

Review of: "The Failure of Diplomatic Mediations in the Syrian Conflict – A Comparative Analysis"

Rubén Rivas-de-Roca¹

¹ Universidad Rey Juan Carlos

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

1. The text furthers our understanding on the reasons that fueled the failure of diplomatic mediations in the Syrian conflict. The authors followed a very inspiring approach based on five challenges of mediation as an analytical tool: Mission and Mandate, Impartiality and Inclusivity, Entry and Consent, Strategy, and Leverage. An insightful background is offered on the events that marked the conflict and the concept of mediation. However, the text would benefit from a clearer structure. For instance, having a method section in which the authors should explain how the analytical tool of challenges work.

Moreover, it is missed the clarification of some objectives/research questions in the introduction or the theoretical background. Although the development of a comparative analysis is acknowledged, specific objectives are needed (What are you doing the analysis for?)

2. The manuscript works as theoretical-driven research. This explains the huge and excellent overview of the conflict and the idea of mediation, but the method is little presented. Therefore, the scope of the present work may be expanded by giving details on how the information was collected.

Besides that, I think that the comparison between the mediation by the League of Arab States and the United Nations makes sense. Nevertheless, no clear reason is provided. The paper states that "new chapter of mediation started when LAS handed the Syrian file to the United Nations (UN) in February 2012", but why LAS meant a new stage? In my opinion, a deeper reflection on it would contribute to better understand the scope of the article.

3. The results of the analysis are noteworthy, arguing that the mediation missions for Syria have not addressed three key factors: the psychological drivers of the direct conflicting parties, the requested independence of the mediation, and the neutralization of the opposition from regional funding. Regarding academic soundness, the findings are exposed in a little fragmented way. I would suggest to reinforcing the conclusion with this information or creating a new subsection that summarizes the mediation efforts of the two main entities (League of Arab States and the United Nations).

4. Lastly, I believe that the current conclusions section is not enough to understand the implications of the study since there is not a proper discussion. The authors should put their findings in relationship to prior scholarship. Furthermore, it is also recommended to acknowledge some limitations and future lines of research.

5. The list of references is appropriate and updated.

6. In short, this article deals with a relevant and timely issue. The theoretical-centered approach is quite interesting,

showing the factors that impact on the weak international mediation for the Syrian conflict. This war has caused great damage, but lessons from this conflict in terms of geopolitical mediation could be applied to different contexts. It would be helpful in future versions of this study to enlarge the conclusions and reinforce the methodological design, but the current text already develops a rich comparative analysis.