

# DISCERNING THE DANGER OF POTENTIAL PATRON SPOILERS

By

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(Under the Direction of Andrew Owsiak)

## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of external state spoilers, or patron spoilers, in the disruption of neighboring civil conflicts. It argues that based on the characteristics of geographic proximity, rivalry, ethnic ties, and perceived economic gains, an external state is more likely to be a potential patron spoiler than a state that does not possess these characteristics. The aim of this paper is to add to the existing spoiler literature in providing a method to identify a group of external spoilers ex-ante. The failure of the Abidjan Peace Agreement in the Sierra Leone civil conflict can be explained by neighboring Liberia displaying the characteristics of a patron spoiler.

INDEX WORDS: Patron spoilers, Civil conflicts, Peace Agreements, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Charles Taylor, Abidjan Peace Agreement

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
SPOILERS .....	4
INTERVENTION .....	8
PATRON SPOILER CHARACTERISTICS .....	10
RESEARCH DESIGN .....	18
PLAUSIBILITY PROBE .....	25
CONCLUSION.....	33
REFERENCES .....	35
APPENDIX.....	39

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 [Conflict Overview].....	22
Table 2 [Effect of Spoiling].....	25

The Sierra Leone civil war resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people and the displacement of approximately one-third of its total population. The war could have started winding down in 1996 with the Abidjan Peace agreement, but the failure of negotiators to recognize the role of spoiler that Charles Taylor's Liberia was playing in the conflict led to the peace agreement being discarded almost as soon as the ink was dry on the paper. This resulted in the civil war dragging on for six more years. In this and other civil wars around the world, the potential for spoiling by foreign states is a real threat to any attempt at peace. This prompts the question: how can potential foreign state spoilers be identified before they undermine a peace agreement? This article seeks to answer this question and also contribute to the spoiler literature by identifying characteristics of potential foreign state spoilers. This will provide policy makers with a better understanding of which actors are potential spoilers in civil war peace agreements.

States that are outside of the civil conflict (i.e. are not currently engaged with either side of the civil war at the time of the peace agreement) usually play some role in or are affected by that conflict. History is replete with examples of states that participate in a conflict by supplying arms, aid, or other means to one or various groups in the conflict. For example, Iran supplies weapons and training to the Assad regime in the fight against Syrian rebels. States outside a civil conflict have a vested interest in the outcome and arrangement of any peace agreement that takes place within the civil conflict because of the impact it has on the goals of that outside state. Some of those goals might relate to state security, regional power dynamics, ethnic ties, or economic concerns. If the reasons for an external state to participate in a nearby civil conflict are not addressed within the peace agreement intended to end the conflict, then it is likely that some of those external states would seek to disrupt the peace agreement. Consequently, these states emerge as spoilers. Spoilers are traditionally defined 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). They also commit violent acts to undermine the confidence and trust that one side has in the other to fulfill their end of the negotiations (Kydd and Walter 2002).

Spoilers are easy to identify after they have acted. On the other hand, potential spoilers are not as easily identified. To be viewed in a more proactive manner by identifying potential spoilers *ex ante*, the parameters of spoiling (specifically who can spoil) need elaboration. One group that should be looked at as potential spoilers, are states that are outside of a civil conflict. Ignoring the potential for spoiling that can come from states outside a conflict leads to a broken peace process that could have been prevented if decision makers had some idea of what to look for before the process breaks down. This limits the prescriptive power policy makers have in identifying a crucial group of potential spoilers to any civil conflict agreements and dealing with them before they spoil the peace process. While not committing direct acts of violence to thwart a peace process, these states use arms deals, economic trades, and ethnic ties with rebel groups to fuel a continuation in the fighting until the peace breaks down. I label these foreign state interveners as patron spoilers. A patron spoiler is any state that disrupts a peace process in a civil conflict not taking place within its own border and in which it is not actively participating at the time of the peace agreement. These actors may have been participating in the conflict before any peace agreement was made, but for some reason or another they have ceased their participation of direct military involvement. The spoiling occurs through continued aid, shelter, and logistical support to any group that actively opposes the peace process. Identifying potential patron spoilers can increase policymakers’ ability to make sure the full set of critical actors is at the negotiating table. This will allow them to better address the interests of these actors. In this

article I argue that foreign states can be potential patron spoilers to peace agreements in a neighboring civil conflict. I also lay out what characteristics these type of spoilers possess that will help identify them before they act.

A potential patron spoiler might be any state but they are most likely to have these characteristics: a common border with the conflict state, any history of rivalry with the conflict state, ethnic ties between the patron state and the rebels, and the presence of natural resources in a conflict state that the neighboring state desires. Sharing a border with a conflict state (geographic proximity) allows an outside state a cost effective opportunity to directly impact peace agreements. The closer a state is to the conflict, the cheaper it is to intervene. Willingness to intervene is therefore a more attractive option than intervention would be from a farther distance. Rivalry produces a willingness to spoil as well because a civil conflict typically weakens a state rival. This can create a perfect moment for attacking that rival, because its attention and resources are divided between fighting the rebels and fighting in the rivalry. Ethnic ties between a patron state and rebels form an opportunity for intervention. A final characteristic that could lead patron spoilers taking action adverse to peace is the acquisition of natural resource wealth from the civil conflict. Those states that fit the description of external spoilers (i.e. they are excluded from the peace process) are patron spoilers. This term references the fact that they often patronize rebel movements in their struggle with government forces.

This article is divided into four sections. First, I will address the spoiler literature by showing how the commonly accepted literature defines spoiling but excludes prescriptive power. Second, I will discuss intervention in civil wars and how it relates to spoiling. Third, I outline the reasons that lead some foreign states to become potential patron spoilers. Finally, a plausibility probe will examine how geographical proximity, rivalry, ethnic affinity, and the presence of

natural resources coalesced in the Sierra Leone conflict to provide incentive for Liberia to intervene as a spoiler of the Abidjan Peace Agreement.

### **SPOILERS**

Spoiling can be broken down into different categories based on who is doing the spoiling, whether or not they are major or minor actors in the overall picture, and when they choose to intervene. Understanding these components of spoiling forms a critical background for this paper. First, I will examine which actors spoil. Second, I will look at the difference between major and minor actors. Lastly, the time frame of when the spoiling takes place will be considered.

Internal and external actors are the most easily identified pieces in the spoiler puzzle. Internal spoilers are actors involved in the conflict and the mediation directly. These actors (whether leaders or groups) signal positive signs for a resolution to a conflict, but fail to implement key measures of any peace agreement (Stedman 1997). The other group of spoilers is known as external spoilers. Any group or groups omitted from negotiations and subsequent peace treaties, which use violence to thwart the peace process, are considered external spoilers. Stedman (1997) implies that these actors feel marginalized by this new status quo because it threatens their goals that are only achieved by a continuation of civil conflict. They then turn to violence to disrupt the implementation of the negotiations. For example, the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) in Rwanda is considered an external actor because it excluded itself from the peace negotiations and committed genocidal acts to impede the realization of the Arusha Accords (Stedman 1997).

Nilsson and Kovacs (2011) note that while not the first to articulate the concept of spoilers, Stedman's (1997) work attempted to break down this concept into a typology and thus

make it easier for understanding and rightfully dealing with spoilers. There is a debate as to what Stedman's (1997) definition means and how it should be operationalized. Nilsson and Kovacs (2011) argue that Stedman (1997) implied in his work that spoilers were only the "key warring actors to the armed conflict" and that anything else stretches the concept to a point that it loses its meaning. I agree only if no identifying characteristics are used in narrowing down which of these other actors would actually spoil. I argue that external states that are not directly involved in the fighting are also one of the major parties in the conflict because of their ability to provide support for rebel groups. Whether or not they are actual combatants in the conflict is irrelevant, as long as they offer the rebels more capability and support that they otherwise would have to continue the fighting. This idea of indirect spoiling is not typically the accepted use of spoiling in the literature. However, Newman and Richmond (2006) argue that "so called civil or domestic conflicts are, in reality, often influenced or characterized by international processes, causes and consequences" and so there is no reason to confine spoiling analysis to only armed conflicts. This is why I am proposing several characteristics of potential patron spoilers. Extending the definition of spoilers to include characteristics of potential patron spoilers will enable policy makers to identify which states may be spoilers before they act.

A problem with the commonly held definition of spoiler is that spoilers can only be properly identified after they have acted. Greenhill and Major (2007) address this issue by arguing that the application of this strict interpretation leaves out potential or latent spoilers in favor of only those spoilers who have already acted. The ability to recognize spoilers and prevent them from becoming spoilers is thereby thwarted. Newman and Richmond (2006) also note a similar definition of spoilers. They argue that policy makers should account for "the activities of any actors that are opposed to peaceful settlement for whatever reason." I take their

argument one step further and argue that states that are outside a civil conflict can be a potential spoiler to peace agreements within that conflict. This is because states external to conflict have been and will continue to be major players and factors in those conflicts. This is where the core of my contribution lies to the spoiler literature. I am extending the potential spoiler literature (Greenhill, Major 2007; Newman, Richmond 2006) to include characteristics that will identify the potential spoilers. I am also adding to Stedman's (1997) work by talking about external spoilers. External spoilers are those who are left out of the peace agreement but who spoil the process through means other than violence, such as supporting and arming rebel groups to encourage them to undermine the peace process.

Before continuing, it is important to understand when a spoiler can be labeled as such. Stedman (1997) makes it very clear that spoiling can only take place after an actual peace agreement has been signed or when "at least two warring parties have committed themselves publicly to a pact." Any violence or other disruption to the negotiations that occurs before an agreement actually is signed is not accounted for in Stedman's model. Other scholars (Greenhill and Major 2007; Zartman 2006) tend to see spoiling occurring much sooner in the peace process, such as when negotiations are going on, but a formal agreement or pact has not been reached (Nilsson and Kovacs 2011). Newman and Richmond (2006) describe a different occurrence of spoilers: "where some form of peace process is underway and where at least one of the parties to the conflict is either engaged in, or committed to, a peace process." For my argument, I will stick with Stedman's (1997) definition that spoiling occurs after an agreement has been signed. This leaves a clear indication in the peace process about who and who is not a spoiler.

Zahar (2000) creates a different typology than Stedman's (1996) classical approach. She suggests the three types of spoilers ought to be based on intent, capabilities, and opportunities.

The intent of an actor is harder to identify. Zahar acknowledges that some groups come to the negotiation table truly desiring peace, while others come only as a means of rearming or to see what potential gains they can achieve.

The ability of a group to continue to fight (what Zahar calls capability) is the second type. It is more measurable in that it includes “organizational coherence, leadership, and an ability to mobilize supporters” (Zahar 2000). The argument is that those groups with a more formal structure are easier to co-opt into a peace agreement than those with a less formal structure because the individual actors are more accountable to the leaders of the group. This is important when dealing with patron states since they have a formal structure in place. According to Zahar then, they should be easier to bring into a peace agreement than a splintered rebel group.

Zahar’s (2000) last type is the opportunities category. She defines opportunity for spoilers as the lack of barriers that make sustainment of the potential of violence less costly. In other words, the right opportunity is one where the costs of being able to utilize violence are low and the benefits are high enough to warrant continued use of violence. Opportunity is broken down into two types: level of commitment of foreign actors to oversee implementation (third-party negotiators and the international community at large) and lack of ability of groups in the civil war who are favorable to peace in preventing use of violence by spoilers, as well as having a sufficient number of these groups. A low level of foreign actor commitment to a peace agreement provides a better opportunity for spoilers to act out, than if there was a strong foreign commitment. Not having anyone who is favorable to peace or having those who are favorable to peace with no ability to stop violence also increases the opportunity to spoil a peace agreement. Zahar’s (2000) last category is important to potential patron spoilers, in that it describes how

patron spoiling can be effective. When a patron spoiler aids rebels, it increases the opportunity for spoiling by decreasing the costs of the use of violence.

Opportunity on its own is not a sufficient condition for spoiling. It must be used in conjunction with willingness. Willingness is the “choice and process of choice that is related to the selection of some behavioral option from a range of alternatives” (Most and Starr 1989). In other words, willingness is the steps that show a state coming to a particular decision and the implementation of that decision. States have opportunities frequently to hurt other states, but they refrain because the willingness concept is not present. Also, states that are willing to engage in hostilities may not do so if the right opportunity fails to present itself. Accordingly, both opportunity and willingness together provide sufficient, though not necessary, conditions for patron states to intervene through spoiling. As Zahar (2006) states, “foreign patrons with a willingness to provide military resources provide even small groups with capability” (2000). This means that small groups, who otherwise could not disrupt a peace agreement on their own, suddenly have the means necessary to do so. This assistance from foreign states means that patron spoiling is closely related to intervention.

## **INTERVENTION**

There are multiple reasons a state would decide to intervene in a civil war in another country. Morgenthau (1967) noted that the ideology and interests of a state are the major reasons for state intervention. Other reasons for intervention could be transnational ties between ethnic groups (Gleditsch 2007; Saideman 1997), opposition of the state to a party in conflict (Corbetta 2010), or economic interests with alliance commitments between states (Fordham 2008). In one of the more notable pieces on intervention, Regan (2000) argues that the number of borders, the intensity of the conflict, large refugee dislocations, and the Cold War rivalry play into whether or

not a country decides to intervene in an intrastate conflict. The first finding argues that a greater number of countries bordering a conflict increase the likelihood that outside intervention will take place. This is because close proximity leads to lower costs for intervention in terms of actual deployment of troops and weapons. Likewise, geographic proximity provides patron states a greater opportunity to spoil neighboring civil wars.

All of Regan's findings, as well as most of the intervention literature, assume that intervention is undertaken as a means to end a conflict sooner, than if it played out on its own. For example, Walter (2002) argues that third-party guarantees (to protect combatants as they demobilize) are necessary for the full implementation of peace agreements. But what if the state that is undertaking the intervention is hostile to the state in crisis? Akcinaroglu and Raziszweski (2005) find that intervention by rival states actually prolongs the duration of civil war. For this paper I am interested in this type of negative intervention. Specifically, I want to know what characteristics patron states possess that would make them more likely to intervene in an intrastate conflict as a means of prolonging the conflict. This type of negative intervention is most closely related to spoiling. Both negative intervention and spoiling seek to reach objectives through the continuation of fighting. For negative interveners this fighting comes at any time during civil conflict. For spoilers this fighting comes after a peace agreement has been reached in conflict.

In talking specifically about intervention for continuing conflict, Cunningham (2010) argues that some states intervene in civil wars to pursue their own goals that may be different from those of internal combatants. One example he uses is Libya's intervention in the neighboring civil war in Chad. Libya claimed that they were intervening to assist the northern Arab groups against the southern-dominated government, but their true intention to annex the

Aouzou Strip (rumored to possess large uranium deposits) soon came to light. Libya not only fought the Chad government for control of this area, but also some of the northern Arab groups who they had allegedly formed alliances to support them in their fight against the government. Cunningham (2010) suggests that independent interventions, like that of Libya, bring an extra set of demands into the overall conflict that have to be addressed in order for some sort of peace settlement to occur short of a full victory by one side. Also, regional states are more likely to intervene as means of making sure that the conflict turns out in a manner that they can influence (Gent 2008). Spoiling is one way in which external states can influence the outcome of a conflict. To combat spoiling, it helps to understand the characteristics of potential spoilers.

### **POTENTIAL PATRON SPOILER CHARACTERISTICS**

Identifying potential spoilers requires understanding the opportunities and willingness external states possess. Four such scenarios seem most common. First, states geographically close to a conflict are more likely to spoil an intrastate conflict peace agreement than states that are farther away. As Corbetta (2010) notes, the highest likelihood of intervention in a conflict occurs in cases of direct geographical continuity. While borders don't necessarily cause conflict or co-operation, they do create a structure of risks/opportunities in which various interactions are more or less likely to occur (Starr and Most 1976). Interests of most states are more closely linked to nearby states than to issues in states farther away because it is closer and easier for neighbors to mobilize against each other than states that are farther apart. This is in keeping with Pearson's (1974) argument that "territorial and social protective interventions seem likely to occur among neighboring or proximate countries." One of the most important features to patron spoilers about geographic proximity is the willingness provided for negative intervention due to the costs.

It is more cost effective for most states to engage or participate in conflicts that are closer, than it is to participate in distant conflicts. The cost of spoiling decreases the closer the external state is to the conflict state, because potential patron spoilers can spend less and spoil a conflict more effectively if they border the conflict state than if they are farther away. This is because patron spoilers who border a conflict have better opportunity to send troops, supplies, and other support measures to groups that oppose any peace process than those external states who do not share a border with the state in conflict. The willingness comes from the ability to open the borders for rebels. If the patron state is farther from a civil conflict they would have to either go around countries between the state and the rebels or would have to go through those countries. Both options cost more in terms of time, operational logistics, and manpower than it would if the patron state directly bordered the conflict. Thus in terms of geographical proximity, spoilers are more likely to act when the civil conflict borders their country because the costs are lower.

*Hypothesis 1: Potential patron spoilers that border a civil conflict are more likely to spoil a peace agreement in that civil conflict than those states farther away from the conflict.*

The second factor in potential patron state spoiling is rivalry. Diehl and Goertz (2000) define rivalry as the “relationship between two states in which both use, with some regularity, military threats and force as well as one in which both sides formulate foreign policy in military terms.” Klein, Goertz, and Diehl (2006) identify four dimensions to rivalries. First there is spatial consistency. This means that in the course of disputes, there are two states that oppose each other. Second is duration. A conflict has to last long enough and repeat enough times that both states regard themselves as competitors.

The third dimension is militarized competitiveness. This is simply militarized competition that can be manifest as disputes, fatalities, and/or higher hostility levels. Linked conflict is the final dimension of rivalry. This is how issues are related over space and time.

Within the linked conflict dimension there are two linkage elements to rivalry. The first element is the role of past history and events (particularly military history) in influencing present and future behaviors (Klein, et. al. 2006). States base decisions on how to deal with other states based on past experience. Past history of disputes usually leads to hostility between states. In context of potential patron spoilers and the state in conflict, the past history between the two is part of the driving force behind the foreign state being willing to consider spoiling any peace agreement in the first place. The second linkage element is closely related to the first. It is expectations of future conflict. With the presence of hostility between states, it is not hard to expect that future disputes will arise between them. “These expectations condition current foreign policy choices, which then may have downstream consequences for the dynamics of rivalries and their potential for peaceful resolution” (Klein, et. al. 2006). More importantly, expecting future disputes keeps the rivalry going and is the connecting feature between conflicts at different times. Again, spoiling a peace agreement then becomes an option for the potential patron spoiler as a means of shifting the dynamics of the rivalry in their favor for the future.

Colaresi, Rasler, and Thompson (2007) define rivalries a little differently than mentioned above. They state that there are three main parts to rivalry classification. First, the states in the dyad must see each other as competitors. Next, there must be a perception that the source of actual or latent threats actually poses a realistic possibility of becoming militarized. The interpretation of threats comes from previous disputes and actions, the fear of probability that competitors will attack, and the subsequent behavior towards other states with its associated

costs based on that fear. Finally, the states in question must view each other as enemies (Colaresi, et al. 2007). This definition emphasizes perception rather than disputes. This is beneficial in that analyzing a hostile relationship between states does not have to wait to cross a certain threshold in militarized disputes in order to be classified as a rivalry. Thus a rivalry can be classified as such earlier in the process. This approach uses historical analysis of policy makers' statements in regard to the other state in the dyad. Foreign policy makers often talk and write explicitly about their rivalries (Colaresi, et. al. 2007).

Rivalry provides an external state with a greater willingness to intervene in a neighboring civil war. This willingness comes from an increased interest in the relative power of their rival compared with their own. In order to keep the other state distracted and divided, it suits the interest of the foreign state to provide more incentives than the new peace agreement provides to rebel groups to keep the conflict going. The state in conflict is less likely or less able to check a neighboring state's ambitions when they are engulfed with a conflict on their own territory. As such, rivals have an interest in the outcome of a conflict in order to keep their rivals weak.

The linkage elements of a rivalry are particularly important to our discussion on spoilers, because the external state is able to keep the rivalry going. As Zahar argues, "the regional ambitions or long-term political goals of external actors, when not achieved in the course of the specific peace settlement, provide these actors with incentives to continue to interfere in the post-agreement politics of a country" (2000). Such ambitions or political goals can be formed in the context of rivalry. If the rival state embroiled in a conflict fails to become weaker as a result of a peace agreement with rebel groups, then the potential patron state spoiler has increased incentive to spoil that peace agreement and help the conflict to continue. Daxecker (2011) notes that a foreign state may intervene in a civil war on the side of the rebels to "weaken their opponent and

drain its resources [and] also to help remove a government seen [as] hostile to their aims.”

Findley and Teo (2006) note this is the case, as they demonstrate that rivals usually intervene on the side of rebels.

*Hypothesis 2: Potential patron spoilers that have a rivalry with the state in civil conflict are more likely to spoil any peace agreement in the civil conflict than those states that do not.*

The third characteristic of potential patron spoilers revolves around the opportunity to increase economic gains that come from conflict. These may include, but are not limited to: territorial seizures, arms exports to the combatants, and supply sales to one or more of the parties involved in the conflict. While the rebels gain access to arms and technology in their relationship with a foreign state, the questions becomes what do foreign states receive in exchange for these goods. Often the answer is found in the access to natural resources within the conflict state. Resources such as oil, gold, copper, and rare earth metals all provide an enticing incentive for patron states. It is easier for the foreign patron to exploit divisions caused by the conflict to obtain natural resources in the conflict state. Liberia’s involvement in diamond smuggling from Sierra Leone is a good example of this. During the civil war in Sierra Leone, Liberia used its connections with rebels to obtain diamonds from Sierra Leone’s diamond mines. This was a resource to which Liberia would not otherwise have had access.

Peace agreements in a civil conflict threaten this relationship between rebels and patron states. With the signing of a peace agreement, the demand for weapons and technology dwindles significantly among the combatants. Therefore the reliance that rebels have on foreign states for arms is minimized or altogether destroyed. Also, agreements in civil conflicts usually incentivize the rebel groups to either give up claim of territories they have seized during fighting or to co-opt them into sharing the resources from those territories. Either way, rebels now have

less incentive to deal with patron states regarding the resources from territorial seizures because the incentives in the agreement usually restrict how those resources can be utilized. Because peace agreements pose this threat to their incentives, patron states are more likely to be willing to spoil a peace agreement in order to maintain access open to resources and the economic gains which came from supporting rebels in conflict.

*Hypothesis 3: Potential patron spoilers are more likely to spoil a peace agreement in a civil conflict when the realization of that peace will limit their economic gain or hinder their access to natural resources in that state.*

A final factor that may lead to intervention from other states is ethnic affinity. Ethnic groups are “collective groups whose membership is largely determined by real or putative ancestral inherited ties, and who perceive these ties as systematically affecting their place and fate in the political and socioeconomic structures of their state and society” (Rothschild 1981). These ties can be different things, such as common language, race, religion, and/or actual familial or tribal ties (Saideman 1997). When two states contain members of the same ethnic group, Davis and Moore (1997) call this a “transnational ethnic alliance.” Such an “alliance” brings with it the same concerns for the welfare and conditions of other members of the ethnic group that an alliance brings to states. Being from the same ethnicity provides the opportunity for an exchange of information, which in turn could lead to potential willingness for action that would not happen otherwise between citizens of different states. They conclude “ethnic members monitor the status and behavior of brethren across the border” (Davis and Moore 1997). Pearson (1974) argues ethnic affinity is also closely tied to geographic proximity. He notes that the idea of protection for surrounding areas relates better to neighboring states because

in most cases, a state is affected domestically more by the audience cost of groups with ethnic ties across a shared border than they are by a group with ethnic ties to a more distant country.

Ethnic identity is important for two reasons. First, ethnic identity creates loyalty and interest between its members in and of itself (Horowitz 1985). State borders do not prevent members of ethnic groups from taking interest in what is going on in the lives of their brethren. This is especially true in cases of conflict. When ethnic groups see their members across a state border struggling in a civil conflict, especially one that is defined along the lines of ethnic divisions, the impetuosity to support their ethnic kin becomes stronger. It becomes stronger because part of ethnic identity is linked to lands that have always been considered home by that ethnic group. Those on the other side of the border realize that losing a civil conflict means that those members of their ethnicity across the border face the very real threat of retribution and punishment from the government for rebelling. Second, “ethnic ties influence foreign policymaking, because support for ethnic kin abroad can be a litmus test for a politician’s sincerity on ethnic issues at home” (Saideman 1997). In other words, ethnic division within a country both constrains and compels leaders as they develop foreign policy aimed at rebel groups in other states. Leaders who are particularly savvy can utilize ethnic ties to gain support for policies such as intervention and spoiling a civil conflict in a neighbor state.

Ethnicity is also important in how a group relates to those around them. Issues of identity, such as ethnicity, play a key role in the initiation and resolution of civil conflict. Those same issues also affect the effectiveness of third-party interventions (Fordham 2008). This is the case because rebels and groups in general tend to trust and collaborate more with those who have a shared heritage and common ethnicity rather than with those that do not. The patron spoiler might have ethnic ties that transcend the borders of the two states. If members of the ethnic

group reside in the external state, they would have an interest in intervention in the civil conflict. This common ethnicity means that familial relationships are more likely to exist within this ethnic group than without it.

The role of ethnic ties between rebels groups and a foreign state can provide willingness for intervention in the conflict while it is going on. The question for potential patron spoilers is whether or not ethnic ties would lead a potential patron spoiler to disrupt a peace agreement without already being involved. There might be a few scenarios in which this could happen. First, a potential patron state might use ethnic ties and the communication that comes with them to persuade rebels to reject a proposed peace agreement. This might be considered spoiling if the definition of Greenhill and Major (2007) or Zartman (2006) is used (see previous discussion above). However, for this paper I have already stated that an agreement must have taken place and therefore this option is not one for consideration. The second scenario would be one in which rebels who are opposed to the peace agreement use ethnic ties to convince a potential patron spoiler that there are enough benefits for them to engage in spoiling a peace agreement and they subsequently do so. This would suggest that the potential patron spoiler has not really entertained the idea of spoiling before the rebels approach them. However, in some cases it might be necessary for these rebels to ask for assistance for the foreign state to have a political reason to intervene.

The final scenario would be that a potential patron spoiler rejects the agreement on behalf of the ethnic group's best interest. This would mean that the state is basically saying that those rebels who have accepted the agreement from their ethnic group are not legitimate representatives of the ethnic group as a whole. The reason for doing this would most likely be that the patron spoiler has other reasons for spoiling a peace agreement, such as rivalry with the

state in conflict or access to resources in the conflict state, and they have been searching for an excuse to act. In this case the patron spoiler is using ethnic ties as an opportunity to spoil the peace agreement. The nonviolent actions taken by the state to undermine the peace agreement constitute spoiling.

*Hypothesis 4: Potential patron spoilers are more likely to spoil a peace agreement when they share ethnic ties with a rebel group.*

I propose that based on the opportunity afforded by geographic proximity to civil conflict, as well as the willingness to intervene based on rivalry, the exploitation of natural resources, and ethnic affinity, a patron spoiler is more likely to disrupt a peace process in a neighboring civil conflict.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The models below show the relationship between physical and psychological characteristics of civil war participants and the failure of peace agreements. The assumption I have made in these models is that potential patron spoilers are driven by some of the same characteristics that result in failure of peace agreements. I make this assumption because spoiling is one way in which peace agreements for civil wars can end. It should follow then, that the characteristics that are part of the general category of failed peace agreements are also found in the specific category of spoiling.

In looking at available data for the conditions to be met in selecting an appropriate plausibility probe, there are two main data sets that come to mind. First is the Correlates of War (COW) project, which categorizes conflicts into different types of wars based on a number of criteria. Second is the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) Peace Agreement Dataset. The COW defines civil war as an armed conflict that meets four criteria: military action is inside the

state, one of the active participants is the national government, an effective resistance exists on both sides of the conflict, and at least 1,000 battle-deaths occur during each year of the war (Sarkees and Wayman 2010). The UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset defines conflict as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths” (Themnér and Wallensteen 2014). This definition includes civil wars. Since I use the UCDP/PRIO Peace Agreement Dataset, I will use their definition of conflict. The UCDP/PRIO Peace Agreement Dataset covers peace agreements that were signed between 1975 and 2001 (Högbladh, Stina, 2011). It shows that there were 133 peace agreements signed during this time period (See Table 1). Fifty of those agreements failed. I used James Fearon’s (2003) dataset to examine ethnic and cultural ties between different rivals. I also used two datasets for the resources variable. First, I used a dataset on diamonds as proxy for lootable resources (Lujala, Gleditsch, and Gilmore 2005). Second, I used a dataset on oil reserves as a proxy for non-lootable resources (Lujala, Rød, and Thieme 2007). There were only forty countries involved with those agreements. Fifty percent of those countries are from the African continent. The unit of analysis in the following regression models is peace agreements.

The dependent variable in the analysis is whether a peace agreement failed (1) or not (0). The peace agreement fails if one of the signatory parties contests or one of them withdraws from it (Högbladh 2011). The four proposed hypotheses of this paper suggest that at least four independent variables are needed. The four proposed hypotheses of this paper suggest that four independent variables are needed.

The first variable of interest is rivalry. An interstate rivalry denotes an intense, hostile relationship that lasts for a sufficient period of time (Klein, et al. 2006). For this study, such a

relationship must exist between a potential patron state and a state signatory to a peace agreement at the time the agreement is signed. I use two variables to denote a rivalry. First, a dichotomous variable assesses whether the signatory country was in a rivalry (1) or not (0) at the time of a peace agreement. I specifically looked for dates of rivalries that overlapped the date in which the peace agreement was signed in order to capture the fact that rivalry should be a consideration for peace agreements. Second, a count variable looks at how many rivalries exist with the signatory state at the time of the peace agreement. This checks for whether the number of rivalries has a differing effect on the likelihood of peace agreement failure.

The second independent variable is contiguous rivalry, which represents geographical proximity in the aforementioned hypotheses. Contiguity in this case refers to either land contiguity or water contiguity as defined by the Correlates of War (COW) Direct Contiguity dataset 3.0 (Stinnett, et. al. 2002). Land contiguity is the “intersection of the homeland territory of the two states in the dyad, either through a land boundary or a river.” Water contiguity whether “a straight line can be drawn between a point on the boundary of one state, across open water, to a point on the boundary of another state, uninterrupted by the territory of a third state” (Stinnett, et. al. 2002). The four categories they use are based on distances of 12, 24, 150, and 400 miles. I then interacted it with the rivalry variables above to capture both (a) whether a state signatory to a peace agreement has any rivalry contiguous to itself, and (b) how many contiguous rivals it might have.

The third independent variable is economic gain from resources. Scholars argue that there are two types of resources, lootable and non-lootable (Lujala, Gleditsch, and Gilmore 2005). First, I used a dataset on the existence of diamonds as proxy for lootable resources (Lujala, Gleditsch, and Gilmore 2005). I then used a dataset on gas and oil reserves as a proxy

for non-lootable resources (Lujala, Rød, and Thieme 2007). Both variables measure if a state in civil war possesses these resources (1) or not (0).

The fourth independent variable is ethnic ties. In measuring ethnic ties, only instances where ethnic similarities exist between minority groups in the country experiencing civil war and a main group in the rival country were used (Fearon 2003). By main group I mean that the percentage of the overall population in a country is such that the leadership in that country would have some of their members in its constituency. For example, in Yugoslavia, the Croats make up 0.012 percent proportion of the total population. In neighboring Croatia, the same group makes up 0.781 percent of the population. With this reflection of ethnic similarity between these two states, Yugoslavia is coded as having an ethnic tie with its rival Croatia (1). This variable measures whether a country with civil war has ethnic ties with any of its rivals (1) or not (0). Also, the number of ethnic ties between states signatory to peace agreements and their neighbors is measured by the relationship of their total percent proportions of their populations. Unlike the ethnic ties with rivals variable, the ethnic ties with neighbors variable does not take into account whether the neighbors are rivals or not. The reason for this is to see if rivalry was pulling this variable in one direction or another. This variable counts how many neighbors total are ethnically similar to the state signatory of peace agreements. Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics for each variable.

Table 1: Conflict Overview

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Rivalry	133	.5413534	.5001709	0	1
Diamonds	133	.3684211	.4842001	0	1
Oil	133	.593985	.4929441	0	1
Number of Rivals	133	.9774436	1.689837	0	15
Number of Contiguous Rivals	133	.7443609	.9743229	0	4
Number of Neighbors	133	4.451128	1.827675	1	9
Ethnic ties between Rivals	133	.6030534	1.079027	0	8
Number of Ethnic Ties with Neighbors	133	1.165414	1.031184	0	4
Failed Peace Agreements	133	.3759398	.4861959	0	1

Since my dependent variable ended is dichotomous, I ran a logistic regression. The unit of analysis is the peace agreement during the time period of 1975-2001.

## RESULTS

Table 2 shows the results of my quantitative analysis of why peace agreements fail. The coefficients suggest that half of the independent variables have a negative effect on whether or not a peace agreement ended. In examining the statistical significance of the variables, only diamonds (lootable resources) was significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that when lootable resources are present a peace agreement is more likely to fail. In fact, the cross-tabular data shows that fifty-eight percent of failures occurred when diamonds were involved.

There are two other variables that approach significance at the 0.10 level, number of rivals overall and ethnic ties between rivals.

The number of rivals overall is positively correlated with the failure of peace agreements, suggesting that as the number of rivals increases the likelihood of a peace agreement failing is greater, all else being equal and held constant. This means that signatory states to peace

agreements need to be aware of the number of rivals they have at that moment. Those with more rivals than just one or even two are more likely to see spoiling coming from one of those rivals.

An ethnic tie between rivals is the other significant variable at the 0.10 level. This variable is negatively correlated with the failure of peace agreements. This suggests that as ethnic ties between rivals increases from no ethnic ties (0) to ethnic ties (1), the likelihood of a peace agreement failing decreases by 0.63 peace agreements, all other variables being equal and holding them constant. In other words, when ethnic ties are present, agreements are less likely to fail. This is contrary to my fourth hypothesis.

One of the unexpected results is that rivalry as a dichotomous variable is not significant in this model. The prominence of rivalry literature in political science would suggest that some combination of the variables or one of the other variables themselves is removing the significance of rivalry in this instance, or more likely, that rivalries are considered in peace agreement composition because of the attention rivalries receive. If true then rivals might be “written into the agreement” in ways that other potential spoilers might not be. Thus, policy-makers may want to look to the less obvious potential spoilers. Examination of the cross-tabular data<sup>1</sup> shows that about thirty-eight of peace agreements failed in civil wars fought between 1975 and 2001. Of those failures, sixty-four percent occurred when a rivalry was ongoing during the date signed. The probability chi-squared statistic indicates that the overall model regarding the ending of peace agreements with the factors of contiguity, rivalry, resources, and ethnic ties is significant.

Also of non-significance are the contiguity variables: number of contiguous variables and the number of neighbors to a state signatory to a peace agreement. Contrary to my expectations,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for data tables.

the coefficients on these variables are negative as well. This implies that a rival does not have to be contiguous to a state signatory of a peace agreement to become a potential state spoiler. Also, it implies that the number of neighbors has little bearing on failure of peace agreements when the factors of lootable resources, number of rivals, and ethnic ties among rivals are considered. This also explains why the number of ethnic ties with neighbors, regardless of whether or not they are rivals, is not significant for peace agreement failure. Perhaps the number of neighbors, the number of contiguous rivals, and the number of ethnic ties among rivals are not as important as the fact that they exist at all.

The fact that oil, the proxy for non-lootable resources, is not significant makes sense. Lujala (2010) makes the argument for splitting resources into the lootable and non-lootable categories based on what is needed for resources to play a part in conflict. The man power, knowledge, and skill that are required to obtain, process, and distribute non-lootable resources is greater than that of lootable resources.

Table 2: Spoiling Characteristics

Predictor	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Number of Contiguous Rivals	-.1904851	.4302092	-0.44	0.658	-1.03368	.6527094
Number of Neighbors	-.1692689	.1480275	-1.14	0.253	-.4593975	.1208597
Rivalry	.7818026	.6273334	1.25	0.213	-.4477483	2.011354
Number of Rivals	.4938742	.3060895	1.61	0.107	-.1060502	1.093799
Diamonds	1.975882	.5341998	3.70	0.000	.9288699	3.022895
Oil	.6410107	.5052035	1.27	0.205	-.3491699	1.631191
Ethnic ties between Rivals	-.6308636	.3860994	-1.63	0.102	-1.387604	.1258772
Number of Ethnic Ties with Neighbors	-.2851078	.2215648	-1.29	0.198	-.7193668	.1491511
Constant	-1.00094	.6520755	-1.54	0.125	-2.278984	.2771048

Number of obs =133                      LR chi2(8) =27.63                      Prob > chi2 = 0.0006  
 Log likelihood = -74.238177      Pseudo R2 =0.1569

**PLAUSIBILITY PROBE**

The application of the aforementioned characteristics in identifying potential patron spoilers can be illustrated with a plausibility probe. A plausibility probe “is a preliminary study on a relatively untested theory and hypotheses” (George and Bennett 2005). With the theory about potential patron spoilers fitting this definition, using the case of Liberia in Sierra Leone’s civil war seems to be the proper design to take in this instance. A plausibility probe also “allows the researcher to sharpen a hypothesis or theory, to refine the operationalization or measurement of key variables, or to explore the suitability of a particular case as a vehicle for testing a theory before engaging in a costly and time-consuming research effort” (Levy 2008). As mentioned previously, the intent of this paper is to provide a theory and set of hypotheses about potential

patron spoilers and their position in the spoiler literature that can be tested and improved upon in future research. Suggestions about future research are provided in a later section.

This particular theory and hypotheses require a sequential set of steps to unfold in order for the true population of potential state spoilers to be considered. First, there needs to be a civil war. Small and Singer (1982) acknowledge in their foundational work “there has never been a definition accepted by all who study these events.” Yet, they do state there seems to be a continuum in which these conflicts can be measured. They therefore provide three criteria for gauging whether or not fighting can be considered a civil war. First, there is territorial integrity, meaning that the boundaries of an area being fought are well defined. Second, one of the combatants has to be the state government and the other has to be rebels within that territory. Third, the rebels have to be able to provide effective resistance to government forces. This begins to narrow down the population of cases by excluding interstate wars.

Second, there needs to be a peace agreement aimed at resolving the civil war. Thus, civil wars that are ongoing or were ended by a means of one-sided victory are excluded as well. Third, the peace agreement may or may not fail. In other words, the implementation of the specific terms in the peace agreement may not come about. Failure can be identified with a resumption of violence in direct opposition to the terms of the peace agreement. This characteristic further shrinks the number of candidates of potential patron spoilers to choose from.

Fourth, a foreign state, which was not actively engaged in the civil war at the time of the peace agreement, may or may not provide rebels with arms, logistical support, shelter, and other means to carry on the fighting. Those states that do provide such aid at the time of a peace agreement are spoiling the peace agreement. With this information and the sources available, the

civil war in Sierra Leone and its accompanying Abidjan Peace Agreement seem to be a good example of a plausibility probe.

The civil war in Sierra Leone possessed many of the traits common to states in civil war. In this case, there was a break down in governmental leadership. As is common with many emerging nations, different political parties struggled to obtain and hold on to power after independence was declared.

As in other civil wars, Sierra Leone experienced the intervention of outside forces. Nigerian ECOMOG forces were sent into Sierra Leone to restore order and bring back the government under the leadership of Joseph Kabbah. Also, there were mercenaries from the South African security firm Executive Outcomes (Adebajo 2002). On the part of the rebels, Liberian NPFL troops initially fought alongside their RUF counterparts for the first few years. This civil war also contained a peace agreement, the Abidjan Peace Agreement, which fell apart. Peace agreements that fail to take hold are common in many civil wars. These conditions of governmental breakdown, outside intervention, and a failed peace agreement make Sierra Leone a good choice for a plausibility probe to demonstrate how a potential patron spoiler becomes an actual spoiler in a neighboring civil war. To understand this process worked in the case of Liberia, it is important to know the background of the conflict in Sierra Leone.

## **SIERRA LEONE AND THE ABIDJAN AGREEMENT**

After independence the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) was successful in running the government, but after about six years the opposition All People's Congress (APC) took control of the government with the election of Siaka Stevens. The APC and Stevens turned to authoritarian rule and tactics to weed out opposition and consolidate power. Stevens and his successor, Major General Joseph Momoh, used the power of their office to line the pockets of

themselves and those who loyal to their rule. This follows Bueno de Mesquita's (2003) selectorate theory, which states that leaders are affected by three groups of people, one of which is the winning coalition. The civil conflict in Sierra Leone started on March 23, 1991. Rebel Sierra Leoneans, called the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh came from neighboring Liberia with the intention of overthrowing the government. Governmental corruption, rampant unemployment, and discord with the military were some of the reasons given for the uprising.

The government responded by sending an ill-equipped military to repel the rebels. The rebels were equipped with more modern weapons from Liberia, and the army was routed in many of the first battles. The RUF soon took hold of some of the diamond areas within Sierra Leone. This source of revenue was easily smuggled out of the country and exchanged for weapons and other needed supplies. The ineffectiveness of the government to repel the rebels, along with the loss of control of some of the major diamond mines, resulted in a coup d'état in April 1992. The new government of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) hired the mercenary group Executive Outcomes (EO) from South Africa to fight the rebels along side newly equipped government forces (Mutwol 2009). The group helped the government take back many rebel-held cities, but the diamond mines continued to be controlled by RUF forces.

In November 1996, the government and RUF rebels reached a deal in the Abidjan Peace Agreement. This agreement stated that hostilities would end, RUF members would receive amnesty for their part in the civil war, the RUF would convert into a political party, the armed forces would reform, all foreign troops would withdraw, and disarmament and demobilization of rebel forces would begin (Mutwol 2009). However, it seems that neither side was really willing to abide by the agreement. The peace was relatively short-lived and fighting broke out soon after

the ink dried on the agreement. For the RUF, part of their reticence for complying with the peace agreement came from their long-standing ties with Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh had both received training and support from Muammar al-Gaddafi in Libya (Mutwol 2009). When the RUF started attacking villages in Eastern Sierra Leone, it was from Taylor's Liberia. Not only did Charles Taylor harbor and train RUF fighters, but also he sent a contingent of his best troops with the RUF forces into Sierra Leone. As Taylor transitioned to peace in an effort to become president of Liberia, he withdrew his troops from Sierra Leone. It was during the time of the Abidjan peace agreement that Liberia was disarming and integrating the NPFL with governmental forces. Since the Liberian troops had withdrawn from Sierra Leone and were not committing acts of violence in the Sierra Leone civil war, any act meant to undermine peace in Sierra Leone can only be considered as outside spoiling. Recall that according to Stedman's (1997) definition, an external spoiler is one that is left out of the peace agreement. Liberia's continued support for the rebels with the aim to undermine the Abidjan peace process then, would lead us to rightly classify them as patron spoilers. To understand how Liberia could have been seen a potential patron spoiler before they acted I will examine my four hypotheses in this context.

## **LIBERIA THE POTENTIAL PATRON SPOILER**

First, part of Liberia's opportunity for intervention was based on geographic proximity. Liberia shares a 306-kilometer border (approximately 190.14 miles) along the eastern side of Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone's capitol, Freetown, is located on the western coast of the Atlantic Ocean. The Sierra Leone communities near Liberia do not have a developed infrastructure, which made the response of the government Sierra Leone less able to provide a quick response to

the rebel attacks coming from Liberia. The rebels also controlled most of the lands in eastern Sierra Leone at the time of the Abidjan Peace Agreement. From Freetown to the rebel held central Kono district town of Koidu is about 211.5 miles. Contrast that with the fact that it is only about 73 miles from the border town of Mendekoma, Liberia to Koidu. In terms of contact between RUF forces and NPFL members, the short distance between them means that it was easier for Taylor's government to provide logistical support for RUF fighters than it was for the government in Freetown to support its troops on the front lines. This means that Taylor and his forces had every opportunity also to swap arms for diamonds without having to travel a great distance to do so. It is therefore little wonder that Taylor was willing to support RUF fighters even after the signing of the peace agreement, as the first hypothesis suggests.

The second hypothesis states that rivalry will play a key role in the willingness of a potential patron state to spoil a peace agreement. Liberia's spoiling of the Abidjan Peace Agreement did not work this way. Sierra Leone had committed troops to and allowed the Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) troops to stage attacks on Taylor's NPFL from Sierra Leone years before the Sierra Leone civil war started. It would stand to reason then that Charles Taylor would be furious with the Sierra Leonean government for aiding ECOMOG and would seek an opportunity to exact revenge on Sierra Leone by aiding their rebels in the later civil war. Adebajo (2002) argues that this was one of Taylor's three main goals for helping the RUF. The other two were "to help install his RUF allies in power in Freetown and to profit from the diamond trade in Sierra Leone" (Adebajo 2002). At first glance it might appear that things were different than at the outset of the civil war because the government in charge of Sierra Leone at the time of the Abidjan Peace Agreement was not the same as those that had allowed ECOMOG troops use of their territory. Recall that

the NPRC had overthrown the government four years prior to the signing of the Abidjan Peace Agreement. However, the NPRC was just as keen to keep close ties with Nigeria (the main supplier of ECOMOG troops), as the APC was. For this reason, Sierra Leone and Liberia are coded as rivals at the time of the Abidjan Peace Agreement (Klein, Goertz, and Diehl 2006).

The third hypothesis links the spoiling of a peace agreement to the economic interests of a potential patron spoiler. During the civil war, the RUF rebels captured many of the eastern provinces of Sierra Leone. These areas are rich in natural resources, especially diamonds. The RUF would smuggle diamonds into other countries, including Liberia to procure weapons and other materials needed on the battlefield. The peace agreement in Liberia and installment of Charles Taylor as president presented an opportunity for RUF fighters to obtain more weapons. Part of the peace agreement in Liberia has stipulated that Taylor's NPFL integrate with governmental forces and withdrawal from any foreign conflicts. Taylor subsequently had lots of weapons that his fighters were no longer using. So he sold off arms from the NPFL to RUF forces in exchange for diamonds illegally extracted from the diamond-rich areas under RUF control (Keen 2005). There were also reports that RUF rebels were trading Sierra Leone's other major products, coffee and cocoa, for arms from NPFL members. The NPFL knew that RUF control of Sierra Leone's eastern diamond mines in the Kono district meant that he had a source of income that could be easily smuggled and traded into other forms of payment. If peace was to be established in Sierra Leone, it posed a threat to the flow of diamonds coming into Liberia from RUF forces. Liberia would not have been able to procure the amount of diamonds they received from the RUF if the RUF no longer had a need for the weapons and other materials Liberia offered in exchange. Looking at the pull that the economic gains (in this case, diamonds)

had on Liberia for spoiling the Abidjan Peace Agreement, it appears that the third hypothesis regarding potential patron state spoilers and economic interests is a factor in Liberia's spoiling.

The fourth and final reason to consider Liberia as a potential patron spoiler was ethnicity and ethnic ties to Sierra Leone rebels. In Sierra Leone there are two major ethnic groups: the Temne from the North and the Mende from the South and East. These groups had been united before independence in their opposition to the Creoles of Freetown and their privileged status in governmental roles. After independence and the marginalization of the Creoles, the discord between the Temne and the Mende renewed as both vied for power in the new political system (Keen 2005). Milton Margai, the first prime minister of newly independent Sierra Leone, and his political party drew their support from the Mende. While there were a few Temne within the Margai government, most of the army and political positions were staffed with Mende. After the governments of Margai and his brother were overthrown by coup d'etat, mostly Temne members staffed the new government of Siaka Stevens. Many of the Mende who previously held leadership positions were replaced with Temne members (Keen 2005). Stevens' successor, Joseph Momoh, furthered the ethnic tensions with his heavy reliance on Temne supporters. The RUF rebel group opposing Momoh consisted of many disaffected members of the Mende group, which spanned across the border with Liberia. On the other side of the border, the major group sympathetic to Taylor's NPFL was the Gio and Mano tribes of the Nimba region (Waugh 2011). They had suffered a lot of persecution under Samuel Doe's rule. While not directly related to the Mende, the Gio and Mano groups are a part of the larger language family of Mande along with the Mende. Belonging to the same broad language family is not sufficient to deem these groups as ethnically similar. Fearon (2003) classifies Liberia and Sierra Leone as having an ethnic similarity. However, this only seems to apply in his classification of the Kissi ethnic group.

This group is the minority in both countries (0.025 proportion of the total population in Sierra Leone and 0.04 proportion of the total population in Liberia) and so the likelihood that their similar ties played a part in Liberia's becoming a potential patron spoiler is very small.

Thus there is no real ethnic ties that can be found between Taylor's NPFL and Sankoh's RUF. With no ethnic ties between these groups and the fact that ethnic ties is not statistically significant, the last hypothesis regarding ethnic ties and potential patron spoilers indicates that ethnic ties have little to do with a potential patron spoiler becoming one.

### **CONCLUSION**

This paper provides a theory and hypotheses in the form of criteria for identifying the foreign states to a civil conflict that could potentially spoil any peace agreements within that conflict, or as I call them, potential patron spoilers. The plausibility probe shows that the four criteria need not be as equally strong for a potential patron spoiler to act. However, possession of these characteristics shows that a patron state is more likely to spoil a peace agreement or peace process in a civil conflict if it has them, because they provide willingness for intervention. Geographic proximity is the first characteristic and probably the most important to potential patron spoilers. States that border a conflict have a greater opportunity to spoil peace agreements than states that are farther away. Willingness can also be displayed through rivalry, ethnic affinity and ties, and/or desire for economic gain. Liberia and the NPFL under Charles Taylor had the willingness to thwart the Abidjan Peace Agreement because they had geographic proximity to the conflict, a rivalry with Sierra Leone, and an economic incentive from the illicit diamond trade with rebels.

One thing to keep in mind is that this list of characteristics is not intended to be exhaustive or all-inclusive. As researchers continue to look into the characteristics of potential

spoilers there are likely other characteristics that will come to the forefront. With that in mind, this paper was designed as a starting point to discern what a potential patron spoiler might look like before they have acted. Continued research in this area can only help improve the ability of third parties tasked with forming and implementing peace agreements in civil conflicts, as well as understanding of which states might play the role of spoiler.

Liberia's spoiling the Abidjan Peace Agreement is just one example of a potential patron spoiler who decided to act. For example, using the characteristics given, it would be very plausible for Russia to spoil any future peace agreement between separatists in the Black Sea region and the Kiev government. The ethnic affinity between Russians and eastern Ukrainians, the close geographic proximity of Russia to eastern Ukraine, and desired access to the Black Sea are all reasons that Russia would potentially act as a patron spoiler.

In civil conflict, more often than not there are outside groups involved with rebel forces. If policy makers hope to produce peace agreements that last, it is important for them to look at the neighboring countries of a civil conflict and assess which states might act as potential spoilers of a peace agreement. This applies to civil conflicts all over the world. Third party negotiators need to pay attention to outside states and their relationships with rebels. Recognizing the characteristics that would identify potential patron spoilers leads to a more proactive approach in the implementation of peace agreements. Peace agreements will then more likely succeed as the potential for spoiling is lessened.

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**APPENDIX**

Cross Tabular Tables:

Ended with Rivalry

<b>Rivalry</b>			
<b>Ended</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>0</b>	43	40	83
<b>1</b>	18	32	50
<b>Total</b>	61	72	133

Ended with Diamonds (Lootable resources)

<b>Diamonds</b>			
<b>Ended</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>0</b>	63	20	83
<b>1</b>	21	29	50
<b>Total</b>	84	49	133

Ended with Gas and Oil (Non-lootable resources)

<b>Gas And Oil</b>			
<b>Ended</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>0</b>	32	51	83
<b>1</b>	22	28	50
<b>Total</b>	54	79	133

Ended with Number of Rivals

<b>Rivals</b>									
<b>Ended</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>0</b>	43	28	3	6	1	0	1	1	83
<b>1</b>	18	21	6	3	0	1	1	0	50
<b>Total</b>	61	49	9	9	1	1	2	1	133

Ended with Number of Contiguous Rivals

<b>Contiguous Rivals</b>						
<b>Ended</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Total</b>

<b>0</b>	45	26	8	1	3	83
<b>1</b>	23	17	6	3	1	50
<b>Total</b>	68	43	14	4	4	133

Ended with Number of Neighbors

<b>Neighbors</b>										
<b>Ended</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>0</b>	1	15	10	29	5	8	5	9	1	83
<b>1</b>	0	3	14	11	5	12	3	2	0	50
<b>Total</b>	1	18	24	38	10	20	8	11	1	133

Ended with Shared Ethnicity Among Rivals

<b>Ethnicity</b>							
<b>Ended</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>0</b>	49	24	8	0	1	1	83
<b>1</b>	31	16	1	1	1	0	50
<b>Total</b>	17	40	9	1	2	1	133

Ended with Shared Ethnicity Among Neighbors

<b>Ethnic Neighbors</b>						
<b>Ended</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>0</b>	19	34	20	6	4	83
<b>1</b>	18	21	9	0	2	50
<b>Total</b>	37	55	29	6	6	133