

## Standing Weekly Assignment 6: Non-Binding Arbitration & Mediation

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### Wallenstein & Svensson

On the question of which strategy of mediation works best, the authors write that there is no academic consensus. By the numbers, however, they find that most civil war mediations follow procedural strategies (the majority) or facilitative communication strategies (the next largest plurality) and rarely directive strategies. Curiously, the strategies of mediation mattered less than who the mediator was: mediated peaces tended to last longer, but only when a non-superpower arranged them. In secessionist wars, other researchers have found concurring evidence that formulative and facilitative strategies work best.

On the other hand, there are authors who argue in favour of a manipulative/directive approach. Specifically, they find that double-track diplomacy (summits supported by track II communication) produces lasting results. To explain the differential success of the leading strategies, some authors divide conflicts into low- and high-intensity struggles, with high-intensity more favourable to directive mediation. Overall, leaning on the scales to skew warring parties' incentives towards mediation can undermine a long-term project, since this is (after all) an artificial incentive.

Biased mediators can paradoxically be more effective than neutral ones, as observed from empirical studies, simply because *leverage* over one party matters more than *neutrality*. Biased mediators often have a stake in the conflict as well, and are better positioned to selectively share information on the less-favoured party with their favourite to produce a desired settlement. On the other hand, that bias might also make information gathering more difficult.