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# Understanding Somaliland's regional stability

A comparative analysis on the prevalence and effects  
of spoilers on the contrasting situations observed in  
Somalia and Somaliland

Misha Desai & Carl Ursing

Peace and Conflict Studies  
Department of Political Science  
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# Abstract

The deadly violence and ethnic conflicts which defined the 1990s period emphasized the need for an effective and viable approach to peacebuilding that shifted from mere containment to strategies that fostered the tenets of a sustainable peace. Nevertheless, the peace process can, and is, often hindered by actors who seek to undermine it for a myriad of reasons. This essay, aims to analyze how spoiling activity affects the peace process and the resulting stability or instability. This will be achieved by applying a comparative approach that summarizes the peace processes that took place in Somalia and Somaliland between 1991 and 1995. After describing the peace processes, spoiling activity during that same period will be highlighted and analyzed to determine how the actions of spoilers, and how spoilers were treated, contributed to the situation observed in Somalia and Somaliland. We will be analyzing the negative and potentially positive consequences of spoiling activities as well as considering the outcomes of including or excluding them from the peace process. The results of this essay shows that spoiler actions ultimately undermined and collapsed the peace process in Somalia, due in large to spoiling actor's exclusion from the peace process. On the other hand, spoilers in Somaliland were generally included in the peace process which facilitated a more inclusive process that took heed of competing interests and grievances and aided in fostering a foundation needed for the creation of a sustainable peace.

**Key Words:** [Peace process, stability, spoilers, inclusion, exclusion, Somalia, Somaliland]

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# 1. Introduction

The Cold War era defined a global order split between two polarized ideological, political and cultural divides, underscored by a mutual standoff between two global superpowers. During this period, addressing worldwide insecurities came a distant second to the Cold War politicking of the global superpowers as external support was often given to fuel protracted proxy wars, in order to protect vested interests.<sup>1</sup> The Horn of Africa is a clear example of this, as the region held both strategic and economic potential for both superpowers.<sup>2</sup> However, the end of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union sparked optimism of the emergence of a new world order that emphasised the need to promote and protect democratic norms and ideals built around universal human rights.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the post-Cold War era failed to live up to this new found optimism as the early 1990s were defined by deadly violence, ethnic conflict, genocide and massive refugee and population flows across borders. The breakdown of multiple states emphasised the need of a reevaluation of international priorities regarding the security and peace discourse that was “increasingly complex and multi-dimensional, going beyond monitoring a ceasefire to actually bringing failed States back to life”.<sup>4</sup> The concept of peacebuilding, that sought to bridge the divide between security and development, provided a viable approach to deal with the range of issues threatening peace and security. Here strategies that shifted their aims from mere containment to facilitating, and at times spearheading the democratisation and peacebuilding process were increasingly favored. The United Nations, taking on the global security role their founders intended, played the dominant role in attempting to foster democratic growth and stability in war torn states.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the peace process is by no means a simple matter, often undermined by groups who aim to hinder and prolong peace talks, violate ceasefires and resume violence; these groups are known as spoilers.

The purpose of “spoiling” a peace initiative is widely varied, however; the unsatisfactory nature of the situation after the peace is installed tends to be a universal aspect of all spoiler groups. Understanding the motivations and actions of spoilers is however vital to understanding the complex

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<sup>1</sup> Tschirgi, Necla “*Peacebuilding as the Link between Security and Development: Is the Window of Opportunity Closing?*” International Peace Academy, Studies in Security and Development, New York, 2003, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Lederach, John Paul, *Somalia: creating space for fresh approaches to peacebuilding*, Life & Peace Institute, Uppsala, 2011, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Tschirgi (2003), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Kofi, Annan, The Secretary-General's Message on the International Day of UN Peacekeepers, 29 May 2006. [http://www.un.org/en/events/peacekeepersday/2006/SG\\_message06.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/events/peacekeepersday/2006/SG_message06.pdf). 26/10/2015.

<sup>5</sup> Tschirgi (2003), 6-10.

nature of conflicts and by understanding the fundamental reasons behind a conflict in turn contributes, and is essential to, achieving a sustainable peace.

We have chosen to apply a comparative analytical examination of two case studies, Somalia and Somaliland, to research the implications of spoilers; not only because of their territorial proximity, similar culture and actors, but the varied results peace initiatives have achieved.

Somalia's recent history has been marred by a prolonged violent internal conflict, stretching from the removal of the dictator Siad Barre in 1991 to the installment of an internationally backed government in 2012 that brought some semblance of stability to the region. On the other hand, Somaliland during the same timeline has achieved peace and today enjoys relative stable economic and political institutions.<sup>6</sup> Understanding this contrast was fundamental to the framing and purpose of this essay. We have studied occurrences of spoilers in the peace process in both Somalia and Somaliland between 1991-1995 to analyze if they have had any implications to the overarching process of creating stability in the region.

While the evaluation of peace processes may present contrasting explanations for the continuation of hostilities, this essay intends to focus on one research question:

**I.** How can the presence of spoilers and how they were treated explain the contrasting stability experienced between 1991-1995 in Somalia and Somaliland?

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<sup>6</sup> Walls, Michael. *Peace In Somaliland : an Indigenous Approach to State-building: Burao, Borama, and Sanaag Conferences. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development (APD) [u.a.], 2008, p.12.*

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Creating a sustainable peace in states that have experienced prolonged violent conflicts is a complex and uncertain process. Nevertheless, the effects of spoilers to this process tends to have relatively predictable outcomes and therefore understanding this phenomenon has gained increasing attention in the last decade. However, while there has been an increase of interest in spoiling behavior it still remains a relatively unexplored area of research. This essay will base its theoretical framework on theories of spoilers and their effect on peace processes and the resulting stability or instability. As such we follow by outlining previous research on this topic, defining the central concepts of spoilers and stability, as well as highlight the transitional peacebuilding discourse.

### 2.1 Previous research

Anna K. Jarstad and Kristine Höglund have addressed in their book, *From War to Democracy. Dilemmas of Peacebuilding*, a particular dilemma regarding the inclusion of spoilers in the peace process. This *horizontal dilemma* considers the relationship between different actors in a peace process and the different roles they have in bringing an end to violence. They argue that the inclusion of spoilers in politics can legitimise and contextualize liberal peacebuilding efforts, but can also undermine the peacebuilding process as it may legitimise the use of violence as a political tool.<sup>7</sup>

On a similar note, research by Edward Newman & Oliver Richmond on spoilers concludes that spoilers are an active component in shaping the local application of generalized ideas of liberal democracy. Spoiling is thereby not only synonymous with preventing negotiations, but also prolonging them by including local contexts in the negotiation.<sup>8</sup> The disruption of peace agreements by actors is not a new phenomenon, but the contemporary nature of the concept of “spoiler” is constructed by today's internal conflicts, to which we have chosen to focus our essay on.

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<sup>7</sup> Jarstad, Anna K. “Dilemmas of war-to-democracy transitions: theories and concepts”. In Jarstad, Anna. K. & Sisk, Timothy D., 2008. *From War to Democracy. Dilemmas of Peacebuilding*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 23, 81.

<sup>8</sup> Newman, Edward & Richmond, Oliver P. (red.), “*Challenges to peacebuilding: managing spoilers during conflict resolution*”, United Nations University Press, Tokyo; New York, 2006, p. 18.

## 2.2 Concept definitions

As some of the terms used in this essay are broad subjects, often open to interpretation, clarification of our use of definitions is required. While academic literature on the phenomenon of spoilers, peace operations and stability may not be very well developed, several working definitions of the concept have nevertheless been established.

### 2.2.1 Spoilers

Stephen John Stedman defines spoilers as “leaders and parties who believe the emerging peace threatens their power, worldview, and interests and who use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it”.<sup>9</sup> As such, Stedman argues that spoilers only exist when there is a peace process to undermine, as in a conflict a negotiated peace often has losers who would not see the creation of peace as beneficial.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Newman & Richmond suggest that spoilers should be a term applicable to anyone who opposes the path leading to peace, for whatever reason, whether included or excluded in the official process.<sup>11</sup> This is highlighted by Stedman who also claims that spoilers can be either inside or outside the peace process.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, Newman & Richmond’s study also questions the normative judgment of spoilers as inherently bent on obstructing the process of peace.<sup>13</sup> Instead, they theorize, it is the components of a peace settlement that collides with the aims and goals of groups, thus removing peace in itself as the obstacle to be objected. Therefore, the driving initiatives of spoilers should be analyzed to possibly include, or remove, certain aspects in the progress for sustainable peace. Adopting this formulation in our essay as well, we also aim to analyze the struggle between the warring parties not as a conflict over peace, but a conflict over possible settlements or marginalization of existing culture and norms. However, as both studies highlight, spoilers can also fundamentally obstruct the path to stability, and their role in spoiling the peace process is of main concern to our essay.

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<sup>9</sup> Stedman, Stephen John. “Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes”, in Stern, Paul C. & Druckman, Daniel (red.), *International conflict resolution after the Cold War [Elektronisk resurs]*, National Academy Press, Washington, D.C., 2000, p. 178.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>11</sup> Newman & Richmond (2006), p.4.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 182-183.

<sup>13</sup> Newman & Richmond (2006), p. 2.

### ***2.2.2 Peace Operations***

In order to create a sustainable peace in a country experiencing a violent conflict, some form of peace process must take place. Understanding, therefore the discourses surrounding peacekeeping operations are useful in comprehending the role spoilers play in shaping post conflict societies. The post-Cold War era saw a dramatic rise in UN led peacekeeping missions, the majority of which utilized an approach that favored fostering and promoting liberal and democratic norms in war torn states. This liberal peace approach is based on the argument that democratic forms of government are more likely to be peaceful and as such the rapid liberalisation of states would foster a stable sustainable peace in countries that experienced violent conflicts.<sup>14</sup> This approach, typically utilizes a top-down strategy, based off Western templates, which emphasizes the organization of fair elections, the creation of a market economy, the separation of power and the promotion of human rights and civil society.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless the weakness of the liberal peace approach has been highlighted by the myriad of peacekeeping failures that have been observed in the 1990s. Central to the critique is its exclusion and marginalization of local actors in the peace process. As such, in lieu of these past failures, a ‘local turn’ has today become increasingly prominent in approaches to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. This approach seeks to understand the changing conditions of peace by necessitating a more expansive approach that encompasses a wider range of peacebuilding actors especially at the local level.<sup>16</sup>

### ***2.2.3 Stability***

To understand the contrasting situation in Somalia and Somaliland it is necessary to explain the definition of stability we will use. To find a fitting approach we have applied Leon Hurwitz definition of stability. Hurwitz presents stability as; (1) the absence of violence; (2) governmental longevity/endurance; (3) the existence of legitimate constitutional order; (4) absence of structural change; (5) a multifaceted societal attribute.<sup>17</sup> Therefore in this essay, in view of Hurwitz’s five indicators, the resulting situation in Somaliland will be represented as stable and Somalia unstable.

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<sup>14</sup> Paris, Roland, *At war's end: building peace after civil conflict*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p. 5, 55.

<sup>15</sup> Autesserre, Séverine, *Peaceland: conflict resolution and the everyday politics of international intervention*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014, p. 52.

<sup>16</sup> Mac Ginty, Roger and Oliver Richmond (2013) ”The Local Turn in Peacebuilding: Critical Agenda for Peacebuilding”, *Third World Quarterly*, 34(5): p. 764.

<sup>17</sup> Hurwitz, L. (1973). ‘Contemporary Approaches to Political Stability’, *Comparative Politics* 5, p. 449-463.



## 3. Methodological Framework

The theoretical framework that has been developed above highlights the multifaceted nature of spoilers and the different approaches and interpretations that have been advanced over the past decade. As such, considering the complex character of the subject at hand, certain limitations and clarifications must be made to specify this essay's focus as well as formalize the analytical tools that will be utilized. This section therefore will aim to illustrate our methodological framework and define our choice of material, time frame and region of focus.

### 3.1 Choice of region

Considering our research question, it is understandable that our focus in this essay will be on two specific territorial regions. As this essay will compare different methods of addressing spoilers, Somalia and Somaliland presents an opportunity to study this comparison in context of a homogenous culture, religion and social climate.<sup>18</sup> This homogeneity removes several of the factors which could jeopardize the fundamental understanding of spoilers as an explanatory factor to the degree of stability in Somalia and Somaliland.

Despite their similarities, the Republic of Somaliland, while not internationally recognized as a sovereign state, is considered an autonomous region with a working political system, constitution and currency separate from Somalia. As such, Somaliland is, in all but international recognition, an independently functioning state. Therefore, in this essay we will consider Somaliland as its own distinct region separate from the country of Somalia. The situation of Somaliland is not unique however, as Puntland is also a semi-autonomous region that has seceded from Somalia and experiences the same relative stability found in Somaliland. However, while including Puntland would have made the essay more comprehensive, the choice to focus on one specific region was shaped by ensuring the scope of this essay was not too broad.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> O'Neill, John Terence & Rees, Nicholas, "United Nations Peacekeeping In The Post-cold War Era" [Elektronisk resurs], Taylor & Francis Ltd, Hoboken, 2005, p. 100.

<sup>19</sup> Barakat S, Connolly D, Hardman F, Lewis A, Lineker B, Menkhaus K, Rzeszut K, and Shanks K (2014), *Beyond Fragility: A Conflict and Education Analysis of the Somali Context*. University of York/UNICEF, Somalia, Kenya, p. 75.

## 3.2 Comparative study

As the aim of this essay is to analyze the role spoilers have had in creating the varying stability in Somalia and Somaliland, a methodological approach that utilizes a comparative framework seemed most suitable. Comparison is a vital and significant tool of any analysis and can aid in establishing empirical relationships between different variables.<sup>20</sup> This method is useful as it allows us to examine cases in detail which in turn could contribute to developing relevant additional variables that have significant theoretical value.<sup>21</sup> However, using a comparative method limits us to material that is comparable, excluding unique factors that possibly could offer alternate explanations in the understanding of spoilers influence on the peace process. This methodological approach is therefore beneficial for this essay in several ways. Firstly, it will help bring to light the similarities and differences between the two chosen regions, regarding the peace processes and the prevalence of spoilers. Secondly, by highlighting these differences and similarities, we can integrate explanatory factors that may help clarify the contradictory situations observed in Somalia and Somaliland.

This research paper will rely mainly on previously recorded information that is, examining previous reports of the peace process. It will thereby try to remove any uncertainty of undisclosed aspects, with purpose to build on contemporary research, not formulate new areas of study. Our reasoning is that by relying on a factual comparative method the aim is to guarantee that emphasis is placed on how the study conforms to practice, not theory. Overall we suggest the use of comparative analysis is most suited for our essay, as the implications of spoilers on a peace process is almost a limitless subject making the discovery of general reactions too complicated.

## 3.3 Time frame

Following on, this essay will be limited to the time frame between 1991 and 1995. The reasoning behind this is because of the limited amount of material on the peace process in Somalia after 1995, and in Somaliland prior to 1991. Peace initiatives in Somalia and Somaliland officially started in 1991 with the political upheaval of the previous regime and removal of Siad Barre, officially seen as a starting point for the political instabilities in Somalia and the secession of Somaliland. The period of study ends in 1995 with the withdrawal of the UN and almost all affiliated groups.<sup>22</sup> This timespan gives us

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<sup>20</sup> Lijphart, Arend “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method”, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (Sep., 1971), p. 683.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 692.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations Operation in Somalia II <http://www.un.org/DEpts/DPKO/Missions/UNOSOM2b.htm>.

the opportunity to study a time period of frequent occurrences of spoilers and their implications on the peace process, but limits the amount of material processed for a more extensive case study.

### **3.4 Choice of variables, definitions and literature**

The previous sections have outlined the extensive nature of our choice of research which validates our choice to adopt a narrower approach. As our aim in this essay is to analyze how stability varies in the two regions as a result of the influence of spoilers, our research will be outlined by an independent variable; spoilers, and one dependent; stability.

Our analysis will utilize a definition of spoilers that borrows from both Newman & Richmond and Stedman. We will use Stedman's definition that considers spoilers as individuals or groups whose direct actions undermine the peace process but also take into account Newman and Richmond's claim that spoilers may counteract possible marginalization of local actors and beliefs. Similarly, when analyzing the possible effect of spoilers we will consider the *horizontal dilemma* of inclusion and exclusion as outlined by Jarstad & Sisk to better help us categorize the effects of spoilers pertinent to our case.

This essay draws upon a wide array of literature consisting mainly of academic books, articles and reports. This material developed a foundation of basic understanding and provided a context to apply our analytical method on. Somaliland's lack of international recognition posed a dilemma to our choice of material on Somalia as it often failed to acknowledge Somaliland as a separate territorial region. As such this required a process of analyzing the facts before verifying them as valid to our research. Nevertheless, considering Somaliland's non-sovereign status, material useful to our study is limited. A national bias is therefore not possible to exclude and may possibly influence our analysis.

We will aim to achieve the above by first providing a chronological in depth description of peace initiatives, defined as peacekeeping and peace building, undertaken in both Somalia and Somaliland between 1991 and 1995. We will follow by highlighting the main spoiling activity recorded in each region based on our chosen definition, during the same period. To clarify, we will consider spoiling activity to be any actions that undermined or aimed to undermine the peace processes in both regions. These actions can be either violent, in the form of the use of physical force, or non-violent, by refusing to sign a ceasefire for example. To understand the purpose of these actions, we will base our analysis on our chosen definition. After this, we will analyze the relationship between these two

variables, building off Jarstad & Sisk's *horizontal dilemma*, to study if, and how, the spoiling activity recorded in both regions affected the peace process and the resulting varying levels of stability.

## 4. Case Briefings

While Somalia has had a long and turbulent history marred by conflict, the ousting of Siad Barre and his administration from power in 1991, marked a significant deterioration of statehood and stability in Somalia.<sup>23</sup> This period saw the region descend into a large scale civil war, as rival warlords and clan chiefs all vied for political and economic power. Central to this struggle was the Hawiye clan, whose two rival leaders, Ali Mahdi Muhammad and Mohamed Farrah Aideed, both sought control over the region. The leaders' bitter rivalry, effectively split Mogadishu into two warring camps, initiating a protracted violent conflict.<sup>24</sup> The international community responded by engaging in peacekeeping operations that aimed to restore stability. The United Nations, supported by the United States (US), was the dominant actor during this period, as such our focus in the next section will be directed at peace operations conducted by the UN in Somalia. During this same period however, actors in Somaliland took advantage of the chaos created by the conflict to begin their secession from Somalia.<sup>25</sup> This is important to note as international efforts to bring an end to the conflict focused on Somalia as a whole and did not consider Somaliland as a separate country. As such the peace process in Somaliland was significantly different from Somalia, both in actors involved but also the strategies adopted and their results. We will focus therefore on conferences organized by local actors when reviewing the peace process in Somaliland.

### 4.1 Peace process in Somalia: 1991-1995

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 1992 resolution 751 was passed by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), establishing the foundations of The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I).<sup>26</sup> First off, the directive of UNOSOM I meant the implementation of 50 observers, appointed to supervise and retain an already implemented ceasefire between the two major warring factions and their leaders; Aideed and Mahdi.<sup>27</sup> Secondly, to improve the humanitarian situation, increased personnel was stationed to protect the transports of supplies from a growing number of possible threats. In this

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<sup>23</sup> Murphy, Ray, *UN "Peacekeeping in Lebanon, Somalia and Kosovo: operational and legal issues in practice"*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 48.

<sup>24</sup> O'Neill (2005) p. 100.

<sup>25</sup> Walls (2008), p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> Murphy (2007), p. 51.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

phase of the conflict, UN sought mainly to support a local re-stabilisation of society, not directly intervene to produce stability itself. However, as the stability in Somalia decreased more UN personnel were stationed in the region around Mogadishu. Despite this, the deployment of these troops was severely delayed due to the UN's failure to seek consent from the leaders of the warring factions, who refused to cooperate as a result.<sup>28</sup> UNOSOM I was unsuccessful in dealing with the challenges it faced, due in part to its small scale and limited mandate, but also because it failed to address the fundamental problem in Somalia; the total collapse of state authority in the country.<sup>29</sup>

With growing demands from the international community to bring an end to the conflict, The Unified Task Force (UNITAF) was established on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 1992 under UNSC resolution 794.<sup>30</sup> The resolution proclaimed the need for a further increase of troops in Somalia authorizing the use of "all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia".<sup>31</sup> While UNITAF was a multinational operation, the US agreed to spearhead the operation, contributing over 28,000 soldiers who succeeded in opening up supply routes that helped reinvigorate the delivery of humanitarian aid. Although UNITAF improved the humanitarian situation in Somalia, communicative and administrative complications resulted in unclear strategic goals, which negatively affected the operations potential to reduce violence.<sup>32</sup> UNITAF therefore was deemed a success, facilitating the transition to the UN's next operation.

United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) was established under UNSC resolution 814 on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 1993.<sup>33</sup> The operations initial mandate was to continue to protect humanitarian personnel and supplies, but differed from previous resolutions, in its authorization to disarm Somali militias and begin the state building process.<sup>34</sup> As the operation continued it became apparent that the creation of a stable and secure environment, that was supposed to be generated during UNITAF, was not complete which forced UNOSOM II to shift its operational focus, which had detrimental effects to the current situation.<sup>35</sup> Tensions culminated when 24 UN soldiers, tasked with inspecting a weapon storage owned by Aideed, were killed by Aideed's militia, resulting in the

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<sup>28</sup> O'Neill (2005), p. 103.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Murphy (2007), p. 317.

<sup>31</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 794 (1992) Adopted by the Security Council at its 3145th meeting, on 3 December 1992*, 3 December 1992, S/RES/794 (1992).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 60-61.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 318.

<sup>34</sup> O'Neill (2005), p. 107.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

UN passing Resolution 837, which effectively declared war on the Somali warlord.<sup>36</sup> However, the new resolution was unsuccessful and instead increased tensions between the UN and Aideed's faction, culminating in the disastrous battle of Mogadishu. This event posed a significant turn for UNOSOM II, as it resulted in the withdrawal of the majority of US troops from Somalia. With the withdrawal of vital personnel, the UN mission was continually unable to deal with the increasingly violent military groups, and ended in 1995 with a final resolution to abandon the UN mission in Somalia.<sup>37</sup>

## 4.2 Spoilers in Somalia Peace process

As the above has highlighted, by 1995 the UN had failed in their general goal to create a stable Somalia, with the country's power still in the hands of competing warlords. While the peacekeeping strategies that were employed in the country can themselves be questioned, actions taken that undermined the peace process significantly contributed to the subsequent failure and withdrawal of the UN from Somalia. The conflict, instigated between two of the biggest factions of the civil war, Somali National Movement (SNA) and United Somali Congress (USC), centered on which appointed leader would bring economic and political reconstruction to the nation.<sup>38</sup> Aideed (SNA) and Mahdi (USC), the representatives of both factions both contributed to the failures of the peace process by the spoiling activity they either ordered or took part in themselves.

The original mandate of UNOSOM I was to monitor the prearranged ceasefire and the transportation of humanitarian aid and while Mahdi and Aideed had agreed to halt hostilities, UN convoys with aid were systematically targeted and looted by local militias. Aideed took advantage of the UN's lack of security, hijacking humanitarian aid as soon as it left the Mogadishu ports, looting valuable aid.<sup>39</sup> The continuous plundering and attacks on UN aid convoys significantly reduced the effectiveness of UNOSOM I which in turn hindered their capacity to provide humanitarian assistance in the country.<sup>40</sup>

As a result of the increased attacks on UN personnel, UNITAF was established to provide increased security. Nevertheless, while the operation of UNITAF was deemed successful, it was significantly hampered by the rivalry of Mahdi and Aideed. Aideed especially, developed animosity

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Murphy (2007), p. 193-194.

<sup>38</sup> Mayall, James (red.), *The new interventionism, 1991-1994: United Nations experience in Cambodia, former Yugoslavia and Somalia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 106.

<sup>39</sup> O'Neill (2005), p. 102.

<sup>40</sup> Murphy (2007), p. 54.

towards the intervening actors, due to their preferential treatment of Mahdi and began encouraging a negative attitude towards the international intervention in Somalia.<sup>41</sup> On the contrary, Mahdi to an extent saw UN as a tool to be used in the campaign for power, following the rules as it fitted him.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, due to the UN's reluctance to disarm the dominant warlords in the country, both Aideed and Mahdi took the opportunity to stockpile weapons. While this did not undermine UNITAF in itself, UN's oversight proved fatal in their next operation.<sup>43</sup>

Tensions in 1993, during UNOSOM II, resulted in the highpoint of UN activity in the region, to where the goals of humanitarian aid was deemed accomplished, which switched focus towards the conflict, which was raging in Mogadishu.<sup>44</sup> UNOSOM II's mandate to disarm local groups, by force if necessary, was received by Aideed a direct measure to pacify and neutralize his faction who increased attacks on UN forces. The most notable of which resulted in the deaths of 24 UN soldiers who were killed during a weapon inspection of a storage facility belonging to Aideed.<sup>45</sup> This event showed Aideed's total disregard of the peace process and proved the tipping point for the relationship between Aideed and the UN. The militarized actions against troops however led the US, outside of UN control, to lead a force into Mogadishu to capture Aideed. However, the mission was a failure, ending in the loss of two helicopters and 18 soldiers while Aideed survived.<sup>46</sup> The negative trends progressed throughout the following year, as violence against UN personnel was on the increase. The opinion of UN's mission as a failure gained ground in the UNSC and during 1995 the last personal in any of the mandates given during the conflict was withdrawn, ending the UN mission in Somalia.<sup>47</sup>

### 4.3 Peace process in Somaliland: 1991-1995

The peace process of Somaliland was initiated prior to the downfall of Siad Barre by the Somali National Movement (SNM). Originating from a Somali diaspora in London and made up by members from the dominant Isaaq-clan, SNM quickly became a legitimate actor fighting the regime due to its inclusive nature.<sup>48</sup> As such, while the collapse of Barre's administration in 1991 prompted a struggle

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<sup>41</sup> O'Neill (2005), p. 106.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>43</sup> Murphy (2007), p. 61-62.

<sup>44</sup> O'Neill (2005), p. 105.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>46</sup> Murphy (2007), p. 187.

<sup>47</sup> Mayall (1996), p. 120.

<sup>48</sup> Phillips, Sarah (2013) "*Political Settlements and State Formation: The Case of Somaliland* ", Development Leadership Program: University of Sydney, p. 44.



for power between competing factions in the southern and central regions of Somalia, the SNM emerged as the dominant actor in the Northern region of Somalia. Nevertheless, hostilities between the SNM and other competing clans in the northern region continued which prompted preliminary talks to end the inter-clan conflicts. However, while international actors were involved in the peace process in Somalia, local actors both engaged and facilitated the peace process in Somaliland. This process was initiated through major conferences and meetings that were open to all clan leaders with the underlying aim of creating a sustainable peace and coexistence between the dominant Isaaq-clan and the less powerful.<sup>49</sup>

The conference of Berbera was the first conference that gathered delegates from all the northern clans in order to establish a regional ceasefire.<sup>50</sup> Due to the inclusive nature of the conference, the first steps towards a collective foundation for future reconciliation were taken as it established initial policies aimed at coexistence between all the Northern clans.<sup>51</sup>

With a ceasefire in place, on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 1991 all Northern clans participated in the Burao conference which set out to continue the reconciliation process as well as discuss Somaliland's future. During this conference the establishment of several fundamental factors to the sovereignty and state building were discussed and agreed upon.<sup>52</sup> Firstly, the sovereignty of the northern region of Somalia was for the first time officially declared and agreed upon as an autonomous nation of Somalia, named Somaliland.<sup>53</sup> Secondly, a decision-making body was created, comprising of individuals belonging to the SNM: the Central Committee. Thirdly, SNM Chairman, Abdirahman Ali Tuur, accepted the mantle as the first president of the new Republic of Somaliland.<sup>54</sup> Despite the celebratory mood in Somaliland at that time, the peace that existed was still fragile, with tensions between clans and factions still significant. This was highlighted in 1992 when violent power struggles erupted over the control of infrastructure and revenue in Berbera and Burao, threatening to plunge Somaliland into a protracted civil war similar to that taking place in Mogadishu.<sup>55</sup> As a response however to the growing hostilities, the Sheekh conference was organised on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1992 in an attempt to bring an end to the conflicts in Buruo and Berbera as well as consolidate peace between the warring clans. The discord of

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<sup>49</sup> Jhazbhay, Iqbal, 2009. "Somaliland: The Journey of Resistance, Reconciliation and Peace". African Safety Promotion. Vol. 7, No. 1. pp. 52.

<sup>50</sup> Walls (2008), p. 18.

<sup>51</sup> Michael Wall, "The Emergence of a Somali State: Building Peace from Civil War in Somaliland," *African Affairs* 108, 432 (2009), pp. 380.

<sup>52</sup> Phillips (2013), p. 53-54.

<sup>53</sup> Wall (2009), p. 374.

<sup>54</sup> Wall (2008), p. 39.

<sup>55</sup> Iqbal (2009), p. 60.

SNM between the conferences of Burao (1991) and Sheekh (1992) had however reduced the Central Committees capacity for action. Thus the President decided to temporarily transfer decision-making power towards a mixed mediation group made up mainly of clan elders, known in Somaliland as *Guurti*.<sup>56</sup> This new council was established to deal with internal security issues that threatened the stability forged in Somaliland with the intent to legitimize the state formation process.<sup>57</sup> Despite these measures, peace remained fragile in Somaliland, which necessitated the establishment of a subsequent conference that was to take place in the first months of 1993.

The Borama conference took place in January 1993 and included all previous delegates.<sup>58</sup> Led by the *Guurti*, the promulgation of a Peace Charter for the entire region of Somaliland and a national constitutional framework that outlined governing principles of law and order in accordance with local traditions and faith was established.<sup>59</sup> The Charter effectively established a democratic governing body in Somaliland with Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal replacing Tuur as the President of Somaliland.<sup>60</sup> The conference was therefore marked by Somaliland's complete transition from SNM's primarily military party system to a civilian system of democracy, without any hardships. The Borama conference was vital in establishing a government that addressed and respected the issues of representation and power sharing of Somaliland's main clans, integrating traditional and modern approaches that fostered a balanced form of governance.<sup>61</sup>

After Egal's succession as the second President of Somaliland, disputes in the political arena threatened the hard forged stability in Somaliland. However, Egal endured and managed to secure the foundations of the Republic of Somaliland, establish institutions of government, demobilise local militias and secure an environment for economic recovery.<sup>62</sup>

## 4.4 Spoilers in Somaliland Peace process

While Egal's administration managed to establish a relative stability and create the foundations needed for the formation of the Somaliland Republic, the peace process however can be understood as a cycle of conflicts born from the different perceptions of how the process of stability should have been

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<sup>56</sup> Phillips (2013), p. 44-45.

<sup>57</sup> Iqbal (2009), p. 61.

<sup>58</sup> Wall (2008), p. 21.

<sup>59</sup> Iqbal (2009), p. 61.

<sup>60</sup> Phillips (2013), p. 57.

<sup>61</sup> Iqbal (2009), p. 62.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

directed.<sup>63</sup> The major peace conferences provided a platform for clan leaders to air their grievances in order to unify vested interests in the region. Despite these measures, tensions still culminated in conflicts between clans competing over economic and strategic assets.

Although the declaration of sovereignty at the Burao conference temporarily pacified the region of Somaliland, a fragile peace still existed and was underlined by a flare in violence that took place in the early months of 1992.<sup>64</sup> These outbreaks of fighting involved rival militia factions within the SNM, who were unsatisfied by the uneven distribution of weaponry after the conflict with Siad Barre had ended. As such instances of banditry, looting and violent clashes began to rise in the regions of Berbera and Burao against the backdrop of Presidents Tuur's efforts to form a national military force aimed at disarming local militias.<sup>65</sup> The dominant position of certain clans within the SNM presented a potential obstacle by lesser members in their attempt to prevent possible marginalization in the process of shaping the future system.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, unemployed youths in the region found themselves with easy access to weapons and with little to do after the cessation of the conflict, many turned to violence and banditry. These conflicts, while small scale, still hampered the main aim of the peace conferences, namely establishing and fostering trust between the Northern clans.

While several meetings were held in attempt to deescalate the situation, by March 1992 tensions had once again resumed as allied clans to the SNM began questioning the future of the region. Central to these concerns was the issue of who would have control over Berbera Port which counted as the only substantial sources of income for the government.<sup>67</sup> The conflict over Berber port culminated in May 1992 when SNM veteran, Abdillaahi Degaweyne asserted his claim on the area, which prompted a violent power struggle between competing factions and aided in deepening clan divisions. In August Degaweyne had managed to chase government forces out of Berbera and ultimately weakening their hold over the region. Consequently, as conflicts were becoming more frequent, small groups within the clans saw the distraction of a relapse into conflict as weakening the Central Committee of Somaliland, and broke into armed struggles to gain momentum in increasing their own powers.<sup>68</sup> Although spoilers were at an all-time high, the Sheekh conference and resulting Borama conference were arranged to unite clan conflicts, effectively creating the stability needed for state formation.

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<sup>63</sup> Walls (2009), p. 3, 11.

<sup>64</sup> Phillips (2013), p. 55.

<sup>65</sup> Walls (2008), p. 44.

<sup>66</sup> Phillips (2013), p. 19-20.

<sup>67</sup> Walls (2008), p. 45.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

## 5. Analysis

As our case briefings have highlighted, actors and strategies utilized in the peace processes of Somalia and Somaliland differed widely. Spoilers on the other hand were present and operational in both situations, yet the peace processes ended very differently as relative stability established in Somaliland while near complete state collapse occurred in Somalia. It is therefore our aim to analyze how the presence of spoilers and how they were treated could explain the differing levels of stability observed in the two regions.

In Somalia, initial looting and attacks on UN personnel directly influenced the establishment of UNISOM I and despite the deployment of UN troops, the operation was continuously undermined by the continued looting and attacks of UN personnel. This spoiling activity deteriorated the humanitarian situation to the degree where the UN deployed UNITAF in an attempt to regain order. While its mandate to reestablish the transportation of humanitarian aid was fulfilled, the failure to disarm Mahdi and Aideed proved fatal in the long run as they grew increasingly dangerous and were therefore able to undermine the continued policies introduced by the UN. The culmination of spoiler actions resulted in the killing of 24 UN personnel during UNOSOM II and initiated the collapse of the peace process in Somalia. Understanding spoilers through our chosen definition that considers spoilers as actors performing actions with the purpose of undermining the peace process or/and with the purpose of counteracting marginalization of certain groups, offers an interpretation more applicable than the other.

Considering Aideed and Mahdi primarily pro-acted, not re-acted to decisions made by the UN, their purpose, according to our information, must therefore have been to spoil the process aimed to bring peace to Somalia in order to receive highest amount of gains from the conflict. Further, for Aideed's and Mahdi's spoiling actions to negate possible marginalization of the local population required specific assumptions that did not correlate with reality at that time. First off Aideed and Mahdi had to be considered protagonists in a situation where the UN was perceived as an antagonist. *Id est*, they would be conveying the will of the local population in an attempt to counteract a stronger power's attempt to imperialize them, which was not the case. Secondly, Aideed and Mahdi were primarily obstructing humanitarian aid, not providing it, which argues that their interests were put ahead of the wellbeing of the Somali people. Thirdly, while the UN attempted to include both actors within the process towards peace, it was the rivalry between Aideed and Mahdi that was the obstacle

to overcome in order to achieve stability. This suggests that Aideed and Mahdi had a negative effect on the peace process.

Seeing how spoilers were treated in the Somali peace process can also help us to understand why a sustainable peace was never achieved. Co-operation of both parties was initially dependable, especially as both Aideed and Mahdi were willing to sign a UN approved ceasefire. However, mistrust between the interveners and Somali actors began to grow as additional UN troops were approved without the consent of either Somali actor. This went against early promises to include all actors in the peace process and aided in establishing a level of distrust between the UN, Aideed and Mahdi. Although efforts to disarm the warring factions were held back, UN did not assume direct responsibility to end the fighting nor solve the political dispute. Similarly, with Mahdi claiming the presidential role, UN policies were accused of benefitting him over Aideed and while this may not have been correct, it did aid in further marginalizing Aideed from the peace process. As such Aideed's increased use of violence to undermine the peace process could be seen as a result of the UN's failure to effectively include him in.

With the UN increasingly excluding Aideed from the peace process, mistrust between the actors began to grow. Meanwhile the UN losing credibility with their role as peacemakers increasingly being questioned. Following, the mandate to completely exclude Aideed from the process was given in resolution 814 (UNISOM II). Due to the resolution's hardline "all means necessary" mandate it can be comprehensible as the point of no return. We found several points in the resolution confirming this, including; the increasingly offensive methods adopted by the UN, the declaration of Aideed and Mahdi as enemies to the UN mission and the disarming of both factions through, if necessary, the use of force. This left the actors with very little incentive to concede power which made finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict almost impossible, as such, greater risks were taken and consequently bigger prices had to be paid.

On the other hand, to understand UN's reluctance to exclude both factions, it is important to keep in mind the stimulus of co-operation that occurred during the first and second UN negotiated ceasefire, which made their status as inside or outside the UN mission a perplexing issue. Rather, the belief that they could benefit from the situation after the UN withdrawal influenced decisions made until UNOSOM II. Observing the situation by using Jarstad and Höglunds *horizontal dilemma*, the decision to include spoilers allowed for continued spoiling to be used as a political tool in order to receive further benefits. Nevertheless, the underlying difference between what the UN said and what they did was a factor that caused spoilers to mistrust the actual purpose of the UN. Consequently, the

UN increased troops as Aideed grew more violent, and Aideed grew more violent as the UN increased troops. This culminated in the violence of 1993, where Aideed caused enough damage to international forces to initiate the dismantling of the peace process in Somalia.

Moving on, while the peace process in Somaliland was inherently different from that in Somalia, spoilers were nevertheless active and influenced the process. Understanding why stability was established in Somaliland, requires us to analyze the purpose of spoilers and how they were treated. The spoiling activity that took place in Somaliland was fueled by clashing clan interests. Initially this took the form of violent clashes perpetrated by actors within the SNM who were unsatisfied by the unequal distribution of resources but also SNM's growing power in the newly formed state. Similarly, unemployed youths began engaging in banditry and looting and violence therefore increased. Nevertheless tensions and spoiler activity culminated in March 1992 with the conflict over Berbera Port. These actions marked one of the most significant challenges to the peace process and threatened to derail all progress made so far in Somaliland.

Considering once again our chosen definition that outlines the purpose of spoilers as both detrimental to the peace process but also capable of countering marginalization, it is evident both aspects were present in the Somaliland peace process. The initial looting, banditry and violence that was observed in early 1992 significantly halted peace progress and aided in creating mistrust between clans but also weakened SNM's ability to maintain stability. Their aim was therefore to obstruct peace as it would reduce their temporary assertion to power. These actions essentially undermined the fundamental goal of the peace conferences, namely the unification of Northern clans as the foundation of the Somaliland state. As such these spoiler actions can be considered as detrimental to the peace process.

However to understand the underlying concept of spoiling in Somaliland requires a conception of spoiling with the purpose to prevent marginalization, and not only as an attempt to obstruct peace in itself. Considering this, the SNM by 1992 held the majority of power with President Tuur and the Central Committee comprising the major decision making body. The spoiling activity was therefore never aimed at initiating conflict, but a reaction to the potential exclusion from the structure of power. Since SNM did not provide any answers to how and who would be able to conceive power in their resignation, uncertainty of the future situation became an incentive to spoiling. The Berbera Port conflict can also be used to confirm this argument, as the port was traditionally inhabited by several groups who shared the revenue generated. This however was threatened by Tuur's attempt to increase SNM's control over revenue flows. Although, the actions taken by the spoiler groups at Berbera can

be seen as being motivated by personal economic gain, it is important to see that these actions were taken to protect clan interests as well. As such while the spoilers can still be seen as detrimental to the peace process, they nevertheless forced the SNM to accept and take heed of the interests of other smaller clans.

While spoilers were active during the Somaliland peace process, the way they were handled and treated was inherently different from Somalia. The peace conferences were organized with the recognition that high levels of inclusivity was necessary to create a peace that was not only accepted by all but that was able to last. The inclusive nature that would permeate Somaliland's peace process was facilitated by the majority of clans descending from the Isaaq-clan, and as such, bonds between its sub-clans were already in existence. By arranging peace conferences where all clans were invited, the risk of potential disruptions was greatly reduced, and even though several occurrences of spoiling behavior took place, they were relatively low, especially compared to Somalia. Furthermore, by including a large number of different actors, the legitimacy of the outcomes from the peace conferences was effectively widened and mediation between numerically dominant and less powerful clans was facilitated.

The exclusion of spoilers was never considered; most likely due to the problems it would have caused the process of state building. This was underlined by the establishment of the *Guurti*, which was mainly made up by mixed elders from all clans and in turn provided enough trust for the minor clans to accept their representation in the state formation process. In turn the *Guurti* transitioned power to a governmental structure accepted by all. By transitioning power from a single group to an open democratic system, inclusion was established as a permanent guarantee, to which conflicts over power were negated. The formation of the *Guurti* can therefore be considered a culmination of spoiling actions and the inclusive nature of the peace conferences. Somaliland did achieve stability, according to our definition, within the timeframe of 1991-1995, to where the peace process was neither seriously hampered nor obstructed by the occurrence of spoilers, but rather spoiling made its contents equally beneficial to the population of Somaliland.

## 6. Conclusion

The case studies of Somalia and Somaliland illustrate the complex nature of peace processes and the significant consequences that result out of spoiling activity. The aim of this essay was to analyze how spoilers affected the peace processes in Somalia and Somaliland, but also consider how their treatment could clarify the varying levels of resulting stability.

The purpose of spoilers in both regions were fundamentally different. In Somalia spoiling actions orchestrated by Mahdi and Aideed were motivated by personal interests and the consolidation of absolute power in the country. As such, the spoiling actions undertaken by both actors can be understood as attempts to protect their own interest to the detriment of the peace process. In Somaliland, creating peace was the fundamental goal which overrode personal or clan based interest. As such, spoiling actors effectively operated with the aim of counteracting the marginalization of their clans or sub-clans. The treatment of spoilers in the regions also had significant effects on the creation of stability. The UN's choice to ultimately exclude spoilers in Somalia effectively fueled the rivalry between Aideed and Mahdi and facilitated the breakdown of relations between them and the UN. On the other hand SNM's choice to include all spoilers encouraged legitimacy for the outcomes of the conferences and facilitated in shaping a peace process that respected all clan interests.

As such the regression to instability in Somalia is the result of spoiling actions undertaken by Aideed and Mahdi which were shaped by the UN's exclusion of them from the peace process. On the other hand, the foundation of stability in Somaliland is the result of the inclusive nature of the conferences and the spoiling effect of countering marginalization of clan interests.

As the effect of spoiling on the peace process varies depending on variables such as, how the peace process was implemented, what actor was driving it and how it treated spoiling, the issue in itself is complex. However, given the homogeneity of the regions, the application of a similar study on different regions would possibly propose an even greater web of variables, as to where our study therefore is a compilation of the more generalized factors of spoilers. In conclusion, our research has shown the importance of considering local contexts and the treatment and purpose of spoilers in understanding the resulting stability. As such this model can be applied to other conflicts with a different context to further understand the consequences of spoilers in peace processes.



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