side of mediation (mediators) and for the demand side of mediation (conflict parties).

Veto Player Theory

A political system has a multitude of actors involved in decision making. Veto players (VPs) are unique in that they are: “individual or collective actors whose agreement is necessary for a change of the status quo (Tsebelis 2002, 36).” Subsequently, a policy change, or a change in the status quo, requires unanimity among decision-makers (Tsebelis 2002, 36). Preferences of VPs are required to be sufficiently different as identical policy preferences of players can be collapsed into a single veto player (Tsebelis 2002, 33; Cunningham 2006, 879). Hence, the more veto players, the higher the policy diversity. Veto players are the product of any “political game” of decision-making with a minimum of two players, and that ascribes veto power to those actors (Tsebelis 2002, 37). In Tsebelis work, each veto player has a circular indifference curve around a reservation point which is located on a certain policy dimension. This is summarized in Figure 1 which illustrates the indifference curves of 3 VPs, their common winset, and the impact of policy diversity, veto player strength and number of VPs:

Figure 1. Winset with Three Veto Players

Each actor 1) prefers all positions on the indifference curve equally, 2) prefers all positions that are closer to the reservation point than the position on, or outside of the indifference curve, and 3) prefers all policies on the indifference curve equally to any position that lies outside of the indifference curve (Tsebelis 2002, 38). A status quo is the currently existing policy, and in an ongoing civil war can be thought of as “fighting”. A Winset of Status Quo is the sum of all negotiated outcomes that can defeat the status quo, i.e. all agreements or policies preferred by the VPs to the current policy. Given two conflict parties, the overlap between the two indifference curves on a policy dimension of the two conflict parties form the agreement space or winset (space). In other words, a winset represents preferences of all veto players. Large winsets indicate more possible policy outcomes and larger changes, whereas smaller winsets indicate less alternative policies and allows only for incremental changes in policies (Tsebelis 2002, 40). As the number of veto players increases, the size of the winset will remain the same or decrease. To sum up: in a bargaining setting with more than one player, in which a policy change to the current policy requires the agreement of all players, the range of all policy alternatives to the current policy is a function of: the number of players involved, the preferences of the involved players and the strength of the involved players.

**Veto Player Theory and Civil War**

The VPT comes from the governmental and parliamentary decision-making processes, yet, equating civil wars to institutional decision-making processes with autocratic or competitive-democratic decision-making processes does not come without its caveats. Cunningham (2006) provided the first adaptation to civil war, addressing the needed alterations to a civil war context. Building on the existing literature of war or crisis bargaining (see for example: Reed 2003; Reiter 2003; Fearon 1995; Fearon 1994), and on Tsebelis’ work, Cunningham (2006) develops how information failures and commitment problems are heightened in civil wars with multiple VPs, and therefore why higher numbers of veto players lead to longer conflicts. As he posits, civil wars are violent bargaining processes “over policy”, which is typically the result of rebel groups revolting against a status quo enforced by a government, with which they are unsatisfied (Cunningham 2006, 877).

In any conflict, parties to the conflict are eliminated from decision-making upon being defeated. In a parliamentary setting, a policy outcome of which one veto player is not in favour of (possible in coalition games) does not automatically eliminate that player from future decision-making processes. Secondly, the costs caused by a continuation of fighting as opposed to a negotiated settlement are experienced by all parties (Cunningham 2006, 877). Third, fighting continues in case no negotiated agreement is reached (Cunningham 2006, 877). In addition to Cunningham’s
comparison between civil war and governmental decision-making, it is crucial to note that in a civil war there are no institutional enforcements in place – the disputants choose to be veto players. Thus, I argue that in contrast to governmental and parliamentary decision-making, the players in a civil war are not bound by institutional arrangements to continue fighting nor to negotiate. In other words, players always have the option to opt out of fighting and start negotiations and vice versa.

In a civil war, we can typically observe 4 types of veto players (Cunningham 2006, 878): the government, original rebel groups, splinter groups from the original rebel groups, external groups. The government is a necessary veto player, as a civil war by its definition involves the government and one non-governmental party internal to the state (Melander and Pettersson and Themner, 2016). Therefore, any civil war is automatically a veto player dyad between the government and a non-state actor. The reasons why we see the production of rebel groups, are usually the same reasons why we observe the production of splinter groups: different policy preferences, leadership disputes and strategic disputes (Cunningham 2006, 878). External groups are those groups that supply a rebel group internal to a civil war, or the government with troops or financial assets to sustain their struggle (Cunningham 2006, 878). An example of an external veto player is Russia’s support of the Assad regime in Syria. A prime example of group splintering while retaining status as veto player of the original group and attaining status of a veto player is the case of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MPLA) in Mali, which split into several groups. One of these splinter groups was the Arabic-Islamic Front of Azawad (FIAA) leaving the original veto player MPLA reformed under the name Popular Movement of Azawad (MPA) (Lecocq and Klute 2013, 427).

There are three reasons, according to Cunningham (2006), why an increase in the number of VPs is associated with an increased risk in bargaining failures and why the collection of information during war does not necessarily decrease uncertainty. Assuming a conventional warfare setting, in a conflict with multiple veto players fighting between two belligerents typically takes place along frontlines, but the reduction of uncertainty only affects the relationship between those who fought. In turn, the uncertainty regarding the other belligerents remains equal or increases, because fighting one party in a conflict does not allow updating one’s information about the probability to win a conflict vis-à-vis the other parties, yet costs of the battle still incur (Cunningham 2006, 879). In other words, in a multi-veto player setting, winning the conflict is on another page than winning against another party. The essence of this is captured by the fact that if only one veto player overestimates their probability to win, bargaining will break down and fighting commences or continues (Cunningham 2006, 880). Secondly, each additional veto player decreases the range of possible agreements, which in a civil war means a decrease in alternatives to fighting (Cunningham
I thus further conclude that the balance of power is increasingly volatile the more VPs are involved.

Moreover, the requirement of all veto players to agree, gives incentives for veto players to hold out on an agreement. In contrast to the spoiler literature, which posits that only those parties that will lose from an agreement or have extreme positions will hold out, all veto players have an incentive to delay agreement, because suspension forces parties to withdraw to their reservation point, thus are not able to maximize the utility (Cunningham 2006, 880). Lastly, due to the nature of civil wars, there are no monolithic agreement blocks or policy dimension alliances: to reduce costs of war, parties will seek those coalitions that will maximize their utility, which is facilitated by the parties’ ability to agree on one policy area, but not in another. The shadow of the future weighs heavily, as future alliances are hard to predict (Cunningham 2006, 880). I argue, and Cunningham omits this, that due to the conflict parties’ incentive to reduce costs and the ability to form coalitions, parties that continuously hold out on agreeing to a deal, run into the risk of incentivizing the formation of coalitions between their enemies, and thus being reduced to a non-veto player position, due to the relative gain in power of the newly formed coalition vis-à-vis the party that continuously held out on a deal.

**Veto Player Theory and the Supply Side of Mediation**

The uncertainty regarding the costs and benefits in a multi-veto player environment is higher than in an environment with only two veto players. This uncertainty impedes the possibility of the conflict parties to reach a shared perception of a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS), as it requires unanimous perception of a MHS (Zartman 2001). A mutually hurting stalemate is a condition in which neither party can escalate unilaterally to a conflict victory and this inability to escalate is associated with sunk, non-productive costs that don’t alter the hurting status quo (Zartman 2008, 7; Greig and Regan 2008; Greig 2005). The costs of enduring a MHS outweigh the costs suffered from a mediation effort, and therefore a MHS is a “ripe” moment of intervention for mediators (Zartman 2008; Zartman 2001).

It is challenging to determine such opportune moments to intervene in a setting with two actors, and a multi-veto player setting elevates this difficulty for the involved parties and for the mediator. Zartman and de Soto argue that mediators can ripen a conflict, given the availability and an opportunity to use adequate incentives (Zartman and de Soto 2010, 36). Such an induction of a recognition of a stalemate and ripening, requires a mediator with muscle that can sanction

---

3 Their ideal policy position
4 Utility for player is maximized when preferences of that player are fully met, therefore approaching the reservation point – the ideal policy or preference – maximizes utility
continued conflict behavior. Such sanctions or inducements are associated with costs, and since a mediator is well advised to incentivize all veto players due to their required agreement to any proposed policy, an increase in veto players increases the amount of inducements, therefore the costs of inducement and consequently the costs of mediation (Zartman and de Soto 2010, 38). Multiple veto players require the mediator to take more policy positions into account. Policy diversification is a direct result of an increase in numbers of veto players, because veto players must have substantially different policy positions to be considered veto players. In a civil war environment, due to incentives to misrepresent private information, mediators and conflict parties will be uncertain about the actual policy positions and associated reservation points of the parties (Cunningham 2006, 879; Fearon 1995, 381). Thus, mediators will find it increasingly difficult to propose a mode of finding an agreement, or propose an item in a peace agreement that reflects a winset – a policy that includes all veto players’ interests and is preferred to the status quo.

A fundamental issue mediators face is the necessity to disaggregate and reframe policy positions into more negotiable dimensions. Diplomat and seasoned mediator Jan Eliasson approached this difficulty when going between the representatives of Azerbaijan and Armenia by using the pretense of representing a mediator and an academic: the goal was to get the parties to identify their demands that are associated with their positions on dimensions previously worked out at the University of Uppsala (Wallensteen and Svensson 2010, 44). In this scenario, only two veto players are present and they could not work out compatible, operational demands. Jan Eliasson did not achieve the shift from the insistence on “territorial integrity” to more negotiable dimensions such as security and an economy (Svensson and Wallensteen 2010, 44). In a multi-veto player context, more policy positions will be present and therefore the difficulty to find operational demands accentuated. Operational demands are important, as those demands can be altered given the right incentives (Terries and Maoz 2005).

Each application of leverage is associated with an increase in costs for the mediator. Leverages such as third party security guarantees, economic promises or promises for foreign aid under the condition of a cessation of hostilities results in higher costs for the offering party. If this were not the case, promises would be false promises and mediators would not be credible and jeopardize the process and therefore risk compromising achieving their own interest. This is more likely to be the case with a more coercive mediator with the necessary “muscle” and with an interest in the conflict and its outcome (Beardsley 2008). Again, veto players are required to agree to negotiations and mediation. It follows that the more veto players there are, the costlier exerting leverage and offering incentives will get, as each veto player requires an additional application of an inducement, and each additional inducement increases the costs for the mediator.
It is conceivable, however, that the number of veto player does not equal the number of inducements that are required. As shown above, though, an increase in veto players in a game decreases the winset. The mediator therefore has a choice between increasing the winset by bringing the parties policy positions closer to each other with sanctions or inducements, or by operating within a small winset. The establishment of this winset is not guaranteed, due to information asymmetries. Consequently, a mediator will find, ex ante, that the increase in number of veto players will make a winset smaller, hence a successful mediation attempt less likely and costlier, and consequently mediation onset less attractive and therefore less likely. Melin and Svensson (2009) find, contrary to their theoretical expectation, that compared to interstate wars, more mediation takes place in intra-state wars, and conclude that mediation must be considered thoroughly before offering it: mediators will consider how costly the mediation will be. Given the argumentation above, it follows that the number of veto players directly affects the costs-benefit calculation and the feasibility of mediation.

**Veto Player Theory and The Demand Side of Mediation**

Conflict parties have different preferences regarding mediation. For governments mediation causes arguably more costs than for rebels for at least four reasons: 1) a mediation process inherently transfers decision-making authority to the mediator, 2) transfers legitimacy to non-state actors, 3) concedes that a government cannot rule sovereign and handle its domestic issues and 4) concessions made by the government can increase support for the rebel group(s) and result in a decrease in support for the government (Clayton 2013; Svensson and Lindgren 2013; Beardsley 2010; Melin and Svensson 2009). Non-state actors on the other hand can press for mediation to gain international recognition by states and an international non-state audience that is supportive of the non-state actor. Weak rebel groups can opt for mediation to regain strength and remobilize, resulting in the ability of a weak rebel group to sustain fighting after defecting from a peace process (Balcells and Kalyvas 2014; Clayton 2013; Richmond 1999).

In a civil war, however, I argue, that with an increase in veto players, private information value increases, which is associated with an increase in uncertainty and a difficulty to reduce uncertainty by fighting. This directly impedes the likelihood of establishing a mutually hurting stalemate, i.e. a situation in which conflict parties perceive that they cannot escalate to victory unilaterally. Ergo, in multi-veto player environments the necessary condition of a perception that conflict costs exceed mediation costs is difficult to be met, given that a MHS is one way to come to such a conclusion. This leads to a more volatile environment where small advantages over other veto players are constantly sought after, making the status quo power distribution especially valuable.
Another point highlights the difference between a two-player multi-veto player environment. The perception of precedence to come to an agreement in the face of a humanitarian catastrophe or irreversible losses in public support has been put forward as a theory why mediation occurs (Zartman 2008). In an environment where a government and a rebel group are caught in a mutually hurting stalemate but refuse to yield, only such a perception of impending doom may motivate public parties to cede violence and seek negotiations. This requires, however, that the negative repercussions of the effects of such a catastrophe are felt equally by each party. In a multi-veto player environment such costs of a catastrophe are likely to be distributed unequally. Case in point, India’s intervention in Sri Lanka’s Civil War in 1987, where the impending hunger crisis caused by India’s resource embargo elevated a perception that pressing for conflict resolution was necessary to avoid humanitarian costs: Jayewardene, the Sri Lankan president agreed to peace talks (Hellmann-Rajanayagam 2009, 54). Consequently, the advantages gained by each veto player vis-à-vis the other veto players is proportionate to the costs suffered by the veto player vis-à-vis the costs suffered by the other veto players. In other words, an imminent catastrophe is more likely to benefit players in a multi-veto player environment than in a conflict with only two players. As the benefit of only one veto player suffices for that veto player to gain an advantage, a veto player may in fact welcome a catastrophe that is disproportionately felt by other actors. In this case, mediation would be less likely as the actor who is not experiencing the catastrophe can take advantage of the other actors who do experience the catastrophe.

Mediation can manipulate incentive structures and mediators can apply carrots and sticks (Gartner and Bercovitch 2006, 823; Terris and Maoz 2005). Veto players thus will be wary of the possibility that mediators will resort to inducements and sanctions such as third party security guarantees and foreign aid, which could tip the balance of power (Clayton 2013, 610). Mediators are therefore likely to obstruct a power distribution and consequently veto players will reject mediation. In addition, in a veto player environment, all parties must agree to a mediation effort. It follows that with an increased number of veto players the likelihood that a veto player rejects the possibility of mediation increases. Moreover, veto players perceive the likelihood of reaching a negotiated settlement, in general, as small, due to the decrease in possible agreements that is associated with an increase in veto players (Tsebelis 2002, 40; Cunningham 2006, 879). Subsequently, neither bilateral negotiations nor mediations are perceived to be strategically viable. This is accentuated by the fact that mediation and negotiation generates costs. First, by the process itself. Second, by agreeing that negotiation and mediation may produce a more beneficial outcome, parties concede that they cannot claim a victory on their own, providing a costly signal, summarized in the
bargainer’s dilemma⁵ (Greig 2005, 250). In short, the establishment of a mutually hurting stalemate, and a common perception of an imminent catastrophe is increasingly difficult with increasing numbers of veto players. Furthermore, due to the risk that mediators will impact the unstable distribution of power among veto players and their desire to retain the power distribution, veto players will reject mediation. To conclude, this line of argument for the demand side of mediation would motivate the investigation of a linear relationship between the number of veto players and the likelihood of mediation incidence. An extension of the veto player theory, however, illustrates that a curvilinear relationship is more likely, which is discussed below.

**Veto Players and Mediation: A Curvilinear Relationship**

Large winsets require large indifference curves and close policy positions, i.e. players must have similar compatible interests. A game of only two players in a violent conflict setting implies that the initial possible winset is small, because policy positions must be sufficiently different from each other, or incompatible, to result in a conflict. Therefore, the initial overlap upon approaching reservation points or increasing indifference curve diameters is small. In other words, in the absence of an incompatibility, the outbreak of violent conflict is unlikely. In addition, factoring in the uncertainty actors have about each other, suggests that the winset will be small. As shown in VPT, an increase in veto players is associated with a decrease in winset and therefore a decreased probability of terminating warfare. I argue, however, that in a conflict setting the relationship is curvilinear, because a two-player game has a small unstable winset, and a large number of veto players essentially decreases the probability of finding a winset. A third or fourth veto player, however, can act as a coalition forming “formateur” that positions itself in a way that allows a winset large enough to counteract the uncertainty mechanisms at play.

In parliaments, the formateur party is the party entrusted with the task to form a governing coalition (Tsebelis and Eun-Young 2014, 336). Contrary to a governmental decision-making process, parties in an armed conflict do not have positional or agenda setting advantages that would allow them to have their policies accepted, otherwise we wouldn’t see conflict (Tsebelis and Eun-Young 2014, 342). Tsebelis and Eun-Young (2014) further find that in the absence of institutional advantages, the formateur party will require a relatively central (not at the extreme end) policy position and needs to minimize ideological differences with potential partners to form a coalition (Tsebelis and Eun-Young 2014, 343). In civil war, parties will more likely than not be positioned at more extreme points on a policy dimension: 1) Extreme policy positions will communicate resolve which is in line with the prediction that parties will want to misrepresent their true resolve. 2) If the parties

---

⁵ “Although disputants tend to fear that a willingness to make concessions signals weakness, disputants must make concessions in order to reach an agreement (Greig 2005, 250).”
were positioned close to the center of a policy position (moderate stance), conflict could only occur, if the parties had a small indifference curve around a reservation point on that policy dimension, which would indicate high interest in that policy. It would remain to be explained why two parties that are moderately positioned would rather fight than find a negotiated solution and why information failure would occur in such an environment. For example, parties could adopt an extreme policy position to credibly convey their stance on a policy decision, rather than position themselves close to the other party’s moderate point.

To be VPs, actors require sufficiently different policy positions and in a conflict setting, these will be increasingly further away from the center and more to the extremes. The factionalization of a rebel group due to leadership or strategic disputes is a prime example, where the splinter group needs to either move closer to the center, or further to the extremes. If that were not the case, the splinter group couldn’t be separated by purpose (Cunningham 2006, 879). As veto player number increase they will adopt more extreme positions. Furthermore, the more extreme the positions of parties get, the more irreconcilable they will be with each other. On the other hand, in the presence of only two veto players, winsets will be small and instable. In the middle, however, we may witness a “flocking around the center” where parties have different policy positions, but that are only so different as necessary, to force concessions from other parties. Moreover, because players are closer to the center than in an environment with a high number of veto players, mediators can identify feasible leverages and inducements, as well as implementable winsets. Hence a medium of veto-players may facilitate mediation onset. Therefore:

\[ H1: \text{The relationship between the number of veto players and mediation onset probability is likely to be curvilinear, with low and high numbers of veto players decreasing mediation onset probability.} \]

This curvilinear relationship is summarized in the following diagramme.

The civil war mediation in the 1980s in Sri Lanka provides some anecdotal evidence and illustration of the above theory. The government of Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE), the Tamil Elam Liberation Organisation (TELO) and the Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Elam (PLOTE) are caught in a fight fueled by ethnic differences and horizontal
inequalities, culminating in the peak of violence that was forebode by rising tensions throughout the 1970s. In this environment, the strongest players crystalized. The LTTE established itself as the strongest militant group of Tamil students, whereas the PLOTE splintered off the LTTE due to disputes over leadership of the LTTE. The TELO fought for an independent region of Tamil Elam, a militant group ins dispute with the government of Sri Lanka and other Tamil militant groups, such as the LTTE which led to the termination of the TELO. Throughout this decade characterized by the outbreak of the civil war, several mediation onsets occurred (Hellmann-Rajanayagam 2009, 63). India spearheaded efforts after domestic attempts did not yield results favoured by India. For this mediation effort, the Tamil groups formed a more uniform group the Eelam People’s National Liberation Front (EPNLF). Although the EPNLF withdrew, this is mediation attempt in Thimpu 1985 exemplifies how a multiplicity of veto players can facilitate mediation due to a convergence of policy position of an umbrella organization that requires a common policy positon to effectively negotiate (Hellmann-Rajanayagam 2009, 64). In this sense, the existence of 4 veto players constituted a ripe moment for the go-between, as the 70s were characterized by a multiplicity of actors, representing an uncertain political playing where the strongest parties were yet to be determined. With the dawn of the 1980s, it became clear that the LTTE were the strongest representation of the militant student movements, alongside the PLOTE and the TELO. Hence, policy positions were distributed among players with different positions, ranging from extreme to more modest, yet, seemingly incompatible, similar enough to facilitate issue trading. A window of opportunity in the foreground of heightened risk of an escalation of violence, that would materialize after a shaky negotiated ceasefire agreement, resulting in the civil war (Samarasinghe 1984).

This section lined out the theoretical argument and the hypothesis. More veto players in a civil war will hinder the establishment of a mutually hurting stalemate, because conflict parties cannot gather reliable data on all other parties. Therefore, the likelihood to request mediation will be lower. In addition, the balance of power is more likely to be more instable, as there are more players against which a party has to evaluate their power: any change is therefore not only impacting the relative strength to the government, but also to other veto players. Veto players will thus be unwilling to see mediation due to the risk of shifting power relations. Moreover, mediators will experience higher costs in their attempt to ripen a conflict for mediation, and in their attempts to induce more compatible policy positions between belligerent parties. As a result, mediators will be less likely to offer mediation in multi-veto player environments. As decreased likelihoods to offer mediation coincide with decreased likelihoods to request mediation, the probability of mediation to occur decreases. Furthermore, due to coalition formation considerations and the subsequent ability to
form stable winsets while decreasing the costs to establish them, the relationship between the number of veto players and mediation onset is in the form of an inverted U-shape. The weakness of the VPT is that it cannot explain why conflict parties have to mediate, but is restricted to a perspective under which conditions mediation is, all else equal, more opportune. The VPT therefore stands in stark contrast to previous studies, focusing on the coercive structures forcing parties to seek mediation. The next section illustrates the research design with which the hypotheses will be tested.

**Research Design**

**Data**

The population under investigation are all non-interstate conflicts within the time period of 1946 – 2003. The limitation to this time period is a result of missing data on veto players after 2003. The unit of analysis is conflict-month. Conflict-month allows for the observation of within-conflict-year variation of the independent variable and the dependent variable and therefore for a more nuanced analysis than a conflict, or conflict-year approach would allow. As Svensson and Onken note, the conflict-dyad year analysis allows the identification of “several conflicts in the same year, and potentially in the same state (Svensson and Onken 2015, 67). Likewise, the analysis of mediation in the conflict-dyad month allows for the investigation of mediation in the same manner.

Non-Interstate conflicts, or civil conflicts, are disputes between a government and another actor over territory or government using armed forces resulting in a minimum of 25 battle-related deaths. Therefore, I follow the definition of the Armed Conflict Dataset (ACD) of Uppsala, and include civil conflict, civil wars, internationalized civil wars, and extra-systemic wars, but exclude interstate conflicts and interstate wars (Melander and Pettersson and Themner 2016). Conflicts over different territories within a country comprise different conflicts, yet conflicts over government within a country are one conflict (Melander and Pettersson and Themner 2016). Conflicts that experienced cessation of violence for 24 month, but reignited after that 24-month period, are treated as separate conflicts (Melander and Pettersson and Themner 2016). The decision to exclude interstate wars is theory and data driven: 1) mediation in non-interstate wars underlies different dynamics than in interstate wars and therefore require different theoretical explanations that go beyond the scope of this paper (see Melin and Svensson 2009). 2) Large-N data on numbers of veto players is, to the best of my knowledge, only available for intra-state conflicts. The framework of this study does not allow a comprehensive collection of data on interstate conflicts and veto players that would be necessary for a large-N analysis. I am therefore limited to existing datasets that have already collected and coded the necessary information on mediation and veto players.
There are several data sets available on civil conflict mediation, of which DeRouen et al. Civil War Mediation (CWM) data set is the most suitable for the following reasons: 1) CWM identifies the exact date (day-month-year) in which mediation of a conflict occurs. Cunningham expands country-year to country-month using date from Gates and Strand (2004) (Cunningham 2006, 882). The CWM and Cunningham’s data set provide divergent start dates for conflict episodes. The reason: Cunningham disaggregates conflict-year to conflict-month to address problems that arise in the study of conflict duration using conflict-year as unit of analysis. A conflict starting in November 2000 and ending in January 2001 would be treated as one additional conflict year instead of 2 additional conflict months (Cunningham 2006, 882). The CWM identifies only conflict-year information as unique identifier of what conflict is mediated. The CWM provides data on the month when mediation started, but does not disaggregate the conflict-year to conflict-month. The CWM thus allows to match a mediation onset date to the disaggregated conflict-month in Cunningham’s data. Note, that the CWM identifies civil war mediation according to the ACD. Cunningham and the CWM therefore observe the same phenomenon/population.

To contrast, the Regan et al. (2009) data set is restricted to conflicts with more than 200 battle related deaths per calendar year, and the application of this data set would incur a loss of information. Consequently, using the CWM data set allows for an accurate analysis of veto player numbers and mediation per conflict-month. The two data sets were matched by identifying the conflict-month that matches the mediation month using the information on mediation onset in the CWM. To exemplify: the ACD codes Afghanistan-1978 as conflict onset year and the conflict in Afghanistan as a continuous conflict with varying actors until its termination in 2001: it experienced 309 conflict months, of which one month (February 1988) experienced a mediation onset, leaving the rest of the 308 conflict months without any mediation onset. In addition, a country experiencing conflict between several different parties constitute different conflict-dyads. For example, in Angola the conflict between the government and UNITA and the conflict between the government and FLEC-R are treated as different conflicts and therefore produce different conflict months. In the dataset, Angola has two separate conflict observations in November 1991 due to the presence of the dyads government-UNITA and government-FLEC that generate the battle-related deaths. Incidentally, in October 1994 mediation occurred between the government and UNITA but not between the government and FLEC-R. Lastly, mediation occasionally occurs outside of recorded conflict-months. Case in point is the mediation process between Azerbaijan and the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh where mediation started in September 1991, although the conflict is coded as having started 1992. These cases are ignored as the theory only supports observation of mediation after conflict inception. All cases in which names of factions differed
between Cunningham and the CWM, for example due to different acronyms, the UCDP actor-database was consulted for disambiguation. In cases of persistent ambiguity, the variables: start and end of the conflict episode, government support side, rebel support side, (disputed) territory, and country were used as basis for an exclusion procedure to reduce uncertainty regarding congruence of the data sets, i.e. that conflicts and their actors are identical in both data sets.

For instance, the CWM records mediation onsets in Ethiopia, specifying the government side (side_A) but not the rebel support side (side_B). Through the exclusion procedure, the mediation onset could be matched to what Cunningham records as conflict between the government of Ethiopia and the ELF, ELF factions, and the EPLF. In cases, in which ambiguity could not be eliminated, the mediation process was ignored. Inability to eliminate ambiguity was in all cases the result of overlapping conflict episodes without uniquely identified actors, thus a mediation effort could not be uniquely matched to a conflict within a respective episode and the respective actors.

In cases in which mediation onset was recorded without a specified date, mediation was ignored. The aforementioned specifications decreased the number of mediation onsets. The coding rules therefore lead to a misrepresentation of reality, however, did not lead to an overreporting of phenomena which would suggest stronger reservations regarding the data and results.

**Operationalization of Veto Players**

I adopt Cunningham’s (2006) operationalization of veto players. Cunningham (2006) operationalizes veto players using three criteria applied to actors included in the ACD. In the ACD, actors are coded as the primary conflict parties, and as “sideA”, supporting the government, and “sideB”, supporting the rebel group (Cunningham 2006, 882). Cunningham developed three criteria to measure veto players in a civil war setting (Cunningham 2006, 883):

1) Viability, those parties who can continue fighting unilaterally. The viability criterion is a composite measure, where troop strength is given ordinal values based on its size relative to the government, as well as additional points for each additional measure met by a party. Veto players can take on values on an ordinal scale between 0 and 7 (Cunningham 2006, 885). The measures are:

   a. “How many troops the group had relative to the government, whether they operated in mountainous or forested terrain, whether they had access to lootable resources, whether they were the dominant group in the region of the country where they operated, whether they had participated and had a strong showing in elections, and whether they received external support (Cunningham 2006, 884).”

2) Cohesiveness, measured by whether a party avoided factionalization that would cause a dispersion of the splinter group and/or the original rebel group that experienced the break-off.
during a conflict. Moreover, the party is required to sustain a stable leadership and consistent demands (Cunningham 2006, 883).

3) Autonomy, distinguishable, separate agenda from another group, measured by the demands voiced by parties.

The data for the measures for cohesiveness and autonomy are derived from “historical sources such as Keesing’s Record of World Events and news reports obtained through Lexis Nexis were employed to identify group demands [, as well as] case histories were used to examine how scholars identify group goals (Cunningham 2006, 883).” Cunningham argues that the determination of whether a party represents a veto player or not is subjective, albeit the effort to approximate objectivity. The inclusion of veto players fulfilling criteria strictly, and veto players fulfilling the criteria more leniently is an attempt to alleviate this predicament of a lack of an objective veto player indicator (Ironically, this is exactly the challenge mediators face when determining which of the actors require evaluation and engagement). For example⁶, to fulfill the strict measure of viability, players require a larger army than the government or operate within conditions that are conducive to insurgencies. A lenient measure requires a party to have a troop size of less than 10% of the government and “have other attributes facilitating insurgency (Cunningham 2006, 885).” In this study, I use the strict measure of veto player to test H1. The variables simply count the numbers of veto players, with each veto players adding a value of 1 to “Strictvotos” or “Lenientvotos” when applicable. The theory suggests the prediction of a nonmonotonic, or curvilinear relationship between the number of veto players and mediation onset likelihood. Consequently, a quadratic term of the veto measures is included in the models, as in “(number of strict veto players)²”.

Such an operationalization does not come without its limitations. First, the data gathering on and coding of veto players causes a loss of information on what type of actor a veto player is. A given conflict may have 6 veto players, but the number of veto players does not reveal how many of these veto players are internal rebel groups, how many of them are splinter groups, and how many are external rebel groups or external governments. While the inclusion of variables that identify whether a conflict had external veto players and splinter groups alleviates this drawback in the data, it is impossible to determine in any aggregated measure what the relative impact of the type of veto player is. The coding rules attribute those actors who fulfill the criteria with the veto player label, but not all veto players are equal, even though the veto player label may suggest this. For instance, the “average strength of veto player” measure does not allow the identification of the veto player that has the greatest effect on the size of the “average strength of veto players” variable, and thus

---

⁶ Cunningham provides explanations of what comprises lenient and strict measures of viability (page 885), autonomy (page 883), and cohesiveness (page 884).
inferences on whether it is the government’s strength or the rebel group’s strength that determines the values cannot be made. A conventional asymmetric war, for example can exhibit the same average veto player strength as a conventional symmetric conflict in which parties are evenly matched, if the government’s strength offsets the rebel group’s weakness and thus inflates the average of the measurement. The average veto player strength would be the same for the two hypothetical examples, even though the rebel groups would effectively be different in strength. The veto player concept is therefore problematic in that information on idiosyncratic characteristics of individual veto players are lost.

**Operationalization of Mediation Onset**

Mediation onset is operationalized as the calendar-date on which a third-party commenced an official mediation process for a given conflict. The same definition as was given before⁷ constitutes mediation. DeRouen et al. collected the information on mediation using newspapers such as the *New York Times*, archives such as Keesing’s News Archive, local newspapers, and transcripts of radio and TV broadcasts (DeRouen and Bercovitch and Pospieszna 2011, 665). The theory section argues from the perspective of the supply side of mediation and the demand side of mediation. This would suggest the investigation of mediation offers and mediation requests or acceptance of mediation offers. The outcome of interest is mediation onset, which can also be viewed as the coincidence of mediation offer by a third party and the acceptance of such an offer by the conflict parties; or the request for mediation by the conflict parties with the acceptance of such a request by a third party.

In the CWM, best estimates of and precise starting dates of mediation are included. Based on this information, DeRouen et al. coded mediation as a binary variable: months that exhibited a start of a mediation process as 1, and 0 for no mediation onset in month. I coded ongoing mediation efforts as “0” in the conflict-months following the conflict-month that experienced mediation and was coded accordingly as “1”. The conflict in Afghanistan that broke out in 1978 did not see mediation until February 1988, therefore all months before February 1988 are coded as “0”, no mediation onset. All months in the year 1988 after February 1988 are only coded as “1”, mediation onset, if this observation constituted a new mediation effort. Therefore, all information on mediation onset within the same month is coded as one mediation onset, i.e. information on multi-party mediation commencing in the same month is lost. In short, the month in which a mediation process commenced is considered as basis for coding mediation onset or the absence thereof. This allows

---

⁷ “a process of conflict management where disputants seek the assistance of, or accept an offer of help from, an individual, group, state or organization to settle their conflict or resolve their differences without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of the law (Bercovitch and Anagnoson and Wille 1991, 8).”
for the inclusion of multiple mediation onsets initiated by the same or a different party at different conflict-months of the same conflict.

Consequently, this approach allows to account for conflict duration, i.e. how many month prior and after mediation onset pass (Clayton 2013, 614). Multi-party mediation is increasingly common and as shown above the coding rules reflect this reality only partially (Böhmelt 2012). Unofficial mediation efforts or Track-II initiatives are therefore not considered. In addition, pre-negotiations, or facilitative non-official mediation efforts prior to the identified start of a mediation process are not considered. This is problematic, as mediation is inherently clandestine due to the sensitivity of topics discussed, and the actors' awareness of possible audience costs. It is possible that mediation is systematically underreported and/or starting dates of mediation dates systematically misrepresented. This study has to, however, adopt a “as good as it gets” attitude, as it cannot provide any examination of each individual mediation process that is coded in the dataset and whether it accurately reflects the mediation effort or misses to account for Track-II efforts or pre-mediation efforts. Reliability is high, due to the coding procedures during dataset generation. On the other hand, the validity of mediation onset requires cautious handling. Nevertheless, all mediation data sets suffer from these drawbacks, and compared to the CWM almost no other dataset includes a more valid reflection or measurement of what constitutes mediation (DeRouen and Bercovitch and Pospieszna 2011).

Control Variables

To fulfil criteria of causality and circumvent interpretation of results suggesting a relationship that are in reality spurious, I include several control variables that theoretically could affect both the independent and the dependent variable. From the mediation literature (see Clayton and Gleditsch 2014), several variables have been determined to be robust predictors of mediation. The below variables are taken from Clayton and Gleditsch (2014) if not specified otherwise. The application of veto player theory to civil war is not as developed as the theoretical linkages in the mediation literature.

1) Conflict intensity, measured in log⁸ of battle-related deaths per calendar month:

Conflict intensity has repeatedly been demonstrated to increase mediation onset likelihood. It is argued that a conflict’s fatalities are a measure of costs, which are to be avoided. As costs increase, alternative solutions become more attractive and mediation more likely. Second, conflict intensity can increase the number of veto players, because actors who have so far not been involved, observe the increasing costs the involved players experience. With an increase in fatalities in a conflict

---

⁸ The log transformation is done, among other reasons, to account for skewedness (non-normal distribution) of data
original veto players will become relatively weaker, and prospect veto players will seek to take advantage of the costs the original veto players have already experienced and enter the conflict as a new veto player that did not experience conflict costs so far.

2) Conflict duration, measured as the months passed since the inception of a conflict-month dyad until its termination or until mediation onset:

As conflicts are prolonged, information asymmetries decrease, while costs increase. Sustained costs can convince conflict parties that they cannot further justify the fatalities. Fighting did not produce any final outcome, and costs press for alternative solutions, making mediation an attractive option and therefore more likely. Following the same logic as in conflict intensity, actors outside of the conflict may opt to become a veto player of the conflict with the agenda to take advantage of the sunk costs the original veto players already experienced. Therefore, as the conflicts carries on, more veto players will get involved.

3) Relative rebel strength, the strength of the rebel groups vis-à-vis the government.

Clayton (2013) showed how conflicts with strong rebel groups compared to the government they are in dispute with experience more mediation than conflicts with weak rebels. Governments are the actors suffering the highest costs in civil war mediation due to the legitimacy it transfers to non-state actors and the precedence it creates for other non-state actors. Strong rebel groups, on the other hand, will then seek mediation to receive international recognition, rather than seeking victory on the battlefield if not foreseeable (Clayton 2013, 612). It is possible that rebel groups who are evenly matched with the government will deter other possible veto players from entering. Government armies require a certain strength to defend their borders and to be recognized by the international community. If an internal group can approach or exceed that strength, any other actors would face at least two strong belligerents, raising the expected costs an additional player suffers.

4) Cold War, dummy variable, indicating whether the conflict occurred during the Cold War period of 1945 – 1989 or not.

The political sphere of influence of the Soviet Union and the U.S.A during the Cold War made it virtually impossible for any political actor to gain access to a polity of interest if this was vetoed by either superpower. Mediation therefore occurred less often during the Cold War than after, because the involvement of external actors was not favoured by either superpower (Svensson and Lindgren 2013, 708). Likewise, prospect veto players would fail to enter a conflict as a new veto player if
restrictions by the superpower are applicable. For example, factionalization of an original rebel group may have been prevented to reduce interest groups and therefore incompatibilities.

**Model**

To investigate the hypotheses of this study, I employ a large-N design. Quantitative methods are adequate when exploration of a hypothesized relationship between two variables of interest is not restricted by data. The ability of large N designs to control for possible confounders, enable the establishment of a correlation between the variables of interest with generalizable results. As veto player theory has not been applied to the study of mediation yet, a quantitative approach is appropriate to determine whether there is a correlation between the number of veto players and mediation onset and whether this correlation is statistically significant. The model is determined by the main hypothesis and the variables of interest in this study: 1) Low and high numbers of veto players decrease mediation onset probability, whereas medium numbers of veto players increases mediation onset probability. For the analysis of the dichotomous dependent variable, I use a logit model.

The logit model eliminates the linearity assumption that usually underlies OLS regressions and other forms of bivariate and multivariate regressions, and is therefore suitable for the investigation of models that have a binary dependent variable. As a dummy variable can only take on the values 0 and 1, a function cannot be linearly fitted to the observations. With logit, however, the link function of the logit function uses the distribution of observations to fit them to probabilities ranging from 0 to 1, i.e. fit observations to when we see the probability approach 1 or 0 (Kellstedt and Whitten 2013, 253). The sample size of this study is large enough to justify logit regression. Logit regression is sensitive to specification errors and sample size, and therefore a larger sample allows the application of logit, while increasing confidence in the results.

**Limitations**

Statistical analyses are weak in scrutinizing and isolating a causal mechanism and establishing a temporal order between predictor and outcome. Causal inferences on the basis of this model are therefore to be made with caution, as a statistical analysis can only provide an artificial approach to the investigation of whether variation in veto players causes mediation onset or not and requires a separate qualitative approach. This is exacerbated by the low variation between conflict-months in the main explanatory variable “number of veto players”, and a one-unit change of veto players in a given month prior to mediation onset. The data on battle-related deaths is frequently used as an indicator for conflict costs. This is problematic, as aggregate measures of battle-related deaths across the conflict do not indicate immediate conflict costs per month or year. When disaggregated to the month, but aggregated across actors, the information
on the relative costs experienced by either actor is lost. Therefore, the aggregate measure assigns the same amount of “hurt” to the conflict parties, albeit parties experience different costs at different times. A total increase in casualties does not necessarily mean that each party suffered the same amount of fatalities.

Ripe moments for mediation entry are those in which enough veto players have been terminated to reduce information asymmetries and policy diversity, while enough veto players are present to form stable winsets. Svensson and Lindgren (2013) argue that as a conflict drags on, more information will be available about resolve and capabilities (Svensson and Lindgren 2013, 717). I contest that this oscillation of available information over time will be conditioned by the veto players present in a conflict. More veto players entail more information asymmetries between more parties. Cunningham (2006) shows that the more veto players there are in a conflict, the longer a conflict lasts. If the termination of a conflict is a function of a significant degree of information asymmetry reduction, and if conflicts with multiple veto players last longer, then the reduction of information asymmetries will be slower the more veto players are involved (Cunningham 2006). The elimination of veto players could be argued to require a fixed effect model for the study, as group variation in the independent variable has to be accounted for. I opt against this because the unit of analysis is conflict month, and there is no within conflict month, nor a frequent between conflict-month variation in the number for veto player.

Results & Analysis

After merging the data sets, the new dataset includes 18,528 conflict months, of which 17,206 conflict months are used in the statistical model, due to missing values from other data sets, which represent a loss of 1,322 conflict months.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>(1) N</th>
<th>(2) mean</th>
<th>(3) sd</th>
<th>(4) min</th>
<th>(5) max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mediation Onset</td>
<td>18,528</td>
<td>0.0175</td>
<td>0.131</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict Vetos</td>
<td>18,309</td>
<td>2.155</td>
<td>0.504</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Intensity</td>
<td>17,477</td>
<td>6.278</td>
<td>1.887</td>
<td>2.565</td>
<td>12.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Duration</td>
<td>18,528</td>
<td>108.2</td>
<td>117.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Rebel Strength</td>
<td>18,472</td>
<td>1.104</td>
<td>0.356</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War (Y/N)</td>
<td>18,528</td>
<td>0.653</td>
<td>0.476</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table I it becomes clear how rare mediation onset is and how disproportionate the amount of conflicts with 2 veto players are, as indicated by the respective variable’s mean (2.155). The mean duration of a civil conflict is 108 month, or 9 years. Conflict intensity is measured in the
log of battle related deaths, and translates into a raw number mean value of 3,851 battle related deaths across all conflict month. 12,096 conflict month (1,008 conflict years) occurred in the 43 year long Cold War period between 1946 to 1989, almost twice as many conflict month when compared to the 6,432 conflict month (or 536 conflict years) observed in the post-Cold War era from 1990 to 2003. Most rebel groups were weak relative to the government they fought against, as is represented by the mean of 1.104 of the relative rebel strength variable. 324 of the 18,528 conflict months experienced an onset of mediation, i.e only 1.77% of conflict-month coincided with mediation onset. Note that in effect, more month experienced mediation, since mediation typically lasts longer than one month.

When applying the strict coding rule\(^9\) for veto players, 89.41% of conflict month exhibit two veto players (the minimum). The highest number of veto players in a conflict month were 6 which represents 0.07% (12) of conflict month observations. This was in the year 1992 in Afghanistan for 12 consecutive conflict months. The lenient coding rules yield 74.48% of conflict months had two veto players and 0.20% (36) of conflict month had 9 lenient veto players, the highest number of lenient veto. The case of Congo/Zaire between 1999 and 2001 exemplifies the difference in the lenient and strict measurements of veto players: in 36 consecutive conflict month 9 veto players were simultaneously present when lenient measures were applied whereas only 2 veto players were present according to the stricter measures in the same conflict month. Thus, the number of veto players can differ substantially between measure types. The aforementioned case of Afghanistan, however, shows that both lenient and strict measures can yield the same amount of veto players per conflict month. Table II illustrates the distribution of mediation onset in multi-veto and dual-veto player environments.

Table 2. Crosstabulation of Numbers of Strict Vetos and Mediation Onset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediation Onset</th>
<th>Frequency (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 (98.32)</td>
<td>16,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (1.68)</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16,370</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^9\) See page 25.
Of the 4,015 conflict months with multiple veto players, 2.17% experienced mediation, whereas 1.68% of dual-veto player conflict months experienced mediation, which amounts to a difference of 150 conflict months, or 0.49% in mediation onset when comparing conflicts regarding the presence or absence of multiple veto players. In addition, in percentages most mediation attempts in multi-veto conflicts occurred when there were four veto players present (3.58%) and no mediation attempts occurred when there were 6 veto players present. However, the simultaneous presence of 6 veto players only occurred once in 12 consecutive months in Afghanistan. The most notable characteristic of civil conflicts between 1946 and 2003 is that most conflict month did not experience mediation, and had 2 veto players. Since conflicts typically last longer than a month, such an analysis of mediation with the unit of analysis being conflict month can be misleading. Aggregating the data to a conflict-year dyad yields that 14.04% of multi-veto conflicts exhibited mediation, whereas 10.69% of dual-veto player conflicts experienced mediation. All in all, between the years 1946 and 2003 11.18% to 17.58% of conflicts experienced mediation (see Clayton 2013 for a comparison; the difference in percentages are a product of different coding rules). The descriptive statistics therefore do not provide a solid basis for a preliminary statement in favour of or against the hypothesis that any given conflict month with high or low numbers of veto players is less likely to see mediation occur. This is due to the low variance in the main explanatory variable “number of veto players” according to strict coding rules.

**Mediation Onset**

This section reports the results of the Models 1 through Model 8. Table 1 includes Model 1 to Model 6. Model 1 and 2 are basic logit model, without the quadratic term (veto players * veto players) of the number of veto players for comparison purposes, and with odds ratio reporting and log-odds reporting for transparency and ease of interpretation. Model 3 and 4 are identical to Model 1 and 2, but include the theoretically motivated quadratic term of the veto player measure, and thus represents the Model that tests the main hypothesis, H1. Model 5 represents a penalized likelihood estimation model, which adjusts the model for rare events and thus corrects biases that are present in the Models 1 – Model 4 due to the large number of “0” observations in the dependent variable. Note, that the penalized estimation in Model 5 does not represent a maximum likelihood technique, but rather a model with an unbiased estimator, and hence Log Likelihood is not reported (King 2004). Model 6 represents a probit model, also a maximum likelihood estimation model like logit, however, with a different link function specification. Model 7 & 8 present the predicted probability of mediation onset and marginal effect of multi veto environments. The choice to report marginal effects was motivated by the move towards reporting marginal effects of predictor variables in logit and probit models, which allows interpretation of statistically significant relationships in
substantive terms, i.e. what effect a variation in a predictor variable has on a dependent variable. Note, that all models use the stricter measure of veto players, not the more lenient measure.

Hypothesis 1 states that the relationship between the number of veto players and mediation onset likelihood is curvilinear, with the probability of mediation increasing with an increase in numbers and then decreasing once a threshold number of veto players has been reached. The models support the hypothesis that low and high numbers of veto players inhibit mediation onset probability, as can be seen in Table 1. In the logit models of Model 1 and Model 2, neither interaction nor quadratic term is present, as to represent a model testing a linear relationship between the number of veto players and mediation onset probability. The coefficient of the predictor variable “number of veto players” is, ceteris paribus, positive but insignificant at conventional levels of significance. For the control variables, the model reproduces findings from previous literature, as conflict intensity and conflict duration, as well as relative rebel strength are, all else equal, significant at the .01 level and positive in Model 2. This means, that the longer and the more intense conflicts are, the more likely mediation will occur. Likewise, conflicts with a strong rebel group vis-á-vis the government are also more likely to exhibit mediation. Finally, while holding all other variables constant, mediation was less likely during the Cold War period between 1946 and 1989, when compared to the post-Cold War period, which is indicated by the negative sign of the Cold War variable in Model 2, which is significant at the .01 level.

The main models of interest, however, are model 3 and 4, as they include the quadratic term of the variable “number of veto players” and therefore test H1. In contrast to the previously discussed models, in Models 3 and 4 the non-quadratic term of veto players becomes significant at the .05 level and remains positive in Model 4, all else equal. The quadratic term of veto players is significant at the .05 level and negative in Model 4. Put together, ceteris paribus other variables, the positive sign of the non-quadratic term, and the negative sign of the quadratic term indicate that the relationship between the number of veto players and mediation onset likelihood is indeed curvilinear, with low and high numbers of veto players decreasing the likelihood of mediation and medium numbers increasing the likelihood of mediation. Thus, this tentatively confirms the direction of the prediction derived from the theory. All other variables retain their level of significance and signs in Model 3 and 4. Comparing the Log Likelihoods of Model 1 and Model 3 indicates that including the squared term of veto players slightly, however, not substantially improves the model.
This is also represented by the AIC (Akaike Information Criterion), as comparatively lower AIC scores are considered to represent a model closer to the truth than a model with a comparatively higher AIC, which is the case when comparing Model 1 and Model 3. The BIC (Bayesian Information Criterion), however, does not verify this, as the BIC is larger in Model 3 than in Model 1. The small difference between BIC and AIC and the Log Likelihoods, suggest that the models are not significantly different in their goodness of fit. In all models, the variation inflation factor approaches 1 for all variables, hence no multicollinearity is present. Only the non-quadratic and the quadratic terms of veto player shows a high degree of multicollinearity, which is to be expected as “veto players – squared” is merely a function of “veto players”. Model 5 is a logit estimation for rare events, or penalized likelihood estimation model. In this model, all variables retain their signs, i.e. the direction of the relationships do not change. The non-quadratic term of veto players, however, becomes significant at the .01 level, while holding all other variables equal. All other variables retain their levels of significance.

As mentioned above, Model 5 is not a maximum likelihood model, therefore does not report or record likelihood estimation information. As a result, the comparison between models regarding likelihood information is not possible. Another difference is that this model uses robust standard errors. This model indicates that the relationships, in direction and degree of significance, between the independent variables and the dependent variable remain robust across model specifications. The probit model, Model 6, confirms the level of significance and signs of all predictor variables, except number of veto players and the squared term of the number of veto players. The non-quadratic term is significant at the .05 level, the non-quadratic term is significant at the .10 level, ceteris paribus other variables. The odds ratios in Model 3 suggest that, with a one unit increase in veto players the odds that mediation will occur are 4.359 higher than mediation not occurring. As the minimum number of veto players in a conflict is two and the maximum number of veto players according to the strict measure is six, interpretation in terms of odds ratio becomes non-explanatory when factoring in that the quadratic term of the veto player variable suggests a confirmation of a curvilinear relationship. The following question arises: when does a one unit increase in veto players have the strongest and when the weakest effect on mediation onset likelihood.
Table 3. Logit Models 1-5, The Effect of Veto Players on Mediation Onset Likelihood, DV: Mediation Onset (Yes/No)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>(Model 1, OR) Mediation Onset</th>
<th>(Model 2) Mediation Onset</th>
<th>(Model 3, OR) Mediation Onset</th>
<th>(Model 4) Mediation Onset</th>
<th>(Model 5) Mediation Onset</th>
<th>(Model 6) Mediation Onset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Veto Players</td>
<td>1.157</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td>4.359**</td>
<td>1.472**</td>
<td>1.402***</td>
<td>0.619**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Number of Veto Players)^2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.816**</td>
<td>-0.203**</td>
<td>-0.190**</td>
<td>-0.081*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Intensity</td>
<td>1.160***</td>
<td>0.149***</td>
<td>1.151***</td>
<td>0.141***</td>
<td>0.141***</td>
<td>0.056***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Duration</td>
<td>1.002***</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>1.002***</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War (Yes/No)</td>
<td>0.203***</td>
<td>-1.592***</td>
<td>0.201***</td>
<td>-1.605***</td>
<td>-1.602***</td>
<td>-0.652***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Rebel Strength</td>
<td>1.840***</td>
<td>0.610***</td>
<td>1.888***</td>
<td>0.636***</td>
<td>0.640***</td>
<td>0.281***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.004***</td>
<td>-5.455***</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
<td>-7.308***</td>
<td>-7.218***</td>
<td>-3.495***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>17,206</td>
<td>17,206</td>
<td>17,206</td>
<td>17,206</td>
<td>17,206</td>
<td>17,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>-1373.944</td>
<td>-1373.944</td>
<td>-1371.465</td>
<td>-1371.465</td>
<td>-1371.192</td>
<td>-1371.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob &gt; chi2</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>2759.888</td>
<td>2759.888</td>
<td>2756.929</td>
<td>2756.929</td>
<td>2756.384</td>
<td>2756.384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIC</td>
<td>2806.406</td>
<td>2806.406</td>
<td>2811.201</td>
<td>2811.201</td>
<td>2810.655</td>
<td>2810.655</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses  
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
A look at the marginal effects on the probability of mediation onset reveals that, while holding other variables at their means, mediation onset probability is the highest when 4 veto players are present, as can be seen in Table IV. Model 7 reports the predicted probabilities as a function of the squared-number of veto players. The brackets include the squared number of the actual number of veto players, and to the left is the value that is actually observed. For clarity, the non-quadratic term is what we observe in conflicts, whereas the squared term is present for statistical purposes to identify a curvilinear relationship. The table is to be interpreted in the following way: while holding all other variables at their means, the probability of mediation to occur is 1.1% higher when 2 veto players are present. The probability for mediation to occur is 1.8% more likely in the presence of 4 veto players, while holding all other variables at their means. This means that difference in effect size between 2 veto players and 4 veto players is 0.7% on the probability that mediation will occur. In other words, whether there are 2 or 4 veto players in a given conflict does not make a significant difference.

Table 4. Marginal Effects of Number of Veto players

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>(Model 7) Predicted Probability</th>
<th>(Model 8, OR) Predicted Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 [4] Veto Players</td>
<td>0.011*** (0.001)</td>
<td>1.011*** (0.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 [9] Veto Players</td>
<td>0.017*** (0.003)</td>
<td>1.018*** (0.003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 [16] Veto Players</td>
<td>0.018*** (0.004)</td>
<td>1.019*** (0.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 [25] Veto Players</td>
<td>0.013*** (0.004)</td>
<td>1.013*** (0.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 [36] Veto Player</td>
<td>0.006 (0.004)</td>
<td>1.006 (0.004)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations 17,206

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

NOTE: All predictors other than veto players at their mean value in Model 7 and 8
Figure 3 contrasts the marginal effect of the number of veto players on the predicted probability of mediation incidence. In the presence of 4 veto players and while holding all other variables at their means, the probability for mediation to occur is 2.6%. The effect veto players have on the probability that mediation occurs, is only 1.8%. In other words, of the 2.6% mediation onset probability, 0.047% are to be attributed to the presence of 4 veto players, leaving 2.553% that are to be attributed to the other predictor variables. In short, the number of veto players matters statistically, but not substantially. These results suggest that other variables explain substantively more than the variables theorized in the veto player theory. While the relationship is in the hypothesized direction, the effect size suggests that veto player theory does not explain well why players have to mediate, and that opportune moments for mediation do not significantly compound other explanatory variables such as conflict intensity and conflict duration.

Figure 3. Marginal Effect of Number of Veto Players on Mediation Onset Probability

**Diagnostics and Robustness**

The below Figure 4 illustrates the small effect veto players have when veto player numbers above 2 are aggregated to multi-veto player environments, thus yielding a binary variable taking on the value “0” when 2 veto players were present and “1” when 3 or more veto players were present. On aggregate, multi-veto environments are more likely to experience mediation than dual-veto player environments, as is illustrated in Figure 4. The large confidence interval of the multiveto = 1 in Figure 4 is explained by the effect of environments with 5 or 6 veto players, as the marginal effect of predicted probabilities on mediation onset as a function of 5 – 6 veto players is insignificant at conventional confidence intervals. Figure 4 shows that conflicts that experienced at
least 1,000 battle related deaths and thus meet the war threshold according to the UCDP are more likely to see mediation than conflicts that did not meet the threshold.

*Figure 4. Predictive Margins of Multiveto, Civil Wars, Conflict Intensity and Conflict Duration at 95% CI*

In addition, the effect of war on mediation probability is greater than the effect the number of veto players have on mediation onset probability, as wars in dual-veto player environments are more likely to see mediation than multi-veto player environments without war. While conflicts above the threshold of 1,000 battle related deaths and conflicts under the threshold are more likely to see mediation in multi-veto environments, the effect the severity of the conflict has on mediation onset probability is greater than the effect the number of veto players has. Likewise, when conflict intensity is split up into a 3-stage categorical variable, mediation becomes increasingly likely the more severe a conflict is, regardless of whether the conflict was a multi-veto or dual-veto conflict. On the other hand, within conflict intensity categories, conflicts with multiple veto players are more likely to see experience than dual-veto player conflicts. The categorical intensity measure takes on the value “1” when a conflict generated 25-1,000 battle related deaths in a year and less than 1,000 over the course of the entire conflict, “2” if the conflict generated 25-1,000 battle related deaths in a conflict year or 1,000 or more in total, and “3” if 1000 or more battle related deaths were observed in a year (Cunningham 2006).
Lastly, long wars are considerably more likely than wars below the 108 months threshold to see mediation, regardless of whether the conflict had multiple veto players or only two. Both long wars and wars below the threshold were more likely to see mediation when more than 2 veto players were present. Figure 4 illustrates the difference between the effect of the number of veto players and the intensity of a conflict or the duration of a conflict on the predicted probability of mediation to occur. In all graphs, 3 – 4 veto players had the greatest positive effect on mediation onset probability. The differences, however, between the different values of the number of veto players is considerably insubstantial when compared to the effect the intensity and the duration of a conflict have on the likelihood that mediation will occur. In other words, the probability that mediation occurs is not significantly different between 2 and 4 veto players, the differences in probabilities between conflicts that experienced at least 1,000 battle related deaths and those conflicts that did not meet that threshold, however, is considerable. Consequentially, Figure 5. exhibits the discrepancy between intensity levels, particularly when a conflict recorded 1,000 battle related deaths or more in a given conflict year, or in 12 conflict months. The figure also illustrates that the effect the number of veto players have on the probability is not independent of the intensity level.

*Figure 5. Predictive Margins of Strict Veto players, War, Conflict Intensity and Conflict Duration*
The differences of the marginal effect that the number of veto players have on mediation onset probability is greater the more intense a conflict is. In other words, the effect size of 4 veto players compared to the effect size of 2 veto players is higher in conflicts with intensity “3” than in less severe conflicts of the intensity level “2”, or “1”. Yet, the effect size of conflict intensity in and of itself on the probability that mediation will occur is greater than the effect of the number of veto players. Finally, the same pattern appears when contrasting conflict duration and the number of conflicts. Regardless of length, conflicts with high and low numbers, i.e conflicts with 2 or 5 – 6 veto players are less likely to experience conflicts than conflicts with 3 – 4 veto players. On the other hand, the effect of conflict duration on mediation onset probability is greater than the number of veto players, and long conflicts more likely to see mediation than conflicts that are shorter than 108 months.

The model itself fairs well in predicting mediation onset, as Figure 6 to 7 indicate. Figure 6 shows how well the model predicts mediation onset within the sample, i.e. the available data. The K-fold CV illustrates a cross validation, where I split up the sample in a 75% size sample of the data and a 25% sample of the original data. The 75% sample was then used as training data, of which the predictions were then used on the 25% test data, to see how many predictions of mediation onset in the test sample are correct, based on specifications won in the training data. This is a way of cross validating the model when no other data is available, and therefore out of sample tests not feasible (Carsey and Harden 2014, 30). This was then repeated using “leave-one-out” cross validation, where one observation after another of all variables is left out of the data at random and then re-introduced in the next iteration when another observation is dropped. The iteration number is determined by the number of observations, and in case of this data 17,206 times. After 17,206 iterations, the mean of the accuracy of correctly predicting mediation onset is calculated. Within the sample, the model correctly predicts 96% of mediation onsets. In the K-Fold CV, the model correctly predicts 98% of mediation onsets in the sample 25% (4,302 of observations) of the size of the original data. This is to be expected, as the K-Fold CV
overprediction is a result of its single iteration in testing the model on the smaller test data. The LOO CV has a mean correct prediction value of 96%. To sum up, the model does well in correctly predicting mediation within the sample and outside of the sample. Moreover, the overlap in correct predictions of the LOO CV and the K-Fold CV indicate unbiased estimates. The advantage of this, is not only that it circumvents limitations of data accessibility, but that this technique can be used to predict mediation onset on data that is yet to be observed (Carsey and Harden 2014, 32).

This is also represented in the separation plot, Figure 7 below. The separation plot is a visualization of a goodness of fit test, and illustrates the ratio of correct predictions of an outcome given an applied model to a given data (Greenhill et al. 2011). In this type of plot, the ideal would be that all predicted observations of mediation onsets are on the right side of the plot (expected y = 1), indicated by the darker shading, and the left side would accommodate all predicted observations without mediation onset, indicated by a lighter shading (expected y = 0). Consequently, this would then result in a darker shaded right side of the plot and a lighter shading on the left side of the plot. In Figure 7, the right side of the plot is darker shaded than the left side, indicating that the model fairs well in correctly predicting mediation onset, i.e. the predicted probabilities indicating mediation onset coincide with actual observations in mediation onset in the data.

![Figure 7. Separation Plot Mediation Onset](image-url)
This result has to be put into perspective, as the explanatory variables used in the data are those that have already been shown to accurately predict mediation onset. The added value of the predictor variable “veto players” is depicted in the ROC-curve plot in Figure 8. The ROC curve plot contains the curves of three different models. Model 1 (no quadratic term of veto players), Model 3 (including a quadratic term of veto players), and a logit model without the variable “veto players” to illustrate a model only containing variables that were previously found to predict mediation onset well (Ruhe 2015; Clayton and Gleditsch 2014). The reference curve is the line depicting a model that has a 50/50 chance of correctly predicting an event. The area below the curve for the reference curve would be 0.5. The higher the area below the curve, the better the model in predicting an event, i.e. area below the curve approaching 1 indicate improvement, while area below the curve approaching 0 indicate worsening. In effect, curves that are pulled towards the upper left corner increase the area below the curve, and thus are better at predicting an event than, for example the reference curve. As Figure 8 shows, there are three models included. The important part here is, that the area under the curve is almost identical for all curves, suggesting that all models – with a non-quadratic term of veto players, with a quadratic term of veto players, and without the variable veto players – perform equally well in predicting mediation incidence. Since the quadratic term is included for statistical purposes, this result is to be expected when comparing the ROC curves of the models with and without the quadratic term of veto players. The comparison with the model excluding veto players, however, demonstrates that the inclusion of veto players as explanatory variable does not add substantial explanatory value to our understanding of when mediation occurs. This is also in line with the estimated results of the models and the marginal effects.

Figure 8. ROC Curve Comparison

![ROC Curve Comparison](image)
To sum up: there is a curvilinear relationship between veto players and the likelihood of mediation onset, with low and high numbers of veto players inhibiting onset likelihood – an inverted-U shape. The effect of veto players in general, and the marginal effect of a one unit increase in veto players, however, is not substantial. In addition, veto players do not add substantial explanatory value when compared to more parsimonious models that already fare well in predicting conflict onset. The results thus suggest that neither the supply side of mediation nor the demand side of mediation are influenced by the number of veto players. Cost benefit calculations of the mediator and the mechanisms that overcome mediation-deterring conditions such as commitment problems, information asymmetry and the increase in the value of private information, are thus more accurately represented in conflict intensity, conflict duration and relative rebel strength. These results thus also suggest that the degree of policy diversity does not influence mediation onset likelihood substantially. In other words, conflicts have to last long and become more intense to motivate conflict parties to come to the table, which speaks to the explanatory power of the mutually hurting stalemate as prerequisite for mediation, which also confirms the previously identified weakness of the VPT: it cannot explain why parties have to mediate. To quote Alvaro de Soto, a seasoned diplomat and mediation artist: “parties resolve their conflicts only when they have to do so (...) (Zartman and de Soto 2010, 5).”

In abstract terms, coercive mechanisms are more conducive to mediation than facilitative mechanisms. The results therefore also suggest, that either mediators do not account for the leverages and incentives they may need to apply in a mediation effort, or that such an assumption does not hold ground in the first place, when trying to explain mediation incidence. This would mean, that what the demand side experiences as coercive conditions and hurt, the mediator experiences as opportunity: a hurting stalemate for one, is an opportunity for the other – two side of the same coin. For the demand side the results indicate that additional veto players increase the volatility of power balances and the value private information has vis-à-vis other players, but “medium” numbers of veto players, where reciprocal concession making and issue trading are theoretically easier than with more or less veto players, cannot offset the mediation inhibiting and conflict resolving conditions. The number of veto players is a statistically significant facilitating factor for mediation onset in the predicted curvilinear relationship, but does not match the coercive effect that perceived dead ends to strategies of continued violence have on conflict parties.

The veto player theory assumes that veto players have to negotiate. For civil conflicts and mediation, however, there is no constitution, and there are no institutional arrangements such as parliments that coerce the conflict parties into non-violent policy-making such as mediation. Only when a condition is met, that forces parties to seek alternative strategies, such as negotiations, will
the parties seek such strategies, but in a civil conflict setting, such instances are rare. Political leaders will always try to maximize their gains by trying out tactics and procedures that would circumvent a procedure that is likely to incur concessions or communicate a weakness. In civil conflicts, the only institution generated and sustained by the conflict parties is structural political violence. It is this structural political violence that either favours one side or has the potential to be a coercive institutional setting when not favouring one side or another: a mutually hurting stalemate.

Another empiric circumstance is the low variation in the number of veto players, and that they are highly skewed towards observations with 2 veto players. 6 veto players are the maximum number of veto players, which is only present for 12 consecutive month. The change in effect size when increasing the numbers of veto players by one unit is low and a wider range of possible outcomes is empirically not present with the strict coding. In addition, the marginal effects of 5 and 6 veto players are statistically insignificant, which is likely due to the low number of observations these numbers of veto players exhibit. Hence, the effect of veto players is largely due to the observations that take on the values 2 – 4. If we cannot be confident in results beyond 4 veto players, and conflict month with 2 veto players represent 98.3% of all conflicts, do we need to know the effect of veto players in the circumstance of 3 – 4 veto players? If we do need to and want to know this, what value does this insight have, besides knowing more? If the results are largely due to 2 – 4 veto players, it is likely that observations with these values exert considerable leverage on the model and therefore cause biased results in favour of a statistical significance of veto players.

**Leverages**

The discussion above motivates three investigations: 1) are there observations that exert a high degree of leverage on the model and do these observations bias the results, 2) does the inclusion of the lenient measure of veto players instead of the strict measure yield different results, and 3) does the change of the unit of analysis to the country-year dyad yield the same results? In addition to statistical purposes, the identification of influential observations reveals possible avenue of small-N comparative case studies, that can establish temporal order, facilitate the observation of the causal mechanism, and serve as hypotheses generating explorations. First, influential cases can exert different types of influences on the model. The pearson residuals reveal the difference between observed and predicted values, and is therefore a measure of the difference between observed and predicted values which optimally is low. The deviance residuals are also a measure of the discrepancy between observations and estimations. Secondly, the Pregibon leverage identifies if any observations qualify as leveraging a variable to be significant or insignificant within a logit model, due to their extreme values or by being an outlier and thus substantially different from model estimates (Pregibon 1981). Logit regressions are sensitive to such cases and the identification
of such cases is imperative to prevent trust in systematically biased models and therefore misleading or wrong results. All three procedures help identify whether the confidence in the results is justified or not. Lastly, the aggregation of data from the unit of analysis conflict-month to conflict-year changes the relative occurrence of values the variable “veto players” can take on, making conflict-year to conflict-year changes in the number of veto players more common, than in a conflict-month analysis. Thus, systematical coincidence of mediation onsets in a given conflict-year and veto players changes in the previous conflict-year, would buttress the hypothesized causal relationship between the variables.

The pearson residuals and deviance residuals reveal (Figure A.III and A.IV, see Appendix) that the difference between observations and fitted values is not biasing the model, which resonates with the separation plot and the cross validations. The Pregibon residuals, however, reveal that the observations of Afghanistan in the year 1992 exert considerable leverage, suggesting that our confidence in the statistical significance of our predictor variables may not be justified (Figure A.I and Figure A.II, see Appendix). Indeed, the exclusion of the observation Afghanistan in 1992 in a logit model with otherwise identical model specifications as in Model 310 produces considerably different results (see Table A.I. And Model 12 in Appendix). All explanatory variables retain their level of statistical significance and direction of relationship from previous model specifications, ceteris paribus other variables. Conflict intensity, conflict duration and relative rebel strength are positive and significant at the 99% level, and the Cold War variable is negative and statistically significant at the 99% level, all else equal. The non-quadratic term of veto players is positive and significant at the 90% level compared to the significance at the 95% level in Model 3. The quadratic term, however, loses its statistical significance, while retaining its negative sign. This is peculiar, since Afghanistan in 1992 had 6 veto players in 12 consecutive months, the only time in the data set 6 veto players were present, but did not experience mediation. As previously suggested, when investigating the marginal effect of the number of veto players on mediation onset probability, results for 6 veto players were statistically significant, most likely due to the small number of observations (12) resulting in overconfident results.

Country-Year, Count Model and Different Veto Measures

Changing the unit of analysis to conflict-year and applying the same model – logit, and identical control variables – does not reproduce the same findings from the conflict-month analysis. The model uses 1,572 observations in 3 different model specifications: logit, probit, and a penalized likelihood estimation. In the logit model, the number of veto players is statistically significant at

10 Logit Model: DV: Mediation Onset (Yes/No), IV: Veto Players, (Veto Players)², Control Variables: log of battle deaths per conflict month, conflict duration in number of conflict months, Cold War era (yes/no), relative rebel strength.
the 90% level and positive, while holding other variables constant. The squared term is negative, but insignificant at conventional levels of statistical significance. Conflict intensity is positive and significant at the 95% level, whereas conflict duration is significant at the 99% level and positive, all else equal. Mediation is less likely in the Cold War period, ceteris paribus, indicated by the negative coefficient and its significance at the 99% level. Conflicts with relatively strong rebel groups are more likely to experience mediation onset. The probit and penalized likelihood estimation models reproduce these findings, although veto players are not significant at conventional levels of significance, while retaining their sign, all else equal. It is thus impossible to say with certainty, that the relationship between veto players and mediation onset is curvilinear and the investigation of lenient veto players as predictor variable clarifies and affirms this.

The substitution of the strict measure of veto players for the lenient measure of veto players reproduces the levels of significance and signs for all predictor variables, except for the lenient veto player measure (see Table A.I. Model 9, 10, 11 in Appendix). In Model 9 the linear term of lenient veto players is, ceteris paribus, negative and statistically insignificant at conventional levels of statistical significance. The coefficient of the lenient measure therefore switches signs when compared to the positive sign of the linear term of the strict measure of veto players. The quadratic term is insignificant, all else equal, and positive as opposed to the negative sign and statistical significance at the 95% level of the strict measure of veto players in model 3. Note that the lenient measure of veto players ranges from 2 to 9, and the distribution mediation and the number of lenient veto players is considerably different from the strict measure, as represented in Table A.IV (see Appendix).

Conflicts can have significantly different numbers of veto players when lenient and strict measures are compared, and a conflict month can exhibit 9 veto players according to the lenient measure, but only 2 according to the strict measure. This was the case in Congo/Zaire between 1999 and 2001. The lenient measure of veto players exhibits a wider range of values, and thus the effect the variable can have on mediation onset is differently distributed than is the case for the strict measure. In other words, the difference of the effect size between values of lenient veto players is more spread out than is the case for strict veto players and the number of observations per value the lenient veto player measure can take on is different.
Table 5. Crosstabulation of Numbers of Lenient Vetos and Mediation Onset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediation Onset</th>
<th>Frequency (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Lenient Vetos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>13,411 (98.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>225 (1.650)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13636</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, for a one unit increase in strict veto players the effect size change is greater than for a one unit increase in the lenient measure of veto players. Consequently, the conflict months experiencing mediation are substantially different with regards to the respective veto player numbers. As a result, the effect that the values of respective veto player variables have on mediation, will be considerably different for each value the respective veto player measure can assume. This is summarized in below Figure VIII, which depicts the marginal effect of the respective veto player measure on mediation onset and exemplifies why the statistical relationship between the respective veto player measure and mediation onset probability are different.

*Figure 9. Predictive Margins of Lenient (left) vs. Strict (right) Veto Players*

The results of the diagnostics speak to the literature on conflict dynamics. Cunningham et al. (2009) show, that “It takes two” when they analyze how characteristics of non-state actors vis-à-vis the government largely shape conflict dynamics and its outcome. Thus, characteristics represented within a dyadic approach can be used to accurately describe and explain why some conflicts are shorter than others, and why some are more intense than others. For the mediation literature, this approach has been explicitly re-examined by Clayton (2013) who shows that the
relative rebel strength is an important explanatory variable for mediation incidence and outcome. The veto player approach, in contrast, is explicitly broadening its scope beyond the dyad by accounting for actors outside of the non-state government dyad. Yet, the empirical reality is that most conflicts are largely defined by the aforementioned dyad, thus additional actors matter in some cases, but not in most (Cunningham et al. 2009). In the cases that they do matter, it is questionable how much of an impact the additional veto players have, even though the definition of veto players includes that they must be able to unilaterally continue fighting and therefore drive the conflict. Veto player theory, however, has additional predictions and is not limited to the number of veto players, nor the strength of a single player of the government non-state dyad: the strength of the strongest veto player, the average strength of the veto players, as well as the policy positions of individual veto players influence policy-making.

Additional Findings

The results reported in this section are in the appendix of this study, in the tables A.II to A.IV. Table II reports the three logit models that test whether a conflict with multiple original veto players (no splinter faction veto players), veto players external to the country where the conflict takes place, and whether splinter factions are correlated with mediation onset. The models suggest that if a conflict is defined by the presence of multiple original veto players, i.e. veto players that are not splinter groups, mediation onset is less likely. The presence of multiple original veto players potentially deters mediation, because original veto players are faced with two pressures that could arise from desiring mediation: 1) if the leadership in a party desires mediation, it puts the cohesiveness of the conflict party at risk, as more adamant parts of the party insist on fighting and threaten splintering in case the leadership opts for mediation. Moreover, splintering would cause relatively more loss of power vis-à-vis the other parties than in an environment with only one other veto player. 2) Externally, the resolve to continue fighting has to be upheld due to commitment problems.

The presence of external veto players increase mediation likelihood, which could show that the presence of an external state undermines the sovereignty of the government in the country the conflict is being fought in. Hence, governments are not faced with a trade-off between conceding that they cannot unilaterally take care of their domestic affairs by considering mediation or having to continuously pay the costs of fighting. Therefore, mediation becomes a dominant strategy over fighting, as possible costs of “losing face” have already been paid (see Beardsley 2010). The presence of splinter factions is not statistically significantly related to mediation onset. Likewise, it doesn’t seem to impact mediation onset likelihood if the conflict is only fought by original veto
players, regardless of the number of veto players, and neither do splinter factions according to a more lenient measure matter statistically, as illustrated in Table A.III.

The average strength of veto players, however, increases mediation onset probability as the average strength of veto players increases. This finding could be a reproduction of Clayton’s (2013) finding, that the strength of a rebel group vis-à-vis the government increases mediation onset probability as the strength of the rebel group increases. This would also speak to the theory that governments are paying higher costs in mediation than do rebel groups (Melin and Svensson 2009, 254). It is possible that the average strength of veto players is a measurement of how intense a conflict is, since veto player strength is also a function of the ability to fight. It is therefore not unreasonable to suggest, that conflicts with on average stronger veto players are also on average more intense, and it is the intensity of the conflict, not the strength of the veto players, that conditions mediation onset likelihood.

Finally, the strength of the strongest veto player is positively correlated with mediation onset probability, suggesting that the stronger the strongest veto player, the more likely that mediation occurs. In the instance that the government is the strongest veto player, this finding could suggest that strong governments do not fear the audience costs associated with mediation, or the concessions that a mediation effort may incur. It is possible, that the stronger the government, the less the concessions and audience costs will hurt the political standing or the power balance, and mediation is seen as a way to show mercy towards the weaker party. Consequently, the international audience may react positively to the government’s decision to re-approach the rebels, and signal support. In case a rebel group constitutes the strongest veto player, mediation becomes more likely, because rebels seek legitimacy and have the power to coerce the government into mediation, where legitimate concessions can be made (Clayton 2013). It is also conceivable that an external player is the strongest veto player, making an extra-systemic conflict, or an internationalized civil conflict a matter of the international arena, subsequently attracting the attention of powers with a strategic interest. Case in point, the Syrian civil war, in which Russia constitutes the strongest veto player, which consequently pressured the USA into re-engaging in a geo-political area they sought to disengage from after the withdrawal from Iraq.

Since the literature on mediation has found that mediation does not occur at random, and that the structural conditions influencing mediation incidence also determine mediation outcome, I will take full advantage of the present data and employ a bivariate probit model. Data from Regan et al. (2009) in combination with the veto player data, allow for the investigation of how veto players and mediation outcome, rather than onset, are related. A bivariate probit allows for the observation of onset and outcome in tandem, accounting for the self-selection effect of mediation into conflicts.
that are most likely to produce failed mediation attempts: the hard cases to resolve, are those that are mediated. The analysis so far has reproduced that mediation only occurs when conflict parties have to. Characteristics of veto player do not coerce conflict parties to mediate, but it is likely that when those conditions that necessitate mediation are met, veto players do matter.

We can think of these circumstances when mediation occurs as those circumstances closest to those in an institutional setting, where the constitution obliges parties to legislate. The institutions like parliaments, the coercive structures in a democracy, are substituted with the conditions that forced parties to mediate, for example a mutually hurting stalemate. The important difference is, that conflict parties can defect at all points from the policy-making procedure, i.e. the mediation effort without having to return to such a policy-making procedure. Within this framework, the effect of the numbers of veto players on the mediation outcome is theoretically similar to the effect on mediation onset: high numbers of veto players are associated with high policy diversity, and therefore small possible winsets, resulting in a low likelihood to achieve an agreement in the form of a ceasefire, partial settlement or full peace agreement. Small numbers of veto players are likely to be positioned at extreme values within a policy dimension when they enter mediation, as these would represent the positions that led to conflict. In the presence of two veto players, the absence of “formateur parties” that could facilitate reciprocal concession-making and issue trading will be associated with small possible winsets, and due to private information and thus uncertainty, with a higher likelihood of mediation failure. The causal relationship is therefore curvilinear and the following exploratory hypothesis can be formulated:

\[ H_0: \text{The relationship between mediation success and the number of veto players is curvilinear, with low and high numbers of veto players decreasing the likelihood of mediation success.} \]

The results suggest, that the veto player theory is particularly applicable when structural conditions force players to make decisions. In other words, the veto player is better at explaining mediated outcomes than mediation onset. Table XI. Illustrates this. The table contains 3 bivariate models. Each model has mediation onset on the right side of the column, which is the selection for the second dependent variable. The second dependent variable is different for each model, for theoretical reasons and draws from a wider debate within the mediation literature on mediation success (see Wallensteen and Svensson 2014, 322). There is no consensus on what constitutes mediation success and what efforts are a failure. I applied three thresholds for mediation success. These are taken from the Regan et al. data set on diplomatic interventions and their continuous mediation outcome variable, which specifies whether an intervention in a civil conflict was a mediation effort, and what that outcome was, including: no agreement (0), ceasefire (1), partial agreement (2), full settlement (3), or ongoing (4) (Regan et al. 2009).
In all models, for a mediation effort to constitute a success, the conflict could not have been ongoing and could not have had “no agreement” as a result of the mediation effort. In the first model, mediation was a success when at least a ceasefire was reached. In the second model, a ceasefire does not constitute a success, at least a partial settlement had to be reached. Likewise, for the third model, only full peace agreements are considered a success. Mediation onset follows the same conceptual and operational definition as before, although Regan et al. (2009) identify several additional mediation efforts than DeRouen et al. (2011). Lastly, the Regan et al. dataset is restricted to efforts for conflicts that reached at least 200 battle related deaths, and consequently, the number of observations for this data set is considerably lower when compared to the data set so far used for this study.

Table 6 (Additional Findings, Bivariate Probit DV1: Mediation Onset (Yes/No) DV2: Different Mediation Outcomes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>Bivariate Probit 1</th>
<th>Bivariate Probit 2</th>
<th>Bivariate Probit 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At Least Ceasefire</td>
<td>At Least Partial Agreement</td>
<td>Full Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Strict Vetos</td>
<td>0.823***</td>
<td>0.846***</td>
<td>0.824***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Number of Strict Vetos)^2</td>
<td>(0.259)</td>
<td>(0.259)</td>
<td>(0.258)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Intensity</td>
<td>0.095***</td>
<td>0.089***</td>
<td>0.096***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Duration</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War (Y/N)</td>
<td>-0.716***</td>
<td>-0.707***</td>
<td>-0.716***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Rebel Strength</td>
<td>0.296***</td>
<td>0.318***</td>
<td>0.296***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticolonial Conflict (Y/N)</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>-0.079</td>
<td>0.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>athro</td>
<td>4.626***</td>
<td>1.861***</td>
<td>4.626***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.686***</td>
<td>-3.693***</td>
<td>-3.685***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>12,384</td>
<td>12,384</td>
<td>12,384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
The bivariate probit models reported in Table VI include the same explanatory variables as the models presented in Table 3\(^{11}\), except for an additional variable in the selection equation of mediation onset. A bivariate probit model requires the addition of an instrumental variable that can theoretically be correlated with the selection equation dependent variable, but not with the dependent variable of the outcome equation (Svensson and Lindgren 2013). I opted for the binary variable identifying whether a conflict is an anticolonial conflict or not, since Greig and Regan (2008) show that mediation offers are more likely when there is a historical link between mediation supply and mediation demand, particularly in the form of a colonizer-colonized relationship. For all conflicts not included in Regan et al. but included in the data for this study, information on mediation outcomes is thus missing. Regan et al. observe 438 conflict-year dyads in 45 countries: for the model, this leaves 12,384 conflict-month, of which 347 experienced mediation, 23 more mediation efforts in 4822 less conflict month when compared to the combined data of Cunningham (2006) and DeRouen et al. (2011).

The results reproduce previous findings in this paper: ceteris paribus, conflict duration, intensity, and relative rebel strength are all statistically significant at the 99% level and positive cross all three models. The Cold War variable is negative, and significant at the 99% level while holding other variables constant. Likewise, across all three models, the number of strict veto players is positive and significant at the 99% level in its linear form, whereas the quadratic term is negative and significant at the 99% level, all else equal. The anticolonial variable is insignificant in all three models, positive in model 1 and 3, but negative in model 2, while holding all other variables constant. In terms of probabilities, a ceasefire is 28.76% more likely when there are 5 veto players present, while holding all other variables constant – a relatively large effect, compared to the 20% increase likelihood of a ceasefire in the presence of 3 veto players, and 2% increase in ceasefire probability for 2 veto players, or compared to the small effect veto players have on mediation onset. This tendency of an increased probability with an increase in veto players is consistent across all variables for mediation outcome. For example, the probability to see a partial agreement is 32.81% higher with 5 veto players present, and for full agreements the probability is 32.23% more likely with 5 veto players, while holding other variables constant (see Figures A.VI – A.XI in the Appendix). In general, the strongest effect across all models is observable in the presence of 5 veto players. In all three models, the effect of veto players on the mediation outcome categories drops sharply for higher values than 5, i.e. 6 veto players exert a considerably lower effect on the mediation outcome categories than 4 or 5 veto players. In short, the curvilinear – inverted-U shaped

\(^{11}\) See page 35.
relationship between mediation outcome and the number of veto players is tentatively confirmed. Tentatively, because these results are similar across models and therefore across different definitions of the dependent variables. The effect size across the numbers of veto players is similar, as well as the difference in effect size of the different numbers of veto players. In addition, confidence intervals are similar across models, and the confidence interval for the effect of 3 and 4 veto players includes 0 in the partial agreement model. The lack of robustness tests suggests reservation vis-à-vis these results. For the veto player theory and mediation these results would suggest, however, that when those conditions that coerce players to mediate are present, policy diversity represented in larger number of veto players is conducive to coming to a mediated agreement. In terms of the VPT, this consequently would indicate that the conditions that bring actors to the negotiation table offset the increasingly small winset that is associated with larger numbers of veto players. Nonetheless, the findings regarding mediated outcome are auxiliary findings within an exploratory statistical modelling, and can serve as a cautious first step towards the application of the veto player theory to the study of mediation success and failure.

Conclusion

Social Science seeks to better understand the political conditions that determine mediation outcome and therefore investigates the conditions under which mediation occurs. This paper’s purpose is to contribute to the mediation onset literature by providing a novel approach to identifying ripe moments of interventions. The proposed approach is an attempt to focus on the characteristics of the conflict parties, here aggregated to veto players and their role as autonomous cohesive actors with the ability to drive the conflict and continue fighting. While the relative rebel strength appears to robustly explain mediation onset, the hypothesis deduced from the veto player theory does not find robust support. The found statistically significant relationship was in the hypothesized curvilinear form, with medium numbers of veto players increasing mediation onset probability. Yet, these results are unsubstantial in “real-world” terms, and model specification sensitive: minor changes to the measure of veto players and observations used in the model, as well as a change in the unit of analysis, cannot reproduce initial findings. While there is some indication that a higher average strength of veto players and a measure of the strongest veto player increase mediation onset likelihood, it is at this point not conclusively clear, to what degree these results are viably different from what Clayton (2013) found. The results buttress existing explanations of why mediation occurs, namely, that coercive conditions are causing mediators to mediate and conflict parties to seek mediation. Moreover, this study provides additional evidence for the importance of the actor-dyadic analysis in large-N studies (Cunningham et al. 2009).
The results also suggest, that veto player specifications and subsequent predictions are more applicable to the study of mediation outcome than to mediation onset, although this indication has to be re-evaluated in a stand-alone study. Veto player theory gains in explanatory power when conditions that force players to policy-making procedures are in place. Civil conflicts, however, are intrinsically instable with regards to the structures that drive conflict parties to negotiate, and therefore defections from negotiations are always an option. Yet, when conflict parties and go-betweens see a window of opportunity for effective mediation, veto player theory can be resourceful for both policy-makers and academia. First, the reduction of policy diversity in multi-veto player environments by forming veto-player alliances can be a fruitful avenue in facilitating negotiations by effectively reducing the number and distance of negotiated positions. Second, when two veto players are present and trade-offs not foreseeable or impossible, mediators may find it useful to take advantage of NGOs and non-veto players such as spoilers, and form a quasi-veto player alliance that can serve as counterweights and formateur parties by bridging discrepancies in policy positions with more moderate positions, or alternative propositions to a certain negotiated demand (see Greenhill and Major 2006; Pfaffenholz 2014). Third, an avenue of research that could combine existing research on issue saliency pursued by “The Issues Correlates of War Project”, conflict actors’ characteristics, mediation outcome and the study of peace agreements, could be the mapping of policy demands of rebel groups and governments, beyond the commonly distinguished ethnic, territorial and governmental demands (see Hensel and Mitchell 2017; Nilsson 2010; Walter 2010; UCDP 2017). The Manifesto Project, for example, maps and quantifies policy positions of political parties in more than 50 countries. Such a content analysis of policy positions of conflict actors, with an emphasis on policy positions revealed in negotiations and mediation, may improve our understanding of what conflict actors want, why they want it, and how it influences peace agreement negotiations and mediation outcomes (see Volkens et al. 2016).

Clayton (2013) notes, that the dynamics in the balance of power between belligerents needs more attention in the future (Clayton 2013, 620). This assertion is also motivated by this study, due to the limitations a quantitative approach is associated with: causation cannot be observed, only inferred. A qualitative approach can alleviate this predicament by scrutinizing the causal mechanisms and establishing the temporal order. For the study of VPs this means the elimination or establishment of VPs, which is inextricably linked to shifts in power balances, and shifts in power balances could represent opportune moments for mediation. Quantitative research needs to operationalize insights won in qualitative accounts of mediation efforts: sequencing of actors’ involvement, sequencing of intervention type, when was which mediation strategy applied and by which actors (see Wallensteen and Svensson 2014). More meaningful inferences on why mediation
occurs, why mediators use certain styles, why we observe certain mediation outcomes and how we can evaluate them necessitates gathering data on mediation mandates. Mediation mandates are formal and informal sources of legitimacy for a mediation campaign. From the perspective of the demand side of mediation, mediation mandates state the limits of mediators’ power and what they expect from the mediator(s).

This paper has sought to break new theoretical ground in the mediation literature, to provide a new perspective on ripeness. Ripe moments have so far been identified using conflict costs. This means that costs have already occurred, i.e. human lives lost. While quantitative approaches to conflict resolution have shifted towards out-of sample and predictive methods to motivate and enable ex ante decision-making, and mediation literature has recently seen the same developments, the observations these predictive models are based on, are paid costs. If mediation truly is one of the most efficient conflict management tools, then academic research has to identify ripe moments, using indicators ex ante to conflict escalation – indicators that are present before the traditional ripeness indicators – to increase effectiveness and further prevent the loss of life. Conflict actors’ characteristics and conditions prior civil conflict or war therefore require additional attention (see Sung 2015).
Bibliography


Appendix

Figure A.I Leverage Plot - Countries

Figure A.II. Leverage Plot - Years
Figure A.III. Pearson Residuals

Figure A.IV. Standardized Pearson Residuals
Figure A.V. Standardized Deviance Residuals
Table A.I. Alternative Model Specifications, DV: Mediation Onset (Yes/No)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>(Model 9) Logit</th>
<th>(Model 10) Logit OR</th>
<th>(Model 11) Probit</th>
<th>(Model 12) w/o Afghanistan 1992</th>
<th>(Model 13) Ethnic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Lenient Vetos</td>
<td>-0.134</td>
<td>0.874</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.240)</td>
<td>(0.210)</td>
<td>(0.090)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Number of Lenient Vetos)^2</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>1.016</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.027)</td>
<td>(0.028)</td>
<td>(0.010)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Strict Vetos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.195*</td>
<td>1.455**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.712)</td>
<td>(0.626)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Number of Strict Vetos)^2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.107</td>
<td>-0.204**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.111)</td>
<td>(0.097)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Conflict (Yes/No)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.471***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.137)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Intensity</td>
<td>0.160***</td>
<td>1.173***</td>
<td>0.065***</td>
<td>0.143***</td>
<td>0.158***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.033)</td>
<td>(0.038)</td>
<td>(0.014)</td>
<td>(0.036)</td>
<td>(0.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Duration</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>1.002***</td>
<td>0.001***</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War (Yes/No)</td>
<td>-1.560***</td>
<td>0.210***</td>
<td>-0.629***</td>
<td>-1.721***</td>
<td>-1.611***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.128)</td>
<td>(0.027)</td>
<td>(0.051)</td>
<td>(0.138)</td>
<td>(0.130)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Rebel Strength</td>
<td>0.673***</td>
<td>1.961***</td>
<td>0.297***</td>
<td>0.620***</td>
<td>0.675***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.108)</td>
<td>(0.212)</td>
<td>(0.050)</td>
<td>(0.115)</td>
<td>(0.111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-5.088***</td>
<td>0.006***</td>
<td>-2.592***</td>
<td>-7.190***</td>
<td>-7.729***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.362)</td>
<td>(0.002)</td>
<td>(0.166)</td>
<td>(1.023)</td>
<td>(0.909)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>17,206</td>
<td>17,206</td>
<td>17,206</td>
<td>16,399</td>
<td>17,206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi Original</td>
<td>-0.890***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.255)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Vetos</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.446**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.188)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Splinter Factions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.489)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Strict Vetos</td>
<td>1.751***</td>
<td>1.186*</td>
<td>1.650**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.596)</td>
<td>(0.635)</td>
<td>(0.659)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squared Term of Strict Veto</td>
<td>-0.199**</td>
<td>-0.166*</td>
<td>-0.231**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.091)</td>
<td>(0.098)</td>
<td>(0.103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Intensity</td>
<td>0.163***</td>
<td>0.136***</td>
<td>0.148***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.034)</td>
<td>(0.034)</td>
<td>(0.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Duration</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Rebel Strength</td>
<td>0.539***</td>
<td>0.557***</td>
<td>0.633***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.112)</td>
<td>(0.111)</td>
<td>(0.111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War (Y/N)</td>
<td>-1.677***</td>
<td>-1.692***</td>
<td>-1.636***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.132)</td>
<td>(0.133)</td>
<td>(0.130)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-7.833***</td>
<td>-6.753***</td>
<td>-7.550***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.867)</td>
<td>(0.923)</td>
<td>(0.949)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>17,049</td>
<td>17,049</td>
<td>17,049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Table A.III. Additional Findings DV: Mediation Onset (Yes/No)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>(1) Only Original Vetos</th>
<th>(2) Number of Splinters (Lenient)</th>
<th>(3) Average Strength of Vetos</th>
<th>(4) Strength of Strongest Veto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original Groups</td>
<td>-0.089</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.420***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.123)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.091)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Splinter Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.396</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.284)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Veto Strength</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.384***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.095)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Strongest Veto</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Lenient Vetos</td>
<td>-0.082</td>
<td>-0.154</td>
<td>-0.921*</td>
<td>-1.099**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.226)</td>
<td>(0.215)</td>
<td>(0.500)</td>
<td>(0.502)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Number of Lenient Vetos)^2</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.099**</td>
<td>0.112**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.024)</td>
<td>(0.025)</td>
<td>(0.046)</td>
<td>(0.046)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Intensity</td>
<td>0.159***</td>
<td>0.159***</td>
<td>-0.187**</td>
<td>-0.198***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.034)</td>
<td>(0.034)</td>
<td>(0.073)</td>
<td>(0.073)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Duration</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>0.002***</td>
<td>-0.000</td>
<td>-0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
<td>(0.001)</td>
<td>(0.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Rebel Strength</td>
<td>0.667***</td>
<td>0.669***</td>
<td>0.593***</td>
<td>0.483***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.108)</td>
<td>(0.108)</td>
<td>(0.169)</td>
<td>(0.173)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War (Y/N)</td>
<td>-1.566***</td>
<td>-1.572***</td>
<td>-1.708***</td>
<td>-1.757***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.130)</td>
<td>(0.130)</td>
<td>(0.266)</td>
<td>(0.264)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-5.099***</td>
<td>-5.050***</td>
<td>-2.007*</td>
<td>-1.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.391)</td>
<td>(0.390)</td>
<td>(1.153)</td>
<td>(1.139)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>17,206</td>
<td>17,206</td>
<td>4,479</td>
<td>4,479</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Table A.IV. Crosstabulation of Numbers of Lenient Vetos and Mediation Onset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediation Onset</th>
<th>(1) Lenient Vetos 2 Frequency (Percent)</th>
<th>(2) Lenient Vetos 3 Frequency (Percent)</th>
<th>(3) Lenient Vetos 4 Frequency (Percent)</th>
<th>(4) Lenient Vetos 5 Frequency (Percent)</th>
<th>(5) Lenient Vetos 6 Frequency (Percent)</th>
<th>(6) Lenient Vetos 8 Frequency (Percent)</th>
<th>(7) Lenient Vetos 9 Frequency (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>13,411 (98.35)</td>
<td>2,345 (97.42)</td>
<td>1,110 (97.97)</td>
<td>944 (99.26)</td>
<td>96 (97.96)</td>
<td>47 (97.92)</td>
<td>32 (88.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>225 (1.650)</td>
<td>62 (2.576)</td>
<td>23 (2.030)</td>
<td>7 (0.736)</td>
<td>2 (2.041)</td>
<td>1 (2.083)</td>
<td>4 (11.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13636</td>
<td>2407</td>
<td>1133</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure A.I.V. Average Marginal Effects of Strict Veto Players

Figure A.I.VI. At Means, Average Marginal Effects of Strict Veto Players

Figure A.I.VIII. Average Marginal Effects of Strict Veto Players

Figure A.IX. At Means, Average Marginal Effects of Strict Veto Players
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>CY Logit (Mediation Onset)</th>
<th>CY Odds Ratio (Mediation Onset)</th>
<th>CY Probit (Mediation Onset)</th>
<th>CY ReLogit (Mediation Onset)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Veto Players</td>
<td>1.754* (0.994)</td>
<td>5.776* (5.741)</td>
<td>0.886 (0.544)</td>
<td>1.748 (1.063)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Number of Veto Players)$^2$</td>
<td>-0.224 (0.156)</td>
<td>0.799 (0.125)</td>
<td>-0.107 (0.0852)</td>
<td>-0.222 (0.171)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Intensity</td>
<td>0.119** (0.0470)</td>
<td>1.127** (0.0530)</td>
<td>0.0612** (0.0250)</td>
<td>0.119*** (0.0442)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Duration</td>
<td>0.000163*** (5.50e-05)</td>
<td>1.000*** (5.50e-05)</td>
<td>8.42e-05*** (3.03e-05)</td>
<td>0.000163*** (5.49e-05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War (Y/N)</td>
<td>-1.495*** (0.175)</td>
<td>0.224*** (0.0392)</td>
<td>-0.792*** (0.0914)</td>
<td>-1.482*** (0.171)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Rebel Strength</td>
<td>0.664*** (0.171)</td>
<td>1.943*** (0.332)</td>
<td>0.358*** (0.0970)</td>
<td>0.663*** (0.173)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-5.697*** (1.423)</td>
<td>0.00336*** (0.00478)</td>
<td>-3.067*** (0.772)</td>
<td>-5.681*** (1.536)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>1,572</td>
<td>1,572</td>
<td>1,572</td>
<td>1,572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Likelihood</td>
<td>-489.118</td>
<td>-489.118</td>
<td>-489.134</td>
<td>-489.134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob&gt;chi2</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>992.236</td>
<td>992.236</td>
<td>992.269</td>
<td>992.269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIC</td>
<td>1029.757</td>
<td>1029.757</td>
<td>1029.79</td>
<td>1029.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
The graphs, figures and tables, as well as regression estimates have been produced using STATA and RStudio. The data, do-files/script-files are available upon request via e-mail: Hegele.Lukas@gmail.com.