

Mediation in international relations (Case study: Oman by the end of King Ghaboos era in 2020)

Fatemeh Shayan 

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Economics,
 University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.

Article Info	Abstract
Original Article Main Object: International Relations Scope: Oman Received: 27 March 2023 Revised: 13 April 2023 Accepted: 17 April 2023 Published online: 22 May 2023 Keywords: mediation, oil revenues, pragmatic foreign policy, prestige, Soltan Ghaboos.	Why and how can Oman become a mediator in the Middle East and international level is assessed in this article. What mechanisms and tools have been applied by this country? The theoretical framework applied in this article is based on the contribution of mediation in international relations. The emphasizes here is on the trustworthiness and neutral role of mediators, specifically a small state with a non-threatening role. Such countries have acquired prestige at international level. The role of the former leader, King Ghaboos, and adopting neutral policy, pragmatic foreign policy, and stable economy are the major contributive factors in making Oman to act as a mediator between Israel and Palestine, Iran and Saudi Arabia and the nuclear energy issue of Iran and the West. The findings here reveal that Oman with her modest oil revenues, as a prestigious mediator guided by his Majesty King Ghaboos has offered short-term solutions through a traditional manner.

Cite this article: Shayan F. (2023). "Mediation in international relations (Case study: Oman by the end of King Ghaboos era in 2020)". *Countries Studies*. 1(2): 41-45. doi: <https://doi.org/10.22059/jcountst.2023.357115.1024>.



Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

Website: <https://jcountst.ut.ac.ir/> | Email: jcountst@ut.ac.ir |

EISSN: 2980-9193

Publisher: University of Tehran

* Email: f.shayan@ase.ui.ac.ir,  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9219-871X>

Extended Abstract**Introduction**

The aim of this research is to assess the way in which Oman has become a mediator in the Middle East and international level.

Research Question

The main question concerns why and how has Oman become a mediator in the Middle East and international level? What mechanisms and tools have been applied by this country?

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research is based on the fact that Oman's neutrality policy, pragmatic foreign policy, leadership role of Sultan Qaboos and the successor, and prosperity and financial stability have caused Oman's role as a mediator, but they have traditionally mediated in Oman.

Methodology (Theoretical Framework)

In this paper, the qualitative research method for studying the hypothesis is based on descriptive-analytical research method. Data collection tools are libraries and internet resources. The proposed research theoretical framework refers to the contribution of mediation in international relations. The emphasis is on the trustworthiness and neutral role of mediators, specifically a small state with a non-threatening role.

Results and Discussion

Analyses in this research indicate that Oman's main motivations for mediation can be divided into three categories: gaining credibility and reputation, creating a perspective as a leading actor, and mediation as an Islamic and religious duty.

In relation to gaining credibility and reputation, Oman is a small country in the Persian Gulf, where Sultan Qaboos had adopted special policies since 70s, which is rare in the Middle East region. Oman has tried to deal with regional disputes and rivalries. Oman acts neutrally and do not interfere in Yemen and Syria, and most importantly, cooperate with other countries to get the honor of mediation. All these are the characteristics that sometimes turn this seemingly marginal country into an actor which gains fame, credit and honor.

Regarding the second motivation, creating a vision as a leading actor, Omani politicians have a vision to become a prominent actor in the Middle East and international level. Oman considers mediation as a strategic priority that can reduce threats such as terrorism, issues related to Palestine and conflicts between Iran and America.

Regarding the third motivation, Oman perceives mediation as an Islamic and religious duty. Resolving disputes outside the courts, and

referring to persons other than judges appointed by Sharia is without problem and has been emphasized by Islam.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that Oman's credit has been created in the shadow of oil revenues and independent foreign policy. But, first, the acceptance of a country as a mediator is the key to his success in this process, and Oman has adopted a neutral and independent foreign policy. Sultan Qaboos and the successor have increased the legitimacy of Oman's role by inviting Netanyahu, American and Iranian politicians, and some European negotiators in Iran's nuclear program to Muscat.

Secondly, Oman's negotiating role and patient dialogue with the conflicting parties have helped to build trust, negotiate and manage them in Oman's mediation. This goes back more to the role of Sultan Qaboos and his foreign minister, who tried to mediate committedly, although it has not necessarily brought absolute peace and reduced conflicts.

The sum of these results shows that Oman traditionally plays the role of mediator and does not have the knowledge to solve problems and conflicts in an institutional and scientific way at the moment and has acted based on the personal experiences of Sultan Qaboos, his successor and their accompanying team.

Other findings of the research indicate that Oman has not presented an advanced model of mediation and a set of factors such as moderate and neutral foreign policy, economic situation and relations with the parties to the conflict have created the traditional role of mediation for Oman, although Oman's mediations have produced short-term solutions.

Ethical considerations

The author has completely considered ethical issues, including informed consent, plagiarism, data fabrication, misconduct, and/or falsification, double publication and/or redundancy, submission, etc.

Data availability

The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the author on reasonable request.

References

Quran.

Aftab (2019). "The Re-mediation of Oman in Tehran: What is the Aims of bin Alavi's Trip to Iran". 21 January.

<https://aftabnews.ir/fa/news/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]

Al- Balushi M. (2020). "Oman's Neutrality; The Peaceful Weapon to Protect the Country's Security". *American Journal of Political Science*. 54(2): 1-12.

Barakat S. (2014). "Qatari Mediation: Between Ambition and Achievement".

- Brooking Doha Center Analyses Paper*. November 12. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/qatari-mediation-between-ambition-and-achievement/> (accessed: 12.2.2021).
- Bercovitch J, Rubin JZ. (1992). *Mediation in International Relations*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Bohmelt T. (2010). "The Effectiveness of Tracks of Diplomacy Strategies in the Third Parties Intervention". *Journal of Peace Research*. 74(2): 160-180.
- Borna (2011). "The New King of Oman Preserve its Relation with Iran". 30 June. <https://www.isna.ir/news/94112717253/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Bpake RR, Mouton JS. (1985). *Solving Organizational Conflicts*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brynen RJ. (2016). "Iran vs Saudi: Oman's Neutrality May Be Key to Resolving Region's Conflicts". *Al-Ahram*. 14 February. <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/187274.aspx> (accessed: 12.12.2020).
- Defense of Democracies (2019). "Oman and Mediation". available at: <https://www.fdd.org/> (accessed: 12.2.2020).
- Ezatti M. (2009). "Mediation and Behaviour of Oman in Reginal Dynamics". 24 June. <http://peace-ipsc.org/fa/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Jafari Veldani A. (2009). "Geopolitics of Strait of Hurmoz and Iran and Oman Relation". *Research of Political Science*. 5(3): 35-67. [in Persian]
- Hafeznia MR, Rabiee H. (2013). *Regional Studies of Persian Gulf*. Tehran: Samt. [in Persian]
- Hosseini K. (2018). "Oman: An Isolating Mediator but Successful in the Middle East." <https://www.bbc.com/persian/iran-features-46005812>. (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- IRNA (2019a). "Mediation Message in the Secret Letter of bin Salman to Oman". 26 October. <https://www.irna.ir/news/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- (2019b). "Egypt and Saudi Arabia Relationships under the Shade of Silent tension". 27 November. <https://www.irna.ir/news/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- (2019c). "There Is no Mediation between Iran and the US with terror of Soleimani". 5 January. <https://www.irna.ir/news/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Karami AD, DoostMohammadi A. (2016). "Geopolitical Analysis of Iran and Oman Relationships before and after the Islamic Revolution of Iran". *Geopolitics*. 12(3): 121-151. [in Persian]
- Khabar Online* (2009). "From Iraq to Switzerland: to Mediation for Iran". 25 May. <https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- MirGeloe Bayat J. (2020). "An Expert of Oman Issues: Mediation between Iran and the West Continue". 30 March. *ISNA*. <https://www.isna.ir/news/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- (2018). "Oman Relationships with Israel: Competition with Saudi Arabia or Isolation from Iran? 16 February. <http://irdiplomacy.ir/fa/news/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Mokhtari M, Adami A. (2017). "Economic Necessity of Development of the Relationships of Iran and Oman". *Quarterly of International Relations*. 23(1): 207-232. [in Persian]
- Nakhaee R. (2019). "Continous meeting Iranian Delegation, Oman and Yemen in Masqat: Mediation in the Land of Mediation". 25 December. <https://www.magiran.com/article/3998169> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Quds* (2018). "Israel Times: Was Iran the Secret Aim of the Trip of Netanyahu". 27 October. <https://www.godsna.com/fa/319594> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Roydad 24* (2009). "Mediation Crisis in the Region: Is there any hope to the New King of Oman?" 18 January. <https://www.roydad24.com/fa/news/> (accessed:

- 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Shargh News* (2019). "The Report of Defence Institute of Democracy: Oman Is Not Neutral?" 7 July. <https://www.mashreghnews.ir/news/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- (2014). "Why Oman Is the Place of Meetings for Iran and Oman Delegation". 8 November. <https://www.mashreghnews.ir/news/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Shayan F. (2017). *Security in the Persian Gulf Region*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Slim RM. (1992). "Small State Mediation of the Iranian Hostage Crisis". in Bercovitch, Jacob and Rubin, Jeffrey Z., *Mediation in International Relations: Multiple Approaches to Conflict Management*. London: Hampshire: 206-231. [in Persian]
- Solooki V. (2018). "The Key Role of Oman in the Region". <http://peace-ipsc.org/fa/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Soori R. (2018). "Netanyahu Trip to Masghat: Their Aims and Objectives". 5 November. <http://www.iiwfs.com/islam-world/islam-world-notes-and-papers/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Sputnik Iran* (2019). "Oman Readiness for Mediation between Iran and Oman". 9 May. <https://ir.sputniknews.com/politics/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Stenelo LG. (1972). *Mediation in International Negotiations*. Lund: Student Literature.
- Tabnak* (2014). "Oman: We became mediator in order that Iran and the US Negotiates". 31 Farvardin, <https://www.tabnak.ir/fa/news/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Tasnim* (2018). "The Result of Netanyahu's Trip to Oman". 27 October. <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/> (accessed: 1.2.2023). [in Persian]
- Vaezee M. (2005). "Theoretical Concept of Mediation in International Conflict." *Research of Law and Politics*. 1(2): 11-36. [in Persian]
- World Bank (2019). "Oman: Economic Update-April 2019-May 1". www.Worldbank.Org/Country/gcc/publication/Oman-economic-update-april-2019 (accessed: 1.2.2021).
- Worrall J. (2021). "Switzerland of Arabia: Omani Foreign Policy and Mediation Efforts in the Middle East". *The International Spectator*. 56(4): 134-150.