

Anne Holper | Lars Kirchhoff [eds.]

Peace Mediation in Germany's Foreign Policy

Uniting Method, Power and Politics



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Preface to the International Edition

In many countries and international organizations, peace mediation is undergoing an intense process of adjustment and sophistication. Alongside its gradually increasing political promotion and strategic relevance within the spectrum of instruments for crisis prevention, conflict resolution and stabilization, the examination, criticism and skepticism have gained substance and precision – an indispensable corrective to this major structural shift in the field. At the same time, while some critical steps in defining the mediation profile of Germany have already been taken, many decisions are still to be made. From a scientific as well as political perspective, this seems like a good moment to capture the recent and possible future developments in a book.

Evidently, peace mediation in Germany must be seen and can only be properly understood against the background of the international dimension. Nevertheless, we dedicated large parts of this volume almost exclusively to the German perspective, the domestic dimension of and discussions around peace mediation. Why? During our years of intense cooperation and exchange with several foreign ministries, organizations and multi-lateral networks, it became increasingly evident that the most impactful and reputable mediation approaches of any entities draw from and respond to two distinct sources of inspiration and information: the collective methodological wisdom that has been accumulated over the years in a global effort, and the highly specific conditions, dynamics and qualities of the very actor that tries to establish a (new) profile in the field.

Considering the wealth of literature already existing with regard to common denominators, questions and achievements in the international peace mediation community, we decided that an in-depth-analysis of the highly specific German history, constraints, potential and role in peace mediation was the missing piece of the puzzle in the effort to define the profile of Germany in the field. Therefore, the book takes a close look at the somewhat special situation of a medium power actor (as Germany is) with a unique and difficult history (which Germany has), actively searching to redefine (as Germany does) its responsibility and role in an international arena that is confronted with a whole set of new dynamics and challenges.

Naturally, we hope that the resulting struggle with regard to concepts, structures and narratives – summarized throughout this book as the struggle between politics, power and method – will not only help explain how

Preface to the International Edition

German peace mediation has developed and how it operates today; we hope that it will also serve as a useful reference frame for comparable processes in other countries and contexts. In the long run, only a deeply integrated and interconnected system of peaceful intervention in violent conflict will have a chance to make a difference in the contemporary field of international conflict.

Instead of dedicating this book to a person, we want to highlight the relevance of a central idea that runs through this volume: Frequently, as Hannah Arendt showed in tracing back the history of the term, power has been falsely equated with coercion, domination and control. Mediation, interestingly, implies an understanding of “power” as an effect of collective communication and cooperation. This book’s deeper purpose is to pave the way for mediation methods and politics to complement their power to make peace with, not against, the will of the conflict actors and groups affected by conflict.

Berlin, June 2021

Anne Holper and Lars Kirchhoff

Preface to the German Edition, or: An Introduction to Peace Mediation from a German Perspective

Over the last ten years, the field of peace mediation has gone through profound changes around the world as well as in Germany, both practically and theoretically. The results extend from newly created structures at the Federal Foreign Office (FFO), the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to the consolidation of mediation methodology and the professional design of peace processes.

These changes have been accompanied by a frank, controversial – and thus, in the best sense of the word, “genuine” – discourse on the challenges, dilemmas and potentials associated with the field. Naturally, these aspects always have played a decisive role in determining the course and results of peace mediation processes. But in the years of quick and pragmatic growth, more differentiated conceptual, methodological and strategic questions initially attracted little attention. Now the answers are being translated into generally applicable empirical values and practical actions, which in turn must undergo critical analysis. The subject of peace mediation thus finds itself in a dynamic, cyclical learning process to which this volume is intended to contribute.

Conflict, war and peace – themes that have always occupied humankind – are doubtless highly complex, not only analytically and practically but also politically as well as in legal and ethical terms. This complexity is contained in the key question from which peace mediation originally emerged: “How can peace be achieved without the use of violence?” Thus it is not surprising that the reemergence of this question has been and is being achieved not only in a network of state and civil-society actors but also through a close interplay of practice and science. For peace mediation processes, too many actors, perspectives and disciplines prove to be relevant for a silo-based approach to make sense.

It is precisely this kind of motivation – genuine discourse, cyclical learning and the cooperation of wholly disparate actors and their perspectives on political action – that is reflected in the composition of this volume on peace mediation. Alongside current contributions from scholars and practitioners from the German and Swiss mediation field, the “Fact Sheets on

Preface to the German Edition

Peace Mediation” form the core of the publication. These Fact Sheets were developed over several years in a cooperation between the Federal Foreign Office and the Initiative Mediation Support Deutschland (IMSD) and represent the status quo on peace mediation from a German perspective. They identify questions that set the course for the future and illuminate conflicting goals and trade-offs. The resulting snapshot deliberately shows achievements and potentials together with remaining ambiguities and gaps.

We would like to highlight two successful axes of cooperation that are reflected in this volume and that are tightly linked with the strengthening of the field of peace mediation in Germany. The first is the close cooperation network within German civil society that deals with the theme of peace mediation. A particularly visible expression of this is the Initiative Mediation Support Deutschland (IMSD), which is described on several occasions in the volume and without whose cooperation and productivity the results presented here could not have been accomplished. The second axis of cooperation is the one between the Federal Foreign Office, the IMSD and academia, in which a respectful exchange on an equal footing was established and instruments and approaches were refined and networked. This, too, is described in this volume.

Since the establishment of such an ambitious instrument as international mediation depends not least on the commitment of specific individuals, let us expressly mention here Ina Lepel, Rüdiger König, Thomas Zahneisen, Gregor Schotten, Clemens Hach, Jens Urban and Björn Gehrman, who – in respective functions and phases of the project – have made significant contributions to the initiation, refinement and establishment of the topic of peace mediation at the German Federal Foreign Office.

The volume’s subtitle stands for an explicit recognition of the different and sometimes conflicting realities in which mediation processes must assert themselves. Peace mediation always operates in an area of tension between methodology, power and politics, and thus is unavoidably characterized by both conflicting goals and trade-offs. If one recognizes this seeming dilemma in a first step as the presence of heterogeneous strengths in methodology, power and politics, new types of profiling and synergy potential arise in a second step. If Germany’s role as a mediator is to realize this potential, a common determination must be made about whether, where and how German politics and mediation methodology can work together fruitfully in an integrated mediation approach or whether they can act more effectively independently of each other.

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Power – understood as a variable strength ratio within a network of relationships that steers interaction dynamics and processes¹ – is thus the volatile capital with which politics and methodology work in very different ways. Mediative methodology is just another approach to generating and using power. When it comes to power, this creates a surprising connector for successful complementarity that can actually unite mediation methods and politics.

We wish to thank Anna Dick, Marike Blunck, Tanja Rollett and Hui Zhang for their dedication and diligence, which contributed greatly to the creation of this volume.

Berlin, June 2021

Anne Holper and Lars Kirchhoff

1 Peter Imbusch, “Machtfigurationen und Herrschaftsprozesse bei Norbert Elias”, *Macht und Herrschaft: Sozialwissenschaftliche Theorien und Konzeptionen*, edited by Peter Imbusch (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2013), 169–93.

Foreword from the German Federal Foreign Office

The Federal Foreign Office has deliberately invested quite some time to consider the question of what peace mediation means for German foreign policy, and what role Germany can, may and should play in it. We have taken many steps along the path toward finding answers, together with our partners. The latter includes partner states such as Switzerland, Norway and Finland that are active in the field of mediation; international organizations such as the UN, the OSCE and the EU; and civil-society groups, in particular the Initiative Mediation Support Deutschland.

While the publication of the German *Peace Mediation Framework* in 2019 was a widely visible conceptual milestone, it is the lived practice of German mediation that determines the relevance of the topic. At this very moment, Germany is active in various roles in more than 40 mediation and dialogue processes. We are working with local, national and international non-governmental organizations via the UN or the targeted promotion of formats and activities. Sometimes we engage in visible and leading roles, and sometimes we deliberately stay in the background. Thus, we have reached the phase of implementation and operationalization.

Germany brings three core strengths to the role of a peace mediator: the political weight of a middle power with a central position within the EU, a credibility that arises largely from the confrontation with our own history and the possibility of using a broad range of stabilization instruments in a networked and long-term manner. These are significant assets.

In addition to providing obvious opportunities, Germany's profile also raises many questions that demand timely, differentiated answers. These questions arise in no small part from today's significant shifts in the multi-lateral order: Where are the contemporary fields of action for engagement that fit to Germany's international role? How can our profile be translated into the concrete design of peace mediation processes? Which unique characteristics must be taken into consideration when a middle power with clearly defined interests and values becomes active as a mediator? Where are the tools for an improved interplay of the relevant instruments and actors?

Many of these questions can best be answered by the Federal Foreign Office on its own, using its in-house capacities. In other areas, a special form of cooperation has proven to be of added value in recent years: the active exchange of knowledge with universities. This was an integral part

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of my department's work from the start. Scientists bring solid insights drawn from hands-on research to our government activities and reflect the research needs of our own practical experiences back to their scientific community.

The structures that have thus arisen in the Foreign Office are a successful start, and a volume like this one is an expression of the productivity of this cooperative effort.

Berlin, June 2021

Rüdiger König

Ministerial Director, Directorate-General S for Humanitarian Assistance, Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation and Post-Conflict Reconstruction (2015–2020)

Foreword by the Initiative Mediation Support Deutschland (IMSD)

Only ten years ago, the term “peace mediation” barely came up in German mediation circles. Mediation activities occurring in the context of peace processes were too diverse and too seldom guided by professional principles to be established as an independent field of mediation. Today, the term is well established in Germany. This anthology represents the first comprehensive handbook to present this subject area with a focus on Germany.

What brought us to this point? In the past decade, the increased professionalization of non-state and state actors as well as international organizations has led to a specialization, to a major development in learning and thus to the emergence of the discipline of peace mediation. In the course of this development, general professional guidelines and principles of mediation also have increasingly been recognized for mediation processes in the context of peace building – an area that is particularly exposed to power politics and pragmatic constraints.

This professionalization was initiated by a few international actors, who defined basic principles and established structures. Chief among them was the UN, which in 2006 set up a Mediation Support Unit followed by a Standby Team and the Group of Friends of Mediation (a network of countries that are dedicated to the topic). The UN also produced numerous publications in this field. The central document is considered to be the *UN Guidance for Effective Mediation* (2012), upon which the German *Peace Mediation Framework* (2019) also draws. In addition, over the years both the OSCE and the EU have installed units and concepts in which the topic of peace mediation is firmly anchored.

In Germany, peace mediation – which in 2013 was a niche area for non-governmental players – became a subject of political debate, culminating in its institutionalization in the Federal Foreign Office in 2015. This occurred after some EU member countries promoted the founding of a European peace institute in 2013 (ultimately established as the European Institute of Peace – EIP). The German Bundestag and Federal Government had to develop a position on this proposal, and a group of non-governmental mediation support actors took this as an opportunity to advocate for the institutionalization and professionalization of the field in Germany. Five

Foreword by the Initiative Mediation Support Deutschland (IMSD)

German organizations that were dedicated to peace mediation either primarily or as part of their work joined to form the Initiative Mediation Support Deutschland (IMSD), in order to bring in their expertise and promote the development of peace mediation among state actors. These five groups were the Berghof Foundation, the Center for Peace Mediation (CPM) at European University Viadrina, CSSP – Berlin Center for Integrative Mediation, inmedio – institute for mediation, counselling, development as well as the Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF). In cooperation with the Subcommittee on Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Management and Integrated Action, they put the topic on the political agenda and from then on supported it in the German Bundestag. The initial working meetings with the Federal Foreign Office in early 2014 led to a fruitful and trusting cooperation that can be described as a successful example of collaboration between civil society and state.

The results of this collaboration were several conferences (2014: Germany as Mediator; 2015: Expert Conference on Conflict Analysis and Mediation Entry Points; 2016: The OSCE as Mediator) as well as the Fact Sheets on various aspects of peace mediation – initially prepared as internal papers by the IMSD and the Federal Foreign Office – some of which are now published in this volume. Peace mediation is understood here as a generic term for various mediative interventions, including national dialogues, at various levels of society. This understanding, which is also reflected in this anthology, does not limit peace mediation to official peace or ceasefire negotiations but is based on the so-called “multi-track diplomacy” approach.

With the publication of the Federal Foreign Office's *Guidelines and Peace Mediation Framework* in 2019, peace mediation was systematically anchored in German foreign policy. From the standpoint of the IMSD, the years 2014 to 2019 thus could be seen as a start-up phase of peace mediation at the Federal Foreign Office. The focus is now turning towards many individual mediation processes and engagements – implemented or financially supported by the Federal Foreign Office itself – and to an increasing internal institutionalization in the Federal Foreign Office. In this new phase, too, the IMSD network of experts will continue to support the Foreign Office's capacity building.

Thus, this volume could not be more opportune. The current task is to further refine the discipline of peace mediation and support its application in the political realm, for it is clear that the practical translation of the *Peace Mediation Framework* is subject to the constraints of realpolitik and complex contextual factors. It is therefore all the more important to be clear about the technical guidelines and principles, in order to be able to

Foreword by the Initiative Mediation Support Deutschland (IMSD)

demand that they be followed as much as possible. This volume is intended to contribute towards achieving that clarity and shaping of the concept of peace mediation.

Berlin, June 2021

Christoph Lüttmann and Dirk Splinter
(representing the approximately 20 individuals who have filled the IMSD with life and content since its founding)

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
BAKS	Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik / Federal Academy for Security Policy
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung / Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CPM	Center for Peace Mediation, European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)
CSS	Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich
CSSP	Berlin Center for Integrative Mediation
DSF	Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung / German Foundation for Peace Research
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIP	European Institute of Peace
EU	European Union
FDFA	Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung / Friedrich Ebert Foundation
FFO	Federal Foreign Office
FriEnt	Arbeitsgemeinschaft Frieden und Entwicklung / Working Group on Peace and Development
GCSP	Geneva Centre for Security Policy
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit
GMF	German Marshall Fund of the United States
HD	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ifa	Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMSD	Initiative Mediation Support Deutschland
ISSG	International Syria Support Group
MSP	Mediation Support Project
MSU	Mediation Support Unit
NGO(s)	Non-governmental organization(s)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SMM	Special Monitoring Mission
SWP	Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik / German Institute for International and Security Affairs
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Abbreviations

UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNSMIS	UN Supervision Mission in Syria
ZFD	Ziviler Friedensdienst / Civil Peace Service
ZIF	Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze / Center for International Peace Operations

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The Volume's Structure and Line of Thought

Anne Holper & Lars Kirchhoff

This publication consists of three parts, each of which examines peace mediation in German foreign policy from a different angle. Part I focuses on concepts and structures, Part II analyses methodology and norms, and Part III integrates all these perspectives within a political-strategic evaluation of the status quo.

In **Part I: The Formation of a German Mediation Profile – Guidelines, Processes, Networks**, six authors from Germany and Switzerland present various approaches to the topic of peace mediation: 1) a compilation of key dimensions and guiding questions for shaping state mediation profiles; 2) an assessment of peace mediation in the current political landscape (including the resulting challenges and niches of action for Germany); 3) an inventory of the historical development and conceptual foundations behind Germany's role as a mediation actor; 4) an appeal to make (better) use of Germany's potential in the field of peace mediation; and 5) a current – by its very nature fractal – view of the role that mediation initiatives have played and could play in Syria.

Part II: The Fact Sheet Series “Peace Mediation and Peace Mediation Support” – Methodological Professionalization includes five items from a collection of policy briefs developed by the Federal Foreign Office and the Initiative Mediation Support Deutschland (IMSD). These were assembled in recent years on the basis of an intensive process of exchange and coordination between the relevant units of the Federal Foreign Office (in particular the Division S03, which is responsible for peace mediation) and the five organizations of the IMSD. Since their successive completion (in some cases they already have been revised and updated), these items have provided comprehensive orientation, served targeted capacity building (for example, for diplomatic training courses and embassies) and certainly contributed to the further development and refinement of the German approach to peace mediation.

Against the background of the first part and the Fact Sheets, the goal of **Part III: Peace Mediation as a Balancing Act Between Methodology, Power and Politics** is to situate the current state of development of peace mediation – in general and in Germany – conceptually, politically,

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methodologically, and scientifically. To that end, the relevant fields of tension are laid out and a tentative prognosis is offered, which open questions could shape the future axes of development. In addition, remaining core questions concerning the differentiation of Germany's roles in peace mediation are addressed.

The **Annex** to this volume contains the **“Peace Mediation Framework” of the Federal Foreign Office**. As the framework represents a milestone in the development of peace mediation in Germany and practically all other texts in this publication relate to this concept, its inclusion is essential.

As the Fact Sheets serve to clarify central terms and concepts in peace mediation and to illustrate their complexity based on concrete examples, the first part of this volume does not need to offer a traditional explanation of terms. Instead, it can be completely dedicated to the framing and contextualization of contents that will be concretized later on. In the synopsis of the two parts, the potentials of theory and practice (isolated and considered together) for the future development of the topic also crystallize, as will be illustrated in the concluding Part III.

With this intentionally heterogeneous compilation of contributions on the conceptual framework, the structural fabric, the political-strategic debate, the methodological and normative professionalization as well as the scientific exploration of the field, an overview of the current landscape of peace mediation appears feasible and worthwhile.