

Dealing with Divergence: Intra-party Dynamics and Spoiler Management in Civil Wars

Desirée Nilsson  and Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs 

Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Sweden

Abstract

Civil war peace processes are frequently accompanied by spoiler behavior relating to intra-party divergence, such as leadership struggles or breakaway groups, which risk undermining the implementation of a peace accord. However, previous literature has not sufficiently explored how third-party actors can address spoiler behavior linked to such intra-party aspects. This study addresses this gap by providing an empirical analysis of a few illustrative cases of spoiler behavior by armed actors in two peace processes in West Africa—Sierra Leone after the 1999 Lomé peace accords and Liberia after the 2003 Accra peace agreement. We find that in contexts where there is a vertical divergence between the leader and the rest of the group, divisive strategies—aimed to divide and rule or marginalize—are effective. In contrast, in situations of horizontal divergence between different factions that are more equal in power, integrative strategies—aimed at unifying the ranks or reconciling a divided leadership—are more appropriate. This study enhances our understanding of how third-party strategies can be devised to manage intra-party divisions that otherwise may threaten a transition from war to peace.

Resumen

Los procesos de paz de las guerras civiles suelen ir acompañados de un comportamiento saboteador relacionado con las divergencias intrapartidistas, como las luchas por el liderazgo o los grupos disidentes, que corren el riesgo de socavar la ejecución de un acuerdo de paz. Sin embargo, la bibliografía previa no ha explorado de manera suficiente cómo los agentes de terceros pueden abordar el comportamiento saboteador vinculado a estos aspectos dentro de los partidos. Este estudio aborda esta brecha proporcionando un análisis empírico de algunos casos ilustrativos de comportamiento saboteador por parte de agentes armados en dos procesos de paz en África occidental: Sierra Leona después de los acuerdos de paz de Lomé de 1999 y Liberia después del acuerdo de paz de Accra de 2003. Observamos que, en contextos en los que existe una diferencia vertical entre el líder y el resto del grupo, las estrategias divisivas, destinadas a dividir y gobernar o a marginar, resultan efectivas. Por el contrario, en situaciones en las que existe una diferencia horizontal, entre diferentes facciones que ostentan un grado de poder más igualado, las estrategias integradoras, dirigidas a unificar las filas o a reconciliar un liderazgo dividido, resultan más apropiadas. Este estudio fortalece nuestra comprensión acerca de cómo se pueden diseñar estrategias por parte de agentes de terceros para

manejar las divisiones dentro de los partidos que, de otro modo, podrían amenazar una transición de la guerra a la paz.

Résumé

Lors de guerres civiles, le processus de paix s'accompagne souvent de comportements dommageables dus aux divergences internes du parti, telles des remises en question de la direction ou scissions, qui compromettent la mise en œuvre d'un accord de paix. Or, la littérature ne s'est jusqu'ici pas suffisamment intéressée aux potentialités d'intervention des tiers dans la gestion de tels comportements. Cette étude cherche à pallier cette situation au moyen d'une analyse empirique de quelques cas d'illustration de comportements dommageables d'acteurs armés lors de deux processus de paix en Afrique de l'Ouest: en Sierra Leone, après l'accord de Lomé de 1999, et au Libéria, après l'accord d'Accra de 2003. Selon nous, quand il existe une divergence verticale entre le chef et le reste du groupe, les stratégies clivantes, visant à diviser et gouverner ou à marginaliser, se révèlent efficaces. En revanche, en cas de divergence horizontale entre différentes factions de pouvoir plutôt similaire, les stratégies d'intégration, visant à unir les rangs ou réconcilier une direction divisée, sont davantage pertinentes. Cette étude nous permet de mieux comprendre comment les stratégies tierces peuvent être conçues afin de gérer les divisions internes du parti, autrement susceptibles de nuire à la transition entre guerre et paix.

Keywords: spoilers, intra-party, civil war, Liberia, Sierra Leone, third-party management

Palabras clave: sabotadores, intrapartidista, guerra civil, Liberia, Sierra Leona, gestión de terceros

Mots clés: comportements dommageables internes du parti, Libéria, Sierra Leone, gestion des tiers

Introduction

How can third-party actors in civil war peace processes manage spoiler behavior that results from intra-party divergence? Locally or internationally led attempts to end armed conflicts through negotiations are frequently accompanied by spoiler behavior that risks undermining the implementation of peace accords (Stedman 1997). Such incidents sometimes stem from intra-party divergence within the armed actors in question, for example, leadership struggles over ideology or tactics, competition and infighting between commanders over spoils of war, or fallouts between former allies. From peace efforts across the globe—from Sudan to Syria and the Philippines—we have witnessed divisions both within groups and between allies, resulting in aborted peace attempts, continued fighting, and further loss of lives. Research has demonstrated that intra-party fragmentation tends to make conflicts more violent, more difficult to resolve, and last longer, highlighting the potentially devastating long-term effects for conflict resolution when former friends become foes (e.g., Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour 2012; Rudloff and Findley 2016). However, in spite of the associated costs of derailed peace processes, we only have limited knowledge of how, if at all, third-party actors can successfully contribute to manage

spoiler behavior when it is related to or emerges from intra-party divergence.

This study addresses this gap by providing an empirical analysis of a few illustrative cases of spoiler behavior by armed actors in two peace processes in West Africa—Sierra Leone after the 1999 Lomé peace accords and Liberia after the 2003 Accra agreement—which were all linked to, and sometimes directly caused by, intra-party fragmentation. However, the spoiler management strategies that the respective third parties used varied considerably, both over time and across different armed groups, with sometimes detrimental implications for the peace process.

By analyzing these cases, this article makes several contributions. First, we contribute empirically by focusing on the intra-party dimension of spoiler events in the Sierra Leonean and Liberian peace processes, which has received limited attention in the literature. Second, we identify and present new theoretical insights regarding how third-party actors successfully manage spoiler behavior resulting fully or partly from intra-party divergence. We currently lack sufficient understanding of the various means and methods that third parties employ—ranging from diplomatic activities aiming at political legitimization and inclusion to military marginalization

through the use of force—and their effects on the peace efforts. While previous research has emphasized the importance of intra-party fragmentation for understanding the emergence of spoiler behavior, there has been much less written on third-party strategies for spoiler management in such contexts.

The article is structured in the following manner: First, we present a brief overview of the scholarly debate on spoilers in civil war peace processes and the literature on intra-party cohesion and fragmentation in armed groups. By linking together these two fields of research, we suggest a few theoretical points of departure that serve to guide our empirical analysis. Second, we analyze these issues in the light of some key spoiler events in the peace processes in Sierra Leone and Liberia, respectively. Thereafter, for the purposes of theory development, we use the empirical findings from our study to arrive at a set of conclusions in regard to third-party strategies for spoiler management in cases of internal divergence.

Intra-party Divergence and Spoiler Management

The Spoiler Debate

In an influential article, Stedman argued that so-called spoilers constitute the greatest source of risk to civil war peace processes (Stedman 1997). Stedman defined spoilers as “. . . leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it” (Stedman 1997, 5). Empirically, however, he focused on both violent and nonviolent behavior. The key reason for why some actors succeed in undermining a particular peace process while others do not, he suggested, is the role played by international peacemakers on site and their ability to both correctly diagnose the spoiler(s) in question and create and implement effective strategies for managing the particular type of spoiler they are facing. For this purpose, Stedman proposed a typology of spoilers, suggesting that different types of spoilers ought to be matched with appropriate third-party strategies or combinations thereof. The key choices are essentially three: “inducement” or meeting the demands of the spoiler; “socialization” or establishing a set of norms for acceptable behavior against which the parties’ actions should be measured and judged; and “coercion” aimed at punishing the spoiler or reducing its capacity through various tactics ranging from coercive diplomacy to the use of force (Stedman 1997, 12–14).

Stedman’s article and the research debate that followed generated a strand of additional work on this

topic, particularly regarding his spoiler typology, as well as why spoilers emerge in the first place (e.g., Zahar 2003, 2006a,b; Newman and Richmond 2006; Greenhill and Major 2007; Johnston 2007; Pearlman 2009; Blaydes and De Maio 2010).¹ However, only a few of these studies focused on what was essentially the key purpose of his article, namely to discuss various strategies for spoiler management and identify which responses are the most useful under different circumstances. With some exceptions (e.g., Schneckener 2009; Zahar 2010), most subsequent works on spoilers have come to focus on why and when we observe spoiler behavior rather than which strategies to use for spoiler management (e.g., Greenhill and Major 2007; Blaydes and De Maio 2010). Stedman did consider the intra-party dimension as critical for correctly diagnosing spoiling behavior, specifically emphasizing the importance of identifying whether the spoiler behavior was primarily generated by the leader or the followers inside the movement. However, his main focus was on matching third-party strategies to spoiler type and not intra-party dynamics in connection to spoiler events. This is also true for the ensuing debate in which these particular aspects of spoiler behavior have not been granted much attention. For example, while Pearlman’s study of spoiling directly emphasizes the importance of intra-party dynamics, her study focuses on the motivations for spoiler violence, rather than how third parties may—or may not—act when such problems persist on either side (Pearlman 2009).

Intra-Party Divergence

In the broader literature on civil wars, however, the heterogeneity of conflict parties is well recognized as important for understanding their behavior (e.g., Staniland 2014; Perkoski 2022). In this debate, some primarily emphasize the differences between armed groups in terms of their organizational setup: some armed groups have a more centralized leadership structure with an enforceable chain of control and command; other groups are highly decentralized or even network-based with a considerable autonomy for local commanders (e.g., Cronin 2006). Such differences also influence peace processes in multiple ways. For example, it has been found that it is more difficult to negotiate with armed groups in situations when it is unclear whether the group representatives at the table have the necessary authority and

1 For a review, see Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs (2011). See also Reiter (2016) and Trumbore (2016).

legitimacy to make decisions on behalf of the entire group (e.g., Söderberg Kovacs 2020).

Intra-party divergence is, however, not only a matter of organizational structure. As noted by Zartman (1995), all armed groups are made up of coalitions of individuals who constantly argue over the direction and means of the struggle, especially at the time of key strategic moments of change. Peace processes are typically key turning points that are likely to evoke intense internal discussions over the value of the armed conflict versus the pursuit of a peaceful settlement. For this reason, the holding of peace talks is almost always accompanied by internal disagreements between two opposing camps within the group—what Darby and Mac Ginty (2000, 233) refer to as the “Zealots” and the “Dealers.” Group cohesion can also shift in response to how the peace accord affects other differences among individuals in the group regarding, for example, financial incentives, ethnic or religious affiliations, or ideological perspectives (Perkoski 2022).

Salih and Gray (2017) offer a useful conceptualization of group cohesion that incorporates elements of both these dimensions, suggesting that strong versus weak cohesion in non-state armed groups can be usefully measured along two axes: “vertical” cohesion and “horizontal” cohesion, respectively. While the former concerns command and control over cadres, the latter concerns unity among leaders or factions in terms of consensus over goals and coordination of strategy and tactics. According to them, weak cohesion manifests in different combinations along these axes but “. . . is often a blend of the two” (Salih and Gray 2017, 1).

Sometimes, these internal divisions lead to full-scale fragmentation or even splintering in the armed group. Several studies have contributed with important empirical findings regarding both the causes and the effects of such fragmentation of non-state armed groups in conflict processes (e.g., Pearlman and Cunningham 2012; Rudloff and Findley 2016). Conceptual advancements in this literature have also offered new approaches to capture the complexity of fragmentation across time and space. For example, Bakke, Cunningham and Seymour (2012) provide a multidimensional understanding of fragmentation in armed movements along three key dimensions: the number of constituent organizations; the degree of institutionalization across them; and the distribution of power among them.

To date, however, there have been no attempts to link these advancements on understanding the dynamics of divergence in armed groups to the debate on spoilers, to better understand how third-party actors in civil war peace processes can manage spoiler behavior.

Linking Intra-Party Divergence, Spoiler Behavior, and Third-Party Management

Building on these insights, we first discuss how different forms of intra-party divergence can be tied to different kinds of spoiler behavior during a peace process, and then turn to the implications for third-party management strategies. We make a distinction between spoiler behavior stemming primarily from *vertical divergence* between the leader or parts of the leadership of the group and the rest of the movement and spoiling foremost linked to *horizontal divergence*, between different leaders or across different factions.

When it comes to vertical divergence, at least two scenarios are possible. In the first scenario, it is primarily the leadership of the group that stands to gain from the expected peace dividends. They may, for example, gain access to political power positions, leaving the rank-and-file without tangible benefits. Middle-ranking officers, in particular, often depend on the continuation of the war to maintain their privileged position, and thus oppose the implementation of costly concessions without clear returns (Zahar 1999). In such situations, combatants may show their disgruntlement by engaging in violent protests, resisting nonviolently by refusing to show up for disarmament, or setting up roadblocks in territories under their control. In the second scenario, it may instead be the leadership of the organization who fear the war-to-peace transition the most. This may be the case if the peace deal comes with serious personal costs, such as the risk of imprisonment, exile, or death (King 1997). In these cases, the leadership may try to undermine or delay the implementation of the agreement by obstructing particular peace provisions, instigating fear among the population through threatening remarks or remobilizing ex-combatants (Themnér 2017). Hence, in both instances, there is a clear divergence between the leadership and the base of the movement, but the locus of the spoiler problem may differ (Stedman 1997).

In cases of a horizontal divide, it is primarily different factions within the group that disagree over which direction the movement should take in relation to the peace process. A common scenario is that of a rift between the so-called moderates and the hardliners in the group, where the former are willing to move ahead with the peace implementation even in the face of unexpected delays or increasing costs, while the latter advocate a more belligerent stance or even a return to the armed struggle (Zartman 1995). In such cases, we are likely to see violent skirmishes between the two factions, or regional variations when it comes to the implementation of peace agreement provisions, such as the disarmament and demobilization of fighters. This rift may manifest itself more

evidently along a political–military divide, such as was with the National Council for the Defense of Democracy–Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) in Burundi at the time of the breakout of renewed violence in 2015, or between factions belonging to different ethnic groups or regions, as we have sometimes seen within the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines during the implementation of the 2014 peace agreement. In some instances, it may be one small faction that breaks away from the mother group, such as the case of the Real Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland, while in other instances there is a more general fragmentation into multiple factions, as with the group known as the Khmer Rouge after its abandonment of the Cambodian peace process.

We propose that the type of internal divergence should matter for how successful a particular type of spoiler management strategy will be. Specifically, we expect that the degree and type of intra-party fragmentation should matter for whether the most suitable strategy is primarily *integrative* in character and aims to encourage and strengthen increased unity and cohesion in the group, or if it is primarily *divisive*, and attempts to further split the group and isolate or marginalize leaders or factions.

When using integrative strategies, third-party actors try to convince the disgruntled actors, whether leaders or factions, to get back into the peace fold by offering various inducements or other policies of inclusion, sometimes in combination with more explicit socialization attempts. Groups and leaders may be more or less forcefully co-opted and be given political positions that can serve to integrate them into the process (Schneckener 2009, 22). Another option is to engage in or support various reconciliation efforts inside the group, between factions or allies, between leaders and followers, or between the political and the military leadership. Such efforts can either function to bridge the divide between the factions or bring in a spoiling militant wing into the mother party.

In contrast, divisive strategies include attempts toward dividing or separating armed groups or factions. Such strategies are frequently accomplished by threatening or coercing some elements while inducing others. Third-party actors can, for example, seek to marginalize factions and leaders by seeking to “. . . isolate them—politically as well as physically—from actual or potential followers and their constituencies,” something that has been suggested as a particularly effective approach toward already weak or weakened actors (Schneckener 2009, 21). Hence, whereas integrative strategies include various efforts such as inducement, co-optation, or reconciliation, divisive strategies involve divide and rule tac-

tics, marginalization, or coercion targeted toward a certain faction while inducing or including others.

Based on the insights presented above, we propose that when a group is primarily divided horizontally between two or several factions that are roughly equal in power, or when a breakaway faction has the capacity to act as a so-called veto player regarding the peace process,² an integrative strategy should be more appropriate. In those cases, the cohesion of the group should be vital for the continued implementation of the peace agreement. However, when the third parties deem that it is possible to move forward with the implementation of the process without the active involvement or support of the spoiling elements, a more divisive strategy may be used in combination with integrative tactics toward the main bulk of the organization.

When organizations are vertically split between leaders and followers, divisive strategies should be effective. In such circumstances, the specific combination of tactics will depend on the locus of the spoiler problem and how the chain of command is being challenged. For example, if the main threat to peace stems from the leadership, an effective third-party strategy is to isolate, marginalize, or even remove the leadership, while integrating the rest of the organization. If, however, the leadership remains firmly committed to the peace deal, but those from below such as disgruntled middlemen or members constitute the main threat to peace, third parties should instead attempt to marginalize parts of the base of the organizations by coercion or establishing clear red lines—all while protecting and building confidence in the leadership. The capabilities or resources that the third parties have at their disposal will however impact the range of strategies that are available to them as well as their likelihood of success (e.g., Greenhill and Major 2007).

Having tied the conceptualization of fragmentation to these overarching strategies that third parties have at their disposal in terms of tackling spoiler behavior related to intra-party divergence, we now turn to our cases to see how this plays out empirically.

Methodological Approach

The purpose of this article is to generate new theoretical insights concerning third-party management of spoiler events arising from intra-party divergence within the framework of a peace process. Case studies have been suggested as a useful methodological tool when navigating relatively unexplored theoretical grounds, aiming to

2 On the role of veto players in the context of civil war peace processes, see Cunningham (2011).

Table 1. Overview of the cases and variations in key dimensions

Case	Type of intra-party divergence	Description	Third-party spoiler management strategy	Outcome
RUF 1	Vertical	Fragmentation between the leadership and the rest of the group with the leader formally inside the peace fold	<i>Integrative</i> : inducement to leader	Failure
RUF 2	Vertical	Fragmentation between the leadership and the rest of the group	<i>Integrative and divisive</i> : coercive marginalization of the spoiling leadership, integrative strategy with the rank-and-file	Success
Ex-GOL	Vertical	Fragmentation between the leadership and the main part of the group with the leader formally outside the peace fold	<i>Integrative and divisive</i> : coercive marginalization of the spoiling leadership, integration with the bulk of the organization	Success
RUF and AFRC	Horizontal	Fragmentation between former allies	<i>Integrative</i> : inducement to the leaders	Failure
LURD	Horizontal	Fragmentation at the center of the group between different factions	<i>Integrative</i> : reconciliation and coercion	Success
AFRC-WSB 1	Horizontal	Fragmentation at the center of the group between different factions and a forcefully removed leadership	<i>Integrative</i> : reconciliation and inducement	Success
AFRC-WSB 2	Horizontal	Fragmentation at the periphery with violent breakaway faction with the main bulk of the movement inside the peace fold	<i>Divisive</i> : coercive marginalization of violent breakaway faction	Success

identify and suggest patterns that could be subsequently further explored with more systematic means (Gerring 2004).

Our empirical analysis looks at illustrative cases of third-party responses to spoiler events within two peace processes in West Africa: in Sierra Leone following the 1999 Lomé peace agreement and in Liberia following the 2003 Accra agreement. For the purpose of theory building, we focus on situations that illustrate various configurations of spoiling events, intra-party divergence, and third-party strategies. We have chosen to concentrate on seven illustrative cases that were selected based on the type of fragmentation at work—three cases primarily characterized by vertical fragmentation and four cases more closely resembling horizontal fragmentation. In table 1, we present an overview of these cases and how they vary in terms of intra-party divergence, third-party strategies, and outcomes.

Considering the purpose of this study, we have chosen to focus on spoiler events where we see evidence of intra-party divergence. While this means that we cannot generalize our findings to the broader set of cases where spoiling occurs, it provides us with an opportunity to theorize

and explore third-party strategies in the context of intra-party divergence. These cases are not meant to test our approach but can show us how third-party actors in civil war peace processes—in our study, primarily the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force in question and its key partners—can manage spoiler behavior that emerges in connection to intra-party divides within warring actors. In terms of outcomes, the overall success or failure of the peace processes lies outside the scope of this paper; we are primarily concerned with why and how these management efforts were able to address the specific spoiler behavior relevant to each event.

In line with Stedman, we believe that the spoiler concept is most relevant to use in relation to the existence of a specific peace agreement (Stedman 1997, 7). It is the stipulations in this peace agreement, the interpretation of its content, or its implementation that certain actors oppose and consequently attempt to change, undermine, or derail for various reasons. In line with Stedman and most mainstream studies of spoilers, the analysis is restricted to the key warring actors to the preceding armed conflicts, factions within these group, splinter groups emerging from within them, or the emergence

of new armed groups during the implementation process (Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2011). Our analysis includes both signatories and non-signatories to the peace agreement, and we include state as well as non-state actors as we believe that both are equally relevant in this respect (Höglund and Zartman 2006). Spoilers are defined as key individuals and parties to the armed conflict who employ violent or nonviolent means to shape or obstruct a peace agreement and thereby jeopardize the peace process (Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2011, 623). The spoiler events of concern are not only violent events but also other kinds of spoiler behavior: refusal to implement parts of the peace agreement, delays in the disarmament and demobilization process, threats and intimidation of peacekeepers, failure to show up for work in peace commissions, resistance toward UN deployments, setting up of roadblocks, etc., which allow us to provide more fine-grained insights into different forms of spoiler behavior.

The case descriptions build primarily on secondary sources, such as scholarly work including books and journal articles, reports, and local news articles, for example, *Africa Research Bulletin (ARB)*, *Africa Confidential (AC)*, *Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)* articles, country reports by International Crisis Group (ICG), and reports of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). Because almost two decades have passed since both these processes were concluded, and thanks to the multitude of personal accounts and testimonies that have since been documented and other sources that have emerged, we now have a much more complete picture of both the actors involved and the processes, including events that at the time of their occurrence were clouded in secrecy or disputed. This allows for a more detailed empirical analysis than would otherwise have been possible.

Empirical Analysis

In the section below, seven different scenarios in two peace processes will be analyzed in more detail. In Sierra Leone, the Lomé peace agreement was signed on July 7, 1999, between the government and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The agreement was a power-sharing deal that gave the RUF as the major rebel group far-reaching political influence in exchange for ending the armed struggle. This agreement, however, effectively left out the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)—the ex-military faction that, in alliance with the RUF, had briefly controlled the country during 8 months in 1997–1998. The agreement requested a peacekeeping force consisting of the UN Observer Mission in Sierra

Leone (UNOMSIL) and Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to oversee the implementation, later replaced by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). In Liberia, the government, the two rebel groups, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), and some civil society actors and political parties signed the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) on August 18, 2003. As part of the peace deal, the warlord and president Charles Taylor was forced to accept an asylum deal in Nigeria. A key feature of the peace agreement was the establishment of a broad transitional power-sharing arrangement that was to be supervised by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) (Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2005).

Case 1. The RUF Rift between the Political Leadership and the Military in July 1999

This case represents a case of *vertical fragmentation* between the top political leadership and the military rank-and-file of the movement in the aftermath of the signing of a peace accord that primarily benefited the former with only limited benefits to the latter. While the third parties tried to address the ambivalent behavior of the leadership, they did not understand the internal rift that had emerged between the group representatives in the capital of Freetown and the military cadres still in the bush. Hence, they failed to manage the group's spoiler behavior during this time.

Almost immediately after the signing of the peace accord, RUF behaved ambivalently regarding the implementation of the agreement (AC 1999, 40(16): 3; IRIN September 29, 1999). The Lomé agreement offered RUF significant political influence through the establishment of a government of national unity. In addition, Foday Sankoh, as the leader of the group, was personally offered both the position of Chairman of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development and the status equivalent to that of a Vice President (United Nations Security Council 1999, 1–2). Sankoh was quick to accept these offers and participate in political decision-making in the capital. However, when the disarmament process began in early November 1999, RUF combatants were slow to present themselves at the demobilization sites, and the international troops on the ground were refused access to RUF-controlled regions (United Nations Security Council 1999, 3). Sankoh publicly encouraged his fighters to disarm, while Sam Bockarie,

RUF's second-in-command who had remained in the field throughout the peace process, openly announced his rejection, declaring that: "I'm envisaging another serious battle in Sierra Leone, I told my men to clean all their barrels and wait" (Gberie 2005, 162). Sankoh, however, claimed that Bockarie was acting alone (ARB 2000, 36(12): 13808–809; IRIN December 2, 1999).

At this time, RUF's spoiler behavior was commonly interpreted by the third parties as a stalling strategy for the purpose of continuing with the lucrative diamond mining in rebel-controlled areas. Therefore, in response, they primarily engaged in a process of cajoling and persuading Sankoh to comply with RUF's commitment through the offering of additional incentives. While this interpretation of Sankoh's dubious motives was probably accurate, as evidence found later among Sankoh's possession seems to support (Hirsch 2001, 89), the third parties failed to also consider the vertical fragmentation that had emerged in the group since the signing of the accord. Although still nominally the leader of the group, Sankoh had been imprisoned in Nigeria from 1997 and onward for an illegal arms deal, leaving Bockarie in charge of the military struggle on the ground (Keen 2005, 47). In doing so, Bockarie established close links with the group's main patron, President Taylor of Liberia, and was actively involved in the cross-border illegal diamond-mining trade (Global Witness 2003). He did not participate in the peace talks and did not benefit from the agreement. Most fighters on the ground also refused to obey Sankoh's order to disarm. As far as they knew, they now followed the command of Bockarie (Peters 2011, 78–79). Sankoh, meanwhile, had only been released to participate in the negotiations, and the agreement granted him personally significant political and economic influence. He thus had incentives to comply with the terms of the agreement as long as he benefitted from it (IRIN December 9, 1999; United Nations Security Council 1999, 3–4). In mid-December, the internal conflict escalated; Bockarie eventually left for Liberia with a group of loyal combatants after a shootout between his men and Sankoh loyalists (United Nations Security Council 2000b, 2–3).

We conclude that the third-party strategy of inducement toward the RUF failed to address the type of fragmentation that had emerged in the group since the peace accords. Given the vertical split between Sankoh and the military base of the movement under the control of Bockarie, the RUF leader in Freetown did not have full control and command over the forces and could not ensure the group's commitment and compliance with the accord.

Case 2. The RUF and the May 2000 Attack on Freetown

In May 2000, after months of escalating violence in still rebel-controlled areas, RUF commanders in the field launched a military attack on Freetown to stop the implementation of the peace accord. This time, the third parties responded to the *vertical fragmentation* with a strategy of divide and rule. They were largely successful in marginalizing the top political leadership while engaging in interactive trust-building activities with the military rank-and-file.

In the spring of 2000, the new UN mission, UNAMSIL, started to deploy troops in rebel strongholds (Hirsch 2001, 86). In response, RUF went on an offensive and began to seize and kidnap UN peacekeepers attempting to deploy in the areas under the group's control. By early May, the peace process collapsed altogether as RUF forces attempted a military attack on the capital (Gberie 2005, 162). This became a turning point in the peace process, which would change both the intra-party dynamic within the RUF and the third-party strategy for spoiler management. In Freetown, as news about the attempted RUF attack reached civil society activists and parliamentarians, a demonstration was organized that marched to Sankoh's house. This resulted in several casualties as Sankoh's bodyguards opened fire while Sankoh escaped through the back door. A few days later, he was captured and imprisoned along with several hundred high-level RUF leaders and commanders (Hirsch 2001, 88–89).

Because of the events of May 2000, the group was forced to elect a new interim chairman in General Issa Sesay. This new leadership with close connections to the rank-and-file changed the cohesion in the movement considerably. At the same time, the coercive power of the government increased significantly with the arrival of British troops. The third parties now shifted to a strategy of close cooperation with the new rebel leadership while attempting to marginalize remaining hardliners. Allegedly, UN representatives even implied that the international community was only after Sankoh and that those who cooperated would not risk indictment for war crimes (Keen 2005, 273–74). The UN also began to take steps to circumvent the influence of President Taylor through the establishment of a ban on the trade of uncertified diamonds from Sierra Leone (AC 2000, 41(13): 2; United Nations Security Council 2000a, 1). At the same time, a range of measures were taken to assure the inclusion of the bulk of the rebel movement, with focus on mid-level commanders and lower ranking soldiers. In November 2000, the new UN Force Commander Daniel Opande traveled extensively to the rebel-controlled

territories to engage in confidence-building measures (ARB 2002, 39(4): 14828). This approach in combination with military pressure was described as a “good cop, bad cop” approach (Keen 2005, 272–73). The strategy paid off. The new RUF leadership returned stolen military equipment, stated its support for UN deployment to rebel-controlled areas, and pledged its readiness to participate in the disarmament process (ARB 2000, 37(8): 14091; United Nations Security Council 2000c, 1; 2000d, 2). There was also a sharp fall in violations against civilians in RUF-controlled areas (IRIN September 19, 2000). On November 10, 2000, a new ceasefire agreement was signed (ARB 2000, 37(11): 14197).

In conclusion, after the May 2000 event, the third parties shifted to a divisive strategy that proved effective in managing the group’s spoiler behavior. The spoiler event brought the realities behind RUF’s noncompliance to light, and a more targeted strategy was put in place by the UN that was now militarily reinforced. With Sankoh behind bars and a new leadership in power with closer links to the military rank-and-file, the UN engaged in a combination of extensive trust-building exercises with the movement still in the field, while trying to isolate remaining hardliners.

Case 3. Ex-President Taylor of Liberia and the Ex-GOL Divide

The former government of Liberia, also known as ex-GOL, formally received positions in the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) as part of the peace agreement, while President Charles Taylor was forced into exile in Nigeria (ICG 2003; IRIN October 16, 2003). Through his departure, ex-GOL suffered an organizational blow that effectively divided the former warring party between the exiled ex-President, who continued to try to influence the developments on the ground, and the other leaders and followers of ex-GOL who remained in Liberia, some of which also opposed the peace deal. This is a case of *vertical fragmentation* as it represented a divide between the leader and a large part of the organization. The third parties eventually managed this situation through a divisive strategy that aimed to marginalize the influence of Taylor while simultaneously using both coercion and socialization to make sure that the remaining members of the former government stayed in the peace fold.

While Taylor had been explicitly instructed not to meddle in the internal politics of Liberia after his departure (ICG 2003, 20), the months immediately following the signing of the agreement would see several at-

tempts by the former President to influence Liberian politics and his former ministers, fighters, and supporters. For example, in September 2003, there were reports of Taylor still having contacts with elements in the interim government of Liberia (ICG 2004, 11; IRIN September 17, 2003; IRIN October 14, 2003). Nigerian President Obasanjo then issued a warning to Taylor to cease such activities if he wanted to remain in the country (IRIN September 17, 2003). SRSG Klein for his part made no secret that he wanted Taylor to face prosecution. Pressure was put on President Obasanjo in Nigeria to hand over Taylor to the Special Court in Sierra Leone so that he could face trial. Obasanjo refused, citing the conditions for Taylor’s asylum deal, and stating that he would only do so if the Liberian government requested it—something that the NTGL rejected (ICG 2003, 20; IRIN December 11, 2003; IRIN April 12, 2004; IRIN July 7, 2004).

The suspicions about Taylor seeking to influence Liberian politics continued throughout the following months. According to some sources, Taylor had wired over money that had been used to instigate the large-scale violence that occurred in late October 2004. He was also accused of financing several politicians running for office in the upcoming Presidential elections in November 2005. Moreover, he allegedly attempted to influence the internal voting process in his old party, the National Patriotic Party (NPP), over who should be put forward as presidential candidate. In June 2005, UN Secretary-General (UNSG) Kofi Annan said that concerns of interference by Taylor had increased (IRIN May 3, 2005; IRIN June 30, 2005). One month later, due to the many reports of violations of the asylum deal, the transitional government of Liberia decided to ask for Taylor’s deal to be reviewed (IRIN July 7, 2005; IRIN August 1, 2005). In response, in September 2005, Obasanjo stated that “. . . Taylor should be kept away from Liberia during the election period” (AC 2005, 46(19): 3, not original quote).

Meanwhile, ex-government forces inside the country were also engaged in various activities that threatened to undermine the fragile peace accord. For example, in September 2003, ex-GOL forces were reported to have engaged in continued fighting with LURD and MODEL forces in various locations, and there were also instances of abductions, looting, and harassment of civilians (IRIN September 15, 2003; IRIN September 22, 2003). Following a violent clash between LURD and ex-GOL forces in early October 2003, SRSG Klein publicly warned the fighters that they would be prosecuted, and UNMIL went on a “cordon and search operation” to look for weapons (ICG 2003, 5–6; IRIN October 2, 2003; United Nations Security Council 2003, 3–5). This was followed by

reports of fighting in Nimba County (IRIN November 6, 2003). Again, SRSG Klein issued a public warning that the culprits would be held accountable, and UNMIL conducted air patrols in the area. A team led by UNMIL also visited the area, accompanied by Daniel Chea (Minister of Defense and ex-GOL), Kabineh Ja'neh (Minister of Justice and LURD), and representatives of MODEL. At one point, Opande also traveled to Nimba County together with ex-Taylor generals Kuku Denis and Roland Duo to convince ex-GOL fighters of ceasing hostilities, and to bring the former Taylor top general Adolphus Dolo (also known as General Peanut Butter) from Nimba to Monrovia. Allegedly, this visit resulted in an increase of ex-government fighters showing up for disarmament (ICG 2004, 11; IRIN November 6, 2003; IRIN November 14, 2003). Despite these efforts, there were also reports of Taylor's former general Dolo remaining in contact with his former fighters in Nimba (ICG 2004, 11). As regards the overall strategy and methods of the UNMIL leadership, SRSG Klein's "confrontational style" reportedly clashed with Force Commander Opande's more "patient and diplomatic" approach (AC 2004, 45(3): 1).

Based on this analysis, we conclude that the divisive strategy employed by the third parties—a combination of carrots and sticks for the former GOL elements with targeted marginalization of Taylor—proved successful. Many of the ex-GOL individuals were brought into the peace process. Taylor did not manage to influence the elections in any significant way before he was subsequently brought to the Hague to face war crime charges regarding his involvement in the Sierra Leone civil war. With Taylor severely weakened and forced in exile, the power distribution inside the group also changed as former GOL leaders gained seats in the transitional government.

Case 4. The Breakdown of the RUF–AFRC Alliance

This case study illustrates *horizontal fragmentation* related to the breakdown of the RUF–AFRC alliance. The third parties did not understand this fallout, which contributed to their failure to manage spoiler activities in the immediate post-agreement period. A series of primarily integrative attempts were made to move the disarmament and demobilization process forward, but the violence only continued to escalate.

At the time of the peace negotiations in Lomé, the RUF and the AFRC were treated as a unified party. This was a consequence of the alliance that had been struck between the armed rebels (RUF) and the leaders of the May 1997 coup when disgruntled soldiers

under the leadership of Johnny Paul Koroma (AFRC) took control over Freetown. However, the relationship between the former allies had turned increasingly sour ever since they had been driven from the capital in early 1998. At the time of the peace talks, Koroma was held in detention in Kailahun by Bockarie, and later transferred to the custody of Taylor in Liberia. The RUF refused the AFRC's demand that Koroma be released and given a seat at the table. In practice, the AFRC was thus excluded from participating (Utas and Jörgel 2008; Themnér 2011).

Despite this, the third parties continued to treat the two groups as one during the implementation of the agreement. For example, in early October, both Sankoh and Koroma were brought back to Sierra Leone and sent on a joint national tour around the country to convince combatants to report for disarmament. Due to continuous infighting, however, the tour soon had to be cancelled and separate visits scheduled. In addition, while the AFRC initiated a gradual process of de-escalation, RUF went on a military offensive to take control over areas previously under joint RUF–AFRC control (United Nations Security Council 1999, 1–5). The groups also clashed north of Freetown resulting in a large number of civilian casualties (United Nations Security Council 1999, 2, 5). By the end of November 1999, the AFRC publicly disassociated itself from the RUF (IRIN November 26, 1999). Despite this, and in direct response to clashes between RUF and AFRC, UN SRSG Okelo stated: "[i]t has become clear that the RUF/AFRC leadership is not complying with the provisions of the Lomé Peace Agreement or cannot adequately control its field commanders and combatants" (IRIN November 3, 1999). This pattern would continue throughout the country up until the breakdown of the peace process in May 2000 (United Nations Security Council 2000b, 3; 2000e, 3).

We can conclude that the failure by the third parties to acknowledge the split that had occurred between the former allies had serious consequences for their ability to manage spoiler violence during the implementation period. An integrative strategy was pursued in which the third parties primarily attempted to address what they perceived to be a vertical divergence between the RUF–AFRC leadership and its joint rank-and-file. However, this strategy did not address the fallout between the former allies and failed to bring down the escalating violence between the fighting forces.

Case 5. The Factional Rift in LURD

This case study illustrates a situation of spoiling related to a fierce leadership struggle inside LURD, one of the

main non-state armed group signatories to the peace accord and a key stakeholder in the peace process. This factional struggle divided the LURD movement, thus representing a case of *horizontal fragmentation*. After a slow start, the third parties were successful in managing the situation with an integrative strategy. They combined a coercive military strategy to quell the violence with an active reconciliatory approach directed toward bridging the divide in the LURD leadership. While the internal rifts would not be completely mended, the third parties managed to keep the internal struggles from jeopardizing the peace process.

Already early in 2004, it became clear that LURD was experiencing a leadership struggle involving Sekou Conneh and his wife Aisha Conneh (ICG 2004, 10). Such divisions within LURD were not new. Notably, the movement had been subject to tensions between the two ethnic groups—Mandingo and Krahn—that dominated the organization, as well as between the political leadership based in neighboring Guinea and the military leadership in Liberia (ICG 2002, 10). However, the present leadership struggle was directly related to the implementation of the peace accord. The immediate trigger was allegedly a proposal by Sekou Conneh that his brother-in-law from a previous marriage was to be appointed as Minister of Finance in the NTGL, something Aisha Conneh is said to have opposed. Aisha Conneh's powerful position in the movement stemmed from her personal connections to Guinean president Lansana Conté, who was a close ally of LURD and the main foreign patron of the organization (ICG 2002, 4–12; 2004, 10; Reno 2007, 76–77). As such, she held considerable influence over the movement, and in response to the emerging conflict between Aisha and her husband, about forty military commanders signed a document where it was proposed that Aisha Conneh was to replace Sekou Conneh as leader of LURD. Soon thereafter, when Sekou Conneh and Thomas Yaya Nimley, leader of MODEL, publicly called for the chairman of the NTGL, Gyude Bryant, to resign from his post, it became apparent that Sekou Conneh lacked sufficient support within his own movement as this proposal was either ignored or rejected by some LURD ministers (AC 2004, 45(3): 2; ICG 2004, 9–10).

UNMIL engaged in several activities to try to reduce the tensions between the two factions. For example, the proposal by Sekou Conneh to remove Bryant was quickly dismissed by the UN SRSG Jacques Paul Klein and US Ambassador John Blaney. At the same time, when Sekou Conneh announced that he did not want to participate in the disarmament process, SRSG Klein and force commander Opande traveled to Conakry to convince him to go back to Monrovia (ICG 2004, 9). This strategy aimed

at keeping the unity of the movement intact became indicative of the third-party response to the internal LURD conflict.

Yet, despite these early measures, the internal problems within LURD escalated. In March and April 2004, there were several instances of intra-party fighting involving LURD combatants (ARB 2004, 41(6): 15795; United Nations Security Council 2004c, 2; 2004d, 3). In May 2004, a faction of LURD threatened to disrupt disarmament unless the finance minister (appointed by Sekou Conneh) was replaced, whereas the other faction warned of a “military showdown” if that would happen (ARB 2004, 41(5): 15766–67). The internal conflict further intensified in early June 2004 when the so-called military high command in LURD, which was loyal to Aisha Conneh, decided to unilaterally suspend Sekou Conneh as chairman. Sekou Conneh for his part rejected the decision as unacceptable. Several attempts were subsequently made by the LURD National Executive Council to find a replacement for Sekou Conneh, and eventually, in July 2004, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General Kabineh Ja'neh, a close ally of Aisha Conneh and one of the key political figures at the negotiations in Accra, was elected new Chairman (IRIN June 10, 2004; United Nations Security Council 2004b, 3). Consequently, during August and September 2004, there were several more violent incidents between the competing LURD factions. In response, UNMIL continued to pursue a two-pronged strategy that combined a military response to the escalating violence on the streets with diplomatic measures including separate meetings with the two factions aimed to reduce tensions (United Nations Security Council 2004b, 3).

In the end of October 2004, the tensions culminated in 2 days of rioting in and around Monrovia. Allegedly, it started with a local land dispute, which then escalated into larger disturbances (ARB 2004, 41(11): 15998; IRIN October 29, 2004). While the details of this event have been disputed, both LURD factions appear to have ceased the opportunity to settle scores. For example, some attacks targeted properties belonging to Aisha Conneh and her affiliates within LURD (ARB 2004, 41(11): 15998; United Nations Security Council 2004a, 1–2). In an attempt to quell the violence, Chairman Bryant imposed a curfew throughout the city; UNMIL responded forcefully by calling on robust units to patrol, employed aerial support, and engaged in cordon and search operations. SRSG Klein went out on UNMIL radio stating that the peacekeepers would “. . . deploy to all affected areas and to react with maximum force to any activities of violence. . .,” and he warned that donors could withdraw earlier promises for funding if violence would continue

(IRIN October 29, 2004; see also [United Nations Security Council 2004a](#); Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2005, 2). UNMIL also arranged for the leaders of the LURD factions to meet in Freetown for a reconciliatory meeting, resulting in the signing of a memorandum of understanding, but the feuding resumed ([United Nations Security Council 2004a](#), 1–2). By June 2005, the conflict within LURD appeared to have quieted down ([United Nations Security Council 2005](#), 1–2).

In conclusion, the third parties engaged in an integrative strategy that combined an overarching coercive enforcement mandate to manage the spiraling violence with reconciliatory measures aimed at uniting the armed group. While they did not manage to put a decisive stop to the internal struggles within LURD, they were largely successful in their efforts to prevent the conflict from threatening the implementation of the peace process. In this case, the group was divided horizontally and both parties were seen as needed for the peace process to move forward: Sekou Conneh had his supporters, whereas Aisha Conneh, together with the new chairman Kabineh Ja'neh, shared close connections with powerful figures in the military high command and with key foreign patrons.

Case 6. The AFRC Faction West Side Boys and Violence at Okra Hills in 1999

This case study illustrates *horizontal fragmentation* within the AFRC, which engaged in violent activities in opposition to the peace agreement. It will be shown how the AFRC faction, internally known as the West Side Boys (WSB), engaged in violent activities following the public announcement of the content of the Lomé peace agreement because they harbored accumulated grievances from having been excluded from the negotiations. When this became known, the third parties were successful in managing the spoiler incident through a two-pronged strategy that both reunited the breakaway faction with its mother group and brought the AFRC leadership into the peace fold.

After the failed joint AFRC–RUF coup in 1997, the relationship between the former allies began to erode. During a visit to the RUF headquarters in Kailahun, Johnny Paul Koroma, the leader of the AFRC, was taken hostage by RUF's second-in-command, Sam Bockarie. At the time of the opening of the peace talks in Lomé in 1999, Koroma was effectively prevented from participating. After the signing of the agreement, violence quickly escalated between the former allies in RUF stronghold areas. As a result, AFRC was pushed back and fragmented into separate units, some of which regrouped in the Okra

Hills where they became known as the West Side Boys (Themnér 2011). In August 1999, reports emerged that thirty-two people—including UNOMSIL officers, ECOMOG officers, aid officials, and journalists—had been abducted near Okra Hills (ARB 1999, 36(8): 13664).

Ignorant of the RUF–AFRC fallout, UN officials first responded by contacting Sankoh, who agreed to send two of his senior commanders to resolve the crisis (IRIN August 5, 1999). However, on their arrival, they were also captured (IRIN September 8, 1999). The British government then sent a team to negotiate the release of the hostages. During their visit, the reality of the RUF–AFRC split became clear. The WSB faction expressed its grievances with the peace accord and demanded the release and return of Koroma (IRIN August 23, 1999). They complained that RUF soldiers had been given preferential treatment in the peace agreement, stating that the hostages would only be released when the position of AFRC fighters in the peace process was clarified. In interviews with former WSB soldiers, Utas and Jörgel record the following quote: “[T]he peace accord document came to Okra Hills, but we found no reference to ourselves, it was only RUF, RUF, RUF. We then decided to begin taking hostages” (Utas and Jörgel 2008, 500).

Several steps were subsequently taken by the third parties to address the concerns of the ex-soldiers. First, the UN arranged for the release of Koroma, who was taken to Monrovia from where he sent a message to his men stating that they should release their captives. In the next few days, all of the hostages were released (ARB 1999, 36(8): 13664). Second, toward the end of September, UNSG Kofi Annan appealed to Koroma to return to Sierra Leone and partake in the peace process (ARB 1999, 36(9): 13700; ARB 1999, 36(10): 13732). Soon thereafter, Koroma was appointed Chairman of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace in the new National Unity Government, and another member of the AFRC was appointed Minister of Tourism and Culture ([United Nations Security Council 1999](#); Themnér 2011, 1–2). Third, the problems faced with disarming the AFRC were specifically addressed in a meeting called by ECOMOG in late September (IRIN September 13, 1999). As a result, ECOMOG and UNAMSIL accompanied Koroma to the Okra Hills in mid-November to talk to the WSB faction (IRIN November 18, 1999). Throughout the subsequent months, Koroma toured the country to inform AFRC combatants of the peace agreement and encourage them to disarm ([United Nations Security Council 1999](#), 1). As a result, close to 4,500 AFRC combatants were discharged between October 1999 and April 2000. When the RUF attacked Freetown in May 2000, Koroma successfully remobilized large parts of AFRC, including the

WSB unit, to defend the city against the rebel forces. This event was critical in restoring the reputation of the group in the eyes of the public (Themnér 2011).

From this, we can conclude that the third parties managed the spoiler behavior of the WSB in 1999 by pursuing a two-pronged integrative strategy that aimed toward both reuniting the disgruntled breakaway faction at Okra Hills into the mother group while also providing the AFRC leadership with a central role in the peace process. This turned out to be a successful strategy in addressing the spoiler violence of the AFRC faction.

Case 7. The Remnant West Side Boys and the August 2000 Hostage Crisis

In the aftermath of the victory against the RUF attack on Freetown in May 2000, most AFRC combatants were either disarmed or reintegrated into the government forces. However, a small group of soldiers belonging to the previous breakaway group known as the WSB—notably made up of those former soldiers in the WSB that did not meet the eligibility criteria for military reintegration as they either were minors or had a criminal record—returned to the Okra Hill camp under the leadership of Major Kallay. Many in this group felt betrayed by both Koroma and the government, and remobilized for violence (Hirsch 2001, 133; Gberie 2005, 174; Themnér 2011). This case illustrates a situation of *horizontal fragmentation* by a violent breakaway faction from the main group, which was already integrated into the peace fold. Under these conditions, the third parties successfully used a coercive strategy of military marginalization to prevent the spoilers from undermining the peace process.

On August 26, 2000, eleven British soldiers and one Sierra Leonean government soldier were abducted near Okra Hills. The international community mobilized immediately to address the situation. A British negotiation team with hostage rescue experts arrived in Freetown within days to try to secure the release of the hostages. In contacts with the negotiators, the WSB fringe clarified its demands: they wanted food and medicines, a satellite phone, and the release of an AFRC mid-level commander still in prison. While the former requests were met, the Sierra Leonean government refused the latter. The WSB subsequently released five of the captured soldiers. Continued negotiations, however, soon stalled as the WSB escalated its demands, requesting that the elected Kabbah government be removed and a unity government installed.

This was a serious miscalculation by the rebels, who did not seem to understand the shifting military and political realities on the ground following the May 2000

events. After the military defeat of the RUF, and with the majority of AFRC already in the peace fold, the international community had few incentives to make any large-scale concessions to the spoilers. Johnny Paul Koroma had formally disassociated himself as leader of the AFRC already in early August, and the spoiler activities of the remnant WSB were not sanctioned by the large community of ex-soldiers (Hirsch 2001, 133). UNAMSIL had also been significantly reinforced militarily, and British soldiers were still on standby since the May 2000 crisis. On September 10, the British parachute regiment launched a major attack in the Okra Hills with the backing of Sierra Leonean government forces. The remaining hostages were freed, and all WSB soldiers were either killed or captured (Hirsch 2001, 133; Gberie 2005, 174).

In conclusion, the third parties managed the spoiler behavior of the remnant WSB in August 2000 through a coercive strategy aimed at military marginalization. This turned out to be a successful strategy in managing the violent activities of the group.

Conclusions

This study set out to examine how third-party actors in civil war peace processes can manage spoiler behavior that fully or partly results from intra-party divergence. Based on our empirical analysis, it is possible to identify several conclusions of relevance to both future research and policy and practice.

First and more generally, our study confirms that a comprehensive analysis of intra-party divisions can be crucial for designing effective third-party strategies for spoiler management in peace processes. Failing to correctly understand and take such dynamics into account can impede the implementation of a peace agreement or worse derail the entire peace process. For example, the growing detachment in the RUF between the political leadership and the large bulk of the military rank-and-file in the post-agreement phase nearly undermined the entire peace process. As highlighted in our second case study, it was not until the third parties adopted a divisive strategy of divide and rule that marginalized the leadership while integrating the large base of the movement that they were successful in addressing the group's spoiler behavior. Similarly, as illustrated in our fourth case study, the failure on the part of the third parties to understand the major fallout between RUF and AFRC represents a missed opportunity. If the third parties had strategically included Koroma and the AFRC in the peace process already at the time of the Lomé negotiations, they could have both significantly strengthened the peace alliance and prevented the grievances

that later emerged from the excluded AFRC faction at Okra Hills.

Second, in terms of the more specific findings, our study highlights important insights regarding the linkages between types of fragmentation and third-party strategies that are worth further investigation. In line with our expectations, integrative strategies appear more effective when the peace process is dependent upon the incorporation of both sides. This may include, for example, when a group is divided horizontally, and military or political power is relatively evenly distributed between different factions. To illustrate, as neither of the LURD factions in Liberia at the time seemed sufficiently weak to exclude, the third parties addressed the internal fragmentation through a strategy of integration. An approach that excluded either of these factions could have backfired. Divisive strategies, however, are likely to be more effective when a group is vertically split between a leader and the rest of the organization and power is unevenly distributed between them. For example, UNMIL used a divisive strategy to address the spoiler behavior orchestrated by Taylor and his small group of loyal ex-combatants after he had been forced into exile by marginalizing the former President from the rest of the organization, while simultaneously encouraging and supporting the inclusion of the broader ex-GOL leadership into the peace process.

Third, our study confirms the general usefulness of conceptualizing intra-party divergence based on the distinction between vertical and horizontal fragmentation. Moreover, our empirical findings make it possible to develop this theoretical reasoning further. Notably, as the examples above illustrate, an appropriate strategy does not only depend on whether the fragmentation is primarily vertical or horizontal, but also on the distribution of power inside the group and the power relationships between the actors. Thus, identifying the relationships between so-called moderates and extremists as well as identifying the locus of the spoiler problem is key to successful spoiler management (Stedman 1997; Darby and Mac Ginty 2000). For example, while we generally find that divisive strategies work well in cases of vertical fragmentation, such strategies can also be appropriate in cases of horizontal divergence, provided that the locus of the spoiler problem lies with a comparatively weaker faction. This was the case in Sierra Leone when the third-party coalition in August 2000 successfully managed the spoiling behavior carried out by the violent remnants of the WSB by marginalizing them through military coercion. In this case of horizontal divergence, most of the ex-combatants from AFRC were already integrated, and the WSB faction was relatively small and

insignificant. Thus, they could be marginalized without risking the peace process.

This brings us to our last major finding. While our empirical analysis generally supports the relevance of distinguishing between integrative and divisive strategies for spoiler management, the employment of effective third-party strategies is ultimately a function of available resources, capabilities, and mandates. In our case studies, the third parties were often constrained by the conditions on the ground. In Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL was slow to deploy. It was not until after the British military intervention in May 2000 that the third parties gained any real military leverage over the warring parties, which influenced the type of strategies they could realistically employ. It would take until August 2000, over a year after the peace agreement, until the UN mission was mandated to “. . .deter and, where necessary, decisively counter the threat of RUF attack by responding robustly to any hostile actions or threat of imminent and direct use of force. . .” (United Nations Security Council 2000d, 1). In Liberia, the UN was better equipped; they were in a position to make use of their military capacity to put pressure on the parties while pursuing both integrative and divisive spoiler management strategies.

Finally, in this study we were only able to examine the overarching patterns and trends at work when it comes to the interlinkages between internal divergence, spoiler activities, and third-party strategies. More research is needed on the specific combination of tactics and tools that can be usefully combined to address different kinds of spoiler events. We also lack sufficient information about third-party spoiler management in situations characterized by more recent trends in armed conflicts, notably in contexts with terrorist-designated armed groups, regionalized or transnationalized conflict dynamics, and hybrid peacekeeping. These are all important areas for future research.

Acknowledgments

We thank Jonna Manneberg, Johanna Ohlsson, and Andrew Fallon for excellent research assistance. The article has benefited from valuable feedback from the editors and two anonymous reviewers. We gratefully acknowledge financial support from the Swedish International Development Agency (no. 2007-235) and the Swedish Research Council (no. 2015-01235).

References

Africa Confidential (AC), various issues. Last accessed January 11, 2023. <https://www.africa-confidential.com/news>.

- Africa Research Bulletin (ARB) – Political, Social and Cultural Series, various issues. Last accessed January 11, 2023. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/1467825x>.
- Bakke, Kristin M., Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, and Lee J.M. Seymour. 2012. “A Plague of Initials: Fragmentation, Cohesion, and Infighting in Civil Wars.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (2): 265–83.
- Blaydes, Lisa, and Jennifer De Maio. 2010. “Spoiling the Peace? Peace Process Exclusivity and Political Violence in North-Central Africa.” *Civil Wars* 12 (1): 3–28.
- Cronin, Audrey Kurth. 2006. “How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups.” *International Security* 31 (1): 7–48.
- Cunningham, David. 2011. *Barriers to Peace in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher, Kristin M. Bakke, and Lee Seymour. 2012. “Shirts Today, Skins Tomorrow: The Effects of Fragmentation on Conflict Processes in Self-Determination Disputes.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56 (1): 67–93.
- Darby, John and Roger Mac Ginty, eds. 2000. *The Management of Peace Processes*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Gberie, Lansana. 2005. *A Dirty War in West Africa. The RUF and the Destruction of Sierra Leone*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Gerring, John. 2004. “What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?” *American Political Science Review* 98 (2): 341–54.
- Global Witness. 2003. “The Usual Suspects: Liberia’s Weapons and Mercenaries in Cote d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone, Why It’s Still Possible, How It Works and How to Break the Trend.” Global Witness, London.
- Greenhill, Kelly M., and Solomon Major. 2007. “The Perils of Profiling: Civil War Spoilers and the Collapse of Intrastate Peace Accords.” *International Security* 31 (3): 7–40.
- Hirsch, John L. 2001. *Sierra Leone: Diamonds and the Struggle for Democracy*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Höglund, Kristine, and I. William Zartman. 2006. “Violence by the State: Official Spoilers and Their Allies.” In *Violence and Reconstruction*, edited by John Darby, 11–31. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- ICG. 2002. “Liberia: The Key to Ending Regional Instability.” Africa Report No. 43, International Crisis Group, Freetown/Brussels.
- . 2003. “Liberia: Security Challenges.” Africa Report No. 71, International Crisis Group, Freetown/Brussels.
- . 2004. “Rebuilding Liberia: Prospects and Perils.” Africa Report No. 75, International Crisis Group, Freetown/Brussels.
- Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), various articles. Renamed ‘The New Humanitarian’. Last accessed January 11, 2023. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org>.
- Johnston, Patrick. 2007. “Negotiated Settlements and Government Strategy in Civil War: Evidence from Darfur.” *Civil Wars* 9 (4): 359–77.
- Keen, David. 2005. *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*. Oxford: James Currey.
- King, Charles. 1997. *Ending Civil Wars*, Adelphi Paper Series, vol. 308. London: Oxford University Press.
- Newman, Edward, and Oliver Richmond. 2006. *Challenges to Peacebuilding: Managing Spoilers during Conflict Resolution*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
- Nilsson, Desirée, and Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs. 2005. “Breaking the Cycle of Violence? Promises and Pitfalls of the Liberian Peace Process.” *Civil Wars* 7 (4): 396–414.
- . 2011. “Revisiting an Elusive Concept: A Review of the Debate on Spoilers in Peace Processes.” *International Studies Review* 13 (4): 606–26.
- Pearlman, Wendy. 2009. “Spoiling Inside and Out: Internal Political Contestation and the Middle East Peace Process.” *International Security* 33 (3): 79–109.
- Pearlman, Wendy, and Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham. 2012. “Nonstate Actors, Fragmentation, and Conflict Processes.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56 (1): 3–15.
- Perkoski, Evan. 2022. *Divided Not Conquered: How Rebels Fracture and Splinters Behave*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Peters, Krijn. 2011. *War and the Crisis of Youth in Sierra Leone*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reiter, Andrew G. 2016. *Fighting over Peace: Spoilers, Peace Agreements, and the Strategic Use of Violence*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Reno, William S. 2007. “Liberia: The LURDs of the New Church.” In *African Guerrillas: Raging against the Machine*, edited by Morten Bøås, 69–80. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Rudloff, Peter, and Michael G. Findley. 2016. “The Downstream Effects of Combatant Fragmentation on Civil War Recurrence.” *Journal of Peace Research* 53 (1): 19–32.
- Salih, Cale, and Stephen Gray. 2017. “Group Cohesion and Peace Processes.” United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Last accessed January 11, 2023. <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PB230-Group-Cohesion-and-Peace-Processes.pdf>.
- Schneckener, Ulrich. 2009. “Spoilers or Governance Actors? Engaging Armed Non-State Groups in Areas of Limited Statehood.” *SFB-Governance Working Paper Series No. 21*. Last accessed January 11, 2023. https://www.sfb-governance.de/en/publikationen/sfb-700-working_papers/wp21/index.html.
- Söderberg Kovacs, Mimmi. 2020. “Negotiating Sacred Grounds? Resolving Islamist Armed Conflicts.” *International Negotiation* 25 (3): 375–88.
- Staniland, Paul. 2014. *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Stedman, Stephen John. 1997. “Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes.” *International Security* 22 (2): 5–53.
- Themnér, Anders. 2011. *Violence in Post-Conflict Societies: Remarginalization, Remobilizers and Relationships*. London: Routledge.
- . 2017. *Warlord Democrats in Africa: Ex-Military Leaders and Electoral Politics*. London: Zed Books.
- Trumbore, Peter F. 2016. “‘The Movement Moves against You’: Coercive Spoiler Management in the Northern Ireland Peace Process.” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 30 (3): 1–20.

- United Nations Security Council. 1999. "First Report on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) (S/1999/1223)." United Nations, December 6, 1999.
- . 2000a. "Fifth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/751)." United Nations, July 31, 2000.
- . 2000b. "Second Report of the Secretary-General on UNAMSIL, Including a Recommendation for an Expanded Mission. This Recommendation Follows the Secretary-General's Letter to the Security Council of 28 December 1999 (S/2000/13)." United Nations, January 11, 2000.
- . 2000c. "Seventh Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/1055)." United Nations, October 31, 2000.
- . 2000d. "Sixth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/832)." United Nations, August 24, 2000.
- . 2000e. "Third Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/186)." United Nations, March 7, 2000.
- . 2003. "First Progress Report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2003/1175)." United Nations, December 15, 2003.
- . 2004a. "Fifth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2004/972)." United Nations, December 17, 2004.
- . 2004b. "Fourth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2004/725)." United Nations, September 10, 2004.
- . 2004c. "Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1478 (2003) regarding Liberia (S/2004/428)." United Nations, May 26, 2004.
- . 2004d. "Third Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2004/430)." United Nations, May 26, 2004.
- . 2005. "Seventh Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2005/391)." United Nations, June 16, 2005.
- Utas, Mats, and Magnus Jörgel. 2008. "The West Side Boys: Military Navigation in the Sierra Leone Civil War." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 46 (3): 487–511.
- Zahar, Marie-Joëlle. 1999. "Fanatics, Mercenaries, Brigands ... and Politicians: Militia Decision-Making and Civil Conflict Resolution." PhD dissertation, Department of Political Science, McGill University.
- . 2003. "Reframing the Spoiler Debate in Peace Processes." In *Contemporary Peacemaking: Conflict, Violence and Peace Processes*, edited by Darby, John and Roger Mac Ginty, 159–77. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2006a. "Political Violence in Peace Processes: Voice, Exit, and Loyalty in the Post-Accord Period." In *Violence and Reconstruction*, edited by Darby, John, 33–51. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- . 2006b. "Understanding the Violence of Insiders: Loyalty, Custodians of Peace, and the Sustainability of Conflict Settlement." In *Challenges to Peacebuilding: Managing Spoilers during Conflict Resolution*, edited by Newman, Edward and Oliver Richmond, 40–58. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
- . 2010. "SRSR Mediation in Civil Wars: Revisiting the 'Spoiler' Debate." *Global Governance* 16 (2): 265–80.
- Zartman, I. William, ed. 1995. *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.