

## Methods Used to Deal with Peace Process Spoilers

Bilbil Kastrati

### Abstract

The conflicts of the past three decades have shown that the major problems which peace processes face are the spoilers. Spoilers are warring parties and their leaders who believe that peaceful settlement of disputes threatens their interests, power and their reputation; therefore, they use all means to undermine or completely spoil the process. Spoilers of peace processes can be inside or outside of the process and are characterized as limited, greedy or total spoilers. Their motives for spoiling can be different, such as: political, financial, ethnic, security, etc. Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that spoilers are not only rebels and insurgents, but can often be governments, diasporas, warlords, private military companies, etc.

In order to counteract the spoilers, the international community has adopted and implemented three methods: inducement, socialization and coercion. Often all three methods are used to convince the spoilers to negotiate, accept and implement peace agreements. Hence, this paper will examine the methods used to deal with peace process spoilers through an assessment of the strategies employed, impact, success and failures.

This paper will also argue that the success or failure of the peace process depends on the method(s) used to deal with spoilers. If the right method is chosen, with a persistent

engagement of the international community, the peace process will be successful; on the contrary, if they fail to do so, the consequences will be devastating.

**Keywords:** Spoilers, Peace process, Inducement, Socialization, Coercion.

## 1. Introduction

For the peacebuilding operations planners and the international community in general it is very important to know the nature, sources and potentials of spoilers. Further, knowledge on definition of spoiling or spoilers, types of spoilers and their motives for spoiling is crucial, since as we will see through this paper choosing the right method and strategy to deal with spoilers is decisive in concluding successfully a peace process.

### 1.1 What is spoiling of the peace process?

Many scholars have different definitions for *spoiling* or *spoilers* of the peace process. Stedman (1997, p. 5) considers that spoilers are 'leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview and interests, [therefore they] use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it.' Similarly, Newman and Richmond (2006, p. 1). consider spoilers, as 'groups and tactics that actively seek to hinder, delay or undermine conflict settlement through a variety of means and for a variety of motives.'

At the centre of these broad definitions are the activities of any party in the peace process who for different reasons oppose the peaceful settlement of a conflict. These parties may be within or outside of the peace process and may use violence and other forms of obstruction to disrupt the process while seeking to achieve their interests. Likewise, parties who first join the peace process but, in the meantime withdraw and hinder or threaten to spoil the peace process, are considered to be spoilers. Also, there are parties who join the peace process as long as it promises to be advantageous for them, although they are not sincerely committed to a peaceful settlement.

Besides the local actors (i.e. warring parties involved in peace process), there are often external actors who influence the terms of the negotiations. Often these external actors make decisions about war and peace. These spoilers are governments, diasporas, multinational corporations and others who benefit from the conflict and violence.

## 1.2 Types of Spoilers

Experiences from previous peace operations show that all parties in conflict are potential spoilers (Greenhill and Major, 2006). Spoilers differ on the goals they want to achieve (limited or total) and in their commitment to attain these goals - high or low (Darby and MacGinty, 2003). According to Stedman (1997, pp. 10-15), a peace process may be threatened from three types of spoilers: limited, greedy and total spoilers.

Limited spoilers have limited goals. Usually their demands can be met by adjusting the peace process so that it better reflects their interests and preferences. In general, they are satisfied with their recognition by exercising or sharing power and through assuring security for their followers. However, limited goals do not mean that they are limited in their commitment to achieve those goals, which they consider non-negotiable.

Greedy spoilers are more opportunistic. This type of spoiler lies between the limited and total spoiler. Their demands depend on the conditions on the ground and the calculation of risks and costs. Greedy spoiler may have limited or total goals, but if their limited goals are met they can be accommodated into a peace settlement, presuming that the costs of war are too high for the total goals.

Total spoilers can only be satisfied by achieving total power and exclusive recognition of authority. Usually this type of spoiler is led by individuals and their demands are non-negotiable since their view of the world is in terms of *all or nothing*; therefore, they oppose any compromise. Total spoilers cannot be induced or socialized; hence, for a peace process to move forward, total spoilers must be either defeated or marginalized so that they can do little to damage the process.

## 1.3 Spoiler motives

Parties who undermine and spoil peace process have different motives for doing so. The motives for spoiling vary from political, economic, cultural, social, security, etc. All parties who participate in peace negotiations demand recognition, albeit some of them want to benefit from peace process by gaining exclusive political power. Others seek a share of the power, while there are also those who want to exercise power in democratically elected institutions. An additional motive is also cultural; constituting social identities including ethnic, racial and religious identities, and the fear of these groups that they might be eliminated by adversaries, should they be disarmed after the peace settlement. Access to economic

resources is another motive for spoiling since all parties require their share in economic resources, such as diamonds, oil, etc. Lastly, some parties are motivated by perceptions of insecurity and they need security guarantees in order to participate in the peace process.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that, in many cases, the international community has observed that these motives overlap; therefore, successful conclusion of a peace process depends mainly on the manner these motives are addressed.

## **2. Methods used to deal with spoilers**

In peace negotiations, warring parties tend to maximise their claims. However, since there is no real possibility of satisfying all parties with an agreement, some of the parties decide to undermine the peace process. Spoilers usually use different forms of obstruction such as inactivity, manipulation, non-cooperation and sometimes resort to violence, in hope of a better position in peace negotiations. Therefore, it is necessary for peacebuilding operations planners to have a clear understanding of, and to consider how to deal with spoilers as a threat. In order to understand what causes, motivates and escalates spoilers we must know their tactics, motivations, funding, number and type (Newman and Richmond, 2006).

First, when dealing with spoilers, a comprehensive analysis of each potential spoiler must be done. This analysis will show spoilers' interests, leadership, composition, motives, available resources, positions in conflict, strategies, perception of the conflict and will identify its allies and adversaries. This will help the peacebuilding operations planners to determine what kind of methods and strategies should be applied to deal with each spoiler individually.

The international community has identified a range of methods to deal with spoilers. Depending on each particular case different methods have been applied; from exclusive strategies which aim to weaken or defeat the spoiler, to inclusive approaches aiming to integrate spoilers into peace process. In some cases, combination of these two strategies is suitable to allow the spoilers to overcome their behaviour. In light of this, Stedman (1997) has suggested three types of methods to deal with peace process spoilers. Initially, spoilers with a limited degree of commitment should be *induced* by giving them what they want. Second, greedy spoilers should be *socialized* within a set of norms, rewards and punishments if needed.

Finally, total spoilers who pursue an all or nothing approach should be *coerced* and, if this is not successful, they should be marginalised and defeated.

## **2.1 Inducement**

Inducement is a method which aims to persuade spoilers to join peace process. This involves taking positive measures to address the concerns of warring parties as a mode of engaging them in the negotiation process. This method is productive when dealing with limited spoilers, if their demands can be met and if the other parties committed to the peace process agree with it. The limited spoiler attitude may be motivated by different factors such as the demand to be recognized as a legitimate party, demands for greater spoils (interests), but it can also be motivated by fear or insecurity.

### **2.1.1 Angola case**

After two decades of fighting back and forth following the independence of Angola in 1991, the Government of Angola and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) signed a peace agreement in Portugal to end the civil war (U.S. Institute of Peace). This agreement was brokered by the governments of Portugal, the United States of America (USA), and the Soviet Union which foresaw demobilization of military forces, establishment of the new Angola's army and the organization of national elections.

In 1992, elections took place in Angola; Jonas Savimbi, the leader of UNITA, lost the elections against Angola's President Santos and his party, the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola). Subsequent to this, Savimbi withdrew from the peace process, refused to cooperate with the international community and launched military attacks against President Santos' forces (Maier, 2007). The USA, as a mediating party, initially induced Savimbi by supporting his actions as legitimate; however, he soon became more aggressive and undermined the negotiations process completely.

Savimbi's behaviour resulted in the international community - including the USA - to change their course. Angola's government, led by President Santos, was recognized by the international community, Angola's army was rearmed and sanctions were imposed on UNITA. This stance taken by

the international community left Savimbi with little space for manoeuvre, thus he was forced to return to the negotiations process (Stedman, 1997).

This case illustrates that the inducement method failed in Angola, due to the USA's close relations with Savimbi and their claim that his military actions were legitimate, which ultimately proved to be an incorrect tactic as he became more aggressive and significantly undermined the peace process. As a result, it became necessary to use the threat of force and impose sanctions against UNITA in order to entice Savimbi back into the negotiation process. It is clear from the Angola case that inducement of the limited spoiler might prove counterproductive, since it might increase the appetite for new concessions or encourage more greedy behaviour.

## **2.2 Socialization**

The method of socialization incorporates a set of norms, which are established by the party who leads the negotiations, aiming to reach a peace agreement between warring parties and which will determine the acceptable behaviour of all actors in the conflict. These norms apply for parties who are committed to peace and those that wish to join later.

There are two components which determine the normative framework for acceptable behaviour - material and intellectual. The material component requires the party that leads the negotiations to utilise a careful application of rewards (carrots) and punishments (sticks) for spoilers. The intellectual component emphasises the need that parties involved should respect the normative framework.

### **2.2.1 Mozambique case**

The civil war in Mozambique, which started in 1977, was concluded with a peace agreement signed between the government of Mozambique and the Mozambique's National Resistance (RENAMO) in 1992. However, the international community was sceptical about RENAMO's honest commitment to the peace process. In the beginning, RENAMO was financially induced by the international community to transform military group into a democratic political party. RENAMO's leader, Dhlakama, claimed that their fight was just and required security assurances and legitimization. This was a sign for the international community that RENAMO had to be socialized into rules of *democratic competition* as a means for its legitimization - in return for its commitment to implement the peace agreement. At this stage, an important role was played by the

neighbouring countries (South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and Tanzania) who warned Dhlakama that they will not support the obstruction of the peace process. Furthermore, the demobilization of its armed forces reduced the possibilities for RENAMO to succeed with the war against the government. Considering all this, with some forthcoming obstruction, Dhlakama participated in the elections of 1994 and became part of the newly elected parliament of Mozambique (Stedman, 1997).

Mozambique case shows that socialization of the spoiler was successful. This was due to the fact that the international community predicted the intentions of Dhlakama who indicated that he required legitimacy and wished to be seen as a democrat. Therefore, the international community involved him into the norms of democratic competition and he became part of the newly elected Mozambique parliament. However, it is important to note that Dhlakama's behaviour was determined first by his assertion to be seen as a legitimate democratic actor; and second, by RENAMO's lack of military capabilities to create substantial change and defeat the government; and finally, because he did not have support from the neighbouring countries.

### 2.3 Coercion

The method of coercion is used with total spoilers who employ the *all or nothing* strategy in the peace process. This method threatens to punish spoilers who do not comply with the normative behaviour and aims to reduce their capabilities to undermine the peace process. Use of the coercion method means employing different strategies, like coercive diplomacy, applying force to defeat the spoiler, departing train and withdrawal strategies.

#### 2.3.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina case

After the horrors in Bosnia and Herzegovina war (1992 - 1995) which culminated with massacres in Srebrenica and Markale, the international community had to employ use of force against Bosnian Serbs in order to end the war. Subsequently the international community used coercive diplomacy in order to persuade the Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks to sign and comply with the Dayton agreement (U.S. Department of State).

Parties of this peace agreement were not satisfied, in particular the political leadership of Bosnian Serbs who refused and obstructed the implementation of terms of the Dayton agreement. In these circumstances,

the international community was obliged to convince the Bosnian Serb patron, the Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, that there was no alternative to Dayton agreement, and that it needs to be fully implemented and respected. President Milošević, under the diplomatic pressure of the international community, accordingly declared that the demands of its client Bosnian Serbs related to the agreement were illegitimate which opened way finally for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Kaldor, 2007).

This case shows that a combination of use of force and coercive diplomacy was the only way to defeat the total spoiler, in this case the Bosnian Serbs, in order to achieve desired results. However, overall peace was only possible when the Bosnian Serb patron President Milošević (who was not formally part of the conflict) was forced to close the door to its ally, the Bosnian Serbs.

### 2.3.2 Kosovo case

War in Kosovo (1998 - 1999) marked the final step in dissolution of Yugoslavia. Armed clashes, which began in late 1997 between ethnic Kosovo Albanians and Serbian security forces, grew into intensive conflict in early 1998 (Weymouth and Hening, 2001). The international community engaged the diplomatic machinery in order to prevent what was seen as the next human tragedy after Bosnia and Herzegovina. The parties, Kosovo Albanians and Serbs, were invited to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Rambouillet conference (France) in March 1999 (Chatham House). The proposed peace agreement was signed by Kosovo Albanians, but was refused by Serbia. Serbia's refusal to sign the peace agreement and the continuing atrocities in the field against the Kosovo Albanians left the international community with little choice; thus use of force was applied to defeat the total spoiler Serbia.

This was a case where the total spoiler could not be accommodated into the peace process; hence, the use of force was the key to achieving peace. Serbia was a total spoiler since it did not respond to calls from the international community to peacefully solve the Kosovo crisis. In contrast, the Serbian security forces launched an ethnic cleansing campaign against Kosovo Albanians; killing more than 10,000 people and displacing over 1.5 million (U.S. State Department).

This case shows that use of force as a method with the total spoiler was the correct one. Use of force was necessary because the total spoiler Serbia employed the *all or nothing* strategy despite extensive attempts of the inter-



national community to find a peaceful solution for Kosovo crisis. Therefore, it was necessary to defeat Serbia completely in order to achieve peace.

### **2.3.3 Cambodia case**

The peace agreement signed in Paris conference in 1991 (U.S. Institute of Peace) provided the means to end the long lasting civil war in Cambodia between the warring parties of the Khmer Rouge (KR) and the government of Cambodia. At the outset, the KR respected the provisions of the peace agreement; however, when the time came for demobilization, disarmament and cantonment of its military forces, the KR started a campaign to obstruct the agreement. International community present in Cambodia (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia - UNTAC) discussed the possibility of the use of force against the KR, but could not reach an agreement. Nevertheless, UNTAC was committed to continue the peace process, with or without the KR, while leaving the door open in case they wanted to join the process at a later date. The UNTAC imposed economic sanctions against the KR in an attempt to force them to participate in the peace process. Furthermore, they organized democratic elections in September 1993 and May 1994, which were supported by neighbouring countries China and Thailand; albeit the KR did not participate. Surprisingly, even though the KR did not participate in the election, they did not launch any military offensive to obstruct same, which allowed for the establishment of democratic institutions in Cambodia (Stedman, 1997).

This case shows that the international community successfully applied the departing train method, since they were determined to continue peace process with or without the KR, while still leaving the door open for them in case they wanted to join.

### **2.3.4 Rwanda case**

The three-year war (1990 -1993) between the Hutu and Tutsi groups ended with signing of the Arusha Peace Accords (U.N. Peacemaker) between the President of Rwanda Juvenal Habyarimana and the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF). This act of the President Habyarimana was not endorsed by many Hutu extremists of the Committee for the Defence of the Republic (CDR) who coerced the President not to comply with the Arusha accords. Forced to act as such, President Habyarimana was seen as a spoiler in the eyes of the international community. The international community (United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda - UNAMIR) chose to

threaten President Habyarimana with withdrawal from Rwanda if he refused to comply with peace accords. In response to this, President Habyarimana agreed to establish the Broad Based Transitional Government (BBTG) which would include representatives of all warring parties; the very same day he was murdered by CDR extremists. This then produced a wave of violence and mass killings of Tutsi and Hutu moderates, which resulted in extermination of over a million people within two months. The extremists also posed a threat to the international community present in Rwanda, the UNAMIR, which withdrew most of its personnel from the country (Steadman, 1997).

This case shows that the method of withdrawal used by the international community was a failure because they did not assess correctly the spoilers in the Rwandan conflict. The policy of the international community to threaten President Habyarimana with withdrawal led to a failure, since the CDR extremists murdered him and launched a campaign against and carried out genocide towards moderate Hutu and Tutsi groups.

### **3. Peace conditionalities**

The international community mainly concentrates its efforts in finding a settlement for a conflict by signing a peace agreement between the warring parties. However, signing the agreement does not end the spoiling behavior. As noted by Kofi Annan, 'roughly half of all the countries that emerge from war lapse back into violence within five years' (International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect). This shows that spoiling continues in various ways even after a peace agreement is signed. Hence, it is necessary for the international community, domestic elites and social groups to take different measures to prevent spoiling in order to curb corruption, criminality and failing of states. Goodhand and Sedra (2007) argue that there are various measures which could be used to counteract spoilers. First, there are socio-economic measures, which entail the creation of economic policies that are conflict-reducing and assist in transforming a war economy to a peace economy. This includes developing policies which promote growth, employment and target poverty. Second, it is important to implement political measures which foster election of legitimate authorities who would diversely represent interests, manage competing claims and resolve conflicts. Finally, security measures should be considered by preventing infiltration of insurgents and terrorist groups, reform the

security sector and placing means of violence under the supervision of legitimate civilian authorities.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Spoilers are the main challenge to peace process; therefore, it is essential for the international community to consider ways to deal with them. Consequently, for the successful peacebuilding operations planners, it is essential to know the nature, sources and potentials of spoilers.

As spoilers consider the peace process to be a threat to their interests, power and worldview, they use different methods to undermine it. As mentioned above, there are three types of spoilers: limited, greedy and total spoilers; each with different motives for spoiling, such as political, social, economic, and security. Recognising this, the international community has adopted different methods to counteract the spoilers including inducement, socialization and coercion. In some of the cases, all three methods are used in order to pacify particular spoiler.

Inducement is an appropriate method to deal with limited spoilers, but if limited spoiler cannot be accommodated with inducement then measures of socialization or coercion may be applied instead. The socialization method is used to deal with greedy spoiler which in most cases has been successful. Finally, the use of force, coercive diplomacy and the departing train methods has proved to be appropriate in dealing with total spoilers.

The case studies explored in this paper demonstrate that choosing the right method and strategy was decisive for success or failure in dealing with a given spoiler. Experience has shown that poor diagnosis and wrong choice of methods to deal with spoilers can lead to a failure, like in Angola, and the Rwanda case where it produced a catastrophe. However, in cases such as Mozambique through an early identification of the problem, right diagnosis and, by choosing the right method to deal with the spoiler, the conflict was successfully brought to an end.

In sum, history has taught us that signing a peace agreement is not always the end of spoiling in any peace process. Therefore, the international community must undertake measures to prevent spoiling: political, such as strengthening democratic institutions; socio-economic, developing the economy and targeting poverty; security related, reforming the security sector and placing security institutions under the supervision of legitimate civilian authorities.

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