Obstacles to Peace Agreements

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Is it Possible to Design Peace Agreements Which All Parties Can Agree To? Why or Why Not?

It is not always clear why some peace agreements succeed and others fail. However, this essay seeks to explore the major barriers to successful implementation. By providing a brief account of the peace process in Rwanda and Sierra Leone during the 1990s, the paper attempts to examine the main obstacles for peaceful settlement. As such, the paper proposes to argue that the ability of an external mediator to address the problematic nature of spoilers is vital for mutual consent to prosper. Moreover, it argues that since peace cannot be maintained without the presence of a committed facilitator, the prospects of achieving durable peace rests on the mediators' capability and willingness to approach the negotiation talks in a skilful manner. If peace is made desirable and continuous war costly, the likelihood for parties to commit to an agreement is at good odds.

The peace process is a complicated procedure, which necessitates skilful management in order to reach diplomatic ends and avoid spoiler problems. By highlighting the importance of responding to civil wars in a "conflict-sensitive" manner and stressing that the quality of the practice in peacebuilding must be carefully addressed before the implementation, this essay argues in favour of the topic (Ramsbotham *et al.,* 2011). By applying theories of civil war resolutions and implementations of peace agreements, the paper proceeds to analyse peace accords in Sierra Leone and Rwanda during the 1990s. Although the efforts to construct peace treaties in these countries subsequently failed, the essay seeks to explore the negotiation process by addressing the means taken to cultivate peace. It wishes to do so by examining the reasons for failure and the criteria for success.

The argument advanced draws on the claim that it is the quality of the negotiation process that becomes the essential element for peace settlements to be successful (Hampson, 1996; Ramsbotham *et al.,* 2011). The barriers to implementation must be adequately addressed and dealt with before arranging the conditions for a treaty. Reaching settlement between warring parties is a complex task which requires all major destabilising factors to be eliminated for successful cooperation and commitment to prevail. Consequently, the essay asserts that for effective implementation to take place, the role played by a mediator or external forces and their ability to manage a "correct diagnosis of spoiler problems" and problems of power-sharing between adversaries is fundamental for making a sustainable peace (Stedman, 1997;Stedman,2001;Hampson,1996).

In *Nurturing Peace: why peace settlements succeed or fail,* Hampson argues that the "poor quality of a peace agreement can be a source of implementation failure" (Stedman citing Hampson, 2002). Furthermore, he asserts that the chances for peace accords to fail in intrastate wars are considerably much higher than the possibility to produce sustainable outcomes between parties in interstate wars (Crocker & Hampson, 1996; Walter, 1997). In civil wars, such as in the following case studies, a successful peace treaty between the government and armed opposition is seldom likely to succeed in comparison with interstate cooperation which appears to be less intertwined (Walker, 1997). Because the adversaries in intrastate wars cannot retain independent military forces, the thought of settlement threatens the only "fall-back defences" they maintain (Walker, 1997). As the only means to security is fundamentally threatened and the parties are stripped off their ability to attain coercive power; their condition becomes significantly more vulnerable and so negotiations talks are less likely to succeed as continuous fighting appears more attractive (Walker, 1997). This problematic situation subsequently creates a vacuum of insecurity that leads to spoiling (Walker, 1997).

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Spoilers are defined as "leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power (…) and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it" (Mac Ginty citing Stedman, 2008). As such, the consequences of the security dilemma in a peace process leads spoilers to arise and limit the prospects of peaceful coexistence by jeopardising negotiation talks (Stedman, 1997) In both of the case studies *spoiler violence* led to the failure of implementation of peace accords (Stedman, 1997). Although the reasons for spoiling were motivated through different means, the measures taken by spoilers and the role played by the facilitators were of similar kind in Rwanda and Sierra Leone. In both cases, it was mainly *total* spoilers who provided the major threat to peace and security guarantees (Stedman, 1997).

Considering the difficulty of the environment, bargaining processes in civil wars are doomed to fail not only because the parties are suddenly expected to cooperate and commit to a peaceful promise, but unless an outside custodian can guarantee the rules of engagement, willingness to commit to peace talks are stillborn (Walter, 1997; Stedman, 2001). As peace processes creates spoilers, the need to address their claims becomes unavoidable if peace is to be accessible.

The civil war in Sierra Leone was largely a product of the war terrorising neighbouring Liberia (Gberie, 2005). Moreover it was fuelled by underdevelopment, diamonds, extreme poverty, repression and a corrupt government (Berman & Labonte, 2006).The Revolutionary United Front, RUF, under leader Foday Sankoh, emerged and challenged president Momoh's government in March 1991 (Berman & Labonte, 2006;MacQueen, 2002). Claiming that he would establish democracy and liberate the country, Sankoh started a campaign that turned into a decade of civil war (Gberie, 2005). Being supported by the former government minister Charles Taylor's military campaign in Liberia, the RUF started launching attacks on civilians and the government (Reno, 2000; Gberie, 2005; MacQueen, 2002). By spreading fear and suffering through means of "apolitical terrorism" the group together with the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) became the main reason for why attempts to create cease-fire failed (Hirsch, 2004).

The RUF's struggle to liberate the country, later referred to as the "RUF phenomenon", made sure that the efforts to end hostilities were ineffective (Gberie, 2005). As such, attempts to negotiate peace in November 1996 with the Abidjan Agreement and later with the Lomé Peace Agreement in 1999 failed (Berman & Labonte, 2006). As Sankoh, although offered amnesty, refused to comply with disarmament provisions and prohibited UN peacekeepers from entering the country, the consequences of his unwillingness led to resumed fighting two months after the Abidjan Agreement was signed (Hayner,2007; Hirch,2004). However, a new cease-fire was agreed to May 1999 (Bergman, 2000; Olonisakin, 2008). Although this cease-fire led to the signing of the Lomé Accord in early July 1999, its prospects for durable peace were largely questioned (Bergman, 2000; Gberie, 2005).

The peace talks that led to the Lomé Accord was hosted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and engaged interesting actors such as the Inter- Religious Council of Sierra Leone and civil society members (Paris, 2004;Hayner, 2007). However, although the actors met up with RUF members and brought their demands to the agenda, their efforts would still not make the RUF rebels give into peaceful collaboration (Hayner, 2007; Olonisakin, 2008). Cease-fire violations were common (Berman & Labonte, 2006). Despite the fact that RUF's rebel leader was given significant influence in the government and was appointed to manage the country's strategic resources including the diamonds, the rebel group was still dedicated to interrupt the peace process (Hirsch, 2004). Less than a year after the accord was signed in May 2000, RUF kidnaped five hundred and killed several peacekeepers, refused to submit to the disarmament deal and killed civilians protesting outside Sankoh's house (Bergman, 2001). Consequently the RUFs refusals to abide by its commitments subsequently lead to a second failure of attempts to create a truce.

Likewise in Rwanda, efforts to implement peace agreements were ruined by spoilers. Although the civil war in Rwanda was mainly an ethnically motivated violent conflict that burst into a gruesome genocide after the signing the Arusha Peace Agreement, it was by similar means as in Sierra Leone mobilised by spoilers (Kuperman, 1996; Mann, 2005; Prunier, 2010). Despite a history of much violent clashes between Hutus and Tutsis, what was later to become the Arusha Accords emerged out of the civil war which began when the Tutsi led Rwandan Patriotic Front, RPF, invaded Rwanda in 1990 (Des Forges, 1999; Mann, 2005). The war which was fought between the Hutu Forces

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Armées Rwandaises (FAR) and the RPF, became in 1993 a subject for international diplomatic initiative under the Security Council (United Nations, 1996).

Having attempted to create a cease-fire, referred to as the" N'sele agreement" in March 1991, the Arusha talks was supervised by the Organisation of African Unity with neighbouring country Tanzania as the chief facilitator (UN, 1996; Khadiagala,2002). In addition, the UNAMIR was deployed in 1993 to assist implementation of the Arusha Agreement (UN, 1996). Yet, the peace process met considerable opposition. As the president of Rwanda, Habyarimana, along with his party Mouvement Démocratique Républicain (MRND) and the party Coalition pour la Défense de la République (CDR), formed an alliance; the two parties became the main obstacles for the effective peace talks to take place(Khadiagala, 2002).

The attempt to provide conditions for power sharing between the opposing parties was prohibited mainly by the MRND and CDR (Khadiagala, 2002). The president also made sure that the peace process was slowed down as he acted reluctantly to take measures for implementation (Burkhalter, 1994). Although the RFP broke down the cease-fire agreement, it was the CDR and MRND that mostly violating the environment for settlement (Khadiagala, 2002). While spreading racist statements the party embarked on mainly three means to disrupt the peace accord: by publicly rejecting the agreement over the Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines, increasing the presidential forces, and delaying the institutional transition, the CDR simultaneously committed numerous political murders to stop the negotiation process (Des Forges, 1999; Khadiagala, 2002). Openly claiming that the Hutus had to take measures into their own hands, the CDR stressed that: "no party, no institution, no person had been able to defend the interests of the majority" (Des Forges, 1999). As a consequence, the hostilities continued until the MRND seized power on April the 7th 1994 and started the systematically slaughtering of nearly a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus (Des Forges, 1999; Mann, 2005).

In both cases of Rwanda and Sierra Leone, a similar pattern for barriers to implementation appeared. As displayed hitherto, the main reason for why the peace accords failed and hostilities continued is primarily a result of total spoiling caused by CDR and RUF (Stedman, 1997). Nevertheless, in the aftermath of the two civil wars more substantial and detailed criticism has been granted the operations. Acknowledging that there are different pathways to peace, lessons learned from the past still provides useful paradigms which can predict peaceful guidelines that all parties can consent to.

As such, Rothchild and Stedman has come up with the following six reasons for why peace agreements fail: "Vague and expedient pace agreements; lack of coordination between mediators and implementers; lack of coordination among implementing agencies; incomplete fulfillment of mandate tasks; short time horizon and limited commitment of implementers and presence of spoilers" (Stedman, 2001). Moreover, if peace agreements in Sierra Leone and Rwanda were to appeal to all parties, not only would these problems need to be addressed more specifically, but the powerful international actors who acted as facilitators should have had the "motives, intentions and capabilities" to quickly address the problematic nature of spoilers and provide measures for the security concerns (Stedman, 2001).

Drawing on these criteria's major criticism has been directed at the UNs commitment to deploy peacekeepers in the case studies (Hayner, 2007). Des Forges argues that when pro-Hutu forces, such as the CDR, observed that they could continue killings without a reaction from the UN this encouraged more slaughtering (Burkhalter, 1994 citing Des Forges). Moreover, unwillingness by the UN to expand the UNAMIR mandate reveals how lack of adequate commitment can affect the peace process (MacQueen, 2002). Similarly in Sierra Leone, poor deployment of UAMSIL peacekeepers led to the same conclusion (Hayner, 2007). Seeing that after thousand British troops arrived Sierra Leone in 2001 and managed to stabilise the peace, the role of mediators to address enforcement need can be the tipping point in peace processes (Gberie, 2005; Hayner, 2007).

Although mediators sometimes do more harm than good as they fail to address the reason for defective cooperation, peace can still be accessible if it is made desirable. While there is no such thing as a "one-size-fits-all" theory, the paper has argued that agreements can still be designed where all parties give their consent. If the security dilemma is addressed through a clear, credible and extensive commitment, by external forces that adequately deal with spoilers and power sharing, careful mediation can create a treaty parties involved can agree to. However, this does not

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automatically mean that all steps taken to peace have come easily.

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