

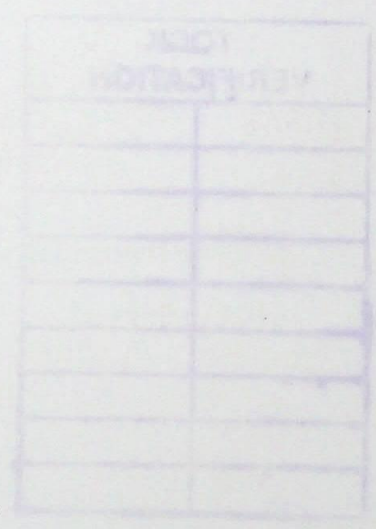
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**COMPETING POLITICAL ACTORS IN A PEACE PROCESS:  
CASE STUDY OF SRI LANKA, 2002-2005**

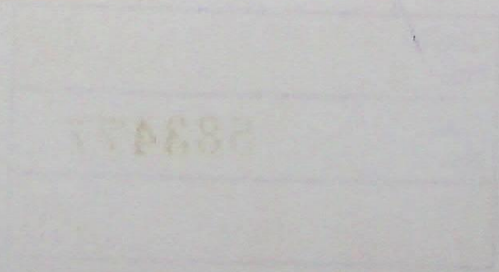
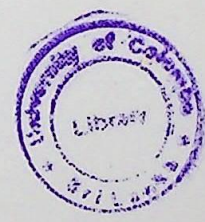


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## **Abstract**

Why is it that most events of spoiling are followed by a crisis in the peace negotiations? The present study addresses this question of how and why spoiling has the potential to generate a crisis in the negotiation process through actions committed by competing political actors. This study attempts to relate spoiling with peripheral and competing political actors to the peace process. The concept of spoiling has led to a debate in the literature (Stedman 1997; Greenhill and Major 2007; Newman and Richmond 2006; Mac Ginty 2006; Zahar 2006). The concept as currently employed surpasses its original meaning and has given rise to a number of uncertainties concerning definition and empirical applicability; this lack of clarity with regard to some of the key aspects of the spoiler concept risks undermining the usefulness of the concept itself.

The overall objective of this study is to understand the factors, strategies and patterns that explain the occurrence, prevention and management of a crisis in the aftermath of spoiling, and also to identify the mechanisms through which spoiling affects peace negotiations. The findings of this research can be identified as concerning: the internal opposition and other signs of fragmentation within a party, which work indirectly through the mechanism of mistrust; the fact that spoiling is more liable to have a damaging effect if trust is low and if there is strong opposition to the peace negotiations; and how spoiling can strengthen the trends of mistrust and resistance to peace negotiations. Another key finding in this research is that violence, when trust between parties is low during the aftermath of spoiling, is likely to aggravate that trend. These findings are based on the case study of Sri Lanka and its peace negotiation process during 2002-2005.



This study confronts the conventional theories and definitions of conflict resolution and war termination, by problematizing the relationship between spoiling and peacemaking. On the other hand, it recognizes the importance of managing spoiling. Theoretical arguments have seldom been used to elaborate the dynamics of the negotiation process. Taking the argument one step further, in the present inquiry, the theoretical implications of the argument were modified to trace the effect of spoiling carried out by competing political actors on the dynamics of peace negotiations. As a result, the research has discovered the logic behind peacemaking in general and contributed to the knowledge on conflict resolution and war termination.