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Abstract

In order to assess the impact of culture on state behavior in international crises, specifically with regard to mediation and its outcome, this study tests hypotheses rooted in both the international relations and the cross-cultural psychology literatures, implementing analysis at both the international-system level and the domestic-state-actor level. At the international system level, the study finds that cultural difference between adversaries affects whether or not mediation occurs during an international crisis but has no effect on tension reduction. At the domestic state actor level, we find that there are certain facets of cultural identity that make a state more or less open to requesting or accepting third-party mediation during an international crisis, but that these facets have no effect on tension reduction.

Keywords

international, crisis, negotiation, mediation, culture

The field of international relations (IR) focuses on the interactions among states and how various factors such as power and resources influence these interactions. The field of cross-cultural psychology (CCP) focuses on how culture influences

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individual and group behavior in various contexts. This research combines the two approaches to examine how the culture of states influences how they behave and interact. Specifically, we examine how culture impacts states' attempts to resolve international crises in which they become engaged, focusing on the use of mediation. After reviewing the relevant literature, we outline a theory of how culture impacts mediation of international crises, both in terms of cultural difference, which is a more common line of inquiry in the field of IR, and in terms of specific cultural dimensions, which has been the domain of CCP. We then present some empirical findings.

The International Relations Literature: Mediation and Culture

The IR literature on mediation focuses almost exclusively on factors that impact mediation outcomes. Wilkenfeld et al. (2003, 281) focus on mediation in international crises, which is defined as an international event that meets the following criteria:

- (1) A change has occurred in the type, and/or an increase in the intensity, of disruptive (hostile verbal or physical) interactions between two or more states, with a heightened probability of military hostilities. (2) These changes, in turn, destabilize the states' relationship and challenge the structure of an international system. (p. 281)

They find that mediation shortens crisis duration and increases satisfaction with outcomes, and that the more involved and forceful the style, the more effective it is in achieving successful outcomes. Beardsley et al. (2006) further explore the effect of three mediation styles—facilitative, formulative, and manipulative—on crisis mediation outcomes. However, Bercovitch and Gartner (2006) argue that dispute intensity mitigates the effect of mediation style. Bercovitch has also explored the characteristics of the mediator, issue type, and disputant behavior (Bercovitch 1991, 1992; Bercovitch and Houston 1996, 2000; Bercovitch and Langley 1993; Bercovitch and Schneider 2000). All of these studies draw on impressive large-*N* data sets to explore their hypotheses. In a more recent work, Bercovitch and Foulkes (2012) offer a conceptual framework for examining the impact of culture and its dimensions on mediation, offering a catalog of contextual variables for consideration.

The constructivist literature within IR embraces norms and identity as products of culture that have an impact on a state's behavior (Katzenstein 1996; Finnemore 1996; Legro 1996). Constructivists argue that cultural norms shape state preference formation and how states pursue these preferences. While this literature has generated useful theories about culture and its impact on IR, it provides few testable hypotheses and scant empirical evidence.

Bercovitch and Elgström (2001) were among the first in IR to examine explicitly the impact of cultural difference on international mediation using quantitative

analysis. They gave great consideration to the difficulty in measuring culture and settled on using geographical proximity, type of political system, level of political rights, level of civil rights and religion (Bercovitch and Elgström 2001, 15). Overall, they found that cultural difference, regardless of how they measured it, was more likely to be associated with unsuccessful outcomes. While this research goes a step further in considering culture's impact on mediated outcomes of international disputes, most of the variables are proxies for aspects of democracy. Additionally, it did not include any control variables and was not able to cluster the errors on conflict, suggesting that a handful of conflicts with a large number of mediation efforts could be driving the results. Furthermore, the instances of mediation are not randomly selected from the universe of conflicts, and it is likely that culture has an impact on whether states initially pursue mediation that is not taken into account when only looking at outcomes. This selection bias (Geddes 1990) could also potentially be driving their results.

Leng and Regan (2003) built on this informative initial research and drew cases of mediation from Bercovitch's International Conflict Management project to further explore the role of cultural difference in international mediation. Their unit of analysis was mediation occurring within an interstate conflict. They found that religious difference led to a lower likelihood of success in mediation; however, neither difference in political system nor having both a different religion and a different political system combined did. They did find support for the democratic peace theory in that democratic dyads were more likely to have successful mediation outcomes. Their study suffers from two of the problems that Bercovitch and Elgström's research does; namely, they do not account for the selection effect and they do not cluster the errors on conflict.

The Cross-cultural Psychology Literature: Culture and Mediation

The CCP literature has devoted substantial resources to studying culture. There have been several attempts at measuring aspects of culture in terms of substantive dimensions. For example, Hofstede (1980) pioneered the quantitative evaluation of culture for use in cross-national comparative analysis in his survey of IBM employees in over seventy countries. Others including Schwartz (1992), Inglehart with the World Values Survey (2000), and the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness project (GLOBE) (House et al. 2004) have also collected data on dimensions of culture. Gelfand et al. (2011) have also contributed to this literature with a study on tightness and looseness of cultural norms and values. By far, the most studied aspect of culture coming out of this body of research has been collectivism/individualism.

CCP research has explored the impact of culture on negotiation in general (Gelfand and Dyer 2000; Gelfand et al. 2011), and mediation as a specific form of negotiation (Carnevale and Pruitt 1992). For the most part, this research has

focused on cultural difference either among parties, or when it has focused on the content of culture, it has examined micro level, individual behavior. Gelfand and Dyer (2000) review a number of studies that examine the impact of culture on negotiation by comparing the behavior of subjects from two different countries in experiments. They point out that while these studies generate interesting results, because they are limited to the two countries included in the study, they are not generalizable. However, these studies surpass much of the consideration in other fields (and especially IR) in that while they may only compare the behavior of actors in two countries, they do examine the underlying cultural values that are likely to lead to the behaviors observed.

If we expand our scope further to include conflict resolution more generally as we did in examining the IR literature, we can also draw upon CCP studies of procedural justice which focus on why people choose particular strategies for resolving conflict (Bond, Leung, and Schwartz 1992). For instance, Leung (1987) found that collectivistic Chinese subjects prefer bargaining and mediation to resolve conflict more than individualistic American subjects. He points out that collectivist cultures emphasize interpersonal harmony and that “mediation is even more effective than bargaining in leading to harmonious relations between former disputants, because it offers substantially more opportunity for face saving in making concessions than does unassisted negotiation” (p. 899). Bond, Leung, and Schwartz (1992) found substantial cultural variation in what subjects expected various conflict resolution strategies would give them in terms of process control or animosity reduction. In another study (Morris et al. 1998), researchers found that Chinese managers were more likely to use an avoiding style to manage conflict because of the cultural emphasis on conformity and tradition while American managers were more likely to use a competitive style because of the cultural emphasis on individual achievement.

Definitions

To this point, we have skirted the issue of defining precisely what we mean by culture and mediation. The definition of culture has long been a source of debate among anthropologists, cross-cultural psychologists, and political scientists, with over 160 definitions of culture having been identified decades ago (see Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952). Perhaps not surprisingly, definitions tend to reflect scholars’ training and experience, with importance placed on mechanisms ranging from symbols (Geertz 1973), to scheduled reinforcements (Skinner 1981), and to mental programs (Hofstede 1980). Carnevale and Choi (2000) argued that

Culture specifies what behaviours are desirable or proscribed for members of the culture (norms), for individuals in the social structure (roles), as well as the important goals and principles in one’s life (values). Culture also specifies how things are to be evaluated (Carnevale 1995). This implies that people of different cultures will have greater difficulty in interaction, in understanding, and in valuation. (P. 106)

This description of culture is particularly useful within our study because it asserts that culture not only impacts individuals' values and goals but also what one thinks others expect as acceptable behaviors, and thus dictates the available conflict strategies (Brett 2001). Because leaders of countries make the decisions about whether or not to engage in mediation, culture will both shape their perceptions of the utility of the method and what their constituents' reactions will be. In the IR literature, this is referred to as audience costs; leaders are accountable to their populations, and their behavior is constrained to a set of acceptable actions (Fearon 1994). If leaders diverge from those actions deemed acceptable, they will pay. In democratic systems, this may lower the chances of reelection, while in authoritarian systems, a coup may be more likely. The theoretical analog in the CCP literature is the "niche construction approach," which conceptualizes the leaders as "'cultural game players' who pursue their goals in anticipation of others' actions" (Yamagishi 2011, 1). Leaders choose a strategy based on the expected outcomes as well as on what others perceive as culturally acceptable or valued.

Mediation is more straightforward to define; however, there remain some important clarifications to be made. According to Bercovitch, Anagnoson, and Wille (1991, 8), mediation is

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.

Mediation is distinct from negotiation—or rather is a distinct form of negotiation—in that disputants voluntarily agree to have a third-party assist in resolving the dispute. A more difficult concept to define is successful mediation. Bercovitch and Elgström (2001) define mediation as successful "when it has made a considerable difference to the parties' observed level of conflict (e.g., achieve a ceasefire, a settlement or an abatement of the conflict). Mediation is unsuccessful when it has no effect whatsoever on the parties' level of conflict" (14–15). Leng and Regan (2003) use a similar typology.

Our concept of a successful outcome adopts this definition: if the mediation resulted in the reduction of tension, we consider it successful. We are focusing in this research on mediation in international crises. We have chosen crises rather than conflicts, which were employed in the Bercovitch and Elgström (2001) and Leng and Regan (2003) studies, because we are interested not only in when mediation can or cannot resolve international conflict but also in when it is or is not able to prevent it. Within crises, perceived threats can be as important as actual ones in leading to the escalation of conflict. We follow the definition of international crisis mentioned earlier, and use the international crisis behavior (ICB) data sets for empirical testing of our hypotheses.

While we employ the system-level ICB data set (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 2010) that Wilkenfeld et al. (2003) and Beardsley et al. (2006) use to test our hypotheses

about cultural difference, we use the actor-level data set (Wilkenfeld and Brecher 2010) to test our theory about cultural dimensions. For a country to be considered an actor in an international crisis, “three conditions [must be] present: decision makers perceive a threat to basic national values, leaders believe that they must make a decision within a finite period of time, and leaders consider the probability of involvement in military hostilities to be heightened” (Wilkenfeld et al. 2003, 281). For a crisis to be international, by definition, it must have at least two countries involved, although it might not be a crisis for both. For instance, in 1988, during the Iran/Iraq War, Iraq recaptured the port of al-Faw from Iran. This event was a crisis for Iran but not for Iraq, because for Iraq it did not result in a positive change in the three criteria listed above. This distinction is important to keep in mind.

Theory of the Impact of Culture on Mediation

We now turn to our theory of the impact of culture on mediation. There are several approaches to exploring the relationship between culture and mediation. The first is to quantify the cultural difference or distance between the disputing parties. The second, and perhaps most common approach in CCP, is to test the impact of specific cultural values on the outcome or outcomes of interest, which provides a related but conceptually separate perspective. We will return to a discussion of this approach, as well as a discussion of the cultural values that may impact mediation acceptance and success.

Cultural difference can be operationalized by counting the differences between two parties across a variety of indicators, such as race, religion, language, or social norms (Ghemawat 2001). We argue that cultural difference will decrease the likelihood that disputants in an international crisis will pursue mediation. However, if and when culturally different crisis actors pursue mediation, the impact of these differences on the outcome of the mediation is an open question.

There are a number of mechanisms through which cultural difference may inhibit mediation acceptance. First, disputants who are culturally different from their counterpart may anticipate that their interaction with the other party will be more difficult, based on either inferred or experienced divergences in conflict style, norms, communication, and emotional expression (Ting-Toomey and Oetzel 2001). As cultural distance increases, disputants may view the costs or anticipated difficulties of engaging in the mediation processes as outweighing the potential benefits.

Cultural difference may also be one method for inferring social identity, in that cultural difference may signal in-group or out-group status. Previous research in social psychology has suggested that social identity becomes particularly salient in intergroup contexts (Hogg and Turner 1987) and that social identification is associated with cohesion and cooperation with the in-group (Turner 1982, 1984). When cultural difference is small, the shared qualities or similarities between disputants may signal in-group status, fostering an acceptance of mediation or other cooperative conflict resolution methods. However, large cultural differences may signal

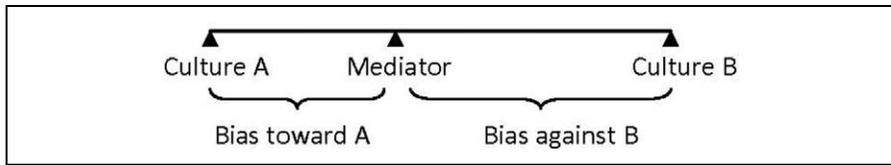


Figure 1. Cultural difference between the cultures of actor A and actor B, and respective mediator bias.

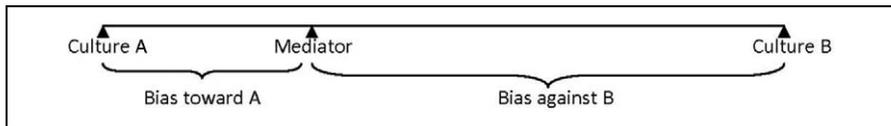


Figure 2. Increased cultural difference between the cultures of actor A and actor B, and respective increased mediator bias.

out-group status. Combined with the greater potential for ethnocentric and stereotypic evaluations of culturally different disputants (Ting-Toomey and Oetzel 2001), this perceived out-group status may dissuade disputants from accepting a collaborative process such as mediation.

Finally, cultural distance may impact perceptions of and reactions to mediator bias. In order for mediation to occur, both states must consent to third-party intervention. If the mediator is closer culturally to one disputant, the other may perceive it as biased and will thus be less likely to consent to mediation. While there are competing arguments as to whether a biased mediator is more or less effective in resolving a dispute (Betts 1994; Carnevale and Choi 2000), we theorize that states consider the effect of a biased mediator *before* they enter into mediation; hence, a mediator who is perceived as biased is a deterrent to mediation. Additionally, we suggest that not only will states that are culturally different be less likely to pursue mediation, but also that the more different they are, the less likely it is that mediation will occur. This is because the farther apart the parties are, the greater the potential cultural difference between mediators and parties, thereby increasing the likelihood that at least one of the states will view mediation as potentially biased and reject it (as seen when moving from Figures 1 and 2).

Based on the aforementioned arguments, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1: The more cultural difference there is between disputants in an international crisis, the less likely they are to pursue mediation.

Whether or not cultural difference has an effect on the success of mediation is an open question; as a result, we propose two divergent hypotheses based on the two schools of thought. Research in the CCP literature would lead us to expect that

cultural difference would have a negative effect on the success of mediation, as is the case in individual-level behavior (Adam, Shirako, and Maddux 2010). Additionally, simple intuition would lead us to think that if cultural difference makes communication difficult, communication through a mediator would be difficult as well. Thus,

Hypothesis 2A: Once mediation has been chosen, cultural difference will have a negative impact on whether or not mediation is effective.

However, it is also possible that once mediation has been chosen, cultural differences will have less of an effect on whether mediation is effective. It is debatable as to whether states generally behave like individuals or groups when interacting with one another. Though some (Buono de Mesquita et al. 1999; Pierce 1994) assert that indeed they do behave like individuals (albeit as very rational individuals) and that the head of state making the decisions is essentially a proxy for that individual, others (e.g., Putnam 1988; Tsebelis 2002) disagree, suggesting that even in highly autocratic states there are some checks on the foreign policy decision-making power of the leader, such as the military. In democratic states, legislatures generally have treaty = ratifying powers and control over the declaration of war and the deployment of the military abroad. So, while leaders have differing personal interests or personality traits, these differences do not impact major international decisions alone. Zartman's (1993) is probably the most well known theory that discounts personal and cultural differences as having an impact on international interactions, claiming that there is an international set of diplomatic norms that govern negotiations including mediation between states. This literature suggests that perhaps states do not behave in the same way as individuals and that hence individual-level theories should not be used to explain state-level behavior.

Extant theory suggests that within two-stage processes in IR, such as the process involving the decision to accept mediation and then mediation itself, a preference that impacts decision making at the first level does not necessarily impact decision making at the second level. For instance, Reed (2000) finds that while joint democracy and joint satisfaction with the status quo have a pacifying effect on conflict onset, once a conflict has started, neither appears to have any impact on conflict escalation once the effect at the first stage has been taken into account. He theorizes that the processes that lead to conflict onset are different than are those that lead to conflict escalation. The same argument may apply to the case of cultural difference and mediation effectiveness, as it is possible that parties that do end up at the table have overcome major hurdles and are committed to mediation despite cultural distance. These theories would suggest the following:

Hypothesis 2B: Once mediation has been chosen, cultural difference will have no impact on whether or not mediation is effective.

While a consideration of the culture of the mediator would be an interesting factor to include in our model, we are unable to do so for a number of reasons. First, in a crisis

that did not lead to mediation, it is difficult if not impossible to know what the culture of a potential mediator would have been had the crisis been mediated. Even if a potential mediator had been proposed to the parties, this type of information is often communicated informally and kept private, leaving no record for subsequent analysis. Additionally, in situations where a mediator was identified, if the mediator was not a state actor (i.e., the United Nations, a regional organization, etc.), it would be dubious to attribute culture to the organization. In many of these cases, there is not necessarily one individual person to whom we could attribute a culture based on the country of origin, but rather a team of mediators from various countries acting on behalf of the organization and who may rotate on and off the team. Of the 139 cases in ICB that were mediated, in only 31 can we definitively attribute culture to the mediator because the effort was led by a single country. Given these limitations, the data do not exist and cannot be collected. Hence, as is the case with other studies (i.e., Leng and Regan 2003), we do not include this variable. In sum, it is the cultural difference between the disputants that is the relevant variable of inquiry, not the culture of the mediator or the mediators' difference from the disputants.

To this point, we have theorized about cultural difference between states in a dispute and its impact on mediation occurrence and success. However, as discussed, the CCP literature also has much to offer in terms of thinking about the substantive impact of specific cultural dimensions on mediation acceptance and outcomes. One much-discussed dimension, which has relevance for mediation, is individualism/collectivism, or the degree of loyalty or cohesiveness felt toward one's group. Generally speaking, collectivistic cultures are more concerned with harmony and "face management" than individualistic cultures (Den Hartog 2004; Ting-Toomey 1988), and mediation is generally perceived as a better way to preserve harmony and face than other conflict resolution mechanisms (Leung 1987). Collectivists attempt to preserve face not only among members of the in-group but also with other members of society. Leaders can use the third-party mediator for political cover if the agreement is unpopular (Huth and Allee 2006; Beardsley 2008) and thus save face with constituents, as well as save face vis-à-vis the other disputant or disputants by only dealing with them indirectly and avoiding potentially disruptive direct confrontation. Therefore, we assert the following:

Hypothesis 3: The more collectivist the culture of a state, the more open it will be to mediation efforts.

Another cultural dimension that may have an impact on openness to mediation is future orientation, or the degree to which members of a culture can account for the future (i.e., planning, delaying gratification, etc.). Individuals in societies that are highly future-oriented are likely to have a longer strategic orientation while those that are less future-oriented seek instant gratification (Ashkanasy et al. 2004). This attribute would seem to mirror the concept in IR of discounting the future.

According to Powell (1999), if a state values the future, then the relative value of attacking another state now goes up, because it involves paying an immediate cost for an expected future gain, especially if the state thinks it can gain more through military action than through mediated settlement. However, states that are not future-oriented will be focused on immediate payoffs and will hence not be willing to pay the military costs of attack because war is costly. Instead, they may prefer to resolve international disputes using mediation, which has minimal material and military costs to the state at the present. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 4: The more future-oriented the culture of a state, the less open it will be to mediation efforts.

Another dimension that may have a negative impact on the likelihood of openness to mediation is assertiveness, or the degree to which one uses more aggressive or confrontational tactics. Societies that value assertiveness also value competition, strength, direct and unambiguous communication, and control over the environment, while societies low in assertiveness tend to value cooperation, speak indirectly, and emphasize face-saving (Den Hartog 2004). As mediation involves having a third party as an intermediary between disputants, relaying messages and information, and allowing disputants to relinquish some measure of control as well as diffusing competition, it seems that very assertive societies would not view mediation favorably, and thus, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 5: The more assertive the culture of a state, the less open it will be to mediation efforts.

Finally, for likelihood of openness to mediation, we propose that uncertainty avoidance, or using norms and rules to alleviate future unpredictability, is likely to have an impact. Societies high in uncertainty avoidance tend to formalize their interactions with others, be more risk averse, and have rules to make behavior more predictable (Sully de Luque and Javidan 2004). When states are involved in an international crisis, there is a great amount of uncertainty and security risk because military tensions are heightened. High levels of uncertainty can also have a negative impact on the effectiveness of communication across cultures (Gudykunst and Nishida 2001). Pursuing mediation introduces even greater uncertainty into the crisis, further exacerbating communication challenges because some measure of control over the information exchange between the disputants is relinquished and the parties can never be completely sure about the intentions of the mediator (whether in terms of being biased toward the other party in the dispute or being biased toward reducing tension and avoiding conflict, no matter the costs to one or both sides). When disputants deal with each other directly through negotiations and/or violent conflict, they can control the signals they send to their adversaries and can interpret the signals their adversaries send to them without having them filtered through the mediator; this reduces uncertainty. Hence, decision makers in states that display

high levels of uncertainty avoidance may be more averse to participating in mediation processes. Thus, we believe the following:

Hypothesis 6: The higher in uncertainty avoidance the culture of a state, the less open it will be to mediation efforts.

These cultural characteristics specifically are thought to influence openness to mediation. There are cultural dimensions that are not as likely to influence openness to mediation that we do not hypothesize about in this study. For example, we do not believe that humane orientation, the degree to which one rewards altruism and generosity; performance orientation, the degree to which one rewards excellence; power distance,¹ the degree to which individuals believe that power should be distributed equally within a state; or gender egalitarianism and the minimization of gender inequality will have a significant effect on a state's openness to mediation efforts.

Once engaged in mediation of an international dispute, cultural dimensions may have different effects, and some dimensions may be more important than others. We argue that collectivism will continue to have a positive effect on successful mediation outcomes once mediation has been chosen because of this dimension's focus on indirect communication, animosity avoidance, and harmony. Thus,

Hypothesis 7: The more collectivist the culture of a state, the more likely it will be to arrive at a successful mediation outcome.

While future orientation might impact the duration of mediation as future-oriented states might be willing to hold out for their most desired outcome, we do not think it would impact the success of the mediation because mediation efforts might break down before the desired outcome is achieved. We do hypothesize that assertiveness will continue to have a negative impact, because the competitive nature of this dimension will make arriving at an agreement that is acceptable to all disputants difficult; thus,

Hypothesis 8: The more assertive the culture of a state, the less likely it will be to arrive at a successful mediation outcome.

Uncertainty avoidance should continue to have a negative impact because it causes societies to avoid sharing opinions and being verbal, making them less likely to reach agreement in mediation; therefore,

Hypothesis 9: The higher in uncertainty avoidance the culture of a state, the less likely it will be to arrive at a successful mediation outcome.

Date and Methods

System-Level Analysis

Unit of Analysis: International Crisis. To test Hypotheses 1, 2A, and 2B, which hypothesize about the effect of cultural difference on mediation likelihood and outcomes, the unit of analysis is an international crisis (i.e., system-level data), and the data include all 452 international crises from 1918 to 2006.

These data differ most significantly from those used by Bercovitch and Elgström (2001) and Leng and Regan (2003) in that each crisis is included in the data set only once, and the general impact of mediation is assessed and coded rather than each individual attempt during the crisis. Using this configuration of the data means that no single crisis can account for statistical findings because of its high number of mediation events. If there is any mediation at any point during a crisis, the crisis is coded as having had mediation. However, we recognize that assessing mediation only once per crisis may ignore the differential impact of early versus late mediation efforts as well as their cumulative effects.

Overall, the ICB data set indicates that negotiation and mediation are closely linked phenomena. The vast majority of cases in which negotiation was used as the highest form of crisis management also showed mediation to have occurred—fifty-eight of sixty-six or 88 percent of cases of negotiation also included mediation. While the current study focuses exclusively on the impact of culture on whether or not mediation is employed, and how successful this mediation is at managing international crises, we should be cognizant of the fact that in many crises, direct negotiation between the parties and attempts at third-party mediation may be occurring in tandem.

Dependent Variables: Mediation Occurrence and Mediation Success. For testing the hypotheses about the impact of cultural difference on mediation likelihood and success, we used variables from the ICB system-level data set. For mediation occurrence, 0 indicates no mediation, and 1 indicates mediation did occur. For success of mediation, 0 indicates no reduction in tensions, and 1 indicates some amount of tension reduction.

Explanatory Variable: Cultural Difference. At the system level, to measure cultural difference and partly as a probability probe, we started with a variable that was already contained within the ICB data: heterogeneity. This variable measures whether the two primary disputants in an international crisis differ according to four characteristics: military capability, political regime, economic development, and culture (belief system, ideology, and language) (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 2010). This five-point scale ranges from 0 to 4: 0 indicating no differences, and 1 through 4 indicating number of differences in attributes. However, this measure captures difference in general, not specifically cultural difference in which we are interested, which led us to consider other measures. We turned to elements that are traditionally

associated with culture, albeit as proxies and somewhat superficial ones at that: language, religion, and race. For language, we used ethnologue.com² (Lewis 2009) and coded the difference in language of the two primary disputant countries on a six-point scale, with 0 being no difference, and 5 being completely different. For religion, we coded the difference between the majority or plurality religion in the disputing countries on a scale from 0 to 2, 0 being same religion, 1 being same religion but different sect, and 2 being different religion. For race, we coded similarly from 0 to 2, 0 being same race, 1 being same race different subgroup, and 2 being different race, based on the majority or plurality population. We examined the correlations among the language, religion, and race variables, and finding them relatively low, also created an index combining the three variables.³ Unfortunately, neither the Hofstede nor the GLOBE data sets contain sufficient coverage of countries⁴ in the ICB data set to be used in this analysis.

Actor-Level Analysis

Unit of Analysis: Actor in an International Crisis. To test Hypotheses 3 through 9, which are related to the effect of content of cultural dimensions on mediation openness and effectiveness, we use a configuration of the ICB data in which the country for which the event is a crisis is the unit of analysis (i.e., actor-level data). We use the data in this format because here we want to test the impact of an individual state's cultural dimensions on its own behavior as opposed to the difference between two states' cultures' effect on their joint behavior.

Dependent Variables: Openness to Mediation and Mediation Success. To test hypotheses about the effect of cultural dimensions on mediation openness and outcomes, we also used data from ICB. We collected data on mediation openness from the summaries of ICB crises and coded a new dichotomous variable in order to measure whether states requested mediation or accepted it when offered, regardless of whether or not mediation ended up actually taking place. For mediation success, we used a similar process as mentioned earlier, recoding the variable to be dichotomous.

Explanatory Variables: Cultural Dimensions. The cultural dimension variables are drawn from the GLOBE project, as it offered us access to more cultural variables for a larger number of states than data from other sources such as Hofstede, or the World Values Survey. GLOBE is a research undertaking composed of at least 170 researchers from over sixty-two societies with data from over 17,300 people in more than 951 organizations (House et al. 2004). GLOBE measures cultural values and practices at the individual, organizational, and societal levels, and uses a number of statistical techniques to validate its constructs and measurements.⁵ We used the values measures because our theory relies heavily on expectations of behavior, especially with regard to openness.⁶ While in the ICB actor-level data set there are 994 observations between 1918 and 2006, GLOBE does not have data on every one of the 140

countries included within ICB, so the sample is truncated to the 689 observations that include a state for which GLOBE variables are coded.⁷ Eighty-six of the states included within ICB were not coded within GLOBE and were hence dropped from analysis.

Control Variables

In order to account for other factors that may impact mediation likelihood and/or outcomes, it is necessary to include them in our model as control variables. For instance, in previous work using ICB, researchers have observed that the frequency of mediation in international crises has increased as we move from bipolarity (1945–1962), to polycentrism (1963–1990), to unipolarity (1991–2006) (Wilkenfeld et al. 2003). Therefore, we include a control for polarity of the system. IR theory deals extensively with relative power and its impact on how states interact, including how they resolve disputes, so we include a measure of power discrepancy in the system-level analysis. Additionally, because others have argued so extensively about the democratic peace, we include a measure of joint democracy for the tests of the impact of cultural difference, and of regime type (whether democracy or not) for the tests of the impact of cultural dimensions. To test for the theory that a “hurting stalemate” makes crises ripe for mediation, we include a measure of the intensity of violence. To test for the duration hypothesis—that the longer crises go on the “riper” they become for peaceful resolution including mediation—we include a measure of duration of crisis. To control for intractability, we include a measure of gravity of the value threatened within the system-level analysis. The ICB’s heterogeneity variable measuring differences between adversaries was used as a control variable within the actor-level analysis, as we believe cultural difference plays a role in openness to and possibly effectiveness of mediation (i.e., the basis of our system-level analyses). Additionally, in the tests of mediation occurrence and openness to mediation, we control for the geographic proximity of the principal adversaries of the crisis, as states that are closer geographically tend to see more instances of conflict. In the tests of mediation effectiveness, we also control for the style of mediation used, from more hands-off to more coercive.

Methods

Because our dependent variables are binary and our hypotheses address the likelihood for culture to positively or negatively impact mediation, we can use maximum likelihood estimation to test our theory in the form of a probit regression analysis. However, as we pointed out earlier, previous studies of the effect of culture on the outcomes of mediation may suffer from a selection bias, in that the same factors that impact mediation effectiveness may also impact likelihood of mediation. Therefore, we follow Reed’s (2000) example and employ censored probit models, which allow us to model both the process of selection into mediation and the outcomes of

Table 1. Censored Probit Model of the Impact of Cultural Difference on Mediation.

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Predicted probabilities	
						Minimum	Maximum
Domestic Violence (DV): Occurrence of Mediation							
Attribute Heterogeneity	-0.153*** (0.0560)						
Language Difference		-0.0698** (0.0351)					
Religious Difference			-0.0906 (0.0880)				
Racial Difference				-0.189* (0.0976)			
Cultural Difference (0-6 categorical)					-0.0989** (0.0410)	0.365	0.200
Relative Power	-0.00729** (0.00290)	-0.00705** (0.00293)	-0.00740** (0.00291)	-0.00788*** (0.00292)	-0.00726** (0.00294)	0.309	0.128
Joint Democracy	0.469** (0.205)	0.555*** (0.203)	0.552*** (0.203)	0.515** (0.202)	0.560*** (0.203)	0.251	0.425
Intensity of Violence	0.278*** (0.0648)	0.274*** (0.0645)	0.263*** (0.0640)	0.277*** (0.0646)	0.274*** (0.0645)	0.181	0.421
Duration	0.00125*** (0.000377)	0.00126*** (0.000372)	0.00128*** (0.000374)	0.00127*** (0.000373)	0.00133*** (0.000375)	0.216	0.646
Issue Gravity	-0.103 (0.170)	-0.181 (0.163)	-0.170 (0.169)	-0.164 (0.165)	-0.110 (0.168)	0.285	0.251
Period	0.210*** (0.0644)	0.209*** (0.0641)	0.218*** (0.0635)	0.222*** (0.0639)	0.217*** (0.0642)	0.142	0.381
Constant	-1.711*** (0.320)	-1.845*** (0.317)	-1.974*** (0.307)	-1.954*** (0.305)	-1.814*** (0.316)		

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Predicted probabilities	
						Minimum	Maximum
DV: Mediation Effectiveness							
Attribute Heterogeneity	0.0138 (0.147)						
Language Difference	-0.142 (0.0972)						
Religious Difference		-0.220 (0.188)					
Racial Difference				0.101 (0.225)			
Cultural Difference (0-6 categorical)					-0.129 (0.111)	0.273	0.088
Mediation Style	0.515** (0.230)	0.495** (0.233)	0.518** (0.236)	0.520** (0.234)	0.484** (0.231)	0.128	0.246
Relative Power	0.00896 (0.00976)	0.00829 (0.0104)	0.00840 (0.00919)	0.00881 (0.00935)	0.00810 (0.0100)	0.175	0.099
Joint Democracy	0.260 (0.499)	0.296 (0.534)	0.312 (0.522)	0.226 (0.494)	0.340 (0.534)	0.144	0.306
Intensity of Violence	-0.266 (0.171)	-0.239 (0.173)	-0.297** (0.137)	-0.282* (0.159)	-0.262* (0.149)	0.124	0.204
Duration	-2.19×10^{-5} (0.000920)	-5.41×10^{-5} (0.000940)	1.48×10^{-5} (0.000904)	-0.000103 (0.000900)	5.92×10^{-5} (0.000931)	0.125	0.439
Issue Gravity	0.0710 (0.365)	0.293 (0.365)	0.226 (0.341)	0.0723 (0.351)	0.293 (0.362)	0.163	0.167
Constant	0.0974 (1.339)	0.520 (1.384)	0.536 (1.252)	0.157 (1.335)	0.618 (1.229)		
Rho Selection Effect		-0.2762406 0.7313	-0.4640521 0.5276	-0.3254698 0.6536	-0.3797234 0.612		
Observations	399	402	401	402	401		

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < 0.1$. ** $p < 0.05$. *** $p < 0.01$.

mediation jointly to see whether the two processes are indeed interrelated. Hence, for analysis at the system level, we employ a censored probit model using mediation occurrence as the selection equation, and mediation success as the outcome equation. For analysis at the actor level, we employ a binomial probit in order to examine states' openness to mediation. We again employ a censored probit model in order to examine mediation success: using mediation occurrence as the selection equation, and mediation success as the outcome equation.

Results

The results of the statistical analyses for Hypotheses 1, 2A, and 2B are reported in Table 1. We first discuss the results of the effect of cultural difference on the likelihood of mediation—the first level of the censored probit model. The results show that for all but one of our models, the greater the cultural difference between disputing countries, the less likely they are to pursue mediation to resolve their dispute, supporting Hypothesis 1. The exception is religious difference, which does not have a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of mediation. This finding adds to the already voluminous evidence refuting the “clash of civilizations” hypothesis (Huntington 1993) that religious differences are the fault lines for conflict. At least when it comes to crises between states, religious difference does not impact whether mediation occurs. The other cultural difference proxies—attribute heterogeneity, language, and race, as well as the composite index—have a negative impact on the likelihood of mediation, even when controlling for other explanations, many of which are also supported. For instance, relative power has a negative impact on likelihood of mediation. That is, as the capability gap between two primary disputants increases, the likelihood of mediation decreases. Weaker states might be expected to pursue mediation as a preferred means of conflict resolution but stronger disputants may feel they have a better chance of achieving their desired outcome without the interference of a third-party mediator. Additionally, there is support for the democratic peace hypothesis: in disputes between democracies, mediation is more likely to be pursued. Intensity of violence and duration of the dispute are also positive and significant, lending support to ripeness arguments as well. However, gravity of issue at stake does not seem to impact likelihood of mediation; thus, the model does not support the intractability argument. Because we employ multivariate analysis to test our hypotheses, we are able to control for these alternative hypotheses.

We are also interested in magnitude of the substantive effects of the independent variables on the likelihood of mediation. Therefore, we have included the predicted probabilities of each of the variables at its minimum and maximum values in order to determine the size of its effect. We use Hanmer and Kalkan's (2012) recommended approach for allowing the control variables to assume their observed values as opposed to being fixed at their means. The predicted probability of mediation occurring when there is no cultural difference is 0.37. When

Table 2. Likelihood of Openness to Mediation.

Variables	Coefficients	Predicted probabilities		
		Minimum	Maximum	Effect
Collectivism	0.481*** (0.1326)	0.251	0.529	0.278
Future Orientation	-0.096 (0.1915)	0.396	0.340	-0.056
Assertiveness	-0.421 (0.0844)	0.378	0.341	-0.038
Uncertainty Avoidance	-0.276** (0.1338)	0.489	0.282	-0.206
Period	0.230*** (0.0473)	0.167	0.521	0.354
Democracy	0.314*** (0.1109)	0.319	0.417	0.098
Intensity of Violence	0.163*** (0.0463)	0.308	0.464	0.156
Duration	0.002*** (0.0003)	0.266	0.926	0.660
Attribute Heterogeneity	-0.094** (0.0483)	0.451	0.331	-0.121
Geographic Proximity	-0.304*** (0.0721)	0.422	0.240	-0.182
Constant	-1.606 (1.0460)			
Number of observations	683			

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0.1$. ** $p < 0.05$. *** $p < 0.01$.

cultural difference is at its maximum value (6), however, it is 0.2, giving us a decrease of 0.17.

The results of the impact of cultural difference on the likelihood of mediation effectiveness can be seen within the second level of the censored probit model. However, before running the censored probit model, we also ran the two stages separately as conventional binomial probit models. These results are not included here for the sake of brevity; however, the results of the model testing the impact of cultural difference on mediation effectiveness—the second stage of the censored probit model—mirror both those of Bercovitch and Elgström (2001) and Leng and Regan (2003) as well as theories in the CCP literature that cultural difference negatively impacts the probability of successful mediated outcomes. Importantly, however, when we turn to the censored probit model, the results suggest that none of the cultural difference variables are related to mediation effectiveness, suggesting support for Hypothesis 2B over 2A. These differences in results between the one-stage and two-stage models provide support for the existence of a selection effect at the first

Table 3. Censored Probit Model of the Impact of Cultural Dimensions on Mediation.

Variables	Coefficients	Predicted probabilities		
		Minimum	Maximum	Effect
DV: Occurrence of Mediation				
Collectivism	0.376*** (0.1341)	0.267	0.479	0.212
Future Orientation	-0.002 (0.1980)	0.351	0.354	0.003
Assertiveness	-0.080 (0.0865)	0.391	0.302	-0.089
Uncertainty Avoidance	-0.319** (0.1369)	0.469	0.279	-0.190
Period	0.288*** (0.0483)	0.168	0.500	0.332
Democracy	0.311*** (0.1123)	0.314	0.401	0.088
Intensity of Violence	0.241*** (0.0466)	0.277	0.495	0.218
Duration	0.001*** (0.0003)	0.267	0.887	0.620
Attribute Heterogeneity	-0.059 (0.0502)	0.419	0.329	-0.090
Geographic Proximity	-0.212*** (0.0716)	0.396	0.263	-0.134
Constant	-1.719 (1.0904)			
Number of observations	665			
DV: Mediation Effectiveness				
Collectivism	-0.012 (0.333)	0.139	0.222	0.083
Future Orientation	-0.395 (0.4290)	0.214	0.149	-0.065
Assertiveness	0.275 (0.1963)	0.155	0.193	0.038
Uncertainty Avoidance	-0.049 (0.3170)	0.237	0.130	-0.107
Period	0.275** (0.1190)	0.057	0.275	0.218
Democracy	0.392* (0.2361)	0.140	0.214	0.075
Intensity of Violence	-0.031 (0.1512)	0.137	0.221	0.084
Duration	0.001 (0.0006)	0.127	0.510	0.384

(continued)

Table 3. (continued)

Variables	Coefficients	Predicted probabilities		
		Minimum	Maximum	Effect
Attribute Heterogeneity	-0.035 (0.0933)	0.207	0.163	-0.044
Mediation Style	0.727*** (0.1939)	0.087	0.310	0.222
Constant	-1.458 (2.5804)			
Number of Uncensored Observations	224			
Rho Selection Effect	0.264 (0.6262)			

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0.1$. ** $p < 0.05$. *** $p < 0.01$.

stage that then affects the second stage. Additionally, these results support the finding by Beardsley et al. (2006) that manipulative mediation tends to lead to more effective mediation outcomes. In several of the models (religious difference, racial difference, and difference based on the composite index), intensity of violence has a negative effect on likelihood of effective mediation. This finding is particularly interesting because intensity of violence had a positive effect on whether or not mediation occurred in the first place. None of the other control variables in the effectiveness model reach statistical significance, and we do not report the predicted probabilities for mediation effectiveness, as the main explanatory variable does not have an effect that is statistically different from zero.

The results of the statistical analyses for Hypotheses 3 through 9 on the effect of cultural dimensions on mediation openness and outcomes for individual crisis actors, as well as their respective predicted probabilities, are reported in Tables 2 and 3. We first discuss the results of the separate probit analysis of the effect of cultural dimensions on the likelihood of openness to mediation. In Table 2, the results show that, consistent with Hypothesis 3, the more collectivistic a state is, the more likely it is to be open to mediation efforts. The predicted probability of a state being open to mediation occurring when a state is less collectivistic (the minimum collectivist value in our data set) is 0.25. When collectivism is at its maximum value in our data set, however, it is 0.53, giving us an increase of 0.28. The model also suggests that the more uncertainty avoidant a state is, the less likely it is to be open to mediation efforts, supporting Hypothesis 6. The predicted probability of a state being open to mediation occurring when a state is less uncertainty avoidant is 0.49. When uncertainty avoidance is at its maximum value in our data set, however, it is 0.28, giving us a decrease of 0.21.

Control variables testing alternative explanations helping to explain openness to mediation were also supported. As our hypotheses regarding the system-level

findings were supported, attribute heterogeneity (i.e., differences in cultural dimensions) was included as a control variable within the actor-level analysis and was found to have a negative and significant effect on a state's openness to mediation. There is also support for the monadic democratic peace hypothesis: democracies are more open to mediation (Raymond 1994). Intensity of violence and duration of the dispute are also positive and significant, lending support to ripeness arguments (Zartman 2000). As we move from bipolarity (1945–1962), to polycentrism (1963–1990), and then to unipolarity (1991–2006), there is an increase in openness to mediation, perhaps as norms for the increased use of mediation become more entrenched (Wilkenfeld et al. 2005). The findings also suggest that the geographic proximity of the principal adversaries in a crisis has a significant and negative effect on openness to mediation, meaning that contiguous or near-contiguous states will be less open to third-party mediation efforts. States located in close proximity to one another may feel they do not need a third-party mediator, and might be more open to resolving crises through nonmediated negotiation (Torre and Rallet 2005).

The results of the censored probit model testing the impact of cultural dimensions on the likelihood of mediation effectiveness given the occurrence of mediation (i.e., the second level of the model) are displayed in Table 3. Hypotheses 7 through 9 regarding the effects of collectivism, assertiveness, and uncertainty avoidance on mediation effectiveness are not supported, as they are not found to have any statistically significant effect on reducing crisis tensions; their predicted probabilities are hence not reported here. As a robustness check we also conducted a binomial one-stage probit model testing the likelihood of mediation being effective, finding some differences in the results between the one-stage model versus the second level of the censored probit model.⁸ These differences again support using a two-stage model.

Several of the explanations for mediation effectiveness included as controls were supported. For example, as we move from bipolarity (1945–1962), to polycentrism (1963–1990), to unipolarity (1991–2007), there is an increased likelihood for mediation being effective. Democracies are also more likely to see more effective mediations, likely as a result of democracies being more accustomed to mechanisms used within mediation through their use of democratic processes within their own state (Huth and Allee 2002). There is also support for Beardsley et al.'s (2006) findings that manipulative mediation tends to lead to more effective mediation outcomes. Similar to our system-level findings, cultural attribute heterogeneity does not have a statistically significant impact on mediation effectiveness, suggesting that once states take into account cultural difference and agree to mediation, these differences no longer play a role in reducing crisis tensions. The impacts of other control variables on the level of effectiveness do not reach statistical significance.

Methodologically, although our theory strongly suggests that we test for selection effects and thus use censored probit models, the main indicator of this effect is not statistically significant in any of our models. In these types of models, the rho is an indicator that error terms of the two models are correlated (i.e., not independent of

one another). Censored probit models, however, are considered by some to be unstable, and our relatively small number of observations may be problematic.

Conclusion

The theory and analysis presented here suggest that culture impacts international crisis mediation in several ways. Cultural difference has a negative impact on whether mediation occurs, but may not impact mediation effectiveness. For instance, the crisis between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2004 occurred between two states that are very similar culturally and the crisis was mediated. We argue that their cultural similarity contributed to their willingness to accept mediation because neither country would have to be concerned about the mediator being culturally biased toward the other side. In fact, the two sides accepted mediation from a number of different sources in the international community, including the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations. In this instance, the mediation was effective at reducing tensions. However, in the first Galtat Zemmour crisis in 1981 between Morocco and Algeria over the fate of Western Sahara, both sides were very similar culturally and accepted mediation by the Organization for African Unity, but the mediation was unsuccessful at reducing tensions. In the end, Morocco did withdraw its troops from the disputed region, but there is no evidence that the mediation impacted its decision to do so. The Spratly Islands crisis in 1995 between two culturally dissimilar states, China and the Philippines, is an example of a crisis in which the two sides did not request or accept mediation. The crisis was sparked for the Philippines when China built several permanent structures on islands to which the Philippines also had claims. The Philippines increased its military presence in the areas of the Spratly Islands under its control but ruled out the use of force.

Specific cultural dimensions are found to affect openness to mediation. For instance, collectivism seems to have a positive effect on a state's openness to mediation. Georgia, for example, with the lowest collectivism score in the data set, does not display openness to mediation in any of the crises it is a part of (the Georgia–Abkhazia crisis in 1992, the Pankisi Gorge crisis in 2002, and the South Ossetia–Abkhazia crisis in 2004, all involving Russia), while El Salvador with the highest collectivism score does display openness to mediation in its lone crisis (the Football War in 1969 with Honduras). Meanwhile, uncertainty avoidance seems to have a negative effect on a state's openness to mediation. The Netherlands, for example, with one of the lowest uncertainty avoidance scores, often exhibits openness to mediation in the crises that it is a part of (i.e., the multiple crises over Indonesia's struggle for independence in 1945, 1947, and 1948), while Thailand, with the highest uncertainty avoidance score, often does not display openness to mediation in its crises (i.e., the Vietnam Invasion of Cambodia in 1977, the Vietnam Incursion into Thailand in 1984, the Sleeping Dog Hill crisis in 1992 involving Myanmar, and the Myanmar–Thailand crisis in 2002). This lack of openness to mediation exhibited by Thailand can especially be seen in the Three Village Border crisis in 1987 between

Thailand and Laos where Thailand was offered mediation but refused to accept.⁹ Some of our auxiliary binomial probit models suggest that other dimensions—like assertiveness—can affect mediation effectiveness, though this finding needs to be examined in more detail in the future, as it was not found in our joint models which account for a selection effect.

We assert that drawing on both CCP theory and IR theory enhanced our explanatory power and encouraged us to address considerations that may have been overlooked within the confines of one field alone. It is of particular interest that our findings suggest that theories about how individuals and groups behave do sometimes, but not always, apply to how states behave. Unpacking the mechanisms behind such behaviors at all levels may prove fruitful as a further line of research in order to examine under what circumstances combining theories from multiple disciplines is most appropriate.

Finally, for the practitioners in the mediation trenches, several of our findings are noteworthy. While each international crisis will have its own unique configuration of historical and geopolitical characteristics, the two critical tasks for the international or regional communities are to get the parties to the table, and then to provide a way to address grievances and arrive at resolution. This study has highlighted the central place that culture occupies in this array of factors. Cultural differences impose significant constraints on the ability of third parties to get the adversaries to accept mediation. But once they are at the table with the mediator, these cultural differences appear to have little effect on whether or not the mediated negotiations will be successful. The incentives that might be offered in order to get the mediated negotiations going in a culturally diverse context will differ from those that might be appropriate once discussions have begun, and awareness of these differences should allow for a more effective approach to the entire mediation process.

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Notes

1. ICB's "power distance" variable—measuring relative power as a measure of the capability gap between two disputants—is included in our models.
2. Ethnologue.com provides a comprehensive list of all of the world's known languages and their classifications, which can be used to measure how closely a language is related to another (Lewis 2009).

3. So as not to overrepresent language in the index, it was collapsed into a three-point scale ranging from 0 to 2 and added to it were the variables for race and religion to create a seven-point categorical scale ranging from 0 to 6. To test the validity of this variable, several other methods for creating the index were employed (i.e., simply adding all the variables, dividing language by 2.5 and adding it to race and religion, and factor analysis), and the resulting variables were all highly correlated and yielded nearly identical results in the analyses.
4. For instance, only about 7 percent of ICB crises include two primary disputants that had been coded in Hofstede's data set. GLOBE has broader coverage, yet still only 15 percent of the ICB cases had both primary disputants coded.
5. GLOBE defines *institutional collectivism* as "the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action," while defining *in-group collectivism* as "the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families" (House et al. 2004, 30). As it is thought that state decision making regarding state behavior in an interstate crisis is handled by state bureaucratic elites working within an institutional framework, we chose to employ GLOBE's institutional collectivism variable as the measure of collectivism, rather than their in-group collectivism variable. References made to "collectivism" as an independent variable of primary interest are hence in regard to institutional collectivism.
6. Hofstede (2006) argues that GLOBE's "values" levels are more reliable measurements of cultural attributes. With the "practice" level variables, the GLOBE authors had assumed that survey respondents would be able to compare their society to others, which might not be true.
7. All except five countries in GLOBE (Brazil, Hong Kong, Ireland, Kazakhstan, and Singapore) are seen within ICB crises.
8. This one-stage binomial probit model results table is again not included here for the sake of brevity.
9. Thailand was also not open to mediation in the first Three Village Border crisis between Thailand and Laos in 1984, though in this crisis Thailand did not *turn down* offered mediation as it did in the 1987 crisis.

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