Journal of Military and Strategic Studies

VOLUME 23, ISSUE 2

Warlord-Islamist Competition: A Comparison of Support Structures

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Introduction

Parastatists and private *entrepreneurs of war* are characteristic actors of so-called New Wars.[1] Two such violent non-state actors (VSNA) - Warlords and Islamist groups - frequently compete against each other in situations of internal conflict. Even a superficial view of these competitions leads to the observation that both groups differ from each other – in particular with regard to the structures, networks and connections they rest their power. This paper will attempt to compare both specific actor types by the support bases they mobilize. Due to limitations in extent, it will build on the analysis of two case studies. The patterns that will be established however can serve as starting points for further research. The main finding corresponds to the expectation that both types of armed actors are predominantly supported by different groups (e.g. local civilians, business community, foreign governments) for divergent reasons. Local populations often seem to back Islamist groups because of a shared religious identity and aspirations to establish lasting governance structures. In contrast, it is the non-ideological pragmatism of most warlords that renders them preferential partners for international and especially Western actors seeking influence in a conflict.

To arrive at this conclusion, this article will sketch out working definitions to characterize the organisations in question. Afterwards, an overview of the case studies with particular

[1] Herfried Münkler, *Die neuen Kriege* (Rowohlt Verlag GmbH, 2011), p. 7.

ISSN : 1488-559X

attention given to the dynamics of warlord-Islamist competition, will be provided. Afghanistan and Somalia can serve as examples because the rivalry between both VNSA types happens on an extensive scale and is an integral feature of the conflicts. The second part of the article will discuss additional information from the case studies to establish positive and negative reasons for support and systematically distinguish between internal and external assistance for either Islamists or warlords or both. Concluding remarks will summarize findings and explore some implications for Western interventionism.

Theoretically, this paper uses ideas and concepts from research on mobilisation in internal conflicts.[2] Frequently, greed- and grievance-based models are used to explain the participation of armed actors as well as their supporters. [3] This work utilizes conceptualisations of self-interest (greed) and perceptions of injustice (grievance) to explain differences in motivations between Islamists and warlords and their supporters. Beyond motivational explanations, resource mobilisation approaches [4] are used to demonstrate how different support structures provide VNSAs with opportunities to engage in armed conflict. Building on the finding that two of the main factors that enable internal war are popular support and reliable financing,[5] this paper presupposes that armed groups are reliant on assistance from in- or outside the conflict area to secure the prerequisites to wage war.

Definitions

Warlordism

Mostly understood not as a contingent, historical phenomenon but as "a system of political economy across time and space,"[6] warlordism is a contested concept among researchers. According to Marten (2007), central characteristics include the seizing of

[2] See Stathis N. Kalyvas and Paul D. Kenny, "Civil Wars", in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2017).
[3] Patrick M. Regan and Daniel Norton, "Greed, Grievance, and Mobilization in Civil Wars ', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 3 (1 June 2005): p. 319.
[4] J. Craig Jenkins, "Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements," *Annual Review of Sociology* 9 (1983): pp. 527–53; Cf. Idean Salehyan, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and David E. Cunningham, 'Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups', *International Organization* 65, no. 4 (2011): pp. 709–44.
[5] Barbara Walter, 'Civil Wars, Conflict Resolution, and Bargaining Theory," in *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth Simmons, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2013), p. 658.
[6] Kimberly Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," *International Security* 31, no. 3 (1 January 2007): p. 58.

control over territory by armed men in situations of state breakdown, a self-interested orientation, and authority based on personal loyalties, patronage and charismatic rule.[7] Jackson (2003) stresses in addition the establishment of control by brute force and the replacement of rudimentary governance functions.[8] A slimmed definition is provided by Giustozzi, stating that warlords are individuals who establish political sovereignty with their capacity for organized violence.[9] While the details and emphases differ, the consensus in the literature maintains that warlords are violent and pragmatic, non-ideological actors.[10] Factors that can contribute to their rise include ethnic division, inhospitable geography and small arms proliferation,[11] exclusionary politics, clan favouritism and famine.[12]

In relation to state power, warlords are often understood as competitors to the Westphalian nation-state model as locally limited monopolists of force.[13] Sometimes they are seen as important fillers of "governance gaps"[14] that provide alternative structure and security in periods of central political break-down.[15] Others argue that by subverting the rule of law and relying on illicit financing methods, warlords emerge and simultaneously contribute to the problems of weak and failed states.[16] According to MacKinlay (2000), it is their inherently predatory *modus operandi* and disregard for mitigating cultural and religious restraints that renders their claim to power illegitimate.[17] Likewise, media usage

[7] Marten, "Warlordism in Comparative Perspective," pp. pp. 48-9.
[8] Paul Jackson, "Warlords as Alternative Forms of Governance," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 14, no. 2 (1 June 2003): p. 137.
[9] Antonio Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords? The Politics of State-Building in Post-Taleban Afghanistan," *Crisis States Research Centre Working Papers Series* 1, no. 33 (September 2003): p. 2.
[10] Kristian Harpviken, "Understanding Warlordism", PRIO Paper (Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2010), p. 4.
[11] Marten, " Warlordism,' pp. 43–49.
[12] Usman A. Tar and Mala Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab: State Collapse, Warlords and Islamist Insurgency in Somalia
', in *Violent Non-State Actors in Africa" : Terrorists, Rebels and Warlords*, ed. Caroline Varin and Dauda Abubakar (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), p. 282.
[13] Usman A. Tar and Mala Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab: State Collapse, Warlords and Islamist Insurgency in Somalia," in *Violent Non-State Actors in Africa : Terrorists, Rebels and Warlords*, ed. Caroline Varin and Dauda Abubakar (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), p. 278; once a warlord establishes complete control over a state, he ceases to be a warlord: Marten "Warlordism," 47.
[14] Philip G. Cerny, "Neomedievalism, Civil War and the New Sp. ecurity Dilemma: Globalisation as Durable Disorder," *Civil Wars* 1, no. 1 (1 March 1998): pp. 48–49.
[15] Jackson, 'Warlords as Alternative Forms of Governance," p.139.
[16] Cf. John P. Sullivan and Robert J. Bunker, "Drug Cartels, Street Gangs, and Warlords", *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 13, no. 2 (1 August 2002): 51.
[17] John MacKinlay, "Defining Warlords," *International Peacekeeping* 7, no. 1 (1 March 2000): p. 49.

of the term normally implies illegitimacy, intimidation and criminality.[18] More nuanced conceptualisations recognize different motivations of warlords, ranging from purely criminal self-interest to national or secessionist aspirations. According to this view, warlords can occupy different positions on a "continuum of instability," from proto-statists to stationary bandits.[19]

For a working definition, the pragmatist, non-ideological orientation of warlords can be combined with the minimal characterisation of Giustozzi. A taxonomy used by Vinci (2009) in a study on warlords in Somalia,[20] allows one to distinguish between types. The primary distinguishing feature in this is the allegiance to an ethnic community. The most common type of Somali warlord faction is formed along clan lines to defend clan territory and represent a specific ethnic community. It is commanded by a leader that is accountable to the clan-leadership which itself is reciprocally dependent on the warlord to survive military against other armed groups. Contrary to this model, warlords with more (up to total) independence from clan structures exist. These are led by charismatic, personalistic rule that recognizes only the warlord as political authority. This article will focus on these "personal militias"[21] as warlords in a strict sense.

Islamists

While substantial academic discourse testifies to its intricacies,[22] the term Islamism itself is comparably less contested. While Islamist movements can differ considerably in their strategies and scope, they are unified in their aim to erect an Islamic state or caliphate in accordance with Sharia law.[23] Following Ahmad (2015) an Islamist group can be defined as a "substate faction that utilises Islamic ideas, identity, symbols, and rhetoric in its framing, and that espouses political order based on Islamic laws and institutions."[24] This

[18] Jackson, "Warlords as Alternative Forms of Governance', p. 134.
[19] Giustozzi, '"Respectable Warlords?', 2; Sullivan and Bunker, 'Drug Cartels, Street Gangs, and Warlords,"p. 52.
[20] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, pp. 73–75.
[21] Alice Hills, "Warlords, Militia and Conflict in Contemporary Africa: A Re-examination of Terms," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 8, no. 1 (1 March 1997): p. 40.
[22] Mehdi Mozaffari, 'What Is Islamism? History and Definition of a Concept', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8, no. 1 (1 March 2007): pp. 17–33.
[23] Markus V. Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia, or: How External Interferences Helped to Produce Militant Islamism," Items (Social Science Research Council, 17 December 2009), p. 2.
[24] Aisha Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar: Business Interests and Islamist Power in Civil War Somalia," *International Security* 39, no. 3 (1 January 2015): p. 92.

definition encapsulates moderate as well as radical variants, both of which are of importance in a comparison with the warlord rule.

An important distinction between types of Islamist groups can be made according to their orientation regarding the territorial expansion of the envisaged Islamic state. While Islamists with a global orientation (e.g. Al-Qaeda) strive for transnational actualisations of their political and religious agenda, national or domestic Islamists (e.g. the Taliban) focus on a particular state and try to control and hold territory in it. While Islamist militias in general espouse pan-Islamic ideology in order to transcend clan and family loyalties in favour of religious identity,[25] Islamists with a global orientation are particularly successful in domestic inter-Islamist competition.[26]

It becomes obvious that adherence to an ideology and religiously framed aims are at the heart of Islamism. Because warlords and Islamists can act similarly in practical terms[27] and both phenomena are associated with state weakness,[28] the difference in motivation (self-interest / religious-political aims) becomes central to demarcating them from each other. It should be noted however that warlords can enact religious policies and justify their rule in Islamic terms[29] and that even strict Islamists can bend the norms and principles of their religion.[30]

Case Study I: Somalia

Somalia, in whole or in part, has been under warlord rule for the past several decades. After the regime of Siad Barre lost a civil war in 1991, several factors contributed to the rise of warlordism in the country. After taking the capital, the mainly clan-based opposition cleansed government positions of rival clans, resulting in the fracturing of the

[25] Cf. Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 76; Cedric Barnes and Harun Hassan, "The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, no. 2 (1 July 2007): p. 155.
[26] Aisha Ahmad, "Going Global: Islamist Competition in Contemporary Civil Wars," *Security Studies* 25, no. 2 (2 April 2016): p.353.
[27] Cf. Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar," 113.
[28] Cédric Jourde, "The International Relations of Small Neoauthoritarian States: Islamism, Warlordism, and the Framing of Stability," *International Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (1 June 2007): p. 488.
[29] Marten, 'Warlordism', 56; Harpviken, "Understanding Warlordism," p. 4.
[30] Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: The Story of the Afghan Warlords* (Pan, 2001), pp. 117–27; Yoshinobu Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct: Through the One-Way Mirror* (Springer, 2016), p. 20.

national army[31] and leading to expulsions and mass-killing campaigns.[32] The resulting anarchy and so-called "war of the militias" was aggravated by the strategy of the Barre regime to create new militias by arming sub-clan groups and manipulating them to fight each other.[33] Furthermore, the looting of government depots contributed to widespread small-arms proliferation, a prerequisite for warlord power.[34]

Because Somalis traditionally identify themselves by clan and sub-clan affiliation, alliances and factions are often formed in accordance with relatedness.[35] While the history of tribal warfare contributed to the emerging warlordism[36] and a "devolution […] to lower and lower levels of clan lineages"[37] was observable, not all warlords were supported by or were bound to clans. On the one hand, teenage bandits or armed business owners did not always recognise clan authority.[38] Successful clan-militia leaders on the other hand could also emancipate themselves from clan oversight[39] and thus become warlords in the strict sense. The fluidity of the Somali clan system even enabled some charismatic leaders to invent new clans on the spot.[40]

A difference in Somalia from many other civil wars was that no faction could hold control over all state institutions or even the capital.[41] As a multitude of increasingly smaller militias and armed groups fought each other, the aim of control over the state apparatus gave way to ensuring their own survival.[42] Against this backdrop of escalating violence, the UN security council authorised peacekeeping missions and a US-led military humanitarian intervention (UNOSOM/ UNITAF) to establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations.[43] From the beginning, the US deemed it too costly to defeat the warlords and instead opted for accommodating them in exchange for

[31] Marten, "Warlordism," p. 52.
[32] Lidwien Kapteijns, "Test-Firing the 'New World Order' in Somalia: The US/UN Military Humanitarian Intervention of 1992–1995," *Journal of Genocide Research* 15, no. 4 (1 December 2013): p. 423.
[33] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 69.
[34] Ibid., p. 70.
[35] Ibid., p. 69.
[36] I. M. Lewis, *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society* (The Red Sea Press, 1994), p. 231.
[37] Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 30.
[38] Terrence Lyons and Ahmed I. Samatar, *Somalia: State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention, and Strategies for Political Reconstruction* (Brookings Institution Press, 2010), pp. 21–22; International Crisis Group, "Somalia: Continuation of War by Other Means?," Africa Report, 21 December 2004.
[39] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 73.
[40] Peter D. Little, *Somalia: Economy Without State* (International African Institute, 2003), p. 47.
[41] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 71.
[42] Abdisalam M. Issa-Salwe, *The Collapse of the Somali State: The Impact of the Colonial Legacy* (HAAN, 1996), pp. 104–7.
[43] Kapteijns, "Test-Firing the 'New World Order' in Somalia", pp. 424–25.

providing order and security.[44] The relationship between the intervening powers and the warlords proved unstable, however. Especially attempts to disarm militias by UNOSOM forces were perceived as existential threats because surviving in the anarchic environment was inextricably tied to "having weapons, technicals and militiamen."[45] Resulting clashes led to humiliating scenes and a withdrawal of all US forces was ordered by President Clinton.[46]

After the UN left Somalia too, warlordism continued unimpeded. Several peace processes failed due to the military resistance of warlords. Especially more independent militia leaders rejected a clan-based power-sharing regime. A peace process in 2004 tried to accommodate the de facto sovereign warlords by granting them titles and positions in a newly found exile government.[47] The concession that military power granted access to peace conferences, international legitimisation and aid funds unintentionally contributed to more fierce competition between the warlords.[48] Disillusionment resulting from the failures of humanitarian interventions and internationally-backed peace processes led to growing popular support for a domestic alternative to warlord rule.[49] In Mogadishu, local Sharia courts were seen as providers of peace, security and the rule of law. The courts first began to contribute to security by arresting petty bandits and gangs without big warlord affiliation and soon merged into the Islamic Courts Union (ICU).[50] The ICU could be regarded as a broad Islamist movement unifying different strains including moderates and extremists,[51] possibly only united by their goal of getting rid of the warlords and establishing an Islamic state.[52] By 2006 their neighbourhood militias merged into a unified armed wing (al-Shabaab) to become a powerful military actor that began to control significant territory. Because their rule was seen as stable, orderly, and less corrupt, they were favoured by the business community and NGOs.[53] They also

[44] Walter S. Clarke and Robert Gosende, "Somalia: Can a Collapsed State Reconstitute Itself?," in *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Washington, D.C.: World Peace Foundation, 2003).
[45] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 81.
[46] Kapteijns, "Test-Firing the 'New World Order' in Somalia", pp. 430–33.
[47] Ahmad, 'The Security Bazaar," pp. 99–100.
[48] Cf. Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*,pp. 76–78.
[49] Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012* (Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 22–23.
[50] Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar," pp.99–100.
[51] Barnes and Hassan, "The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts," p. 155; Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," p. 11.
[52] Hoehne,
'Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," pp. 11, 16.
[53] Tar and Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab," p. 238; Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 83.

became popular because of their ability to provide a form of justice in the otherwise anarchic city and because they protected ordinary citizens somewhat against arbitrariness and criminality.[54] All this rendered the ICU an existential threat to warlord factions. The warlords that had been fighting each other for years quickly aligned in order to beat the threat,[55] but were unable: Within six months, the ICU captured 90% of the Somali countryside, ousted most warlords from Mogadishu and in the first time in 15 years established unified political and military control over the capital.[56] Two factors substantially contributed to the extraordinary success of the ICU. For one, the support of the business community constituted a continuous financing source that the courts got in exchange for providing stability and public security.[57] Second, the religious identity of the movement allowed the courts to draw support across clan boundaries.[58]

Somalis, both in the country and in the diaspora as well as external observers were positively surprised by the peacefulness and stability of the ICU's rule.[59] Thus it might seem surprising that Ethiopia allied with warlord factions and launched a military campaign against the courts.[60] The US, which had taken interest again in Somalia after the 9/11 attacks,[61] backed the intervention.[62] The alliance was able to defeat the ICU with US support in the shape of direct weapons delivery to warlords and airstrikes.[63] Ethiopia's reason for conducting the invasion is generally located in a concern with internal secessionist and Islamist movements. Since the alliance with the warlords quickly fell apart after the war, it is assumed to be based purely on security interests.[64] The US interest in Somalia was framed in terms of the struggle against global radical Islamism. From 2006 onwards the US allied with warlords to counter Al-Qaeda's encroachment in the region under the "war on terror" maxim.[65] A high-ranking US

[54] Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, 22–23.
[55] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 88.
[56] Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar," p. 100.
[57] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 76.
[58] Barnes and Hassan, "The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts," p. 155.
[59] Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," pp.9–10.
[60] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 72.
[61] Kapteijns, "Test-Firing the 'New World Order' in Somalia," p. 436.
[62] Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar', 113.
[63] Hoehne, 'Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," pp. 20–23.
[64] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, pp. 83–85.
[65] Roland Marchal, "Somalia: A New Front Against Terrorism," Items (Social Science Research Council, p. 5 February 2007), https://items.ssrc.org/crisis-in-the-horn-of-africa/somalia-a-new-front-against-terrorism/; reportedly the CIA provided around $2 million to a "disreputable clique of Mogadishu warlords", Paul D. Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia: A History and Analysis of the African Union Mission (AMISOM), 2007-2017* (Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 28.

official legitimised the invasion by alleging that the ICU was controlled by al-Qaeda even while an EU commissioner was on site to broker a peace deal.[66]

In the wake of the intervention the ICU fractured and its military wing, the al-Shabaab militia, radicalised and gained influence.[67] Now definitely al-Qaeda affiliated, galvanised and more brutal, al-Shabab "hardened" due to its combat experience and employed more elaborate tactics as well as a military administration of controlled territories and communities.[68] It also adopted a transnational orientation which led to terror attacks in neighbouring countries and an influx of foreign fighters.[69] Even though more extremist, al-Shabab continued to enjoy high levels of popular support and funding.[70] Reasons for this lie partly in the harsh conduct by the invading forces (including shelling of civilian districts) and US airstrikes that added to the legitimacy and popularity of al-Shabaab even with diaspora Somalis.[71] In contrast to the warlord factions, the Islamist militia explicitly positioned itself in opposition to Western interests and foreign influence in general[72] and espoused an ideology that centred on the protection of the Muslim community against outside threats.[73] The withdrawal of Ethiopian forces in 2009 was accompanied by a simultaneous territorial expansion of al-Shabaab and the establishment of alternative governance structures including tax collection and Sharia courts.[74] At its greatest expanse around 2010, al-Shabab controlled Mogadishu and most of southern Somalia.[75]

Another peacekeeping mission (AMISOM[76]) succeeded in installing an internationally recognised government in 2012. This government has also been criticised for undemocratic practices, corruption and being only functional in certain areas due to the

[66] Roland Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 3, no. 3 (1 November 2009): p. 392.
[67] Tar and Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab", pp. 283-285.
[68] Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," p. 24.
[69] Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar,' p. 113; Bronwyn Bruton, "Al-Shabab Crosses the Rubicon," *Foreign Policy*, 3 April 2015, https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/03/al-shabab-crosses-the-rubicon-kenya/.
[70] Institute for Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Index 2015: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism', 10, accessed 16 August 2022, https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2015-measuring-and-understanding-impact-terrorism; Tar and Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab," p.279.
[71] Ken Menkhaus, "Violent Islamic Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America," Hearing before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (U.S. Senate, 11 March 2009).
[72] Tar and Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab", p. 279.
[73] Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, pp. 27–28, 45.
[74] Tar and Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab," p. 285.
[75] Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Developments in Somalia," (Brookings Institute, 14 November 2018), https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/developments-in-somalia/.
[76] African Union Mission to Somalia; since 2022: African Union Transition Mission in Somalia.

presence of foreign troops.[77] Again al-Shabaab proved resilient and retook lost territory for which AMISOM forces could not muster staying power.[78] To this day, power struggles in Somalia between radical Islamists, warlords, foreign forces and the national government continue.[79]

Case Study II: Afghanistan

Warlord havens have been an occurrence in Afghanistan for over 40 years.[80] The general pattern of Afghan warlordism is thereby similar to other exemplary cases.[81] Its roots can be traced to the emergence of community militias which formed out of local rejection of coercive reforms implemented by the socialist government after the 1978 coup.[82] In the context of the Soviet invasion, the militias initially represented the political interests and security desires of villages[83] which however only exercised limited control over their field commanders.[84] Similar to Somalia, armed groups in Afghanistan still often resemble clan militias, that is to say, they are generally loyal to specific areas and peoples with whom they share identities and historical grievances. But like in the first case study, there are also warlord armies that could be described as "freelance" or personally bound to a single leader.[85] Many of the warlords that have successively emancipated themselves from local networks and traditional support structures have instead tapped into external sponsoring sources.[86] This was the case for many commanders of the loosely connected, Western-backed *Mujahideen* rebel movement that fought the socialist government till 1992. After the regime change, many commanders of the Soviet-Afghan war acted increasingly independently, also from the ranks of the disintegrating national army. From

[77] Matt Bryden, "Somalia Redux? Assessing the New Somali Federal Government," CSIS Africa Program Report (Center for Strategic & International Studies, August 2013), pp. 4–5; also warlord influence seems possible, cf. ibid. p. 6.
[78] Tar and Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab," p. 292.
[79] Andres Schipani, "Al-Shabaab Attack on Mogadishu Hotel Leaves 21 Dead," *Financial Times*, 21 August 2022, https://www.ft.com/content/b0f4bae7-962e-42ea-891d-e34d176690ef.
[80] Ahmad Shah Azami, "Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan.", *Central European Journal of Politics* 7, no. 1 (2021): p. 51.
[81] Marten, "Warlordism," p. 54.
[82] M. Nazif Shahrani, "Introduction: Marxist 'Revolution' and Islamic Resistance in Afghanistan," in *Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. M. Nazif Shahrani and Robert L. Canfield (Berekley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 17–24.
[83] Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?," p. 5.
[84] Michael Vinay Bhatia and Mark Sedra, *Afghanistan, Arms and Conflict: Armed Groups, Disarmament and Security in a Post-War Society* (Routledge, 2008) ch. 3.
[85] Jackson, "Warlords as Alternative Forms of Governance," p. 142.
[86] Harpviken, "Understanding Warlordism," p. 2.

the mid-1990s onwards, Afghanistan had "thousands of small political and military actors […] that could be described as warlords."[87]

The new *Mujahideen* government itself was unsurprisingly also mainly comprised of warlords. In their new function, many proved inept, stuffing the bureaucracy with sympathizers, being overtly patrimonial and thus alienating allies. The competition for government posts and resources as well as over-financing sources (taxation/ racketeering on road checkpoints, custom revenues, foreign support, poppy cultivation and smuggling) led to war among the warlord factions already in the same year they defeated the socialist government.[88] The resulting state of lawlessness and anarchy enabled the rise of the Taliban. Originally a movement of religious scholars[89] that originated in a majority Pashto region, said to be particularly devastated by warlord violence, the Taliban's original intention "was to disband the warlords and to restore law and order based on a strict interpretation of Sharia law."[90]

Ordinary Afghans, disgusted by warlordism, initially welcomed the Taliban because of the peace and normalcy that accompanied their rule.[91] It is telling that the founding myth of the organisation describes the restoration of peace and the enforcement of the Sharia after the abduction of girls by a local warlord.[92] Especially the Taliban's self-constraint and discipline stood in stark contrast to the warlords' behaviour and resonated with the population.[93] Also, their adherence to religious norms distinguished them since the warlord influence had diluted the original Islamism of the *Mujahideen* party.[94] Their extraordinary popularity led to over 10.000 new members in a single year[95] and extensive territorial gains. Although the Taliban also prioritised war over the provision of civil services and likewise engaged in patrimonialism while allocating positions,[96] their overall conduct towards the civilian population differed from that of the warlords. This can be exemplified by a comparison of the Taliban takeover of Zabul in 1996 which was essentially bloodless,[97] and the *Mujahideen* sack of Kabul in 1992 which was accompanied

[87] Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?," p. 5.
[88] Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?," pp. 6–11.
[89] Their name deriving from the term for *student* or *seeker*.
[90] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, pp. 13, 15.
[91] Azami, "Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan.," p. 51; Marten, "Warlordism", p. 54.
[92] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p. 13.
[93] Abdul Zaeef, *My Life with the Taliban* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011),p. 67.
[94] Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?," p. 11.
[95] Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: The Power of Militant Islam in Afghanistan and Beyond* (I. B. Tauris, 2010), p. 29.
[96] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p. 15.
[97] Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (Tauris, 2002), pp. 33.

by widespread looting.[98] The difference in terms of treatment of the civilian population is not completely straightforward though as the Taliban also committed human rights violations including scorched earth tactics and burning entire villages.[99]

After taking over the capital and much of the countryside after 1996, the Taliban incorporated some warlords into their ranks while exiling others to the north. Initially, positive developments included improved security, the clearing of roads from criminals and the establishment of courts.[100] The results of a 1997 survey indicate that women felt safer under the Taliban[101] (while also having fewer rights than previously)[102]. The immigration numbers to neighbouring countries in their first period in power (1996-2001) suggest however that they were not universally popular.[103]

Similar to Somalia but much more, Afghanistan moved into the focus of US foreign policy after 9/11. The decision to intervene was mainly coupled with the unwillingness of the Taliban government to extradite high-ranking al-Qaeda members.[104] With militarily implemented regime change in Afghanistan, the US wanted to send a "message of resolve to other state sponsors of terrorism."[105] In addition, the intervention was also justified to establish democracy in the country.[106] Interestingly, Western views on the Taliban before the terror attacks were more positive, depicting them as a "naïve, pious, determined band of religious students who swept into power on a wave of popular revulsion over criminal warlords."[107]

[98] Azami, "Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan.," p. 54.
[99] United Nations, "UN Mapping Report Afghanistan," unpublished, 2005 (leaked version available at: http://www.flagrancy.net/salvage/UNMappingReportAfghanistan.pdf), p. 248.
[100] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p. 15.
[101] Bill Heike, "Country Without a State—Does It Really Make a Difference for the Women?" in *Afghanistan -a Country Without a State?*, ed. Christine Noelle-Karimi, Conrad J. Schetter, and Reinhard Schlagintweit (Lahore: Vanguard, 2002), p. 107.
[102] Rashid, *Taliban*, 2002, p. 33.
[103] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p. 16.
[104] Carter Malkasian, *The American War in Afghanistan: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 56–58.
[105] Zalmay Khalilzad, *The Envoy: From Kabul to the White House, My Journey Through a Turbulent World* (St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2016), p. 90.
[106] Julian Voje, "Die geostrategische Bedeutung Afghanistans aus Sicht der USA" (Thesis, Bonn, Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität Bonn, 2014), pp. 290-306.
[107] Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden* (Penguin UK, 2005), p. 283; see also: Rashid, *Taliban*, 2002, p. 46.

The ground fighting of the 2001 US intervention was almost exclusively done by a coalition of mostly non-Pashto warlords, termed the Northern Alliance (NA).[108] Supplied with Western money, weapons, and intelligence, and supported by airstrikes, the NA defeated the Taliban in a matter of months. An international conference in Bonn was convoked in order to choose a new interim administration; not only Taliban representatives but also other influential Islamist organisations were excluded from participation.[109] Instead, many warlords were granted key positions in the newly formed national government (as in 1992).[110] The administration under Hamid Karzai based their authority from the beginning on the military power of warlords. It is thus not surprising that the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration process had only moderate success, with many warlords retaining their arms, illicit financing sources and control over populations.[111] Although a confiscation of heavy arms began after 2002, still many warlords kept unofficial control over politics and commerce.[112] This was not only tolerated but actively reinforced by US policy: Among other assistance, the granting of massive infrastructure projects turned some warlords into billionaires. According to Azami (2021), warlords were the main beneficiaries of US money spent in Afghanistan.[113] Furthermore, high-ranking US officials legitimised them with personal visits.[114]

Various security forces of the Afghan state, like the national army[115] and the local police,[116] were linked to warlords from the very beginning. Western PMCs (subcontracted by the US military) employed warlords as sub-subcontractors, who in some cases were involved in anti-coalition activities.[117] One warlord-owned private security firm is even suspected of paying the Taliban to attack NATO convoys in order to generate business.[118] An official investigation came to the conclusion that the

[108] Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The U.S. and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (Penguin, 2008) Ch. 4.
[109] Azami, "Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan.,?" p. 55.
[110] Harpviken, "Understanding Warlordism," p, 2.
[111] Bhatia and Sedra, *Afghanistan, Arms and Conflict*, Ch. 4.
[112] Marten, "Warlordism," p. 55.
[113] Azami, "Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan.," pp. 62, 67.
[114] Ibid., 58; The US ambassador to Afghanistan problematized these visits in retrospect: "we should have stopped visiting them. We should have supported the government more visibly. I stopped visiting Ismail Khan and Dostum, but Rumsfeld visited them several times." cited in: Rashid 2008: pp. 190–191.
[115] Antoni Giustozzi, "Re -Building the Afghan Army", 2003; Conrad Schetter, "Kriegsfürstentum und Bürgerkriegsökonomien in Afghanistan", *Arbeitspapiere zur Internationalen Politik und Außenpolitik* 3 (2004).
[116] Human Rights Watch,"'Today We Shall All Die" Afghanistan's Strongmen and the Legacy of Impunity " (New York, 2015), p. 41, https://doi.org/10.1163/2210-7975_HRD-2156-2015060.
[117] Sean McFate, *Mercenaries and War: Understanding Private Armies Today* (Washington, D.C.: National Defence University Press, 2019), p. 21.
[118] McFate, *Mercenaries and War*, p. 22.

employment of warlords undermined the national government and conflicted with US state-building aims.[119]

Examples that testify to the warlords' abilities to retain their power and capacity for violence include the stabbing of the minister by a rival faction in open daylight,[120] the threat of a warlord to start a civil war if not recognised as provincial governor[121] and a warlord disobeying orders from the capital to relinquish his post.[122] Over time reports cumulated that warlords engaged in kidnapping, torture and killings up to ethnic cleansing.[123] A 2002 attempt by the national government to render the warlords innocuous was to ban private militias and order their leaders to assume a government position.[124] While lesser warlords could be lured into the army by offering them commands as high up as four-star generals, it was often impossible to convince the more powerful, also because no higher positions were left.[125] The result was also that illiterate persons were given the rank of full general.[126] Even when the strategy to isolate warlords from their local power base worked, a designated successor would just step in.[127]

Karzai was aware that the warlords were one of the biggest threats to its authority but also, that it was unable to disarm them without US support:[128]

"We understood that the West would not help us free Afghanistan from an environment of warlordism. On the contrary, some were promoted and allowed to keep their militias,

[119] U.S. House of Representatives, "Warlord, Inc.: Extortion and Corruption Along the U.S. Supply Chain in Afghanistan", Report of the Majority Staff (Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, 2010), p. 2, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/congress/2010_rpt/warlord-inc_100622.htm.
[120] Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, p. 179.
[121] Azami, "Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan.," p. 7.
[122] Ajmal Arian and Abubakar Siddique, "Defiant Governor Reaches Agreement with Kabul," *Radio Free Afghanistan*, 21 March 2018, https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/Afghanistan-atta-mohammad-noor-ghani/29113319.html.
[123] Barnett R. Rubin, "Afghanistan's Uncertain Transition from Turmoil to Normalcy," | Council on Foreign Relations', Council Special Report (Council on Foreign Relations Press, 2006), pp. 5-6, https://www.cfr.org/report/afghanistans-uncertain-transition-turmoil-normalcy.
[124] Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?," p.14.
[125] Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?," p. 15; one exception was Abdul Dostum who assumed the position of deputy minister of defence.
[126] Mujahid, cited in: Azami, "Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan." p. 65.
[127] Marten, "Warlordism," p. 56.
[128] Azami, "Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan.," pp. 56, 59.

to enrich themselves, and to intimidate Afghan villagers, legalise business by forming contracting businesses, receiving […] hundreds of millions of dollars."[129]

The rationale of the US was that if the government was not able to deal with local strongmen, it could not survive politically anyway. According to Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld, Karzai had to learn to govern "the Chicago way."[130] Contrary to announcements, the US approach did not prioritise state-building. Instead, the unstated, military-intelligence-driven strategy was to keep the national government ineffectual in the capital, use the warlords to ensure peace in the countryside and employ Special Forces to hunt down al-Qaeda.[131]

The democratisation process was equally plagued by corruption and warlord influence. In the Afghan parliamentary elections of 2005 around 80% of MPs had ties to illegal armed groups,[132] even though an electoral law prohibited commanders of unofficial military forces from becoming candidates.[133] Elections were often managed by warlords themselves, seats allocated by prior agreement.[134] Membership in the parliamentary became a symbol of prestige rather than a responsibility to represent the electorate and many warlords MPs were often not competent enough to introduce reforms or sufficiently understand bills.[135] In 2014, one of the most prolific warlords became Vice President.[136] All this contributed to a disillusionment with democracy by ordinary people. The US support for warlords led to the impression that corruption and abuses

[129] H. Karzai cited in: Kai Eide, "Afghanistan and the US: Between Partnership and Occupation – Peace Research Institute Oslo,' PRIO Paper (Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2014), pp. 12–13, https://www.prio.org/publications/7578.

[130] Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (Penguin, 2011), p. 376.

[131] Azami, "Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan.," p. 57.

[132] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Rights Body Warns of Warlords" Success in Elections' (Geneva: United Nations International Regional Information Networks, 18 October 2005), https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2005/10/18/rights-body-warns-warlords%E2%80%99-success-elections.

[133] A commission reviewed the candidates and found over 1000 with links to armed groups, but in the end, only 54 candidates were barred: Cyrus Hodes and Mark Sedra, *The Search for Security in Post-Taliban Afghanistan* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 13–14.

[134] Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 7; Noah Coburn and Anna Larson, *Derailing Democracy in Afghanistan: Elections in an Unstable Political Landscape* (Columbia University Press, 2014).

[135] Azami, "Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan.," p. 64.

[136] Azam Ahmed, "Afghan First Vice President, an Ex-Warlord, Fumes on the Sidelines," *The New York Times*, 18 March 2015, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/19/world/asia/afghan-first-vice-president-an-ex-warlord-fumes-on-the-sidelines.html.

were tolerated which undermined the credibility of state-building efforts.[137] A 2010 UN survey found that half of the population considered even the NGOs corrupt.[138]

As in 1994, the Taliban directly benefited from disillusionment, corruption, and warlord violence. Popular support (mostly in the countryside and in Pashto areas) for the alternative governance structures by the Taliban grew.[139] Although there was the expectation that economic development coupled with democratisation would undermine Afghan warlordism, US influence all things considered sustained the warlord system and impaired long-term modernisation plans.[140] It contributed to the Taliban resurgence from nightly raids since 2002 to permanent territorial presence, to finally taking almost the whole country in a matter of weeks after Western forces left in 2021.[141]

Discussion

To systematically establish which types of actors support which side in a domestic competition between warlords and Islamists for what reason, the case studies will now be compared and complemented with additional relevant information.

External Warlord Support

Warlord militias on the ground are *ready-made* military forces that can be cost-efficiently utilised by foreign powers. Pakistan, Iran and the US-sponsored warlords as a means to gain influence in Afghanistan. Furthermore, they present an avenue to militarily interfere without risking their own casualties, a potential cost that Western powers in particular are increasingly unwilling to pay.[142] External warlord support can be also motivated by the aim to prevent the emergence of a strong centralised authority that could be a potential rival, as in the case of the Ethiopian aid to Somali warlords.[143] In terms of

[137] John F. Sopko, "Corruption in Conflict: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan" (Arlington: Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), 2016), p. 77.
[138] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Corruption in Afghanistan—Bribery as Reported by the Victims" (Vienna, 2010).
[139] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p. 23.
[140] Cf. Mark Peceny and Yury Bosin, "Winning with Warlords in Afghanistan," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22, no. 4 (1 October 2011): p. 613.
[141] Ratbil Shamel, Die Gründe für die Rückkehr der Taliban an die Macht," *ASIEN: The German Journal on Contemporary Asia*, no. 160/161 (2021): pp. 185–200.
[142] Hugh Smith, "What Costs Will Democracies Bear? A Review of Popular Theories of Casualty Aversion," *Armed Forces & Society* 31, no. 4 (1 July 2005): pp. 487–512.
[143] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*,pp. 82–83.

regional or international security however this approach might not produce optimal results in the long term: Warlordism is associated with porous borders, weapons and drug smuggling and illegal trade.[144] But instability can also be an intended consequence of such support since the presence of warlordism in a country indicates defective conditions of sovereignty which allows foreign powers to intervene more easily.[145]

The flexibility of warlords in alliance-building and the lesser influence of ideological considerations like anti-westernism[146] renders them accessible partners for Western powers. Alliances between states and warlords formed despite cultural, historical, and economic factors weighing against them, including considerations about the welfare of affected communities.[147] As has become apparent in both case studies, the US (and other Western states) are not opposed to supporting warlords in principle.[148] Especially in areas where political Islam is a factor, warlord rule is generally seen as the lesser security threat.[149] It is precisely the "ideological quality"[150] that is inherent to Islamist VNSAs that is regarded as the preponderant threat to Western interests and security (at least post 9/11). In the 1980s a warlord with a radical Islamist agenda (and later on, ties to al-Qaeda) still could be a CIA-supported *favourite* of the US in the fight against the Soviets.[151] The support of explicitly *non-radical* warlords in Afghanistan and Somalia coincides with a fundamental shift of the primary ideological antagonist of US foreign policy (from Communism to Islamism).[152] The West backed the NA not only because of structural or tactical reasons but because they regarded them as morally favourable compared to the Taliban.[153] Similarly, the takeover of Mogadishu by the ICU was seen in the West as the

[144] Marten, "Warlordism," p. 43.
[145] Cf. Marc-André Ryter, *Motives for Humanitarian Intervention and the International Community* (National Defence College, 2003), p. 41.
[146] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 85.
[147] United Nations Development Office for Somalia, "Study on Governance in Lower Jubba Region" (Nairobi: United Nations Development Programme, 1998), p. 140.
[148] Cf. Marten, "Warlordism," p. 46.
[149] Reuters, "Clinton Vows to Boost U.S. Support for Somali Govt," *Reuters*, 6 August 2009, sec. Africa Crisis, https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL6095551.
[150] Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," p. 2.
[151] Barnett R. Rubin, "New York Times on ISI; Serena Hotel Attack (Plus Update Connecting the Two and Historical Background)," *Informed Comment* (blog), 15 January 2008, http://icga.blogspot.com/2008/01/new-york-times-on-isi-serena-hotel.html.
[152] Jourde, "The International Relations of Small Neoauthoritarian States," p. 490.
[153] Cf. Jean-Paul Azam, "On Thugs and Heroes: Why Warlords Victimize Their Own Civilians," *Economics of Governance* 7, no. 1 (1 January 2006): p. 57; Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Réflexions sur la guerre, le mal et la fin de l'histoire* (Grasset, 2001).

victory of a "Taliban-like"[154] regime and thus unacceptable. The framing of foreign policy in ideological terms led to situations where the US could ally with violent warlords but was not willing to even negotiate with moderate Islamist organisations,[155] regardless of which faction was supported by local populations. Again, it is the pragmatism and ideological versatility that make warlords advantageous local partners against the shifting adversaries of Western powers. It also allows transnational business interests to partner up with them. International companies support warlords to gain access to resources, markets and labour.[156]

Warlords noticing the trend since 2001 began branding themselves as 'counter-terrorists' "in an open bid for American support"[157] and appropriated the anti-terror rhetoric of the Western security policy discourse.[158] In a rather ironic turn of events, Somali warlords even formed the Alliance for Restauration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism.[159] While external support and international recognition can mean some (external) legitimacy for a warlord[160] it can at the same time render him illegitimate in the eyes of domestic audiences.[161] This suggests that internal and external legitimacy can stand at odds for warlords.

In general, warlords offer a way to exert influence in situations of instability for foreign interests. Regarding cases of Islamist-warlord competition, it can be said that Western powers in particular use local 'unideological' strongmen to counter what is perceived as Islamic extremism, especially during the height of the *War on Terror*. This strategy did not yield successful results in the cases considered. Especially direct military support of warlords by foreign powers against *moderate* Islamist militias lead to the latter's radicalisation. In the literature this is sometimes seen as a strategic error of the US, contributing to the proliferation of terrorism.[162]

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[154] Isaac Kfir, "Islamic Radicalism in East Africa: Is There a Cause for Concern?, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 9 (10 September 2008): p. 842, fn. 87.
[155] Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," p. 21.
[156] Jackson, "Warlords as Alternative Forms of Governance," pp. 140, 145.
[157] Tar and Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab," p. 290.
[158] Ashley Elliot and Georg-Sebastian Holzer, "The Invention of 'Terrorism' in Somalia: Paradigms and Policy in US Foreign Relations," *South African Journal of International Affairs* 16, no. 2 (1 August 2009): pp. 215–126.
[159] Barnes and Hassan, "The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts," p. 154.
[160] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 78.
[161] Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," p. 23; reliance on external supports can imply weakness, see: Abdulkader H. Sinno, *Organizations at War in Afghanistan and Beyond* (Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 14.
[162] Tar and Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab," p. 290.

Internal Warlord Support

As many warlord armies evolve out of tribal and clan militias, they often retain patrimonial relations with their local support base, especially if access to institutional structures grants them the ability to allocate posts. Warlords with stronger local and ethnic ties may transition more easily into formal government structures because they can rely on a civil population to perform non-military tasks.[163] More independent ones on the other hand contribute to the subversion of traditional clan structures[164] which deprives them of much internal support. In Somalia, the emergence of warlordism has led to the phenomenon of *mooryaans.* These are individuals who break loyalties to their clan to fulfil mercenary roles for warlords. While they are preferred by warlords for not being implicated in interclan rivalries and are only motivated by payment, they naturally undermine the traditional authority of clans.[165]

For the local population more generally, warlordism can provide alternative governance structures in collapsing states.[166] The case studies suggest that the emergence of extensive warlord fiefdoms was partially possible because the minimal security they provide is greater than the security in situations of exclusive petty banditry. The assumption that warlords assert themselves against "roving bandits" because they provide a minimal public good in the form of security, has been suggested in the literature before.[167] While some warlords can have long-term state-building perspectives and provide public services such as health and education,[168] this does not seem to be the norm in the Somalia and Afghanistan cases. Because the stability a warlord can provide is usually tied to the individual personality, it can cease after his demise.[169] Thus, populations preferring long-term prospects for peace and security may look to alternatives not founded on personalistic authority.

In a direct comparison to Islamist organisations, it should be noted that warlords also often legitimise their power in religious or ideological terms. In Afghanistan in particular, many start from a clerical background or are part of an Islamist party; an affiliation which

[163] Cf. Harpviken, "Understanding Warlordism," pp. 3, 7.
[164] Marten, "Warlordism," p. 57.
[165] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, pp. 74–75.
[166] Jackson, "Warlords as Alternative Forms of Governance."
[167] Mancur Olson, "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development," *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 3 (September 1993): pp. 567–76.
[168] Harpviken, "Understanding Warlordism," p. 13.
[169] Jackson, "Warlords as Alternative Forms of Governance," p. 149.

confers to them an elevated normative status according to some observers.[170] These overtly religious or ideological warlords challenge conventional conceptualisations as primarily pragmatic actors.[171] Some of the arguments below that explain popular support for Islamist movements - especially with regard to adherence to religious convictions present in the population - may also apply to this type of warlord. However, it seems that religious affiliation had little impact on the conduct of warlords.[172]

The religious strictness of Islamists could also be unattractive in some parts of the population, thus benefiting their rivals. The extremism of post-foreign-intervention Islamists in Somalia made them unattractive for moderate, reform-oriented Muslims.[173] After the Taliban takeover in 1996, the employment of 30.000 religious enforcers supervising burka-wearing and bans on TV, music, kite-flying and school attendance of girls[174] were a source of discontent. While the previous warlord rule might have been somewhat more liberal, the compliance with strict religious norms was however for many "a small price to pay for the restoration of stability."[175]

It is not uncommon for domestic elites and especially governments that are unable or unwilling to monopolise violence themselves to franchise coercion to private entrepreneurs of violence. Warlords in this role are remunerated by one internal faction to counter other groups, intimidate voters or assassinate political rivals.[176] In Afghanistan, the reputation of being brutal could earn a warlord a provincial government post,[177] which suggests that the instrumentalisation of warlords by particular interests might decrease their general popular support. While the use of extensive violence rendered warlords particularly unpopular with the national intelligentsia, journalists, and NGOs, harsh conduct to ensure order was often appreciated by local populations that suffered from undisciplined troops.[178]

The relationship of business interests to warlords is likewise complicated. Since businesses can start their own armed militias as in Somalia[179] the very distinction

[170] Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?," p. 10.
[171] Harpviken, "Understanding Warlordism," pp. 4, 11, 15.
[172] Harpviken, "Understanding Warlordism," p. 22.
[173] Tar and Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab," p. 248.
[174] Vahid Mojdeh, *Afghanistan Under Five Years of Taliban Sovereignty*, 2002, pp. 17–20; Rashid, *Taliban*, 2010, p. 115.
[175] Michael Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan* (Pluto Press, 2001), p. 38.
[176] Cf. Ariel Hernandez, *Nation-Building and Identity Conflicts: Facilitating the Mediation Process in Southern Philippines* (Springer, 2014), p. 102.
[177] Harpviken, "Understanding Warlordism," p, 14.
[178] Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?," p. 8.
[179] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 73.

between warlord and businessperson is not always completely straightforward.[180] While some researchers suggest that Islamist groups receive more support from the business community (see below), there are also some economic considerations that might favour warlords. If the alternative is complete anarchy and permanent violence, warlordism can offer some economic hope for the inhabitants of failed states.[181] According to Giustozzi, most Afghan warlords were primarily not interested in depleting their territories to extract wealth[182] and some of them took measures to encourage local business activity.[183] But because security is commonly not sufficiently guaranteed, investments under warlordism often turn out unprofitable.[184] Then again, warlord rule could be preferable for the economy because of the lower levels of regulation and bureaucracy it entails.[185] While Islamist rule is not particularly associated with regulations in the Western sense, both the ICU and the Taliban enacted religiously-framed restrictions. After taking power, the ICU banned certain products, such as *qat* and cigarettes, even if the merchants were former chief financiers.[186] The Taliban pressured businessmen not to trade with foreign "crusaders,"[187] and for a time prohibited poppy cultivation.[188] Even though warlords might be less inclined to restrict business relations to others based on ideological condemnation, there are also cases where they banned business activities because of personal reasons.[189]

It can be summarised that the relationship of warlords to domestic support structures is ambiguous and highly case-specific. Clan-associated warlords usually have a local support base; independent ones only if they provide better public goods than the competition. Similarly, there are some limited factors that may encourage businesses to support warlordism, but as will become clear in the following section, the benefits of backing Islamist movements often prevail, if both options are available.

[180] Andre Le Sage, "Somalia: Sovereign Disguise for a Mogadishu Mafia," *Review of African Political Economy* 29, no. 91 (1 March 2002): pp, 132–38.
[181] Jackson, "Warlords as Alternative Forms of Governance," p. 149.
[182] Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?," p. 3.
[183] Harpviken, "Understanding Warlordism", pp. 11.
[184] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 75; Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar."
[185] Jackson, "Warlords as Alternative Forms of Governance," p. 143.
[186] Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar," p. 113.
[187] Thomas H. Johnson, Matthew DuPee, and Wali Shaaker, *Taliban Narratives: The Use and Power of Stories in the Afghanistan Conflict* (Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 71.
[188] Felbab-Brown, "Afghanistan," p. 56.
[189] Cf. Marten, "Warlordism," p. 56.

External Support for Islamists

Foreign support options for Islamist actors - especially of the radical kind – are relatively sparse. State support, almost exclusively from Muslim countries, exists but is limited both in number of donors as well as volume. Pakistani intelligence services supported the Taliban to gain influence but provided a significantly lesser amount than what the US gave warlords.[190] Eritrea sent the ICU advisors and arms[191] but in total the aid was also much smaller than what certain warlord factions received from Ethiopia and the US. While Muslim countries did not match the levels of Western support for their faction in Islamist-warlord competition, some do not shy away from financing even armed Islamist groups associated with terrorism. The al-Shabaab militia was partially funded by state sponsors such as Saudi Arabia, Syria and Qatar.[192] The denomination also plays a role. Iran was willing to sponsor a non-Shia warlord in Afghanistan but not the Sunni Taliban.[193]

Domestic Islamists can expect more unequivocal assistance from international Islamist networks. Even though the relationship between al-Qaeda and the Taliban was conflictual[194] it was at times nonetheless close. Both entities had diverging aims and orientations but fought together and supported each other with shelter, recruits, funds and connections. The Taliban consciously appropriated the rhetoric of global Jihad and anti-westernism to gain external support. The non-extradition of bin Laden served as a powerful symbol of defiance against the West which convinced Muslim volunteers from all over to fight in Afghanistan.[195] The avenue of international radical Islamism constitutes also a connection between both case studies: Some Somali Islamists who were later active in the Sharia courts movement were gaining combat experience at the side of the Taliban in the 1990s.[196] The alliance with al-Qaeda was however not always beneficial for either the Taliban or the ICU. Several high-ranking Taliban themselves criticised the decision to harbour bin Laden because it provoked the US intervention.[197] Al-Qaeda's

[190] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p. 16.
[191] Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," p. 10.
[192] Kathleen Caulderwood, "How Is Al-Shabab Funded These Days?," *International Business Times*, p. 4 September 2014, sec. Business, https://www.ibtimes.com/al-shababs-finances-militant-group-gets-funding-local-businesses-sources-abroad-1678894.
[193] Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?," p. 13.
[194] Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created: The Myth of the Taliban-Al-Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan, 1970-2010* (Hurst Publishers, 2012), pp. 235–37.
[195] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p.17.
[196] Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," p. 7.
[197] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, pp. 17–18.

endorsement of the ICU hurt its moderate wing and helped adversaries to justify action against them.[198]

Foreign support for Islamists was given for very different purposes. While Pakistan provided sanctuary, funds, and technical assistance to the Taliban mainly for geopolitical reasons, sympathizers of global Jihad and al-Qaeda had more ideological motivations.[199] In volume, foreign support for Islamists was smaller than for warlords. Again, this seems to be a novelty since the end of the Cold War when political Islam was perceived as a more immediate security threat. During the Soviet-Afghan War, the *Mujahideen* – which can be classified as both a warlord and an Islamist movement – received high levels of foreign support from Western as well as Muslim countries.[200]

Internal support for Islamists

Islamist movements can gain internal support for a wide variety of reasons. The invocation of religious principles and a public image of piety is effective if Islamic sentiments are already present in the population. Religion is often already seen as a hedge against crime, social dissolution, and general instability.[201] The universalist aspiration provided by political Islam allows Islamist groups to facilitate trust and cohesion across clan and tribe boundaries.[202] The courts' union centred their religiously-based inclusivity and mostly avoided engaging in inter-clan politics.[203] The Islamic identity allowed the Taliban likewise to draw recruits across ethnic cleavages, even from tribes that are traditional opponents of the Pashto.[204] It certainly helped that Islam was the legal and moral basis of Afghan society for centuries[205] and that the Sharia system was more respected than particularistic tribal norms or secular state law.[206]

[198] David H. Shinn, "Al-Qaeda in East Africa and the Horn," *Journal of Conflict Studies* 27, no. 1 (2007): p. 60.
[199] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p. 24.
[200] Azami, "Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan.," p. 51.
[201] Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," p. 16.
[202] Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar," p. 110.
[203] Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," p. 5.
[204] Gilles Dorronsoro, "The Taliban's Winning Strategy in Afghanistan" (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009), p. 26, https://carnegieendowment.org/2009/06/29/taliban-s-winning-strategy-in-afghanistan-pub-23331.
[205] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p. 12.
[206] Anatol Lieven, "An Afghan Tragedy: The Pashtuns, the Taliban and the State," *Survival* 63, no. 3 (4 May 2021): p. 25.

In Sufi Somalia, where the fundamentalist Wahhabism of al-Shabaab was traditionally unpopular, the Islamist movement could build trust and political capital by not only engaging in an armed struggle but in civilian projects such as building schools, orphanages and organising Islamic development aid. Some Islamist leaders even dedicated themselves exclusively to non-violent politics.[207]

Strict adherence especially to orthodox religious norms can alienate a certain part of the population even if accommodating another. The Taliban, realising the popularity problem inherent in fundamentalism showed more flexibility regarding particularly controversial rules (such as the ban on girls' education) after 2001.[208]

Besides religion, another important factor explaining how Islamists secure internal support is the provision of security and public goods. The ICU gained most territory by peaceful invitation from local populations that "appreciated the stability and justice provided by the courts."[209] Islamist groups undertook great efforts to win over local populations by demonstrating governance abilities. Al-Shabaab held lectures in small towns to convince locals that it could provide better public services.[210] In every region they penetrated, the Taliban established a parallel shadow government which competed with the national state in the facilitation of military, administrative and judiciary functions. This was explicitly done to prepare for the replacement of state institutions.[211] When they were convinced of the effectiveness of a certain warlord's state-building efforts, they left him in power after their takeover.[212] And even some Western analysts lauded the reliability and integrity of their courts.[213]

Especially the Taliban understood that ahead of material strength, legitimacy was their main driver of success and that the conflict had to be won politically and psychologically,

[207] Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," pp. 2–4.
[208] Jon Boone, "Taliban Ready to Lift Ban on Girls' Schools, Says Minister," *The Guardian*, 13 January 2011, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jan/13/taliban-lift-ban-girls-schools.
[209] Hoehne, "Counter-Terrorism in Somalia," p.10.
[210] Tar and Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab," p. 285.
[211] Anand Gopal, "The Battle for Afghanistan: Militancy and Conflict in Kandahar" (New America, 2010), pp. 22–23; Dorronsoro, "The Taliban's Winning Strategy in Afghanistan," p. 25.
[212] Gilles Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present* (C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2005), p. 250; Governance abilities were not the only factor in determining who can join since the Taliban also co-opted warlords according to their military effectiveness, see: Bhatia and Sedra, *Afghanistan, Arms and Conflict*, p. 241.
[213] Christoph Reuter and Borhan Younus, "The Return of the Taliban in Andar District," in *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field*, ed. Antonio Giustozzi (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 111.

not only militarily.[214] Hence they treated propaganda as a main effort and made efficient use of indigenous means of communication such as night letters, chants, and poems.[215] They were also conscious of conducting military operations in accordance with Muslim sentiments, in particular, to contrast their behaviour from NATO COIN operations. This is for example why the Taliban avoided night raids which exposed women to the public eye. [216] But their "armed propaganda" also included intimidation by violence and exemplary assassinations.[217]

One of the most significant efforts of the Taliban to appear legitimate is the drafting of an official code of conduct, enforced and binding for all members, the *Layeha*. [218] This document was consciously written and disseminated to achieve popular support, which is why its leitmotif is the protection of common people. It can be interpreted "as part of the Taliban's efforts to become a rule-bound organisation of a quasi-government by establishing concrete rules and regulations" [219] which emphasised predictability, due process, and fairness. A comparison with international humanitarian law reveals that the basic tenets are reflected in the *Layeha* (the distinction between combatant and non-combatant; proportionality, persons *hors de combat*). Some statues explicitly mirror articles of the Geneva Conventions. Concrete provisions of the *Layeha* are for example the prohibition of torture, recruitment of minors, [220] drug consumption, paedophilia and engaging in tribal disputes.

In both case studies, Islamist organisations gained traction out of situations of warlordism. Partially they can be understood as popular reactions to it. So, negative reasons for their success have also been located in the drawbacks associated with warlord rule. These include high levels of illiteracy and poverty,[221] acceptance of kidnapping and business killings,[222] and dissolution of existing political structures.[223] Especially egregious

[214] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, 1, p, 25.
[215] Johnson, DuPee, and Shaaker, *Taliban Narratives*, p. 15.
[216] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p; 23.
[217] David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 58.
[218] For this whole paragraph, see: Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*.
[219] Ibid., p. 28.
[220] defined as boys without facial hair.
[221] Marten, "Warlordism," p. 43.
[222] Marc Lacey, "U.N. Loses Patience With Somali Custom of Kidnapping, "*The New York Times*, 21 May 2002, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/21/world/un-loses-patience-with-somali-custom-of-kidnapping.html.
[223] Sullivan and Bunker, "Drug Cartels, Street Gangs, and Warlords," p. 41.

for local populations is that warlord troops are often not paid but given the right to plunder in exchange for loyalty.[224] In the Somali case, many warlords were not accountable to traditional, clan-based norm enforcement penalising such transgressions.[225] Similarly in Afghanistan, it was the financing by smuggling, extortion, extraction of resources as well as levying of duties and taxes[226] that led to "popular disgust"[227] with the system.

Since warlordism is almost by definition grounded in a political economy of violent criminality and exploitation[228] it is not surprising that local populations look for alternatives. Business communities may however have additional economic reasons for supporting Islamist competitors of warlordism. Under warlord rule, lasting economic growth is hindered because of additional costs on trade and higher risks for long-term investments.[229] In particular, the establishment of checkpoints to extort merchants along trade routes has economically limiting effects.[230] Traders must calculate the cost of crossing each privately held turf.[231] The tendency of warlord fiefdoms to fracture or become vassalages of bigger warlords[232] multiplies these costs. One of the first measures of both the Taliban and the ICU after taking power was the dismantlement of highway checkpoints[233] and road barriers,[234] which indicates that Islamist groups seek to mobilise the support of business interests against warlordism. And indeed, the Taliban were backed by the transportation sector because they reopened lucrative routes.[235] A coalition between them and Pashto trade networks materialised because of their efforts to eradicate road checkpoints.[236] Taliban announcements mention business interests and

[224] Jackson, "Warlords as Alternative Forms of Governance," pp. 140–45.
[225] Vinci, *Armed Groups and the Balance of Power*, p. 75.
[226] Azami,
"Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan.," p. 49.
[227] Marten, "Warlordism," p. 43.
[228] Dipali Mukhopadhyay, *Warlords, Strongman Governors, and the State in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 5.
[229] Marten, "Warlordism," pp,41–43, 58.
[230] Cf. Joseph Winter, "Living in Somalia's Anarchy," *BBC News*, 18 November 2004, https://archive.globalpolicy.org/nations/sovereign/failed/2004/1118anarchy.htm.
[231] Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar," p. 94.
[232] Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?," p. 6.
[233] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p. 13.
[234] Barnes and Hassan, "The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts," p. 154.
[235] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p. 17.
[236] Schetter, "The 'Bazaar Economy' of Afghanistan"," p. 8.

vow to safeguard property[237] and the official formulation of their founding myth explicitly references the burden on commerce imposed by warlordism.[238]

That economic and Islamist interests often converge can also be observed in Somalia. The ability of the courts union to work across ethnic divisions enabled them to offer lower prices for providing security.[239] According to the chairmen of a Mogadishu market: "For every $100 we were forced to pay to the warlords, we could give $35 to the Islamic Courts."[240] A second factor is that the ICU implemented the Sharia system which was favoured by the business community because it provided a non-violent, transparent and universal framework for dealing with disputes.[241] In turn, the money provided by the support of big economic actors allowed the ICU to buy militiamen from underneath the warlords, thus eroding their power base.[242] While Islamist organisations can also extort and tax businesses,[243] in total, prices for basic goods fell significantly under their rule, including for end consumers.[244]

In summary, internal support for Islamists against warlords is based on religious and ideological proximity, the provision of safety, public goods and superior governance and a reduction of costs imposed on economic activity under warlordism.

[237] Johnson, DuPee, and Shaaker, *Taliban Narratives*, p. 20.
[238] Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, *The Taliban Reader: War, Islam and Politics in Their Own Words* (Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 510.
[239] Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar," pp. 89–91.
[240] Cited in: Ibid., p. 113.
[241] Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar," p. 98.
[242] Ken Menkhaus, "Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping," *International Security* 31, no. 3 (1 January 2007): p. 88.
[243] Tar and Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab,"p. 286.
[244] Ahmad, "The Security Bazaar," p. 111.

Conclusion

		Warlords	Islamists
internal	population	- particular interests in franchising violence (clans, political elites) - less adherence to strict religious norms	- ideological and religious proximity - universalist aspirations transcend particularistic loyalties - better governance and public services - higher security
	local business interests	- less regulation and fewer prohibited economic activities	- less 'taxation'/ racketeering - judicial system to solve business disputes
external	foreign governments	- pragmatism; no ideological hostility - exertion of geopolitical influence - casualty aversion	- exertion of geopolitical influence
	Islamist networks		- ideological and religious proximity
	international business interests	- access to resources, protection of assets	

Table 6.1.: selected reasons for groups to support either faction in warlord-Islamist competition

Table 6.1.: selected reasons for groups to support either faction in warlord-Islamist competition

In situations of conflict between Islamists and warlords, both groups are predominantly supported by different actors for varying reasons. The table above highlights some of the major reasons as inferred from the two case studies of Somalia and Afghanistan. The generalisability of the findings should be regarded with caution; additional research is indispensable to establish whether these trends hold up in other conflicts. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that the conceptualisation used, rely on substantial simplification. For example, local populations are actually not monolithic entities that cohesively support one faction. In Afghanistan for example, the Taliban were less popular with the urban and liberal sections of the population.[245] Also, local populations in internal conflicts mostly employ a *fence-sitting* strategy by retaining options for cooperation with every faction. Often, they only side unambiguously with one party after a sufficient prospect of success has become apparent.[246]

Notwithstanding these caveats, two major factors explaining popular support for Islamist groups in competition with warlords could be induced from the case studies. One, the adherence of Islamists to religious norms resonated with parts of the population, especially if it stands in contrast to the unrestrained conduct of warlords. This might be interpreted as support for the religious outbidding theory which states that elites invoke religion to mobilise domestic audiences and outbid opposition groups.[247] Secondly, the clear political agenda of Islamists which included acceptance of costs for public goods and governance services led to increased popular support. While warlords do not have to be entirely apolitical, they seldom advocate for a new political system that aims for collective benefit and is generally more interested in a privileged place within the existing

[245] Nagamine, *The Legitimization Strategy of the Taliban's Code of Conduct*, p. 16.
[246] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 226–33.
[247] Monica Duffy Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War," *International Security* 31, no. 4 (1 April 2007): pp. 102–3.

order.[248] Regarding security, both actor types could offer local populations advantages, especially when compared to complete lawlessness. In direct competition, however, Islamist could provide more protection from violence and capriciousness since the political economy of warlordism seems to be inherently dependent on a non-peaceful, violence tolerating environment.[249] As for business interests, there are reasons for supporting either faction. The case studies suggest however that those for supporting Islamists outweigh.

External sources of support were also found for both actors. Islamist networks unsurprisingly back domestically oriented Islamist groups. Western powers almost unanimously supported warlords against Islamism (at least since 2001). This reflects a fundamental foreign policy priority shift and testifies to warlords' non-ideological pragmatism and ability to be instrumentalised against different adversaries. Decreased dependency on popular support with simultaneously enhanced dependency on foreign sponsorship might however increase warlords' willingness to victimise civilians and thus reinforce the overall pattern.[250] Assuming that stability and state-building are really priorities of Western interference, the strategy of supporting warlords seems self-defeating in the cases considered. Because initial popular support for Islamism was in both case studies at least partially founded on a rejection of warlordism, foreign support and cooperation with warlords led to extremism, anti-westernism and increased support for radical Islamism in the long term. International interventionism misunderstood rational political and economic drivers of ICU support and strengthened a more radical reaction.[251] Similarly in Afghanistan, issues associated with the intervention itself and the subsequent warlord-infused national government (collateral damage, corruption, illegal 'taxation' to name just a few) contributed to the Taliban resurgence. The swift reconquest of Afghanistan 2021 once again gives credence to the notion that "the outcome of the civil war hinges on […] popular support."[252] The fact that US intelligence services likely still provide direct funding to warlords in both countries[253] suggests either that US decision-

[248] Cf. Ariel I. Ahram and Charles King, "The Warlord as Arbitrageur," *Theory and Society* 41, no. 2 (1 March 2012): p. 172.
[249] Harpviken, "Understanding Warlordism," p. 2.
[250] Reed M. Wood, "Opportunities to Kill or Incentives for Restraint? Rebel Capabilities, the Origins of Support, and Civilian Victimization in Civil War", *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 31, no. 5 (1 November 2014): pp. 461–80.
[251] Harry Verhoeven, 'The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy of Failed States: Somalia, State Collapse and the Global War on Terror', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 3, no. 3 (1 November 2009): pp. 419–20.
[252] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, p. 91.
[253] Azami, "Warlords, the United States, and the State of Anarchy in Afghanistan.," p. 58; Tar and Mustapha, "Al-Shabaab", p. 292.

makers do not share the assessment presented in this paper or that other interests predominate over the preferences of local populations.

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