

**Warlords in the International Order: A Neorealist Approach**

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**This thesis is submitted towards the attainment of the degree of PhD in  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Armed groups are becoming increasingly significant international actors. International Relations as a discipline must analyze and integrate these actors if it is to effectively explain international politics. This thesis begins this process through examining the international relations of warlords.

Specifically, this thesis asks: how do warlords relate with states and other international actors? The thesis moves away from the greed-grievance debate, instead a Neorealist approach is used to analyze the relations of warlords. The conclusion reached is that warlords relate with states and other international actors in essentially the same way as states – they seek to ensure their survival through the balance of power. Specifically, they relate in terms of internal power cultivation, alliances, and war.

The argument for this conclusion begins with a conceptual analysis of warlords, in which it is determined that warlords are non-state actors that use military power and economic exploitation to maintain fiefdoms which are autonomous and independent from the state and society. It is then demonstrated that the traditionally state-centric Neorealist approach can be used to analyze warlords, by arguing that warlords can be seen as empirically sovereign, ‘functionally undifferentiated’, ‘like units’, which are motivated by survival, and exist in an anarchic system. Neorealist theory and its notions of self help, internal power cultivation, alliances, security dilemma, and war are examined and it is demonstrated how these concepts describe and explain warlord international relations.

The validity of using the Neorealist approach is tested throughout the thesis in vignette case studies on warlords including the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPLF), the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and Afghan warlords as well as in two major case studies on Somali warlord relations with the UN and Ethiopia and the Lord’s Resistance Army’s (LRA) relations with Uganda, Sudan, and the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).

## **PREFACE**

I would like to thank the many people who have helped me in the writing of this thesis. In particular, I owe a debt of gratitude to my PhD supervisor Christopher Coker who has advised me and provided valuable insights throughout the entire process. I am also immensely grateful to those who provided me with extensive comments and editing help in writing the thesis, including Matthew Arnold, Lisa Aronsson, Rune Henriksen, Jennifer Rumbach, Hannah Vaughan-Lee, and Marco Vieira. I would also like to thank those people who have provided me with helpful advice on my work, including Chris Alden, Philippa Atkinson, Mark Bradbury, Dominique Jacquin-Berdal, Alexandra Dias, John Kent, Matthew LeRichie, Lisa Magloff, Monika Thakur, Becky Tinsley. Other people I would like to thank are Paul Kalenzi and his family, Tony Odiya, Samuel, Laura, Chris and the many others who helped me with my research in Africa; as well as my friends who helped in their own way during the writing process, including Dave, Jeremy, Lyndon, Mark, Radwan, Tobias, and Tony. My gratitude also goes out to the LSE International Relations Department and the University of London Central Research Fund for providing me with funds for my research. Finally, I owe the most thanks to my family, and especially my parents, without whom I could not have done any of this.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

ADF – Allied Democratic Forces  
ANC – African National Congress  
C3 – Command, Control, and Communication  
DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo  
ECOMOG – ECOWAS Monitoring Group  
ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States  
EPLF – Eritrean People’s Liberation Front  
FARC – Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia  
GoS – Government of Sudan  
HSM – Holy Spirit Movement  
ICBM – Intercontinental Ballistic Missile  
IGAD – Inter-Governmental Authority on Development  
IGO – Intergovernmental Organization  
IMF – International Monetary Fund  
IPE – International Political Economy  
IR – International Relations  
IRA – Irish Republican Army  
LRA – Lord’s Resistance Army  
MNC – Multi-National Corporation  
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding  
MPLA – Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola  
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
NGO – Nongovernmental Organization  
NPFL – National Patriotic Front of Liberia  
NRA – National Resistance Army  
NRM – National Resistance Movement  
NSA – Non-State Actor  
NSC – National Salvation Council  
OLF – Oromo Liberation Front  
OLS – Operation Lifeline Sudan  
OODA – Observe-Orientate-Decide-Act  
PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organization

PMC – Private Military Company  
RENAMO – Mozambiquan National Resistance  
RPG – Rocket Propelled Grenades  
RRA – Rahanwein Resistance Army  
RUF – Revolutionary United Front  
SAG – Sovereign Armed Group  
SNA – Somali National Alliance  
SNF – Somali National Front  
SNM – Somali National Movement  
SNSA – Sovereign Non-State Actor  
SPLA – Sudanese People’s Liberation Army  
SPLM – Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement  
SPLM/A – Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement/Army  
SRRC – Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Council  
SSDF – Somali Salvation Democratic Front  
TFR – Task Force Ranger  
TNG – Transitional National Government  
UN – United Nations  
UNDOS – United Nations Development Office for Somalia  
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund  
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme  
UNITA – National Union for Total Independence of Angola  
UNITAF – UN International Task Force  
UNOSOM – United Nations Operation in Somalia  
UPDA – Uganda People’s Democratic Army  
UPDF – Ugandan People’s Defense Force  
US – United States  
USC – United Somali Congress  
USC/PM – United Somali Congress/Peace Movement  
WSLF – Western Somali Liberation Front

“Another infirmity of a Commonwealth is the immoderate greatness of a town, when it is able to furnish out of its own circuit the number and expense of a great army; as also the great number of corporations, which are as it were many lesser Commonwealths in the bowels of a greater, like worms in the entrails of a natural man.”

- Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Chapter XXIX

## CHAPTER 1– INTRODUCTION

Armed groups – non-state organizations that have the capacity for systematic military action – are becoming increasingly significant actors in international relations.<sup>1</sup> For most of the Cold War armed groups were typically local or mainly involved internationally via another state. But, by the end of the Cold War, armed groups started having international lives of their own. Their relations became international in the sense that they participated in interactions with a state or inter-state organization across at least one national border, which were not on the behalf of a state or intergovernmental organization.<sup>2</sup> This internationalization was most evident initially in the cases of drug cartels and international terrorists, but it has come to include other types of armed groups such as warlords and insurgencies.

This new trend is linked to the more general phenomenon of globalization. John Mackinlay theorizes that there has been a ‘globalization of insurgency’ in which the improvement in transport technology, proliferation of information and communication technology, deregulation of international markets, and increase in migration have allowed many types of non-state actors (NSAs), including armed groups, to break their local bonds.<sup>3</sup> Because of this, armed groups are now regularly involved in a multitude of international interactions, ranging from business dealings with multinational corporations to alliances with neighboring states to warfare with both states and other armed groups.

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<sup>1</sup> See footnote number 105 in Chapter 2 for a more detailed description of this definition of armed group.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the definition of transnational relations provided in Risse-Kappen 1995

<sup>3</sup> Mackinlay 2002

At the same time, local armed groups are increasingly raising policy concerns for international actors. States and related inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), such as the United Nations (UN), now have to consider armed groups in their policy deliberations. State failure has meant that a state government may no longer be able to cope with armed groups within its territory. The implication is that international organizations or states may have to relate directly with an armed group instead of being buffered. For instance, the UN has had to directly contend with militias in Somalia because there is no state to maintain the traditional role of barrier between domestic and international actors. States' foreign policies may also demand alliances with armed groups, as the United States found in its war in Afghanistan.

While armed groups' influence on states and other international actors was also common during the Cold War, it has become a more significant issue now because of two factors. Firstly, armed groups are more independent from states and therefore have potentially separate policy goals, which cannot be addressed by only dealing with a state's motivations. Secondly, armed groups are relatively more powerful actors now and can therefore demand more equitable relationships. Together, these two factors – independence and relative power – have produced a situation in which armed groups must be considered relevant international actors.

It should not be held that just because armed groups are not states or formal international organizations, they cannot take part in international relations. In fact, armed groups regularly do so, as Christopher Clapham notes:

Although formal participation in international diplomacy is restricted to properly constituted states, which are recognized as such by other states and permitted to belong to international institutions such as the

United Nations, insurgent movements may for many purposes be regarded as quasi-states themselves, and they exercise many of the functions of statehood, including the conduct of external relations... The diplomacy of 'non-juridical states', to adapt Jackson's terminology, thus provides an intriguing counterpoint to that of juridical statehood, as well as being of considerable interest and importance in its own right.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, this 'non-juridical' diplomacy is rarely studied and poorly understood by the field of International Relations (IR).

With the growth in the importance of the international relations of armed groups, it has become necessary for IR theorists to make sense of these interactions. IR as a field of study is duty-bound to analyze and theorize about all international actors in order to fulfill its purpose of understanding international politics. At first these actors were mainly states and the field did well studying them. As more actors have come to have active international lives it has become important to analyze them and integrate them into interstate models. Armed groups are only the latest such example. A parallel trend occurred in the 1960s and 70s when there was a growth in the importance of the international relations of other NSAs, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and multinational corporations (MNCs). This led to a new set of concepts, including the term NSA, and theoretical frameworks for understanding these organizations' international relations.<sup>5</sup>

It is necessary for IR theorists to begin the process of theorizing about armed groups and integrating them into broader models of interstate relations. Now is the

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<sup>4</sup> Clapham 1996: 222, 23

<sup>5</sup> For instance, Keohane and Nye (1971), Huntington 1973. The analysis continues, with for instance the recent collection *Non-State Actors in World Politics* (Josselin and Wallace 2001).

proper time to do so because armed groups have reached a stage where they can be considered key actors in international politics in the sense that any analysis of international politics which did not incorporate the influence of armed groups would not provide an adequate and effective explanation. As Donald Rothchild notes:

[it] seems strangely incomplete when scholars of international relations concentrate attention on juridical norms of sovereignty or the balance of power between sovereign states, because such foci fail to reflect certain critical facets of the reality of internal and external relations currently occurring across Africa (and to some degree, across Eurasia as well).<sup>6</sup>

Specifically, we must analyze the role of armed groups, even if they exist within sovereign states, in order to fully comprehend international politics. Though Rothchild only refers to Africa and Eurasia, we could extend his statement to most of the world. For instance, an analysis of US foreign relations would be wholly inadequate if it did not acknowledge the place of international terrorism and insurgency. It is with this in mind – armed groups need to be integrated into explanations of international politics – that this study has been undertaken.

The incorporation of armed groups into the general explanation of international politics is a task beyond the scope of this study. One of the most daunting aspects is that armed groups differ from each other so radically. Even a casual observation of armed groups immediately shows that there are many different types of active armed groups. These range from highly decentralized, cellular

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<sup>6</sup>Rothchild 2002: 190

structured international organizations to state-like, long-term rebellions. Briefly, it is possible to differentiate at least five different types of armed groups, which might have relevance to international relations. These include:

- Criminal gangs, such as the Russian or Sicilian mafia
- Terrorist groups, such as Al Qaeda
- Traditional guerilla insurgencies, such as the Maoist rebels in Nepal<sup>7</sup>
- Proxy-militias, such as the *janjeweeds* in Sudan
- Warlords and their organizations, such as Rashid Dostum or Charles Taylor

Each of these groups differ, at the least, in organizational structure, means of warfare, goals in fighting, and the nature of their international relations. For example, terrorist groups will have ‘cellular’ structures and symbolically use violence against civilians to bring “widespread attention to a political grievance and/or [to provoke] a draconian or unsustainable response.”<sup>8</sup> Prima facie, it seems that their international relations will differ radically from, for instance, a traditional guerilla insurgency, which will tend to use a relationship with civilian society for support.

Therefore, just as a general theory of international relations for all types of actors is out of reach, a truly general theory of the international relations of armed groups may be impossible – for, different types of actors may have different motivations and different types of interactions. This necessitates a more focused approach. Rather than addressing all types of armed groups, this study will be focused on a specific class. Though this will not answer the big question – an explanation of the international relations of all armed groups – it will provide a foundation to answering this general question, both in that one group out of many will be

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<sup>7</sup> ‘Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist’

<sup>8</sup> Baylis et al. 2002

theoretically understood and that there may be lessons learned for theorizing about other types of armed groups.

## **WARLORDS**

This study will focus on the class of armed groups known as warlords. There are several reasons for focusing on this class in particular. Warlordism is an area that has generally been under-theorized. During the Cold War there were extensive studies on insurgencies and guerillas of various forms and recently there has been a heavy focus on terrorism. However, warlordism has only been addressed in a handful of studies.

At the same time, warlords are a common type of armed group, one that is becoming increasingly important in international relations. A cursory reading of recent news articles easily demonstrates their importance. Warlords such as Taylor, Dostum, and Hussein Aidid have all been prominent actors in regional politics and their exploits have had global implications. While their relations may not have the global implications of a Great Power, they are often at least as influential as many of the world's smaller states. Indeed, their reach is in some ways surprising. For instance, Stephen Chan notes:

Warlords have had their hands on the machines. They have laundered their monies through the Bank of Credit and Commerce and, since that bank's demise, have not given up on what currencies and the movement of currencies mean. From the warlords of China who, for a time, held Chiang Kai Shek captive and were in a position to change Chinese history; to the conscious use of warlords in short-term strategy that has now produced something the West did not expect in

Afghanistan (the Mujahideen factions used the West too); to warlords who fight for national or at least ethnic liberation while exporting drugs, like the Karen in Burma; to the warlordism of Lebanon in the 1980s.<sup>9</sup>

Yet, as with other types of armed groups, we are poorly equipped to understand these various international relations, for as Chan goes on to note, warlords “have intruded upon international relations but have been excluded from the discourses of International Relations.”<sup>10</sup>

Warlords are also a highly independent form of armed group. They are relatively free from the motivating influence of other actors – i.e. they are not proxies for a state – which means that their decision-making can be studied independently of other actors. This separates them from proxy militias like the Sudanese janjaweed or any number of the insurgencies funded by one of the Superpowers during the Cold War. Such actors cannot be effectively analyzed without reference to a state, as their decision-making will be essentially derived. Warlords, on the other hand, exist in and of themselves. As we shall see, they support themselves with mini-economies, have their own private armies, and maintain autonomous and independent foreign relations. Therefore they are best studied as a separate actor.

A major gain from looking at warlords is that the lessons learned from their examination may be applicable to other types of armed groups. Their independence means that by understanding how a warlord would make a decision we can apply a prediction of an idealized, unbiased decision, of what an uncontrolled armed group

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<sup>9</sup> Chan 1999: 165

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.: 165

would do in a given situation. Such an analysis could, for instance, then be applied to a proxy militia and then adjusted to account for the influence of the exterior state.

The only work specifically focused on the international relations of warlords is an edited volume by Paul B. Rich, *Warlords in International Relations*.<sup>11</sup> In it, Rich encourages the “widen[ing of] the compass and range of IR as a discipline” in order to take into account warlordism.<sup>12</sup> In his chapter, Chan criticizes the field of IR for its mostly exclusive focus on states, and exclusion of non-state actors such as warlords.<sup>13</sup> While Chan turns to issues of identity and modernity as an alternative, his point is clear: it is necessary for IR to take into account warlords as relevant actors.

Rich admits that this collection is only a beginning of the necessary research and this study will pick up where his collection, and the field in general, has left off. It is an attempt both to increase our understanding of the international relations of warlords, as a specific instance of armed group, to integrate warlordism into international relations theory, and to lay the groundwork for integrating the study of other armed groups into our understanding of international politics.

The first step in understanding the international relations of warlords is simply to ask how they relate with other international actors. Therefore, this thesis seeks to answer the question: **how do warlords relate with states and other international actors?** Or, put another way, what are the international relations of warlords? The next step, then, is to narrow down the best way to answer this question.

## APPROACHES TO ANALYSIS

In the collection, Rich addresses the place of warlordism in regard to several debates. He discusses the relationship of warlords to theories of modern warfare. For example,

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<sup>11</sup> Rich 1999

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.: xvi

<sup>13</sup> Chan 1999

he sees warlordism as an example of the 'wars of the third kind' which have arisen over the last of couple decades.<sup>14</sup> While there is much to be learned from the analysis of warlords and warfare, it is strictly speaking not an analysis of their international relations. With more of an international focus, he looks at warlordism in relation to the global economy, while in another chapter Neil Cooper looks at warlordism and the arms trade.<sup>15</sup> Rich also looks at warlordism's connection to the doctrine of sovereignty, specifically, in relation to the weakening of the state's sovereignty. Finally, Rich addresses the place of warlordism in relation to intervention and other attempts to mediate the effects of state failure. The other authors in the collection focus on specific warlords and each takes similar approaches to Rich, though with a general slant toward area studies. For instance, there are articles on warlordism in Rwanda and Somalia.<sup>16</sup>

The approaches taken in Rich's collection are typical of examinations of the international relations of armed groups in general, and warlords in particular. We can speak of three different basic approaches.

- The first is the traditional descriptive approach taken by area studies experts.
- Another, more recent approach, is to examine the economic aspects (including international economic relations) of armed groups.
- Finally, a theoretical approach focuses on how armed groups contribute to state failure, and in doing this, it addresses the issues of the international relations of armed groups.

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<sup>14</sup> From Holsti 1996. Also see Kaldor's notion of 'new wars' (Kaldor 1997) and the analysis of warfare put forth by Alvin and Heidi Toffler (Toffler 1995).

<sup>15</sup> Cooper 1999

<sup>16</sup> McNulty 1999, Makinda 1999

## Area Studies

There are a significant number of area studies texts that focus on analyzing specific armed groups, including warlords. In focusing on armed groups, they cover the international relations of these groups as a matter of course. For instance, Douglas Johnson covered the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in detail.<sup>17</sup> Most of the essays in Rich's collection are similarly approached from an area studies perspective.<sup>18</sup> The area studies approach is especially helpful in understanding the details of a particular warlord, as well as the domestic, and sometimes, regional context.

Some authors have used a regional approach to the study of internal wars which does provide some valuable insight. An example is Michael Pugh and Cooper's edited volume *War Economies in a Regional Context: Challenges and Transformation*.<sup>19</sup> As the title suggests, they and the other authors are partial to the economic approach to analysis, but Pugh and Cooper also point out the importance of examining not just economic networks from a regional level but also military, political, and social networks. This allows them to, for instance, note how the "various political alliances in a regional conflict formation can influence the structure of regional arms networks."<sup>20</sup> While the authors are focused more on the causes and conduct of warfare, as opposed to the international relations of warlords per se, it does provide a valuable lesson to take note of: this is that even so-called internal conflicts cannot be understood without an international approach.

However, the area studies approach in general fails to truly theorize about warlords from a generic perspective of them as a class of international actor. This is a

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<sup>17</sup> Johnson 2003

<sup>18</sup> Rich 1999

<sup>19</sup> Pugh and Cooper 2004

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.: 31

general weakness of the approach. Even Pugh and Cooper's valuable analysis still only expands the level of analysis, rather than taking a fully generalized and theoretical approach. David Laitin, in his analysis of armed groups in Somalia, makes the case for why such a specific approach is weaker than a more generalized, theoretical approach:

...there is a compelling reason to hold under some suspicion casual theories that rely almost entirely on local conditions and factors. Such explanations give us virtually no purchase on the question of what type of civil war was fought in Somalia and what are general guidelines for reducing its likelihood. Accepting any of these explanations implies that we need special experts on every country who would be able to use their local knowledge to foresee devastating civil wars. The problem with is not that it is costly. Rather, the problem is that the record of area experts (whether it be those who studied international the Soviet Union, South Africa, or Somalia) in foreseeing catastrophe (or in the case of South Africa, in foreseeing that catastrophe would reach its full limits only within the townships) is not very impressive. More important, by focusing principally on local conditions for a conflict that has already occurred, we get very little purchase on how to identify conditions in other places, where systematic third-party intervention could play a decisive role in dampening imminent civil war, with the possibility of unimaginable noncombatant suffering.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Laitin 1999: 151

Essentially the same issues apply to the study of the international relations of warlords. The descriptive and comparative approach of area studies necessitates specific analysis of each different warlord and his relations. The problem with this is that there is neither a generally applicable understanding nor much predictive ability. Therefore, a foundational point of this study is to begin to provide a theoretical understanding of the international relations of warlords. However, this should not be taken as a complete denial of the value of the area studies approach. In fact, far from discounting the insights gleaned from area studies, this study will use area studies literature as a basis for a more theoretical understanding. It will provide an alternative explanation which has value in combination with a more holistic account of any particular warlord – just as a theoretical account of a particular state’s international relations would be combined with specific studies of that state’s history, politics, and culture.

### **The Political Economy Approach**

The large literature on war economies does often focus on the international economic relations of armed groups and is theoretical in nature. This literature has provided a fairly rigorous analysis of how, when, and why armed groups, including warlords, interact with international economic actors. More generally, the political economy approach provides a functional perspective on armed group relations. This, as Mats Berdal acknowledges is valuable in itself. He notes:

[b]y posing the question of what *functional* utility violence may be serving to participants in wars – to elites, ordinary people caught up in war, and external actors that stand to gain from conflict – it becomes

possible to discern how a set of vested interests in the continuation of war may emerge.”<sup>22</sup>

The political economy approach is exemplified in, for instance, the work of Berdal, David Keene, and Paul Collier.<sup>23</sup> William Reno provides a particularly good political economy take on warlords in his work *Warlord Politics and African States*.<sup>24</sup> Reno’s theory focuses on how “rulers control markets to enhance their own power.”<sup>25</sup> As already noted, Rich also borrows from the political economy approach in his call for an analysis of warlord’s interactions in the global economy.<sup>26</sup>

However, the political economy approach only illuminates one part of the larger and much more complicated international relations of warlords. Even some of the originators of the so-called ‘greed’ thesis have come to admit the need to incorporate other factors. For instance, the World Bank Report *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* notes that “[w]hile the prevalence of natural resources secessions suggest that greed cannot be entirely discounted, it does not appear to be the powerful force behind rebellion that economic theorists have assumed.”<sup>27</sup> Indeed, as Berdal himself notes “one-sided attention to economic motives... runs the risk of creating a distorted picture of what is driving actors to violence and war.”<sup>28</sup> While Berdal is referring to conflict analysis, his insight is equally applicable to the analysis of the international relations of those actors involved in conflict.

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<sup>22</sup> Berdal 2003: 483 (italics in original)

<sup>23</sup> Berdal and Malone 2000, Keen 1998, Collier 2000

<sup>24</sup> Reno 1998

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.: 30

<sup>26</sup> Rich 1999

<sup>27</sup> World Bank 2003; noted in Berdal 2005

<sup>28</sup> Berdal 2003: 490

In particular, this literature tends to discount the political, diplomatic, and military aspects of armed groups. Karen Ballentine notes that

...economic incentives and opportunities have not been the only or even the primary cause of... armed conflicts; rather to varying degrees, they interacted with socio-economic and political grievances, interethnic disputes, and security dilemmas in triggering the outbreak of warfare.<sup>29</sup>

For instance, while political economic analysis might note the fact that Taylor took part in extensive trade with foreign firms, there is significantly less, if any, commentary on his non-economic diplomatic relations.

Yet it is the diplomatic and military relations of armed groups that are most interesting; for the military and diplomatic relations of warlords are those that tend to most concern states and therefore drive international politics as a whole. States are almost certainly involved with warlords in economic relations, however, these relations are minor compared to the much larger undertaking of warfare or broad strategies of international diplomacy. An analysis of warlordism must be able to comment on these aspects of warlord relations if it is to provide an adequate understanding of international politics.

Moreover, the war economy literature is divorced from broader IR theory. This is due in part to its roots in area studies and conflict analysis. Though the war economy literature does take into account international relations, it is not concerned with international relations as the central problematic. Rather, the approach is

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<sup>29</sup> Ballentine 2003: 260

typically concerned with explaining how and why states fail or with the nature of internal wars.

Another foundational point of this study is that it will attempt to provide a more comprehensive approach, which incorporates political and military aspects of warlordism, along with economic factors. Furthermore, it will use an approach which can be incorporated into IR theory. At the same time, this study admits the importance of explaining the economic aspects of warlordism and will address the issue in some detail; for, as Berdal notes, “once civil wars have broken out, their logic and trajectory cannot be understood without an appreciation of the economics underpinning them.”<sup>30</sup> This is just as interstate economic relations must also be taken into account in comprehending a state’s military and political relations. Thus, this study is intended to build upon, not necessarily replace, political economic insights.

### **State-Failure Approach**

In his work *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival*, Clapham provides an impressive attempt at a more general theoretical account of the international relations of armed groups.<sup>31</sup> While Clapham focuses on armed groups in general, his theoretical points are also applicable to warlords. In this work, Clapham specifically addresses the international relations of insurgents in regard to their weakening of the state and in doing so, he addressed issues such as the diplomatic aspects of armed groups.

As is apparent from the title, Clapham’s work is focused on states. In one of the latter chapters, the international relations of armed groups are explored from the perspective of illustrating how armed groups contribute to the breakdown of the state.

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<sup>30</sup> Berdal 2005: 692

<sup>31</sup> Clapham 1996

Clapham introduces the subject as: “one of the clearest symptoms – and also causes – of state decay in Africa was the growth of armed opposition movements against the state... which came to pose a serious challenge not just to individual states, but to the African international order as a whole.”<sup>32</sup>

Although Clapham’s examination is helpful in understanding state failure, it is not an adequate explanation for the purposes of this study. This is because the approach he takes is primarily focused on explaining state failure, not international relations. While the understanding of state failure has been a necessary and valuable pursuit because of the growth in failed states, the focus on analyzing armed groups from this perspective has meant that analysis has been less effective than it could be.

Essentially, the problem is that the groups are not seen from the perspective of entities in themselves, but as sub-units in relation to another unit. In effect, they are modeled as germs infecting a natural state. Warlords are seen as fundamentally domestic actors with a single overriding domestic concern – that being to make the state government collapse. This leaves little to say about the warlord’s relations outside of the rationalization of destroying a state. For instance, the question is left open as to how a warlord relates with an external state which is not involved with the host state. Moreover, there is no integration with wider international relations, for instance, in how changes in the relations of other states will cause the warlord to change his actions.

The state failure approach also tends to provide an inadequate analysis once a state is overthrown, if a warlord clearly isn’t working to overthrow a state, or if the warlord is fighting multiple states. For example, the Somali National Front’s (SNF) relations with Ethiopia throughout the mid-nineties cannot be adequately theorized

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.: 208

about once the Somali state collapsed, since there was no state for it to cause to fail. Rather, an explanation of these relations must be based on other factors. Another example is the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), whose international relations – in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are not necessarily best described as being orientated toward the failure of the Ugandan, Sudanese, or Congolese states.

Along these lines, another of the foundational points of this study is to draw analysis away from the perspective that theorizes about armed groups, and warlords in particular, in relation to a state towards the perspective that they are separate political units that can be examined in and of themselves. For instance, in discussing sovereignty and its relation to warlordism, it is common to refer to how warlords contribute to the breakdown of sovereignty in failed states.<sup>33</sup> Instead, this study will look at the degree to which a warlord organization is itself sovereign. The benefit of doing this is that warlord relations can be more broadly understood.

It should be noted that this study is not meant to replace discussions from the perspective of the state, since the analysis of state failure is also an important debate. Rather, the perspective that this study takes is meant to serve as the starting point of a separate debate. Such a debate is valuable for understanding armed groups in themselves and, more importantly, it helps in determining responses to these actors. Moreover, it provides insight into broader international relations and foreign policy questions.

Thus, summarizing the above points, what this study proposes is an approach to the study of warlords which meets three requirements:

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<sup>33</sup> See for instance, Rich 1999

- It should be theoretical in nature, specifically, in such a way that can be integrated into wider IR theory.
- It should be comprehensive, focusing on all-important facets of the international relations of warlords, especially the extremely important political and military aspects.
- And, it should be focused on warlords as separate actors which relate with states, rather than as sub-actors in relation to states.

### **THEORETICAL APPROACH**

Rather than describing specific actors and their actions, there is a need for a generic understanding of warlords, one which is predictive. In other words, a theory is needed. A theory explains why a set of probable associations, or laws, hold.<sup>34</sup> Theories do this through the use of a theoretical construct, or concept, which is made up, but which provides the connection, and thereby the explanation, of a series of associations. These associations allow for prediction through the deduction of what will happen in future cases based on the application of the theoretical construct to available information.

The specific type of theory we are looking for is one which explains the international relations of warlords as actors. In order to do this, it is necessary to have a conceptualization of the notion of warlord which treats it as an organization. Even more ideal is a theory that explains these relations in such a way that we can integrate our understanding of warlords with our understanding of other international actors. In particular, one which would integrate them with the dominant groups in international relations, i.e. states. In order to do this, the theoretical approach must be able to

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<sup>34</sup> Waltz 1979

address the military and political relations of warlords, as these relations are the primary type of interaction between states.

Rather than making up such a theory, it is more efficient to borrow a theory which has already proven itself useful in explaining some relations of international actors. For this, we can turn to the large body of IR theory. This is a natural approach given that warlords are international actors and therefore come under the rubric of IR.

### **International Relations Approach**

Within IR there are multiple theories which can be used to examine the international relations of an actor.<sup>35</sup> However, the specifics of this thesis severely limit the possible choices. The constraints arise from the nature of the question being asked and from the nature of warlords as the actor under scrutiny.

This thesis is addressing a 'how' question, therefore the theory which it uses must be descriptive as well as predictive. Moreover, it is a generic question, about a category of actors, and therefore the theory it uses must be able to generalize about a category of actors. This precludes the use of, for instance, many types of identity based theoretical approaches.<sup>36</sup> Though an identity based theoretical approach may have many valuable points to make concerning the nature of particular warlords and, for instance, their relationship with ethnicity, it will be of limited use in analyzing how warlords, taken as a generic category of armed group, relate. As such, this study

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<sup>35</sup> Another possible way to incorporate warlords into theory is to create an entirely new, more inclusive theory of international relations. For example, some (non-Realist) theorists have posited that there may be unlike units in international systems. John Ruggie's formulation of the medieval system, in which there are differentiated and overlapping sovereignties is an example (Ruggie 1986). However, this is overcomplicating the matter, rather than completely refaming our entire theory of international relations, it is better to simply incorporate warlords into what we have now.

<sup>36</sup> For example, Constructivist or identity based theorizing has already been used to describe armed groups by area studies experts, but it is inadequate for reasons noted above. In particular, Constructivism is not generalizing enough nor can it necessarily link warlords with interstate theoretical accounts. Examples of this type of work are theorists who have examined the ethno-politics behind the wars in the former-Yugoslavia (i.e. Kaplan 1994b).

will take into account identity issues and other more specific theories, but will not rely on them for the bulk of analysis.

Additionally, within the set of theories which address relations, there are some specific features of warlordism which make it difficult for some theories to analyze them adequately. Firstly, unlike states, they are fundamentally illegitimate. Secondly, they are necessarily highly focused on relationships based on military force. These features make warlords different than states, which are legitimate, as well as most other types of non-state actors which IR does study, i.e. NGOs, which are not military organizations. In order to be valid, a theory of warlord international relations must be able to adequately account for these two factors.

Warlords are illegitimate on two levels.<sup>37</sup> On a normative level, warlords are anathema to liberal ideals, or for that matter, all civilian political communities' ideals. They are also illegitimate in terms of international laws and institutions. This means that they cannot take part in international law, contracts, official diplomacy, or any of the other formal or official relations which we take for granted in regard to states. Thus, it is necessary to take into account warlord's informal relations<sup>38</sup>

While this lack of formal recognition by the international community does not preclude them from analysis by many of the variants of the Liberal school of international theory, it does limit the effectiveness of the use of such theories. This branch of theory includes both the classical and the more recent Neoliberal varieties.<sup>39</sup> These theories focus on the ways in which states have developed peaceful means of interaction based on incorporation into governing institutions. Since warlords are essentially illegitimate they cannot directly take part in these institutions. Therefore

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<sup>37</sup> This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

<sup>38</sup> Some of the specifics of this illegitimacy of warlords will be addressed in Chapter 3 in reference to the notion of juridical sovereignty.

<sup>39</sup> See for instance Dickinson 1920, Baldwin 1993, and Keohane and Martin 1995

any analysis of warlords from the Neoliberal perspective will be more likely to treat warlords as actors *acted upon* or obstacles to policy implementation rather than as units which actively and independently relate with other units. Furthermore, though Neoliberalism is more accepting of non-state actors, it tends to focus on international organizations, NGOs, MNCs, and others that are more concerned with interdependence than with conflict.

An attempt by a Liberal or Neoliberal theory to analyze warlords would produce an inadequate explanation of how warlords relate with states and other international actors. Warlords will have considerable informal relationships with actors and these must be explained. Moreover, warlords tend to relate in terms of an offensive, rather than cooperative manner. Therefore, this class of theories will not be used.

As their very name implies, warlords are concerned with war. Other interactions are secondary to this fact and any theory which is to analyze warlords must account for warfare. Warlords are involved in significant economic interactions, however, these interactions, as will be demonstrated, tend to be means not ends. Moreover, states tend to interact with warlords in terms of political and military interactions.

For this reason, International Political Economy (IPE) theory is of limited help in the analysis of warlords.<sup>40</sup> Warlords do take part in economic relations, but it is the military factors that dominate the existence of warlords and IPE has little to say about these relations. Moreover, warlords do not take part in the sort of formal, macro-level economic issues, institutions, and organizations which IPE is focused on, such as

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<sup>40</sup> On IPE, see for instance, Strange 1988 and Friedman and Lake 2000

placement within formal international financial systems and institutional membership in the International Monetary Fund (IMF).<sup>41</sup>

The theory used to describe the relations of warlords must comfortably address these issues of politics and war head on and must be flexible enough to accept informal, de facto relationships which are based on power. Liberal theories and IPE may be helpful in understanding ways to get warlords to cooperate or describing their economic relations. However, the first goal of our analysis must be to adequately describe warlord's most basic relations.

### **Realism and Neorealism**

Realism is powerful in its ability to describe and predict the actions and relations of international actors. The theory of Realism has been formulated in many different ways.<sup>42</sup> At its basis, it assumes that politics is governed by laws which have their roots in human nature; that interest, in terms of power and/or security, are the factors which determine relations in an anarchic environment; and that actors are rational. At the same time, it does not generally comment on the juridical or normative relations of actors, except possibly to "refuse to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with moral laws that govern the universe."<sup>43</sup> Moreover, Realism has been applied to many epochs of international politics, from ancient Greece to the modern day, during which time it has addressed many different types of actors in different types of systems.

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<sup>41</sup> There are of course other theories used to examine international relations that have not been discussed here. These include, but are not limited to, the various post-positivist theories, including Critical Theory, as well as Marxism. Critical Theory, and its cousin Critical Security Studies, are more concerned with questioning the basic foundations of international relations and security studies and these basic foundations are not questioned, nor need they be, by the study of warlordism and therefore would not likely lend much theoretical insight to this study. Similarly, Marxism is so far removed from the basic precepts which are assumed in even making this study possible and relevant, that a Marxist theory of warlordism is best left for a completely separate study.

<sup>42</sup> See for instance, Morgenthau 1993, Mearsheimer 1995, Waltz 1979

<sup>43</sup> Morgenthau 1993: 13

Given this understanding of Realism, it is valuable in analyzing the international relations of warlords for several reasons. Warlords, unlike say NGOs, exist in the pragmatic world of conflict and 'de factoness', rather than the world of international agreements and other peaceful means of relating that states have developed. Realism is a theory which is more focused on such pragmatic relations and is willing to dismiss the relative importance of international agreements. Also, Realism's focus on these military and political aspects makes it well suited for explaining the relations of the essentially bellicose warlords. Thus Realism is able to incorporate some of the essential factors necessary for a theory of warlord international relations. However, the fact that in many ways traditional Realism is more of an approach to the study of individual actors and their psychology – as has been said, it is best viewed as more of "an attitude regarding the human condition"<sup>44</sup> than as a proper theory – leaves it unable to offer a truly generalizable account of warlord international relations.

Since Kenneth Waltz's canonical work *Theory of International Relations* was published in 1979, many Realists have turned to systemic level explanations of international relations.<sup>45</sup> This text formed the foundation of what has since been called Neorealism. Such explanations are extremely productive in theorizing about international relations because they are more rigorous than so-called 'Political Realism' which is focused on hard to quantify psychological beliefs. Systems, or 'structural', reasoning is more exacting in that it treats all actors as similar units and then allows for potentially measurable differences in a single variable. In the case of Neorealism, this variable is power.

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<sup>44</sup> Gilpin 1986: 305

<sup>45</sup> Some, such as those who count themselves as 'Neoclassical Realists', have since turned back from systemic level thinking to look inside of the state.

In particular, Waltz's theory has made sense of the fact that different types of states, such as liberal democracies versus totalitarian dictatorships, act in essentially the same way at the systemic international level. By looking at the systemic level and not focusing on the internal features of states, Waltz could limit differences and make comparisons of like actors. His theory could then make explanations by referring to one variable – that being power – and one motivation – that being survival. Within a Neorealist view, it is clear how actors will make decisions, i.e. how they relate, and this makes theorization about particular actors or complexes of actors possible. Neorealism is able to do this because it reveals the constraints on all the possible ways an actor may act. Therefore, as Waltz notes, it is a truly predictive theory.<sup>46</sup>

Neorealism is valuable for theorizing about warlords for the same reasons that it is valuable for theorizing about the relations of states. It can make comparisons between actors which seem to differ internally, but act similarly at the international level. It is able to demonstrate how actors will relate by revealing the constraints on their choices. It is also a predictive theory and can provide some rigor in the analysis of warlords. Beyond this, Neorealism has the same benefits as Realism in that it is focused on political and military relations and does not rely on juridical legitimacy in its analysis of actors. Due to all of these benefits, this study will use Neorealism to analyze the international relations of warlords.

Ironically, the feature of Political Realism which seems to make it seem more applicable to analyzing warlord relations than Neorealism, actually makes it less so. Political Realism is a theory which focuses on the unit, and sometimes the individual, level of analysis. Since it is more of an attitude than theory, it would be easy enough to apply this attitude to warlords, who are often called 'Machiavellian' anyway.

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<sup>46</sup> Waltz 1979

However, to analyze warlords at this level would only continue the practice of focusing on the differences between warlords and states, which only serves to make it more difficult to integrate warlords into models of interstate relations. Therefore, it potentially falls into the same problems as area studies. Neorealism, on the other hand, treats all actors as essentially the same in type and thus provides for the possibility of a general theory.

This decision to use Neorealism is made even though the theory draws a starker line between states and NSAs than Realism and is arguably the most state-centric theory of international relations. This will of course mean that the argument for using Neorealism to analyze warlords will be considerably more complicated than the one to use Realism. In a sense, the theory must be reinvented or renewed to take into account these actors. But, the payoff will be far greater than that which would be gained from the use of another theory.

Beyond the applicability of Neorealism to armed groups, there are numerous other points of disagreement about the value of Neorealism in general and about how it should be used in practice.<sup>47</sup> For example, there are debates about the exact nature of the anarchy which Realism assumes. Some theorists argue that there are different types of anarchy and we should not necessarily assume one type or another.<sup>48</sup> However, most of these debates are not the focus of this study. This study merely assumes that the same advantages and disadvantages of the theory in regard to states also apply to warlords.

Another criticism of Neorealism is its inability to adequately theorize about the formation and termination of states.<sup>49</sup> This weakness will also hold true for the analysis of warlords. As with states, it will not be possible to adequately treat how and

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<sup>47</sup> See for instance, Keohane 1986 and Baldwin 1993

<sup>48</sup> See for instance, Constructivists such as Alexander Wendt (1995)

<sup>49</sup> See for instance, Keohane 1986

why warlords become warlords or how and why they stop being warlords. This, however, is not central to the thesis question, which is focused on how warlords relate, not how they form or how they end. In essence, this study has the same ambition as Waltz – to talk about relations, not about formation or termination. Such a narrowing of study is necessary for a theoretical understanding of any topic, since “theory is not a statement about everything that is important in international political life, but rather a necessarily slender explanatory construct.”<sup>50</sup> Having said that, the thesis will make some comments on warlord formation and termination throughout the study as it comes up. In particular, some attention will be paid during the conceptualization of warlords, in discussing the nature of warlords and anarchy, and in the case studies.

A further issue to take account of in this use of Neorealism is that Waltz is concerned with ‘why’ questions, whereas this thesis is concerned with a ‘how’ question. To put this into another language, Waltz is mainly creating a ‘theory of the market’, not a ‘theory of the firm’. But, in a sense, this study seems like it is asking for a theory of the firm. This is not as threatening as it seems however. Waltz also discusses how states relate in small case studies throughout his work. Furthermore, analysts since 1979 have applied his theory to states in the same way as this thesis will apply his theory to warlords, i.e. they ask how states will relate generally. The purpose of this study is to integrate warlords into the system which Neorealism can theorize about. To put it back into the language of economics, it is attempting to integrate non-firms, e.g. churches, into the theory of the market, a market which is accustomed to dealing only with firms. In doing this it answers the thesis question by

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<sup>50</sup> Waltz 1990: 32

providing a system-level understanding of how warlords relate. It is in this sense that the thesis takes a Neorealist approach.

There are other systemic level, or 'structural', theories of Realism. For instance, John Mearsheimer has developed what he calls 'Offensive Realism', which is in many ways similar to Waltz's version of structural realism, but places stress on the notion that all states have innate offensive capability and that these states can never be sure that another state will not use its offensive capability.<sup>51</sup> However, by making the case that Waltz's Neorealism can analyze warlordism, the case is implicitly made that other forms of structural realism could also likely analyze it. In other words, if it works in this case it will likely work in others. In addition, Waltzian Neorealism is the most widely accepted form of structural realism and the oldest, which means that there is more debate to draw from. Finally, Waltz's theory simply offers a better explanation. For these reasons Waltz's theory of Neorealism in particular will be used to theorize about warlords.

The use of systemic Realist theory to depict warlord relations has been attempted once before, though not with reference to the international relations of warlords. Hsi-Sheng Ch'i, in his work *Warlord Politics in China: 1916-1928*, used the systemic theory of Morton Kaplan to model the relations of warlords within China.<sup>52</sup> Ch'i, a historian, used the systemic theory to meaningfully explain the historical data of the known warlord alliances and breakups. While Ch'i used systemic Realism without reference to international relations or the essential premises of the discipline of IR, his work does demonstrate that there is something to be gained in taking the systemic Realist approach and adds credence to this study's attempt to use the theory.

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<sup>51</sup> Mearsheimer 1995

<sup>52</sup> Ch'i 1976; Kaplan 1957

## Hypothesis

Having illustrated the thesis question and the theoretical approach which will be used to answer this question, it is now possible to make a hypothesis of what the answer will be. Neorealism describes set patterns of relationships – or “law-like regularities”<sup>53</sup> – which states form with each other. Specifically, states will form balances of power and fight wars with each other. Moreover, Neorealism *explains* these relations in terms of the ensuring of survival in a self help system. This study will demonstrate that these patterns of relationships also apply to warlord international relations. Thus, **the hypothesis of this study is that warlords relate with states and other international actors in essentially the same way as states – they seek to ensure their survival through the balance of power. Specifically, they relate in terms of internal power cultivation, alliances, and war.** As with state analyses, this study will explain these relations.

This thesis is therefore an attempt to apply the Neorealist theoretical approach to warlords and then to use those conceptual tools of the theory to describe the relations of a particular actor – warlords. It is not an attempt to create an entirely new theory of international relations, though some modification of the typical formulation of Neorealism will take place. Nor is it an attempt to detail the specific international relations of any particular warlord, though this will be done to some extent as a means of testing the theory. Rather it will answer the question of how warlords relate generally by integrating them into a systemic analysis.

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<sup>53</sup> Waltz 1979: 116

## **ARGUMENT OUTLINE**

There is a high price to pay to come to these conclusions about the international relations of warlords. For, due to the nature of Neorealism and warlords some fairly major theoretical barriers must be overcome.

Firstly, it is not completely clear what a warlord is and various different commentators include many different types of armed groups in the warlord category. As such, the first challenge of this study will be to find a definition and conceptualization of warlordism which will allow us to clearly define what actors are warlords and make rationalized comparisons with seemingly related armed groups. In effect this will involve making a political analysis of warlords in a similar manner as has been done for states by political theorists.

Secondly, Neorealism usually deals with states and warlords are clearly not states. Moreover, the theory focuses on relations in the anarchic international system and not on interactions within the delineated boundaries of a (failed) state. Therefore, the next step in this study will be to examine the nature of Neorealism and demonstrate how it is possible to use the theory to analyze warlords.

After resolving these definitional and theoretical issues, the study will have to move on to applying some of the concepts of Neorealism to warlords. These include the concepts of self help, the balance of power, the security dilemma, and war. In order to apply these concepts, it will be necessary to first examine and understand Neorealism in detail and then to individually apply each concept to warlords, so as to make assurances that the concept functions correctly.

The following chapter summary will briefly illustrate the method by which this study will address these issues and answer the thesis question:

## **Chapter 2**

One problem to confront in this study is that, as with the term 'state', there is no agreed definition of warlord. In Chapter 2, the traditional definition of warlord will be deconstructed in order to detail the essential features. Some of the relevant concepts include the fact that warlords are NSAs with autonomy and independence from the state. Warlords gain their autonomy and independence through military and economic power. They also have private political communities which can be cohesively governed and directed by a leadership.

This conceptualization of warlordism will allow us to make rationalized comparisons of warlords with related groups. For example, criminals and terrorists do not have the autonomy of warlords, while traditional insurgents and proxy militias do not have complete independence from the state and society in the way that warlords do. Based on this conceptual analysis it will be possible to move onto the theoretical approach.

## **Chapter 3**

Chapter three will demonstrate how it is possible to use the Neorealist approach describe, explain, and predict the relations of warlords. The method to proving the validity of the use of a Neorealist approach will be to first demonstrate that Realism can be applied to warlords and then that the supplementary features of Neorealism also apply.

This chapter will make its argument by demonstrating how warlords can fit into Robert Gilpin's assumptions about Realism, which may be taken as criteria for the theory's use.<sup>54</sup> Firstly, Realism deals with the group level of human activity. The

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<sup>54</sup> Gilpin 1986

previous chapter will have demonstrated that we can treat warlords as unitary actors – i.e. groups. Furthermore, the notion of sovereignty will be examined and it will be shown that warlords are ‘empirically’ sovereign, although not ‘juridically’ sovereign. In addition, it will be established that we may treat warlords as ‘like units’, which Waltz and other Neorealists demand, and furthermore it will be demonstrated that they are ‘functionally undifferentiated’.

The next step is to demonstrate that warlords are motivated in the same way as states. The literature treats the motivations of armed groups as driven either by identity dynamics (grievance) or economic factors (greed). However, these motivations will be found to be instrumental in nature and are just some of the range of motivations that warlords may have. It will be argued that these drives are better covered under the heading of power. And it will be demonstrated that, just as with states, warlords must first be concerned with survival before they may pursue other activities.

A more subtle understanding of ‘collapsed’ and ‘fragmented’ states will be provided which will allow us to theoretically link the ‘domestic anarchy’ of such states with the international system. Domestic anarchy has been theorized about before, but as a ‘closed’ system, disconnected from international anarchy. This chapter will demonstrate how that is not necessarily the case and how we may speak of ‘open’ anarchic systems in states and therefore treat warlords as international actors.

Finally, this chapter will discuss how state failure and the nature of anarchy perpetuate the anarchic system in which warlords exist and strengthen the autonomy and independence of warlords. This is parallel to the reproduction of the state system which is theorized by various historical sociologists and IR theorists. Taken together,

this chapter will demonstrate that the Neorealist approach can in fact be applied to warlords.

#### **Chapter 4**

This chapter will examine how the conceptual tools of Neorealism can be applied to describe warlord international relations. It will describe the theory of Neorealism and its concepts of self help, the balance of power, the security dilemma, and war. It will then examine how and to what degree these concepts can be used to theorize about warlordism. Neorealism and its constituent concepts, such as the balance of power, are traditionally only applied to states and to apply the theory to warlords is controversial at the least. Therefore the approach to this chapter will be to first illustrate the concept as it is traditionally understood and then to demonstrate its applicability to the analysis of warlord international relations.

Briefly, self help describes the need for an actor in anarchic systems to rely on itself for security. Neorealism assumes a self help system. As will have been demonstrated in Chapter 2 and 3, warlords are motivated by survival in an anarchic system, just as states are, and therefore we can conclude that a self help situation can also be used to describe warlord relations.

The balance of power traditionally refers to relationships between states, but it too may be applied to warlords. The concept of the balance of power describes the forces driving actors to build up power internally or to align in order to offset the power of any one actor which attempts to gain hegemony. This section will look at hard balancing – the formal military and diplomatic aligning of states — as well as soft balancing – which is less formal and not necessarily military-orientated in

relation to states. The concept of balance of power will then be discussed in relation to warlordism.

The security dilemma, which describes the situation in which self help orientated actors will bring about further insecurity by trying to provide for their own security against peer actors, will also be examined. The security dilemma will be described in relation to states, in internal anarchic systems regarding non-state actors, and finally in mixed systems which include states and non-state actors, including warlords.

Finally, this chapter will examine the nature of interstate, or ‘anarchic’ – which is a means of balancing power – and internal, or ‘hierarchic’ war. While warlords are usually considered to take part in hierarchic war, this chapter will illustrate how they also take part in anarchic war.

## **TESTING THE VALIDITY OF THE APPROACH: CASE STUDIES**

Having examined the nature of warlordism and illustrated how a Neorealist approach can help to describe, explain, and predict warlord international relations, it will be necessary to test whether the Neorealist approach is valid.<sup>55</sup> In other words, while the first piece of the study will demonstrate that the conceptual tools of Neorealism can be applied to warlords and how they can be used to answer the question of how warlords relate with other actors; the second piece of the study will make the argument that the insights from the Neorealist approach match up with observed reality and provides an explanation of these observations.

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<sup>55</sup> The theory of Neorealism has been tested extensively on state to state interactions over the past two and a half decades. While this is not the place to review the findings of these tests, the ongoing use of the theory clearly shows that it has some value, at least relative to other theories of international relations.

The purpose of a theory is to explain. Specifically, to explain “regularities of behavior and [these regularities should lead] one to expect that the outcomes produced by interacting units will fall within specified ranges.”<sup>56</sup> By ‘explain’, Waltz means “...to say why the range of expected outcomes falls within certain limits; to say why events repeat themselves, including events that none or few of the actors may like.”<sup>57</sup> Thus, we can call a theory valid if it describes and explains the regularities of behavior of interacting units. In order to determine if a theory really is explaining the regularities, it must be tested.

Of course it is not possible to use a truly experimental approach to determine the effectiveness of the theory. As with most other studies of international relations, case studies will be used to determine the validity of the theoretical approach.

Waltz listed a seven step approach to testing a theory, which he applied to Neorealism in relation to states. Briefly, the steps are to begin by inferring hypotheses about observable tests.<sup>58</sup> Then the theoretical definitions and concepts are applied and outside variables are eliminated or controlled for. Finally, the theoretical hypotheses are tested against observations. Rather than stopping at one test, multiple distinct and demanding tests should be performed. If a test is not passed, one should not consider the theory falsified, but instead “ask whether the theory flunks completely, needs repair and restatement, or requires narrowing of the scope of its explanatory claims.”<sup>59</sup> Thus, we can conclude that if a theory can explain relations in multiple, demanding tests which compare predicted hypotheses to actual historical outcomes, it is a valid theory.

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<sup>56</sup> Waltz 1979: 68

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.: 69

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.: 13

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.: 13

Waltz's final point is important in that while no theory can ever be proved to be true in the strong sense of proof, we can infer whether or not it is a functionally useful theory. If it is found to be useful, then a theory should be kept and continued to be applied. These further applications of the theory have the additional role of acting as continuing tests of the theory.

Such a testing approach can also be used to determine if a Neorealist approach can be validly used for the analysis of warlords. A case of a particular warlord will be presented and hypotheses will be generated about how we should expect the warlord to act. Then, the observed actions of the warlord will be documented and compared with those we expect. If it is found that the actors acted as expected – i.e. that the observations conform to theoretical predictions – and Neorealism can explain why the warlords acted as they did, then it will be considered to have demonstrated the validity of the theoretical approach. While Waltz sought to test whether the theory of Neorealism was valid in general, this study will seek to test whether it is valid to use in the particular case of warlord actors. The case studies in this thesis will attempt to do just that.

Throughout Chapters 2, 3, and 4, vignettes – in effect small case studies – will be used to illustrate the concept(s) being discussed. These vignettes will include examples from warlords in many different regions, including Taylor in Liberia, the RUF in Sierra Leone, the LRA in northern Uganda, Somalia warlords, and Afghan warlords. These vignettes will apply the generalized testing model discussed above. However, in order to provide a more rigorous test of the validity of the Neorealist approach, two extensive case studies will be used, the second of which will be more demanding than the first.

The case studies will each be divided into two separate tests. The first concerns the validity of the definition of warlords and the concepts that have been developed to describe warlords. The use of the definition to classify and analyze seemingly alike groups provides reason to believe that it is a suitable definition. Also, the conceptualization will be tested to see if it helps to explain the warlord's actions. The second test will be to use the Neorealist approach to explain the international relations of the warlords in question. The usefulness of the theoretical approach will then be determined by its ability to match hypotheses to observations.

The following chapter summaries will briefly illustrate the case studies which will be used:

## **Chapter 5**

In the first case study, the Neorealist approach will be tested in relation to warlords in Somalia. The definition of warlord will be applied to classify and analyze multiple, seemingly alike actors. Specifically, different groups in Somalia – including faction militias, warlords, business militias, court militias, and Islamic militias – will be examined and the definition of warlord will be used to differentiate all the groups.

Following this process, the Neorealist notions of anarchy, self help, and survival will be addressed in the Somalia situation. It is necessary to examine these issues in Somalia in order to ensure that the system meets the minimum requirements for the use of the Neorealist approach. I.e. is Somalia an anarchic environment, is it a self help system, and are the actors motivated by survival? Once this has been accomplished it is possible to test hypotheses.

Multiple hypotheses will be tested. For instance, warlords in Somalia should be more concerned with the survival of the organization than with other factors, such

as grievances against particular actors. Therefore they should align with other actors regardless of grievances. Another hypothesis is that war should be over survival, rather than control of the state.

These hypotheses will be addressed through the examination of two specific instances of warlord international relations. The first is the 1993-94 UN intervention. The second is the relationship between the SNF, Ethiopia, and Al Ittihad. The second examination is a particularly good case to look at in that it meets Waltz's appeal that "[o]ne should... look for instances of states allying, in accordance with the expectations the theory gives rise to, even though they have strong reasons not to cooperate with one another."<sup>60</sup>

## Chapter 6

In the second case study, a more demanding test will be conducted. In this case study, the international relations of the LRA will be examined. The LRA is an infamously difficult organization to analyze. Moreover, this case study will examine a fragmented state (a term to be defined in Chapter 3) as opposed to a collapsed state, like Somalia, as in the previous case study. Though this case study will also be in Africa, the situation and actors are so different from those in the Somalia case study that it should provide a more general analysis than even a case study set outside of Africa.<sup>61</sup>

As in the first case study, the definition and conceptualization of warlordism will be applied to the LRA. This will be done in order to see if it is a warlord and if so, whether we can sensibly organize the empirically observed features of the organization under our definition. *Prima facie*, the LRA does not seem to be a

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<sup>60</sup> Waltz 1979: 125

<sup>61</sup> For example, a case study on Afghan warlords would resemble the Somalia case study even more than the LRA resembles the Somalia case study.

warlord and therefore the demonstration that it is will provide a more demanding case study to look at.

The Neorealist theoretical account of the LRA's international relations will then be applied in order to see if it is able to effectively describe the relations of the organization and make predictions about it (in the sense that the hypotheses are correct and explanations are better). This test will be accomplished by examining the LRA's relations with the Ugandan state, the Sudanese state, and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).<sup>62</sup> It will be found that a dynamic balance of power has formed between the LRA, SPLM/A, Uganda, and Sudan.

## **Chapter 7 - Conclusion**

The conclusion to this thesis will provide a summary of the argument and then some implications of this study will be explored. The most obvious conclusion and implication of this study is that it provides an effective analysis of the international relations of warlords.

The introductory discussion of this study, concerning the need to integrate armed groups in general into IR models of international politics, will be rejoined. This study has in many ways begun this integrative process and the degree to which it can be used to theorize about other types of armed groups will be discussed. In particular, the conclusion will address the degree to which the Neorealist approach can be applied to other types of armed groups, including: de facto states, traditional guerillas, clan-based militias, and proxy militias.

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<sup>62</sup> Throughout this study I will generally refer to the single organization of the SPLM/A, except in cases where the distinction between the military or political portion of the organization is specifically relevant, these portions will then be referred to as the SPLA (Sudanese People's Liberation Army) and the SPLM (Sudanese People's Liberation Movement) respectively.

The conclusion will also address some theoretical and practical implications of this study. The theoretical implications include insights into the nature of sovereignty and anarchy. Practical implications include insights to be used in policy-making concerning the response to warlords which arise from this study.

### **Note on Methodology**

A brief note on methodology is in order here. This thesis is primarily applying the insights of a theoretical approach to a particular type of actor. In doing this, it has been necessary to perform close-readings of theoretical texts, such as *Theory of International Politics*, as well as extensive research on the actors involved. The source materials for understanding these actors have come from primary and secondary sources. These materials include: books, journal articles, research institute, NGO and IGO reports, news articles, and miscellaneous documents such as mission statements.

In some instances the existing literature or available primary documentation has not provided the necessary empirical knowledge to effectively discuss a particular warlord or event. In such cases, empirical case studies have been based on field work. This fieldwork was carried out in four separate trips, the first to Uganda and Kenya, including visits to Kampala, Gulu, internally displaced person camp in northern Uganda, and Nairobi; the second to Ethiopia, Kenya, and Sudan, including visits to Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Rumbek, and Khartoum; the third to Ghana and Liberia, including visits to the Budaburam Liberian Refugee Camp, Monrovia and Tubmanburg; and the fourth to Washington, DC.<sup>63</sup>

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect information on warlords and the organizations with which they interact. In particular, the case studies involving

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<sup>63</sup> Due to local insecurity it was not possible to perform fieldwork in Somalia, however, interviews concerning Somalia were conducted with relevant personnel in Kenya.

Sudan, Somalia, and Uganda are partially based on interviews. In cases of specific, generally unknown information, or direct quotes the interview is noted in the footnotes.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> These interviews fall into three categories of anonymity. Some of the interviewees granted full permission for citation. In such cases, direct quotes are footnoted as the person's title and their name is included with this title in the bibliography. Due to the sensitivity of this research, some of these interviews were conducted under the condition of non-attribution to a name. In such cases the person is referred to by a description, such as 'UN Source', which has generally been agreed upon with the interviewee. In the bibliography, the person is just referred to by their description and their name and title has been withheld. In other cases, the person required the interviews to be entirely anonymous. These interviews were not recorded and there are no direct quotes attributed to them in the text, however, entries with a description have been left in the bibliography. A separate sheet with non-attributable names and titles is provided for examiners.

## CHAPTER 2 - DEFINITION AND CONCEPTUALIZATION OF WARLORD

The first step in an analysis of the international relations of warlords is to define and conceptualize them. This, however, is no easy feat. Paul Jackson points out that “at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the label warlord has come to be used very broadly to cover a wide range of clan and political leaders who use armed civilians to impose power.”<sup>65</sup> Recent instances of warlordism have included very different types of men and organizations including Taylor in Liberia and clan based militias in Somalia; while journalists and academics have used the term to negatively refer to men from Dostum to Mobutu Sese Seko to Saddam Hussein. A definition of warlordism is needed which allows for a rationalized comparison.

Furthermore, the concept of warlord needs to be explored in significant detail in order to produce the degree of understanding necessary for a theoretical analysis of their international relations. Nation-states have been examined in detail by academics ranging from Max Weber to Charles Tilly and the high degree of theoretical understanding of states has facilitated the theoretical analysis of their international relations. In comparison, there has been relatively little conceptualizing about warlords. To facilitate theorizing about warlord international relations, it is necessary to perform a conceptual analysis in a manner producing a level of detail approaching that of our understanding of states.

The intent of this chapter is to explore some of the proposed definitions of warlordism and then to provide a conceptual framework that can be used for analyzing warlords from the perspective of their international relations. The historical

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<sup>65</sup> Jackson 2003: 134

definitions of warlordism will be discussed, including those used by analysts of the Chinese warlord period and by Africanists. After tracing this definitional history, the chapter will move on to look at more modern definitions. The chapter will then incorporate other aspects of warlords into a broader conception of warlordism, including economic relations, barbarism, and the effects of globalization. Political community, governance, autonomy, and independence are found to be very important in understanding warlordism and these concepts will be explored in some detail. It will be concluded that, fundamentally, warlords are *NSAs that use military power and economic exploitation to maintain fiefdoms, which are autonomous and independent from the state and society*. To conclude the chapter, this definition of warlordism will be used to make rationalized comparisons with other actors.

## CONTEXT

### **Historical Definition of Warlord**

It is important to take a historical view of warlordism because it, like other political-military organizations such as empires or city-states, seems to be a natural political formation that appears in various forms and in different locales throughout the ages. In particular, warlords and their organizations often arise out of the weakening or collapse of larger political structures such as empires or states. Examples of what we might refer to as warlords date back to antiquity and include the heroes of ancient Greek epic poetry, late Western Roman Empire military leaders, including the half-legendary King Arthur, and the Vikings of Medieval Europe.

For instance, M. I. Finley quotes one passage from the *Iliad* which details the nature of “war” during the Greek dark ages (i.e. the period which Homer wrote about). The passage is a description by Nestor about a raid on Elis:<sup>66</sup>

Would that I were in the prime of my youth and my might as steadfast as when a quarrel broke out between us and the Eleans over a cattle raid. ...Exceedingly abundant was then the booty we drove out of the plain together, fifty herds of cattle, as many flocks of sheep, as many droves of swine, as many herds of goats, and a hundred and fifty bays, all mares... And Neleus was glad at heart that so much booty fell to me the first time I went to war.<sup>67</sup>

Such a passage is not out of the ordinary. Throughout the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* the heroes assume that warfare involves raiding for booty.<sup>68</sup> Though the *Iliad* is not strictly historical it is generally argued that the notions of Greek life, including warfare, which it portrays are a reflection of reality.<sup>69</sup> It is easy to draw parallels between such practices and more contemporary forms of warlordism – non-state armed groups fighting “war” for loot.

In the modern age, the term warlord has been used to describe competing provincial military and political leaders during the period after the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 and up to either 1927, when Chiang Kai Shek was able to restore

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<sup>66</sup> Finley 1956

<sup>67</sup> Homer 1999: 132, 33; quoted in Finley 1956

<sup>68</sup> A. Jackson 1993. It should be noted that Alastair Jackson argues that Finley overemphasises the place of raiding as war for the Homeric age Greeks and believes that fighting for honor played the more major role; however, he does not disagree with the basic point that during the period which the *Iliad* portrays, raiding was common.

<sup>69</sup> Finley 1956, A. Jackson 1993

some form of order, or the beginning of the Anti-Japanese war in 1937.<sup>70</sup> The term is a translation of the Chinese *junfa* which, like the English term warlord, has a pejorative connotation.<sup>71</sup> As opposed to an earlier term, *dujun*, which simply meant ‘supervisor of military affairs’, *junfa* connotes military activity without an aim or purpose – an important distinction still applied today. The word warlord was used as a translation by foreign correspondents in their sensational descriptions of the violent tactics used by the *junfa*.<sup>72</sup>

James Sheridan gave a formal academic definition of warlord in his seminal work on the subject of Chinese warlords, *Chinese Warlord: The Career of Feng Yu-hsiang*. He defines a warlord as an actor who “exercised effective governmental control over a fairly well-defined region by means of a military organization that obeyed no higher authority than himself.”<sup>73</sup>

Many later authors have continued to rely on Sheridan’s definition.<sup>74</sup> The staying power of his definition is due to its simplicity and applicability. In essence, it demands only two features of a warlord actor. The first is that the actor must exercise control via military power. The second is that the actor is the highest level of a hierarchy. Sheridan’s definition was most notably taken up by Africanists in the 1980s, who began applying the concept of warlord to African military actors.

<sup>70</sup> See Lary 1985, Roberts (1989) and McCord (1993) for historical and theoretical discussions of the period.

<sup>71</sup> The word ‘warlord’ itself is possibly derived from the literal translation of *Kriegsherr*, a formal title of German Kaisers. Colin Darch (1989) holds this view.

<sup>72</sup> Rich 1999

<sup>73</sup> Sheridan 1966: 1

<sup>74</sup> For instance, Diana Lary defines China’s warlordism as “a system in which China was fragmented into a series of satraps, each controlled by a commander answerable only to himself or to those more powerful, in a military sense, than himself.” (Lary 1985: 2)

## African Warlords

The contemporary debate about warlordism, and in particular the discussion of what actually defines a warlord, began with the application of historical studies of Chinese warlordism to military actors in Sub-Saharan Africa. The 1989 special issue of the *Review of African Political Economy*, which focused on ‘Warlords and Problems of Democracy’, is considered to be a milestone in the warlord debate.<sup>75</sup> The literature these authors were referring to was pioneered by historians like Sheridan in the 1960s and took on growing detail in the 1980s with authors such as Diana Lary’s analysis of soldiers in the warlord period.<sup>76</sup>

In particular, authors such as Roy May and Roger Charlton applied the concept of warlordism to military actors in the protracted conflict in Chad during the 1980s.<sup>77</sup> According to Charlton and May, the Chadian state developed an internal militarism through two related processes: “a process of de-institutionalization and organizational decay at the level of the central government. [And it involved] a concomitant and progressive growth of regionalism, ultimately emerging as a regionalization of the whole political process.”<sup>78</sup> This was combined with a “reliance on force of arms to settle political disputes and to determine policy.”<sup>79</sup> From this, Charlton and May drew a parallel with the Chinese warlord period.

In both cases, these warlords “relied upon their personal politico-military skills to establish first, their control over a regional power-base and second, [drew] upon the economic resources of their fiefdoms, to expand, by force if necessary, their domain of effective power.”<sup>80</sup> Put more simply, a warlord had two necessary

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<sup>75</sup> *Review of African Political Economy* – 16 (45/46)

<sup>76</sup> Sheridan 1966, Lary 1985

<sup>77</sup> Charlton and May 1989

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*: 17

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

characteristics, “a private army and an area under his control.”<sup>81</sup> As each of these warlords attempted to expand, they bumped into each other, creating conflict, aptly described as ‘internal anarchy’ in the China example.

Charlton and May go on to argue for the analytic value in applying the warlord model to Chadian politics. From these foundations, the term warlord, and its basic definition, was used to describe numerous political actors throughout sub-Saharan Africa and later the Balkans, Middle East, and Central Asia by both academics and the media.<sup>82</sup>

## CONTEMPORARY DEFINITIONS

Since the 1980s there has been a continued interest in warlordism. In particular, the Sierra Leonean and Liberian wars in West Africa, clan fighting in Somalia and Afghanistan, and a scattering of other potential candidates including the DRC and Chechnya have been put forward as examples of warlordism. In order to analyze these conflicts theorists have returned to the earlier writings of the Chinese historians as well as of the Africanists of the 1980s in pursuit of an accurate definition of warlordism.

In their analyses, most theorists have kept intact the central tenets of the definitions used by the Chinese historians and the Africanists. Sheridan’s definition in particular is echoed in more recent analyses. For example, Antonio Giustozzi defines a warlord as a “particular type of ruler, whose basic characteristics are his independence of any higher authority and his control of a ‘private army’, which responds to him personally” in his analysis of Afghan warlords.<sup>83</sup> Jackson notes that, “the term warlord has been used... to describe a man who is in control of a particular

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.: 20

<sup>82</sup> See, for instance, Shawcross 2000

<sup>83</sup> Giustozzi 2003: 2

group or area and who does not answer directly to a higher authority – although they may defer to stronger warlords.”<sup>84</sup>

This traditional definition of warlordism is still widely used because it is a clear, empirical description of warlords. Some actors in Somalia or Afghanistan do in fact have private militaries and do not answer to a higher authority. This is a fundamental feature of warlordism and sets it apart from many other forms of political organization.

Beyond these basic features, commentators on warlords have noted three supplementary factors. The first are the economic issues wrapped up in warlordism. The second feature is warlordism notorious barbarism. Lastly, there are the effects that globalization have had on warlordism.

### **Economic factors**

A feature of warlordism often remarked on by theorists is its self-serving nature. Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz note that warlords are “quite literally, businessmen of war, that is, they relied on violence as the main instrument of their economic activity.”<sup>85</sup> Another author notes that the *raison d’etre* of warlordism should be the “pursuit of narrow, commercial self-interest.”<sup>86</sup>

The economic rationale for warfare is nothing new, even Aristotle mentions the use of war fighting for economic gain. In his *Politics* he remarks, “it also follows that the art of war is in some sense... a natural mode of acquisition.”<sup>87</sup> Warlords, however, are thought to make economic exploitation their primary justification for warfare. These accusations are not unfounded. It has been reported that Taylor made

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<sup>84</sup> Jackson 2003: 134

<sup>85</sup> Chabal and Daloz 1999: 85

<sup>86</sup> Robinson 2001: 123

<sup>87</sup> Aristotle 1958: 21

hundreds of millions if not billions during his time as a warlord in Liberia.<sup>88</sup> Reno takes this position to be the essential feature of warlordism and bases his theory of warlordism on their use of economic markets.<sup>89</sup> Whether or not it is of primary importance, clearly economic profit is essential to warlordism and must be taken into account in an analysis.

### **Barbarism**

Warlordism is almost synonymous with barbarism, savagery, and 'senseless' acts of war. Numerous authors have reflected on the almost unimaginable suffering that warlords have caused, usually for seemingly senseless reasons. For example, Ralph Peters refers to "erratic primitives of shifting allegiance, habituated to violence, with no stake in civil order... [who are] as brutal as ever and distinctly better-armed."<sup>90</sup>

Chris Hedges remarks concerning warlords are also illustrative:

They carry their phallic weapons slung low at an angle toward the ground. Most of these fighters are militiamen, those who stay away from real combat, have little training or discipline, and primarily terrorize the weak and defenseless. And they look the part, often with tight black fatigues, wraparound sunglasses, and big ugly jeeps or cars with tinted windows. For them war is about empowerment. They have turned places like the Congo into Hobbesian playgrounds.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Reno 1998

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Peters 1994: 16

<sup>91</sup> Hedges 2002: 163

No analysis of warlordism can fail to incorporate an explanation of the savagery of the warlord. Simply noting that warlords are 'evil' or 'psychotic' is of little analytical value.<sup>92</sup> Rather it is necessary to explain why they act in such savage ways toward even members of their own community, break treaties, and in general rebel against the idea of an orderly society.

Combined with this savage outlook, warlords are generally held to be weak, by and large ad hoc organizations, with no interest in forming an orderly state. For instance, Clapham describes 'warlord insurgencies' as being:

distinguished by personal leadership, generally weak organizational structures, and still weaker ideological motivation. In those cases where they managed to overthrow incumbent regimes, they generally proved unable to establish effective governments in their place.<sup>93</sup>

In other words, warlords are seen as a purely destructive force. In fact, our notion of barbarism goes back to the Greeks who felt that what "rendered a people barbarous was their unwillingness to make anything of themselves. They left no mark on history."<sup>94</sup>

Warlords are clearly barbaric in this manner. They do not attempt to construct for others including future generations, but only to destroy or to take for the immediate usage. They are, as Thomas Hobbes says, "like worms in the entrails of a natural man."<sup>95</sup> Warlords are thought to exist only for their own ends and, even when given the chance, will not civilize themselves or provide public goods for those

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<sup>92</sup> Keen 1998, 2000; also see Vinci 2005 for a specific example.

<sup>93</sup> Clapham 1996: 212

<sup>94</sup> Coker 2002: 92

<sup>95</sup> Hobbes 1998

civilians that they rule over. Thus, while states may commit ample atrocities and otherwise act in savagely violent ways, what sets warlords apart is the uselessness of their violence, for at least the state can argue that it committed evil for some greater good. A conceptualization of warlordism must also take into account such barbarism as well.

### **Globalization**

Another important feature of contemporary warlordism that gives us a clue into its true nature is that warlords are integrated into the global system. As Mark Duffield notes, “today’s successful warlords may act locally but they think globally.”<sup>96</sup> While the term globalization, which denotes the increase in economic, political, social, and other forms of connectedness and interdependence by actors around the world, is an imprecise term, it is an issue which must be taken into account in the analysis of warlords.<sup>97</sup>

Globalization has facilitated a much more intimate relationship between local, neighboring actors and distant actors in the international system. This is possible because of at least four factors pointed out by Mackinlay:

- improvements in transport technology (and its availability in all parts of the world, including developing countries);
- the proliferation of information and communications;
- deregulation of international economies and markets;
- and increased migration.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Duffield 2001: 175

<sup>97</sup> Berdal (2003) makes this point in regard to the study of civil wars.

<sup>98</sup> Mackinlay 2002: 16

These factors have converged, along with historical events such as the end of the Cold War, to allow local actors like warlords to gain access to international markets and to take part in international politics.

In particular, the economic ramifications of globalization need to be taken into account in an analysis of warlords. The international economic connections of warlords allow them to buy and sell goods and services in international markets without regulation by the state. Of central importance to warlords is the ability to sell commodities under their control through the international market, for instance, the case of Jonas Savimbi's diamond sales and other goods to foreign firms. At the same time, warlords are able to purchase goods on the international market, and especially important to them are small arms and other tools of war.<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, political and diplomatic issues arise in relation to globalization and these also must be taken into account in relation to warlords. Globalization has made possible political connections between warlords and other actors, which were traditionally reserved for the state. For example, previous to the global incorporation of communication networks, it would not have been possible for a local warlord to communicate with far off state actors, except possibly through long-distance travel (which also would have been very difficult). Now, however, it is possible for a warlord like Taylor to be interviewed on BBC through a satellite phone while still in Liberia or for Savimbi to make the journey to Washington, DC to visit with his patron, Ronald Reagan. In order to fully conceptualize warlordism, it is necessary to include these international connections as a fundamental feature of warlordism. In

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<sup>99</sup> Cooper 1999

fact, the prominence of these international connections is part of the impetus for this study.

A recent definition provided by Duffield incorporates the international connections of warlords. He defines a warlord as:

the leader of an armed band, possibly numbering up to several thousand fighters, who can hold territory locally and, at the same time, *acts financially and politically in the international system without interference from the state* in which he is based.<sup>100</sup>

Here Duffield keeps intact the traditional feature of warlordism in which the warlord is able to control territory (implicitly) through military force. Where Duffield diverges with the traditional definition of warlordism is that he explicitly demands a connection with the international system and the warlord's independence from the state. These factors, as the following section will make clear, are as central to warlordism as are its more traditional aspects, such as its enlistment of private militaries.

## **CONCEPTUALIZING WARLORDS AND WARLORD ORGANIZATIONS**

Having looked at some of the different definitions of warlord, we can begin to put together an inclusive definition and explore some of the concepts which underlie warlordism. Many different concepts have come up in the definitions which others have used, even if they are taken for granted, in addition, there are some underlying concepts which theorists have ignored altogether. The following section will explore

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<sup>100</sup> Duffield 1997: 18, noted in Mackinlay 2000: 48 (italics added for emphasis)

some of these concepts which underlie warlordism, including the notions of non-state actor, autonomy, political community, singular actor, and independence. Other issues which must be addressed in regard to warlordism include economic, motivational, and military aspects.

### **The Warlord**

A warlord is a man, but we should not see the warlord as only an individual. Warlords include men like Dostum, Taylor, and Mohammed Farah Aidid. These warlords control organizations. This organization is an emergent entity made up of the sum of its individuals. These individuals combine together into a cohesive unit, which can, for theoretical purpose, be treated as a single actor. The warlord as an individual is the highest authority over this organization – as will be illustrated below.

More generally, the warlord organization is identified with the warlord as an individual. This is typical of armed groups. Charles King points out that

as conflicts drag on, the distinction between the aims of the struggle and the personalities and perceptions of leaders charged with achieving them can begin to fade. Combatants on either side may come to identify their own leaders with the struggle itself.<sup>101</sup>

This can have practical consequences, as King also discusses the notion of “gambling for resurrection” in which “although accepting defeat or agreeing to negotiation might entail fewer costs than pressing for total victory, political leaders – thinking of the

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<sup>101</sup> King 1997: 30

consequences of defeat for themselves – may decide to carry on the fight.”<sup>102</sup> It also has the consequence of causing theorists to refer to the organization, and its motivations, in terms of individual leaders.

Yet, while in practice it might not be possible to replace a warlord because he is the central link in the chain of authority, in theory he is replaceable. In this sense the warlord organization exists as a separate, definable entity.<sup>103</sup> There are examples of warlord replacement as well as counterexamples. For instance, Aidid was replaced upon his death in 1996 by his son Hussein Aidid.<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) collapsed soon after Savimbi’s death in 2002. The explanation is that in warlord organizations, as with other military organizations, the leader’s death weakens the organization significantly. In some cases, this weakness is enough to cause the complete collapse of the organization, and in others it is not.

Thus, even though the term is usually applied to a single individual, it more rightly refers to a cohesive group. This is the same way that we treat a state run by a dictator as a single group even though we refer to the individual dictator as the instigator of policy and may even refer to the state in terms of the dictator when speaking of the origins of policy. Accordingly we should treat the warlord as in fact being a ‘warlord organization’, but we may continue the common practice of referring to the entire organization as simply ‘warlord’.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.: 31

<sup>103</sup> Yet, we could not separate the warlord organization from the warlord, for then he would just be a man.

<sup>104</sup> McKinley 1996

## Political Community

This begs the question, what is the warlord organization, how is it defined?<sup>105</sup> One problem with defining the warlord organization is that it is often assumed that authority is territorially based and, by extension, that a definition of warlord should be based on control of a fixed territory. This assumption is made because it is in reference to a fixed territory with distinct boundaries that we define the state. But, as Jeffrey Herbst has shown, territorial control is not always as important as authority over people.<sup>106</sup> While Herbst was referring to Africa, sovereignty as authority over people can also apply to other areas and other groups. For example, we assume it in reference to nomadic tribes in Central Asia throughout history. This sort of sovereignty was also found in Europe. For example, “[t]he Roman Empire contained political-legal units based on people, holding that Roman citizens and local tribes were ruled and treated differently although they were to be found in the same geographical area.”<sup>107</sup>

Unlike the state, the population that is under the warlord’s authority is not based on territory, but is instead based on membership through initiation and specific inclusion. With the state, membership is defined by being born within a specified territory, or otherwise attaching oneself to the territory. The warlord organization, on the other hand, is made up of those who are specifically initiated. In effect, this usually means those that have undergone some sort of recruitment process and are part of the patronage system. For example, a person may join and becomes a paid

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<sup>105</sup> The broadest category which we can use to describe a warlord organization is that it is an ‘armed group’. By this we mean that it is a non-state organization which has the capacity for systematic military action. This, of course, is a very expansive definition, meant more to separate out groups such as mobs or non-violent criminals, than to include specific types. However, the concept of armed groups does incorporate the different types of organizations which we would like to include, from organized criminal gangs to terrorist groups to warlords to rebel insurgencies.

<sup>106</sup> Herbst 2000

<sup>107</sup> Vollaard 2001:94

member of the militia of Mohammed Qanyare, a Somali warlord. However, initiation into membership can be achieved in other ways, such as forceful conscription. For instance, a child who is forced to fight for the RUF becomes a member of the organization. Often the process of initiation will include imbuing physical and emotional markers, such as tattoos or shared memories of trauma. This process of initiation and inclusion differentiates those in the warlord organization from other forms of compulsive inclusion, such as being part of a family, clan, or ethnic group.

Initiates are not only known to themselves, but are also seen as separate by other political communities. Tattoos, uniforms, costumes, speaking a different dialect or using slang are all means by which a member of the warlord organization can mark him or herself as separate from other political communities. At times initiation can include acts which make it difficult for the individual to return to another political community, such as when LRA abductees are forced to kill or maim members of their own family or village. In general, the manner in which members of the warlord organization treat civilians draws a stark line between them and the local population.<sup>108</sup>

Members are included into a clearly delineated organization, which is in essence, an enclosed political community.<sup>109</sup> Political community is defined by a definite in-group and out-group distinction.<sup>110</sup> However, this boundary determines more than just the separation of one group from another, indeed it determines – to use Schmitt’s terminology – friends, who are those also under the authority of the warlord, and the enemy, who are, usually, everyone else.<sup>111</sup> For the state this friend enemy distinction is based on fixed territorial boundaries or, for a nomadic tribe, it is

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<sup>108</sup> Duyvesteyn (2005) notes this in regard to the Somali and Liberian wars.

<sup>109</sup> This is a strongly developed ‘group’ distinction, as opposed to a ‘grid’ distinction to use Mary Douglas’ term. Douglas 1970, based on Soeters 2005.

<sup>110</sup> To use the terminology from Simmel’s classic work, *Conflict* (Simmel 1955).

<sup>111</sup> Schmitt 1996

based on ethnicity and familial relation etc. For the warlord, this boundary is based on inclusion and retention in the warlord organization. Members are exclusively part of this political community – in the same way that those who live in a state are exclusively citizens of that state – and in this sense the political community is enclosed.<sup>112</sup>

As with the state, this friend-enemy distinction must be continually redefined and reinforced. For example, in Liberia, it has been noted that “[a]s the overall threat to a faction decreased, as it did in some area after Cotonou [a multifaceted agreement between the factions, including cease-fires], cohesion reduced.”<sup>113</sup> Also, as with states, the paramount way to (re)create the friend-enemy distinction is through war. This helps to explain the warlord’s continual need for conflict – without it, his organization may simply dissolve. This insight echoes Weber, who notes, “[t]he charisma of the warlord rises and falls with its efficacy and also with the demand for it; the warlord becomes a permanent figure when there is a chronic state of war.”<sup>114</sup>

The warlord political community is separate, but related to existent political communities, such as clans. Often warlords arise out of a sub-national political community which has a defined border. The most common examples of this are clans, as occurs in Somalia or Afghanistan. The leaders of such armed groups, which are by definition militias – since they are the non-professional armed extension of a civilian community – are more rightly called ‘warleaders’. However, the warlord becomes a warlord in the sense that he breaks away from a dependency on the clan. Though he may continue to use the rhetoric of clan, he must base his motivation on other factors – to be discussed below. (In Chapter 5, the case of Somali warlords will be examined

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<sup>112</sup> Of course there may be dual citizens in a state and, similarly, in a warlord organization people may be part of multiple political communities. However, on the whole, most people will have a single membership.

<sup>113</sup> Alao, Mackinlay, and Olonisakin 1999: 47

<sup>114</sup> Weber 1978: 1142

and the relationship between warlord and clan will be specifically addressed.) This firm line between warlordism and clan militia is an important distinction to make because it better reflects reality and is starkly evident in the fact that many warlords do not arise out of clans or other political communities – though they may attempt to adopt such rhetoric or otherwise use such a relationship instrumentally. (Sections in Chapters 3 and 4 will detail some of the instrumental benefits for warlords which arise from aligning with clan, ethnic groups, or other communal groupings.)

Accordingly, we should call the enclosed political community that the warlord controls a fiefdom. The term fiefdom can refer to a specific piece of territory, which warlords may more or less temporarily control. There is no doubt that warlords sometimes control territory and the people on that territory. But there is also a second meaning of the word which is more apt for this discussion. This is that the word can be used in the sense that it is an *organization* which is controlled by a dominant person or group. It is more rightly in this sense that the warlord has a fiefdom. Thus, *it is the fiefdom that the warlord is the highest authority over.*

This notion of membership rather than territorial control aligns with empirical observations of warlordism. For example, Qanyare has had control over specific pieces of territory, including, for instance, Dayinle airport. But, it is not that we associate Qanyare's authority with a specific piece of territory, even if he has controlled it for a long period of time. Rather, it is Qanyare's authority over his private militia which is important. A defeat in one place and victory in another will cause Qanyare and his group of fighters to move, but he would still have authority over the group and be no less a warlord. In the same way, for the fighters in Qanyare's militia, their loyalty is not to a territory, but to the organization, and by

extension, Qanyare himself. The men do not answer to any government or authority other than him or their assigned superior.

It is this peculiar nature of the warlord political community that makes the common warlord practice of killing or looting from local populations appear more logical. It may seem to an outsider that a warlord organization made up of individuals from the same ethnic group, religion or community of the local population would not want to prey on these people because they are 'the same people'. Therefore, when warlords kill this local population, they are often considered to be barbaric. The reason being that we typically think of killing within our own political community as savage and murderous, whereas we can justify the killing of our political community's 'enemies'.

But this is not how the situation should be understood. The individuals within the warlord organization have their own separate political community and see the local residents that they prey on as enemies. To members of the warlord political community it is acceptable to kill those outside of the political community in the same way as it is seen as acceptable for citizens from one nation to kill citizens from another nation during wartime, even if they are of a similar ethnic or religious background.

This allows us to understand a seemingly paradoxical organization like the LRA. The LRA is made up solely of Acholi people from northern Uganda and southern Sudan. Yet, the LRA also extensively preys upon the Acholi people – torturing, abducting, and looting from them on a regular basis. To some this may seem contradictory as it is assumed that the LRA would not want to alienate the people that they have sprung from and should militarily represent them against other groups. However, when we keep in mind that the LRA personnel have defined

themselves separately from the Acholi people, their actions seem more rational. They have their own political community and it is not based on ethnicity, but on initiation and indoctrination.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, to the LRA the Acholi people are as much outsiders as any other political community would be and therefore violence against them is as acceptable as against any other political community in a conflict.

This is only one of the ways in which a warlord political community differs from civil political communities; a related point is that due to the nature of the warlord political community, the idea of 'public goods' is completely alien. Only those initiated into the warlord political community are able to obtain goods from the organization and these goods are in themselves the glue which holds the organization together. This is one of the features that separate the warlord from the state, which does provide public goods to those within its territory. Unlike the state, the warlord "does not primarily direct the peaceful struggle of man with nature, but the violent struggle of one community against another."<sup>116</sup> But, the warlord organization is nonetheless a political community and political communities are dominated in the Weberian sense of the members of the community not just being ruled by force, but of also having an interest in obedience.<sup>117</sup>

### **Warlord Governance and Command**

The warlord's authority over a population implies the existence of governance. However, warlord governance is extremely different from that found in a state or even a guerilla insurgency. In a state there is a clear citizen base and a military is formed out of this citizen base. Even in a guerilla insurgency there is a base of people who

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<sup>115</sup> Chapter 6 will discuss this initiation process.

<sup>116</sup> Weber 1978: 1141, 42

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

continue on with their lives while they may be governed by the insurgents or otherwise contribute to the rebel's fight.

Warlordism, on the other hand, “veers toward a total combination of military and political means. Warfare in effect becomes politics and politics warfare in a permanently militarized anarchical society.”<sup>118</sup> All members of the warlord political community are part of a military organization, and even the economy is fundamentally wrapped up with the military. This is pure praetorism – i.e. the intervention of the military into political life and breakdown of civilian/military relations.<sup>119</sup>

Consequentially, the warlord's praetorian governance structure is the same as its command, control, and communication structure. In the warlord organizations, political organization is the same as military organization, and to command the military is to govern.<sup>120</sup> In order to bring about such domination, the warlord organization must have a:

- leadership,
- hierarchical control structure,
- set of tactics and strategies to carry out, and
- method for effectively communicating orders.

The leadership of a warlord organization, and in particular, the warlord himself, can set the rules of governance. For instance, Joseph Kony, the leader of the LRA, has instituted an entire quasi-religious governance and command institution. Warlords like Dostum and Taylor relied heavily on patrimonial, looting based internal

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<sup>118</sup> Rich 1999: 6

<sup>119</sup> Warlords may therefore be understood as ‘real’ warriors as John Keegan defines them. They see war as a way of life, like the Cossack. (Keegan 1993) Mackinlay notes this point. (Mackinlay 2000) Their political community is run by, and made up of, military personnel and the perpetuation of their way of life depends on an economy based on conquest and looting as does their continued recruitment.

<sup>120</sup> In Clausewitzian terms, this is the complete combination of people, government, and army. (Clausewitz 1989)

economies to maintain authority. As with other political organizations, we can classify the different means by which warlords gain authority.

In order to effectively govern a political organization, the warlord may obtain authority from charismatic, patrimonial, or rational (legal) sources, just as states can.<sup>121</sup> These are the sources of political authority which Weber attributes to political organizations. Though Weber admits that authority can come simply from force, this is an unreliable form of authority and therefore the leader must legitimize his authority in some manner. As Robert Dahl notes, authority from legitimate sources “is not only more reliable and durable than naked coercion but also enables a ruler to govern with a minimum of political resources.”<sup>122</sup> Charismatic power originates in an individual. Patrimonial power derives from direct exchange from the top of an organization down the hierarchy. Finally, bureaucratic power is instilled in the organization itself. In general, the warlord organization is a non-bureaucratic form of organization.<sup>123</sup> Rather, the warlord relies on patrimonial and charismatic sources of authority.

For the warlord organization, patronage usually comes in the form of looted goods or other monetary inducements which flow down from the highest levels of the organization to the lowest fighters in the warlord organization. The patronage creates a bond between the warlord and the fighters in the political community. This patronage is the incentive which allows the warlord to retain preeminent control over the fighters, for it is a mirror of patriarchal domination. As Weber notes:

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<sup>121</sup> Weber 1958, 1978

<sup>122</sup> Dahl 1965: 19. This point is made more generally in concern to armed groups by Duyvesteyn (2005).

<sup>123</sup> Reno 1998

[u]nder patriarchal domination the legitimacy of the master's orders is guaranteed by personal subjection... The fact that this concrete master is indeed their ruler is always uppermost in the minds of his subjects. The master wields his power without restraint, at his own discretion and, above all, unencumbered by rules, insofar as it is not limited by tradition or by competing power.<sup>124</sup>

This unrestrained power, which is gained from direct, personal connections with the warlord, creates a hierarchy of power which can be observed in all warlord organizations, even seemingly unorganized groups. This reliance on patronage for governance is the major factor in the warlord's ever-present need for economic exploitation – a point which will be addressed in more detail below.

The reliance on patronage also helps to explain why the warlord as an individual is so central to the organization. The warlord will almost always attempt to monopolize the economic connections which dominate the warlord organization's economic system.<sup>125</sup> In so doing, the warlord as an individual becomes a necessary link in the chain of organizational control. While Reno stresses the economic repercussions of the warlord's centrality to the organization, here the 'political' repercussions – in the sense of politics being about determining who gets what, when, and how<sup>126</sup> – are to be stressed. And, in this sense, *patronage is what defines the internal politics of the warlord organization*.

Charismatic power is also important for the warlord. For example, the LRA is governed by the mystic Kony, who 'uses... spiritualism to maintain control, starting with his overall vision of liberation and destruction and continuing with individual

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<sup>124</sup> Weber 1978: 1006-07

<sup>125</sup> Reno 1998

<sup>126</sup> Lasswell 1936

spirits that ‘guide’ specific military tactics.”<sup>127</sup> Or, for instance, in Liberia “success and influence depended more on a commander’s power in his own right as a dominating personality in the faction hierarchy than on his capabilities as a military leader.”<sup>128</sup> This too helps to explain the prominence of the warlord as an individual in the warlord organization, for it is in him that charismatic authority resides.

Warlords have their own personalized organizational systems for maintaining a hierarchy of domination with corresponding discipline and communication. In general, these systems will be much less efficient than in conventional militaries. Often discipline is low and based on force and abuse. Communication is basic, though satellite phones and other high-tech equipment are regularly used by warlords who may obtain technology as easily as any other group can through globalized trade networks. Another factor, which Reno has argued, is that warlord organizations lack a structured bureaucracy in the way which most states have.<sup>129</sup> This will also serve to make the warlord organization significantly less efficient, though not necessarily less effective, than states. Nonetheless, even though warlord organizations are often characterized as nearly chaotic organizations, there is always a system in place for controlling fighters.

With the ability to direct troops in place, a warlord must develop a strategy and set of tactics with which to manage warfare. The strategies can be borrowed, such as the guerilla strategies developed by Che Guevara or the military doctrine of a state’s army, or made up by the armed group itself, as the ‘Holy Spirit Tactics’ of Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement.<sup>130</sup> In some cases, they seem to fight with essentially no strategy and few tactics other than random shooting, as is often said

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<sup>127</sup> Refugee Law Project 2004: 13

<sup>128</sup> Alao, Mackinlay, and Olonisakin 1999: 47

<sup>129</sup> Reno 1998

<sup>130</sup> See Guevara 1961 and Behrand 1999

about warlords of the Liberian and Ugandan conflicts. However, even in these instances, there is in fact a rational set of tactics and strategies. The specifics of these strategies will be detailed in the case study chapters to follow.<sup>131</sup>

The warlord's ability to govern and direct the warlord organization and thereby to function as a single, cohesive actor can be observed in the various instances of warlordism. For example, this is what allowed Dostum to direct his forces to assist the United States in its war against the Taliban. While his forces are not commanded as efficiently as modern militaries, like the United States', they were nonetheless commanded and controlled. Similarly, while the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) may not have been the most effectively governed organization, Taylor's men did not completely run wild. In particular, Operation Octopus – a surprise invasion of Monrovia – though an overall failure, is generally held to have proven Taylor's ability to carry out complex, sustained military actions.<sup>132</sup>

With a set of strategies and tactics in place, a warlord must move on to teach these to the fighters in the organization. Since such strategic doctrine is, in effect, the praetorian organization's government, or constitution, by indoctrinating new troops, the warlord reproduces and reinforces the organization over time. Even the most simple and barbaric warlord still institutes some form of training and indoctrination

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<sup>131</sup> This organizational structure of a warlord organization (and all armed groups for that matter), based on command, control and, communication, can usually be broadly divided into centralized and decentralized strategies. Warlords practicing centralized strategies attempt to control their members through a tight network of hierarchical command. This necessarily involves better discipline and communication technology. A decentralized strategy is less dependent on discipline and technology as it allows for more independence in the ranks. The non- (or less) hierarchical organization of the group means that lower level commanders can have more independent control. The trade-off is that there is greater danger of factionalization. One solution to this problem is a bottom-up ideology of control in which soldiers are inculcated with a set of beliefs that reflect those of the command; therefore, when command is relinquished, they can be trusted to continue the strategy. Most terrorist organizations use some degree of a decentralized (or 'cellular') structure. Another method of ensuring control is to predict the probable motivations and actions of groups and arm them accordingly as is used by the Sudanese government with the janjaweed.

<sup>132</sup> See for instance Duyvesteyn 2005

for the fighters. For example, the LRA gives extensive combat training to its soldiers.

One returned fighter noted:

In Sudan they gave us training for three weeks. ...I was also trained to shoot, and how to put together guns and handle the weapons – antipersonnel mines, antitank mines, SMG, LMF, PKM, mortars.<sup>133</sup>

Additionally, new fighters in the LRA are given spiritual education and indoctrinated into the organization with formal mystical processes, such as spreading shea butter on their bodies.<sup>134</sup>

*The warlord organization, therefore, should be seen as a structured, cohesively organized, singular actor.* There is a political community and the warlord has the organizational reach to command and direct the organization as he wishes. The organization can thereby act as a whole.

### **Autonomy**

Within the framework of IR theory, warlords are NSAs in that they are, “at least in principle, autonomous from the structure and machinery of the state, and of the governmental and intergovernmental bodies above the formally sovereign state.”<sup>135</sup>

NSAs take part in transnational relations in the sense that they are “regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization.”<sup>136</sup> These actors include many different types of organizations, such as

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<sup>133</sup> Interview with ‘Sarah’, a returned LRA fighter, reported in HRW 1997.

<sup>134</sup> See HRW 1997 and Refugee Law Project 2004

<sup>135</sup> Josselin and Wallace 2001: 3

<sup>136</sup> Risse-Kappen 1995: 3

MNCs, such as Shell Oil, NGOs, such as Oxfam, religious groups, such as the Catholic Church, as well as various military organizations, such as Executive Outcomes or Hamas. However, warlords are qualitatively different from other NSAs in that they are completely autonomous and independent of the state.

More than being autonomous from the state's structure, warlords are not subject to the state's authority at all. Warlords are essentially autonomous actors. This feature is reiterated in most of the earlier definitions of warlord. The warlord's autonomy makes it the highest authority and this authority extends to both its internal and external relations.

The warlord's authority over its affairs seems paradoxical since almost all the Earth's territory is regulated by one state or another and states are by definition the highest authority over entities within their territory. At the base of the state's authority is its monopolization over the legitimate use of force.<sup>137</sup> Through a process of cooption and force, the nation-state has generally been able to make itself the most powerful actor within its territory.<sup>138</sup> This authority assumedly extends to NSAs. For instance, while Microsoft operates multinationally it is still regulated by American law and is therefore not completely autonomous.<sup>139</sup>

Warlords, however, are not subject to regulation by states because, in some instances, the state 'fails' and a non-state actor may become powerful enough, relative to the state, to rival its authority. The state 'fails' as it loses control over the population within its territory. Eventually, the state's authority and, lacking that,

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<sup>137</sup> This traditional conception of the state comes from Weber who says that "a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory." (Weber 1958: 77)

<sup>138</sup> See Tilly 1995 and 1997 for details on how this process occurred in Europe.

<sup>139</sup> In some instances, this authority may be indirect. States can invest authority in other entities, such as IGOs like the UN. In turn these entities may regulate certain NSAs.

control, are weakened to the point where another actor can exert its own control. In such instances, the warlord can wrestle away its own autonomy.

### ***Military Force***

Warlords are able to maintain autonomy from the state because they have the military ability to do so. As noted, the warlord organization is praetorian in nature – it is in effect an army. The nature of the warlord military force depends on the particular warlord. Examples range from conventional forces split into companies and platoons and using assault rifles and artillery to irregular units of child soldiers using machetes and technicals.<sup>140</sup> The military force may not necessarily be enough to topple a state, but it is certainly enough to scratch out some territorial control for at least a temporary period. This military force can not only be used against the state to make them autonomous, but it is also used internally to serve as the reservoir of power that allows the warlord to maintain authority over the warlord organization.

In particular, the warlord will turn to asymmetric means in order to assure its autonomy. We may call this particular bread of asymmetric warfare, the *warlord way of warfare*. The warlord necessarily exists inside a state and states in general, even ones which are failed, tend to have powerful military capabilities. In contrast, warlords are much smaller organizations and they cannot co-opt society or use international backing with the ease that states do. This makes warlords relatively weak. In order to overcome this asymmetry, warlords must turn to asymmetric ways of warfare.

Asymmetric warfare denotes a mismatch between the capabilities of belligerents involved, where at least one of the sides changes its tactics or strategies to

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<sup>140</sup> Technicals are trucks with heavy machine guns or other weapons mounted on them.

exploit the asymmetry.<sup>141</sup> The usual type of asymmetric warfare we refer to is that practiced by guerillas, however, warlords cannot rely on the civilian population in the way that guerillas can. Also, unlike terrorists, which also practice asymmetric warfare, warlords do not exist (e.g. hide) within the state.

Therefore, warlords must turn to their own breed of asymmetric warfare. This type of warfare is an extremely violent and savage one. It generally involves attacking civilians rather than military targets, using “destabilization” tactics,<sup>142</sup> such as through committing conspicuous atrocities, and relying on the use of fear as a force multiplication strategy.<sup>143</sup> Yet, it is a highly effective form of asymmetric warfare which allows the warlord to fight protracted conflicts with states that can last decades. This need to turn to brutal forms of warfare helps to explain why warlords are barbaric.

The autonomy of the warlord is exemplified in all that they do. For example, the NPFL answered to no authority other than Taylor. The same could be said about the organization controlled by Dostum in Afghanistan. Neither the Taliban nor any other government could count itself as an authority over the men who made up his warlord organization. This meant that when the United States wanted to enlist the help of Dostum and his men, they had to deal directly with him.

This military ability also allows the warlord to remain the highest authority over the organization’s external relations. Since the warlord has the military ability to rival the state it can maintain its own, separate foreign relations for the simple reason that the state cannot stop it from doing so. Thus, warlords interact with the international environment directly rather than having their interactions regulated by a

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<sup>141</sup> This definition is an amalgam of typical definitions of asymmetric warfare. See for instance, Hammes 2004 and Joes 2004. The precise definition of asymmetric warfare is not central to this argument.

<sup>142</sup> De Waal 1997

<sup>143</sup> Vinci 2005

state; a point that is noted in Duffield's definition.<sup>144</sup> For example, Taylor made business deals with various foreign companies, while some Somali warlords have aligned themselves with Ethiopia. These points will be revisited from a theoretical standpoint in Chapters 3 and 4.

### **Self-Perpetuating Organizations**

The warlord organization is not autonomous for a temporary period, rather, it exists continuously. Put another way, the organization perpetuates itself. Defense against the state or other aggressors is part and parcel of this self-perpetuation. States are similarly self-perpetuating organizations.

Civil political communities, such as states and tribes, are not only separate from other political communities, but are also self-perpetuating organizations. These organizations have people which reproduce at a rate that is at least the level at which people die. They also have a governance structure to rule and direct the members of the organization and the ability to teach new generations the same rules and norms as previous generations and thereby continue to reproduce their community's organizational structure. Moreover, they have economic systems which can provide food and other basic necessities with which to survive.

Like other political communities, the warlord political community can perpetuate itself. In order to be such a self-perpetuating organization, the warlord must be able to accomplish some very similar objectives to that of civil political communities. As has already been demonstrated, warlords have a leadership structure and the ability to indoctrinate new people. They must also have the ability to recruit new members, at least at the rate necessary to sustain its ranks, and the economic

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<sup>144</sup> Duffield 1997

ability to provide for the survival of its members and to procure a military ability with which to defend the organization.<sup>145</sup> These final two requirements are exceptional in that they force the warlord to solve some very difficult problems.

### **The Problems of Mobilization**

We can refer to these minimum requirements for self-perpetuation as the ‘problems of mobilization’.<sup>146</sup> They are problems in the sense that there are obstacles which must be overcome in order to perpetuate the organization. They are not just problems for warlords to solve, but rather problems for any self-perpetuating armed group.

Most importantly, a warlord must be able to motivate personnel to fight for him and must therefore answer the potential recruit’s question, ‘why should I fight and, possibly, die for you?’ We can refer to this as the problem of motivation. As Collier points out, there are certain dilemmas wrapped up in convincing people to fight.<sup>147</sup> Firstly, there is the *collective action problem*, in which it is a ‘public good’ to fight and therefore there will be free riders who want the good, but do not have an incentive to help personally. Secondly, there is a *coordination problem*. While people might join a large force, they are not apt to join a small one because they may feel it would not be able to accomplish the objectives. Finally, there is a *time-consistency problem*, in which soldiers have to fight before they achieve their objective (or attain benefits). This means that while it is easy for the leader to promise benefits, individuals recognize he may not be trustworthy and that promises may not be made

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<sup>145</sup> While there are other possible issues to address, such as a defensive base or intelligence capability, these issues are not necessary in the same way that the main two requirements are. For example, armed groups like terrorists can mobilize without having a base camp, while warlords regularly function with little to no intelligence capability. However, a warlord would not be a warlord if it did not have people and weapons.

<sup>146</sup> Also see Vinci 2006c

<sup>147</sup> Collier 2000

good after victory. These problems are compounded in a dynamic environment like, for instance, Somalia where it is difficult to predict the future.

A more straightforward problem is how to obtain and move equipment – what we can call the problem of logistics. The equipment necessary to mount an armed struggle depends on the particularities of the conflict and the environment in which it is taking place. For example, the LRA has simple needs – machetes and Kalashnikovs are suitable weapons and the essentials of survival are truly basic – some millet and second hand cloths. On the other hand, the Afghan *mujahideen* needed Stinger missiles carried long distances on donkeys to effectively combat the Russians.

There are a finite set of ways to solve these problems of mobilization. Specifically, it is possible to describe only four basic ways that the problem of motivation can be solved and four ways that the problems of logistics can be solved. Warlord solutions to the problems of mobilization will be found across the entire spectrum of possible solutions, however, there are some definable tendencies.

## **Motivation**

Broadly speaking, people can be motivated to fight in four ways:

- They can fight out of a sense of loyalty,
- They may feel that fighting is mutually beneficial for survival,
- They may simply be forced to fight, and
- Finally, there may be economic incentives to fight.

Warlords rely on each of these means of motivation. The following section will demonstrate what each form of motivation entails and how warlords take advantage of it.

## *Loyalty*

Loyalty may arise from several sources. One important origin is being a member of a definable community, such as an ethnicity, tribe, nation, or religion. Related to this, a group may form out of a belief in a particular idea, such as the need for revolution. Finally, individuals may be convinced by the personal charisma of an individual.

Individuals derive both instrumental and existential benefit from membership in a community and this will give an individual reason to perpetuate the groups and thereof, compellence to fight. Instrumentally, there is advantage from an association with others that may potentially bring economic or other benefits. Especially attractive in conflict environments are the potential strategic and defensive gains. Existentially, individuals can benefit from participatory membership in a group, ranging from a 'sense of belonging' to a higher purpose for their actions. In general, individual rewards do not need to be immediate, and can be promised for future collection. Men will fight in order to attain or retain these benefits.

Loyalty generates trust, or 'social capital', between the individual and the group (and its leaders) which gives him a reason to feel that fighting today may lead to benefit tomorrow. This allows leaders to effectively promise future benefit. Related to this, by participating in groups, "people learn to set each decision in the context of past and future decisions about other matters: I'd better not free-ride now because other people didn't free-ride last time, and if I do, they might free-ride next time."<sup>148</sup> The group itself will reinforce these perpetuating activities through social pressure on members to conform.

One of the most powerful forms of loyalty is 'primary group loyalty', a phenomenon which seems to be the core motivation for individuals to continue

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<sup>148</sup> Collier 2000: 99

fighting in wartime situations. In the seminal studies, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command*, by S. L. A. Marshall and *The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath*, by Samuel Stouffer, the authors found that US soldiers were most driven to continue fighting by loyalty to their immediate units.<sup>149</sup> Though there has been some more recent debate about the merit of such views,<sup>150</sup> the findings were recently reaffirmed in a US Army War College Study on Iraq.<sup>151</sup> The more generalized form of this case is that extrinsic factors, i.e. social relationships, as opposed to intrinsic, i.e. a ‘warrior spirit’, are important in understanding combat motivation.<sup>152</sup>

### ***Self help***

As loyalty pulls people into a group, the security dilemma pushes them together. In some states the government’s authority over society has collapsed completely, in these ‘collapsed states’, the nature of security changes radically. Jack Snyder and Robert Jervis describe the security situation in a collapsed state as replicating the “pattern of Hobbesian competition for security in the ‘state of nature’, where no sovereign power protects fearful individuals from each other.”<sup>153</sup> In such a situation a security dilemma develops in which “each party’s efforts to increase its own security reduce the security of others.”<sup>154</sup> Within this environment, an actor must rely on ‘self help’, i.e. he must provide for his own protection.

Continuing the parallel initiated by Snyder and Jervis, just as the security dilemma drives individuals to fight with others out of a sense of mutual threat, it also does the reverse, causing them to align with each other for defense. This may be seen

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<sup>149</sup> Marshall 1947 and Stouffer 1949

<sup>150</sup> Particularly in the case of Marshall. See for instance, Williams and Canedy 1999 (noted in Newsome 2004)

<sup>151</sup> Wong et al. 2003

<sup>152</sup> Newsome 2004

<sup>153</sup> Snyder and Jervis 1999:16

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.: 15

as resembling the classic balance of power, in which weaker actors align against more powerful actors. Therefore, while an individual may not feel loyalty to a particular group, he will join them if he feels it to be the best way to survive. The same goes for group-to-group alliances which, in conflict environments, use the logic of ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend.’ Thus, while the security dilemma may help to explain why ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia armed against each other it also helps to explain why these same groups consolidated themselves.

### ***Coercion***

Individuals may be coerced into fighting. The most basic method is to apply a physical threat. Throughout history, this has ranged from enslavement to conscription. Somewhat more sophisticated means of coercion rely on psychological manipulation. For example, the LRA abducts child soldiers and then uses a systematic process of traumatization to psychologically manipulate them into fighting. More commonly, various social and ‘peer’ pressures may be used to ‘recruit’ fighters. Rather than solving the problem of motivation, coercion circumvents it.

### ***Economic incentive***

Recent conflict analysis literature has focused extensively on the economic incentives of conflict and demonstrates how economic incentives motivate fighters. Authors such as Keen and Collier have analyzed the role that economics have played in conflicts.<sup>155</sup>

The essential point is that economic incentives provide an immediate, rather than promised, benefit to fighters, allowing for a ‘bottom-up’ motivation to fight.

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<sup>155</sup> See for instance, Keen 1998, Berdal and Malone 2000, Collier 2000 and Duffield 1998

Immediate economic gain eliminates the free-rider problem because only those who participate will benefit.<sup>156</sup> It also removes the problem of coordination for, even on a small scale, there is still benefit to be had; and, it removes the problem of time-consistency because there is the potential for immediate benefit.<sup>157</sup>

### **Logistics**

There are four basic methods used by armed groups to obtain weapons and equipment.

- They can manufacture (or grow) it,
- Steal or loot what they need,
- Purchase it from other groups,
- Or be given it by an external actor.

Again, warlords rely on each of these means of logistics. The following section will demonstrate what each form of logistical procurement entails and how warlords take advantage of it.

### ***Self-supply***

A straightforward way to attain weapons and survival goods is to make them. Historically, groups would farm or collect food and manufacture their own weapons. The primary benefit of this is that a group can be completely self-sufficient.

While farming and collecting food is possible, it is not necessarily an efficient use of resources since it is not the 'core competency' of armed groups. Some armed groups do make their own explosive devices, such as Hamas, the Irish Republican

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<sup>156</sup> Collier 2000

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

Army (IRA), and Iraqi insurgents. But, in general, it is difficult for many nation-states, much-less armed groups, to manufacture their own modern weapons.

### *Looting*

The easiest way for an armed group to obtain the weapons it needs is to steal them. When a state collapses, weaponry is often easy to obtain by looting. However, obtaining weapons from an active army may be difficult since it involves ‘picking oneself up by the bootstraps’ as it is usually necessary to have some weaponry in order to raid other groups for theirs. Moreover, as Cooper notes, weapons captured from the government “are not usually sufficient for the successful prosecution of war against the state, and most sub-state groups rely either on supplies from sympathetic government or the black market.”<sup>158</sup>

Obtaining food and water by looting is a relatively simple process, as most farmers are usually unarmed. Yet simply taking food is not always the most efficient method. Rather, as Mancur Olson notes, it can be preferable to ‘regularize’ theft.<sup>159</sup> Olson comes to this conclusion in his examination of the nature of collective action, which he undertakes in order to explain how dictatorships and democracies emerge out of anarchy.

Olson provided an account of how even in a state of anarchy, ‘bandits’ – by which he means any armed group – and those whom they prey on would both be better off if the bandit were to monopolize and rationalize theft. ‘Roving bandits’, which occasionally plunder a community, leave the community with no incentive to produce because individuals will feel that anything they do produce may potentially be stolen. Whereas, if a ‘stationary’ bandit takes his theft in a more regularized form,

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<sup>158</sup> Cooper 1999: 21

<sup>159</sup> Olson 1993

i.e. taxes, and maintains a monopoly of theft in the area, those who inhabit the area will have an incentive to produce. For “[i]f he steals only through regular taxation, then his subjects know that they can keep whatever proportion of their output is left after they have paid their taxes.”<sup>160</sup> This gives them an incentive to save and invest. In turn, the extra income generated by the inhabitants due to investment will lead to larger gains by the stationary bandit over time. Therefore, it is in his interest to leave some income to the inhabitants whilst also protecting them from ‘roving bandits’.

Olson specifically refers to the Chinese warlord Feng Yu-hsiang in justifying his logic. He notes that Feng was preferred by the local villagers as a stationary bandit over that of the roving bandit warlord, White Wolf. A similar logic holds for contemporary warlords. For instance, there is some anecdotal evidence that civilians preferred life in a more stable Taylorland than to that outside, between the various warlords controlling Liberia during the civil war.<sup>161</sup>

### *Purchasing*

Another way to gain necessary resources is to simply buy them. The effects of globalization have been particularly good to insurgencies as they have made many goods, especially weapons, easily available, even in the most remote parts of the world.<sup>162</sup> However, a reliance on purchasing weapons demands that the armed group has an economic system.

As the recent war economy literature has noted, this is not out of the question for armed groups. In particular, they have often come to rely on the extraction of natural resources, such as diamonds or timber, to exchange for goods in the global

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid.: 568

<sup>161</sup> Multiple interviews, London, UK October 2005 and Monrovia, Liberia, June 2006

<sup>162</sup> For a discussion of how this is so, see Mackinlay 2002

marketplace.<sup>163</sup> This is how, for instance, the RUF in Sierra Leone armed itself as did UNITA after its ties with the United States were broken.

In most cases, looting is only the start of the acquisition process, next it is necessary to sell the loot in order to buy what is really needed. As Reno noted in his analysis of Liberia, “Taylor recognized at the start of his conquest of Liberia that he would have to quickly find money to buy guns... The fastest way to generate hard currency lay in selling abandoned assets in areas under NPFL control.”<sup>164</sup> Eventually this loot – sell – buy cycle can become much more complex.<sup>165</sup> For instance, Taylor set up the ‘Bong Bank’ to act as the intermediary with arms dealers and “soon found he could tap more sustainable logging operations to fund military operations.”<sup>166</sup>

### *External support*

Lastly, armed groups may be given the equipment they need by external sources. Generally this is done for strategic reasons. Throughout the Cold War, one or the other superpower often funded insurgencies in states which were clients of the other superpower. For example, the United States helped fund the mujahideen in Afghanistan in their fight against the Soviets. And, of course, armed groups can rely on being given resources by local residents or diaspora who support the cause. This issue of external support will be covered in some more detail in Chapter 4, under the discussion of internal power cultivation and alliances.

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<sup>163</sup> See, for instance, Duffield 2001

<sup>164</sup> Reno 1998: 95

<sup>165</sup> Much of the war economy literature is focused on analyzing these sorts of cycles.

<sup>166</sup> Reno 1998: 95

## **Warlord Solutions to the Problems of Mobilization**

In practice, there are some definable trends in warlord's solutions to the problems of mobilization. Firstly, many warlords founded their organization based on some form of communitarian loyalty for motivation. For example, in Somalia, most warlords had some sort of connection with clans and clan-based loyalty dominated motivation (this example will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5).

However, warlords generally move away from communitarian forms of loyalty as it becomes clear what their true intentions are. This makes it more difficult for the warlord to convince fighters to remain loyal. At the same time, there are disadvantages in relying on loyalty to a communitarian cause, such as that the warlord's authority may be usurped by an outside figure, such as a clan elder.

In cases where they do maintain a pretence of communitarian ideals, they do so cynically, and with an instrumental focus. For instance, in regard to rise of warlord organizations in Liberia, Eboe Hutchful and Kwesi Aning note that:

[t]he leaders of these factions claimed to have built their armies to defend their own ethnic groups against attacks from other armed factions. Ethnicity, however, was employed simply as a façade to camouflage political ambitions and aspirations to maintain power within a small circle of Liberia's elites.<sup>167</sup>

Instead of relying on communitarian loyalty, warlords generally move toward an economic incentive or more generally patronage based system of motivation. In particular, looting becomes the most viable form of remediation. For example, the

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<sup>167</sup> Hutchful and Aning 2004: 209

NPFL had few if any ideological benefits, but it could pay its fighters well in loot. As has been reported,

Most [fighters] did not receive a cash salary – their food and essential survival needs were ‘found’ from local sources. Looting captured houses was seen as a legitimate reward for months, sometimes years, of extreme hardship.<sup>168</sup>

This is not a new phenomenon. For instance, Ch’i notes how economic incentives, usually in the form of the ability to plunder, were the major means of recruitment and retention for warlord armies in China during its warlord period.<sup>169</sup> As with contemporary warlordism, such incentives were necessary because of the soldier’s general lack of ideological or personal commitment to the warlord.<sup>170</sup>

Economic incentives are so valuable for warlords because they can motivate fighters continually and with no need for constantly reinforced ideological teachings or other processes that might interfere with the warlord’s autonomy. Warlords need only offer fighters the opportunity to loot or other economic incentives because this is a convenient way for him to initially motivate people to fight and to retain loyalty, especially in the impoverished areas where warlordism tends to be found.

Although not necessarily a primary means of motivation, the warlord is also likely to turn to coercion as a reinforcement of motivation and as a means to incorporate new members.<sup>171</sup> Brutal violence is an easy way to indoctrinate troops and

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<sup>168</sup> Alao, Mackinlay, and Olonisakin 1999: 46

<sup>169</sup> Ch’i 1976

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.: 83

<sup>171</sup> We should not take the warlord political community to be solely made up of adult men. They do have women and children as members. Women are often made into combat soldiers by warlords. At other times women may act as porters or ‘wives’ to warlord fighters. Child soldiers are also commonly

enforce loyalty. Other forms of psychological manipulation may be used to recruit new members, including offering addictive drugs. In many cases, warlords can rely on the recruitment of war orphans, who may not have anywhere else to turn to for protection.

At the same time, warlordism may become a self-fulfilling prophecy, as the insecurity they create forces individuals to think in terms of self help, and in instances join the warlord organization. In many instances, the local population, especially young men, can only turn to enlistment with the warlord to find any security. As Christopher Coker notes, there has been the growth of a “neo-feudal security regime in which the only protection against violence is membership of gangs, clans, or allegiance to personal warlords or leaders with their respective feudal affiliations and ties.”<sup>172</sup> In total, it is often the case that it is safer to be part of a warlord organization than it is to be a civilian.<sup>173</sup>

Furthermore, these ties are not always forced; but may themselves “create a strong sense of identity” in that “[n]eo-tribal affiliations can provide what spirit of community there is in much of the world, and that spirit often feeds off war.”<sup>174</sup> This breakdown in identity is itself partially an outgrowth of warlordism and, again, in this sense warlordism may create a vicious spiral.

More generally, appeasing a warlord may be the only way to remove his threat. For example, when Taylor ran for President of Liberia in 1997, his (unofficial) campaign slogan was: "You killed my ma; you killed my pa; I'll vote for you,"<sup>175</sup> and

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used by warlords as has been extensively documented by NGOs such as Human Rights Watch (e.g. HRW 1997). Children may even be born into the warlord organization as occurs with the LRA.

<sup>172</sup> Coker 2001: 115

<sup>173</sup> Keen 1998

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.: 115

<sup>175</sup> 30 June 2005 IRIN

“the overwhelming vote for Taylor was in reality a vote for the only leader who could deliver peace.”<sup>176</sup>

The reliance on patronage only adds to the warlords pressing economic needs. Weapons are also extremely important as are basic food and clothing necessities. In order to meet these economic needs, the warlord must exploit resources. Warlords cannot easily turn to taxation in the way that more legitimate political actors can. While warlords can turn to external supporters, they are careful about the loss of independence and are notoriously disloyal when their interests change. Instead of being seen as dependents, external suppliers tend to supply warlords when their interests converge rather than when they hope to change the warlord’s interests.

In general, warlords tend to turn to looting to meet their economic needs. This aspect of warlordism is explained to some degree by Clapham, who notes:

Since it was difficult for insurgents to develop regular structures of production, the export of goods from insurgent-held areas was liable to degenerate into a once-for-all sale of anything that could be carried away, with very damaging effects on long-term economic development. Given the problems of bulk transport under guerilla war conditions, low bulk and high value items had an obvious attraction. This explained the lure of Angola’s diamond mines to UNITA, and the extension of the Liberian war over the frontier into the diamond-mining areas of Sierra Leone.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Alao, Mackinlay, and Olonisakin 1999: 119

<sup>177</sup> Clapham 1996: 233

Here Clapham is commenting on all forms of insurgency (in Africa) but it is clear that this applies more to warlords than to other types of armed groups. The reason for this is that most other types of armed groups have some form of connection with the community that will prevent them from too much excess in their looting, warlords do not have such a connection. At the same time, traditional insurgencies seek to take over the state and therefore may not want to completely destroy that which they hope to one day run. Again, warlords do not necessarily have such ambitions – and if they do, they are not likely to care much about the health of the state in any case – and therefore they may show a degree of excess not seen in other types of armed groups.

The implication of this analysis is that while it is true that these funds do benefit a warlord or his followers, this is not necessarily to say that this is the reason why warlordism exists. Seen from another perspective, economic exploitation serves as a way of perpetuating the warlord organization, just as national economies and taxes perpetuate states. This point will be taken up again in Chapter 3.

### **Independence**

All international actors are interdependent to some degree, including warlords.<sup>178</sup> For instance, even states must rely on logistical arrangements with foreign powers, sometimes even potential enemies, to provide for weapons and other equipment. With this in mind, we must treat warlord independence as relative.

The test of an armed group's independence will be based on the degree to which it can demonstrate control over its decisions. If, for instance, the armed group is fully funded by a state and carries out those states' orders, it is clearly not independent. On the other hand, if it is only reliant on its own home-made weapons

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<sup>178</sup> In fact, it may be held that all organizations are. (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978)

and never communicates with outside actors, it is clearly independent. In most cases, however, there will be some degree of a mixture. Within such a qualification, the warlord is independent, at least to the same degree as an average state.

### *Parasitical Nature*

The warlord's independence is an odd and complicated one since the warlord is parasitic off of what we may call the 'host state'. It is in this sense that warlords are, as Hobbes remarks, "like worms in the entrails of natural man."<sup>179</sup> This parasitic nature of the warlord is a return to an older form of warfare, as Coker tells us, which has existed since before the Axial Period of history.<sup>180</sup> Coker points out that pre-civilizational warriors were "resented even by those whom they were supposed to be defending. The...armies they commanded had to be fed and provisioned, and the security they provided was often oppressive."<sup>181</sup> The warlord organization's parasitism means that it is absolutely illegitimate in the sense that it has no legitimate reason to expect to receive any gains, since it provides nothing, but instead forces others to give.

It is this parasitical nature of warlord political communities that fundamentally differentiates it from the state, tribe, or other form of self-sustainable political community. The warlord taps into the people and economic resources of a state, and siphons off what is necessary.<sup>182</sup> It would not be possible for a warlord to exist as an entity without a state of some sort. If such a situation were to occur, the warlord

<sup>179</sup> Hobbes 1998: 221

<sup>180</sup> Coker 2002

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.: 168

<sup>182</sup> For this reason, it is not essential for the warlord to control the state. It may be desirable, as a route to further power – as for instance Taylor eventually took control of the Liberian state – but it is not necessary. As Clapham noted, "leaders like Taylor and Aidid, or equally Savimbi, seek to take over the recognized national governments of their respective states, but could run their own quasi-governmental operations in the absence of fixed territories, formal governmental structures, or international recognition." (Clapham 1998b: 8)

organization would necessarily have to transform its organizational structure into one that was a de facto state of some sort, which had the organizational structure to rule over a larger, self-sustaining political community. This, in fact, does occur if, for instance, the warlord takes over a state completely. However, usually the warlord does not do this and simply continues a parasitic existence.

Yet, it is also this parasitic nature that allows the warlord to also return to an older form of almost absolute warfare. In his analysis of the Scythians, Coker reminds us that nomadic warriors such as the Scythians could deploy up to 70 percent of male population to fight – an astounding figure.<sup>183</sup> Yet, warlords are able to employ an even higher percentage of fighters. They may even reach up to near 100 percent of the members of their political community for fighting. The reason is that they do not need to provide for any of the requirements of subsistence, except through warfare and looting of various degrees. They do not even need to have women with which to bare them children to produce new warriors, given that they simply abduct or bribe others from outside communities to fight for them. Though, of course, many warlord organizations do have women fighters.

Although the warlord organization is parasitic, it is nonetheless an independent organization and truly separate from the state. The warlord is not dependent on the state's public goods, or any other state or entity. The warlord organization simply loots what it wants. Nor does the warlord organization need defense from outside actors. Rather, the warlord organization provides for its own security. When a warlord does make alliances with other states, he is sure to maintain his decision-making authority, as is illustrated by the high rate of warlord's cheating

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<sup>183</sup> Coker 2002

on, or otherwise backing out of alliances which no longer suit him. The warlord's use of alliances will be covered in more detail in Chapter 4.

The warlord is also independent from society. The warlord organization is its own political community and is therefore separate from society. It may exploit local civilians, just as the warlord may exploit any group; however, it is not dependent on local civilians for goodwill. This differentiates him from national resistance movements or traditional guerilla organization, which must rely on the support of local civilian communities. The differentiation is important, since by aligning with society, the warlord may have to provide concessions, whereas by looting from society, the warlord does not lose any decision making authority.

It is the warlord's independence from society which separates it from other types of autonomous and independent armed groups. Some insurgents come to control large swaths of territory as well as large populations. These insurgents, however, usually depend on society. Using standard guerilla doctrine they base their power in the ability to align themselves with society and use its resources to combat the government. This is how, for example, Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) was able to maintain itself, even without turning to significant external support.<sup>184</sup> This alignment allows the guerilla to make the organization independent from the state, but in turn it limits the guerilla's independence from society. However, this is acceptable to the guerilla organization because they are not attempting to separate themselves from society, but rather to take power over society from the government or to secede from the state with society. The warlord does not turn to society for support, nor does he then turn to dependency on an external state

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<sup>184</sup> See Kasfir 2002 for an analysis of NRM popular support.

sponsor – traditionally the other means for an insurgency to gain support.<sup>185</sup> This differentiation between the warlord and traditional guerilla organizations will be covered in more detail below.

Similarly, clan and tribe based militias are also autonomous and independent from the state at times, however, they are based on a larger society. For instance, in Somalia some of the militias are direct extensions of the clan and are thus commanded by the clan elders, who are outside of the militia structure, not by a warlord, who would be at the top of the militia structure. These groups are therefore not true praetorian political communities. (Chapter 5 will compare and contrast clan-based militias with warlords in more detail.<sup>186</sup>)

### ***Warlord Administration***

Conversely, warlords can opt to expand their rule to cover civilians outside of the warlord political community. For instance, after the 1990 ceasefire in Liberia, Taylor set up and administered an area known as ‘Taylorland’, with its capital in Gbarnga. In this administered area, he and the NPFL provided a basic structure for administering local law and justice. They also used it as an economic base from which to trade with Western corporations.

Such warlord administrations threaten the independence of the warlord and the immediate warlord political community. Just as with the warlord organization, coercion is not a very effective means of authority and therefore the warlord will generally need to make concessions to the civilian community and legitimate his authority. In other words, the warlord may need to not only take, but also give to

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<sup>185</sup> For instance, Clapham refers to ‘internal’ and ‘external’ insurgencies, in reference to whether the insurgency is located inside the ‘target’ state, and therefore receives support from the local population, or in a neighboring state, and therefore receiving support from that state. Clapham 1996

<sup>186</sup> Also see, Vinci 2006b

society. Doing so may force structural changes in the warlord organization and its very nature may change. This defines the boundary at which the warlord organization bleeds into other types of political organizations, such as 'embryonic' or 'de facto' statehood. These boundaries will be examined in the comparison section to follow.

### **Proposed Definition**

To summarize, warlord organizations are truly a different form of political community from the western liberal nation-state, tribes, or other political communities which we are accustomed to considering. The warlord organization was found to be an armed group in the sense that it is a non-state, unitary actor and it maintains its autonomy through the use of arms. The warlord organization is also a political community based on membership and inclusion, rather than territorial connection, and this fiefdom is able to govern and perpetuate itself indefinitely. Furthermore, the warlord is independent from all other actors, as the state is, and he uses economic or other exploitation to maintain this independence.

This conceptualization has provided an understanding of warlords in the same way that we have an understanding of the nature of states. It has brought out many complex ideas, but, as with states, it is possible to simplify the definition into a form which includes the most important concepts and which reflects, though also builds upon, previous definitions.

We may define warlords as: *non-state actors that use military power and economic exploitation to maintain fiefdoms which are autonomous and independent from the state and society.*

We can operationalize this definition and test whether an actor is a warlord by first asking whether he has a political community over which he is the highest

authority. Is this fiefdom autonomous; i.e. does the group have the military power to do what it wants? Secondly, we can ask if the group is independent; i.e. does he have the ability to obtain the personnel and equipment and can he direct this force effectively and cohesively enough to be autonomous, without losing decision making authority.

Conceptualizing warlords in the terms presented above serves some analytic goals. Firstly, the organization and methodologies of warlords make sense and our definition aligns with empirical observations of warlordism. Secondly, warlord organizations can be neatly integrated into IR theory and in general, interactions with both domestic and international actors make sense from a theoretical level. The following chapters will use this definition to address how warlords relate with states and other international actors.

Before moving on, however, it is important to note that this conceptualization also provides a parsimonious way of differentiating warlords from related actors. It will be helpful to compare warlords with other types of armed groups. By doing this we can clear any confusion as to which actors are warlords. Moreover, we will understand what factors make other types of armed groups unlike warlords. This will be helpful in the conclusion of this study, when the applicability of the Neorealist approach to other types of armed groups will be discussed.

## **COMPARISONS WITH OTHER ACTORS**

As noted in the introduction, many different types of actors are called warlords, even if they are not and, vice versa, warlords may be referred to by other names. In many cases it will be difficult to distinguish the warlord from different types of armed groups, especially the guerilla insurgent. Moreover, there may be a certain amount of

evolution by one type into the other. This may cause confusion in analysis as it does in reality. However, by using the concepts and definition developed in this chapter, comparison can be quite precise.

The following sections will compare warlords with other types of organizations. Specifically, it will differentiate warlords from criminal gangs, terrorists, traditional guerillas, proxy militias, *de facto* states, and 'embryonic' states.

### **Criminal Gangs**

Unlike warlords, criminals skirt the state's imposed law and order, but they are still very much dependent on it. As Mackinlay puts it "the Mafia live as citizens of a free society in most cases, and their freedom to move and communicate is not guaranteed by their own military strength, but by the institutions of the state."<sup>187</sup> Even if organized criminals were able to rival the state, they probably would not. Robinson remarks that organized criminals

are not likely to gain greatly where no regulation or control exists because enforced laws are needed to differentiate the products and services they offer. It is the perverse contradiction of the gangster existence that, although he undermines the state or states in which he operates, he depends on their basic stability for his commercial success.<sup>188</sup>

Criminals are parasitic on the state in that their economic gain comes from subverting the state's law and order. For example, drug dealers' added value is in providing a

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<sup>187</sup> Mackinlay 2000: 7

<sup>188</sup> Robinson 2001: 127

product which is illegal under the state. If drugs were to be legalized, drug dealers would cease to exist.<sup>189</sup>

It should be noted that, by definition, warlords are considered criminal by the state(s) which they occupy and likely by the international community. They are 'criminal' in the sense that they are a rival to the state's legitimate authority. Furthermore, their reliance on economic exploitation and violent tactics makes them immoral and illegitimate by any measure.

However, warlords are not like criminal gangs because they do try to separate themselves from the state. They do not need, nor want, the state's public goods. Their benefit comes controlling their own fiefdom and taking what they want from other communities. Thus, while warlords are technically illegal organizations, they are not professional criminals in the usual sense of the term.

### **Terrorists**

Warlords are sometimes accused of being terrorists because of their reliance on such savage forms of violence, however, they are clearly not terrorists upon closer examination. Terrorists use violence committed upon civilians to bring about political change or bring attention to a political or cultural grievance through direct pressure on a government or indirectly through the backlash from a government's draconian response to the terrorist's violence. The terrorist typically exists within a society and relies on secrecy to remain undetected until his attack. Thus, unlike the warlord, the terrorist does not try to separate from the state.

Warlords may also use terrorist tactics as well, since these tactics are often effective in asymmetric warfare.<sup>190</sup> However, we must be careful to make the proper

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<sup>189</sup> Or, at least find an alternate racket. For example, when Prohibition ended, the American mafias were forced to find other businesses such as gambling and extortion to fund themselves.

distinction between terrorist organizations and organizations which use terrorist tactics. The warlord organization is made up of an inclusive political community which wishes to remain autonomous from broader society. They are less concerned with changing a specific government policy or drawing attention to a particular political or cultural issue and therefore we should not confuse them with terrorists per se.

### **Traditional Insurgents**

Traditional insurgents rival the state, but cannot gain their independence from it, or from society.<sup>191</sup> Guerilla warfare depends on the enlistment of the help of the local population in its war against the state, as Mao Tse-tung said, “because guerilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathies and co-operation.”<sup>192</sup> The local population is used for voluntary recruitment, it provides economic aid including food and other supplies, and in Maoist doctrine it provides shelter for the military to disperse into during attack by the government. In many cases guerillas will also sleep in civilian villages and, in general, can still be considered a part of the community. Furthermore, since the local population is still subject to the state’s authority and dependent on its public goods to some extent, the guerilla is indirectly connected

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<sup>190</sup> There are also hybrid organizations, such as Hezbollah, which use terrorist tactics and control territory. In the case of Hezbollah, it was more proper to describe them as an insurgency, as they were specifically fighting against Israeli occupation. Now it may be better to describe them as a de facto state or even political party.

<sup>191</sup> I will use insurgent to refer to those who rival the state’s authority in order to overthrow the state and take power. Guerillas are those who use guerilla warfare doctrine in order to rival the state. These terms overlap but are not necessarily the same. Warlords may also use guerilla warfare doctrine and in many cases they may be considered insurgents in that they are rivaling the state’s authority. However, it is not necessarily the case that they are trying to take over the state. For instance, many Afghan warlords use more conventional warfare tactics. Also, since there is no real state to speak of in southern Somalia, it does not make sense to call Somali warlords ‘insurgents’.

<sup>192</sup> Mao 1961, reprinted in Campbell 1967: 260

with, and therefore reliant on, the state. The insurgent organization can be reliant on local society because it does not want to separate from the state, but to replace it.

Related to the traditional insurgent is the secessionist guerilla, which wants to split off and create a separate but equal state. In calling for a continuation of the state under a separate leadership, the insurgent can enlist the support of the local population. For instance, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) fought for secession from Ethiopia. As an organization it was integrated into society and enlisted the voluntary services of society.

The warlord on the other hand, creates a completely separate, enclosed political community, which at best ignores local communities or at worst parasitically lives off of them. Warlords are not reliant on a local population for support; rather they tend to be predators on the local population. Indeed, predation is one of the most common signs of a warlord organization. When not directly exploiting a local population, warlords use other economic means to perpetuate themselves, especially the sale of natural resources, as warlords in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the DRC have done. In a similar manner, they do not need the good will of a local population to recruit new members. Instead, they may use economic incentives or force to acquire new personnel. The conclusion is that warlords can rival the state without necessarily enlisting the help of the local population.

Additionally, warlord organizations will also have a different structure from insurgent organizations. As Mackinlay points out:

There is a strong relationship between [a popular movement's] structure and the appeal it makes to the supporting population. If a popular insurgency is proclaiming self-determination, then it should

reflect structures designed for that purpose, and not be overwhelmingly organized for grey-area trading and the exploitation of natural resources.<sup>193</sup>

For example, the insurgency will often have a relatively large portion of its organization devoted to political issues, education, and public relations. A typical example is the EPLF. Warlords on the other hand, will doubtfully focus much organizational attention on these issues; though they may focus at least some attention in order to attempt a legitimization of their financial dealings, as Taylor did when he set up, amongst other things, a television station and bank within Taylorland.<sup>194</sup>

### **Foreign-Funded Guerillas/Proxy Militias**

The other method for mounting an effective guerilla war, especially prominent during the Cold War, is to rely on foreign aid for support. This sort of support allows the guerilla to separate itself from the local population, as for instance, the Greek Communist guerillas were able to do in finding shelter in the states north of Greece.<sup>195</sup>

A related example is proxy militias, which are organizations set up and controlled by the state in order to carry out policy goals. An example of a proxy militia is the South African and Rhodesian funded organization Mozambiquan National Resistance (RENAMO).<sup>196</sup>

Such groups are an extension of another state's military or intelligence service in that their aims are dependent on and to some degree controlled by another state. At the extreme they would not even count as NSAs, in that they would not be

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<sup>193</sup> Mackinlay 2002: 70

<sup>194</sup> Harris 1999

<sup>195</sup> Joes 2004: 19

<sup>196</sup> Resistencia Nacional Moçambicana (GlobalSecurity.org 2005c)

autonomous from the state at all. Warlords are, however, truly autonomous and independent NSAs in that they are not hierarchically commanded by another state.<sup>197</sup>

### **De Facto States**

Another class of NSA which may resemble a warlord organization is a ‘state-within-state’, Paul Kingston’s term, or ‘de facto state’, Ian S. Spears’ and Scott Pegg’s term.<sup>198</sup> These organizations have many of the features of a state, but are not granted legitimacy as a state by the international community. In his discussion of the empirical nature of states-within-states, Spears notes that:

states-within-states have imposed effective control over territory within a larger state and may have an impressive array of institutional structures that, among other things, allow taxes to be collected, services to be provided, and business with other international actors to be conducted.<sup>199</sup>

Somaliland is a case in point. The former British protectorate was incorporated into Somalia after decolonization. It subsequently fractured into warlord rule after Barre’s departure in 1991, along with the rest of Somalia. As the rest of Somalia continued on into a deep state of anarchy, Somaliland consolidated factional rule into state or state-like rule. Analysts have pointed out the numerous marks of statehood

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<sup>197</sup> While a warlord is not a proxy militia, he may provide his organization’s services for a fee to another state. For example, numerous Afghan warlords were funded by the United States in its war against the Taliban. In fact, many warlords begin to some extent as proxy militias or have phases where they are more or less fully funded by a foreign state. An example would be UNITA and its shift from foreign backing to the use of resource exploitation for funding. (Global Witness 1998)

<sup>198</sup> Kingston 2004; Spears 2004; Pegg 1998, 2004

<sup>199</sup> Spears 2004: 169

that Somaliland has, including an elected President, its own visas, and embassies, as well as some public good including a relative monopoly over violence.<sup>200</sup>

However, de facto states are structured much more similarly to a state than are warlord organizations. What sets de facto states apart is that, unlike warlords, they have a territorial based, civil political community, and provide public goods – just as states do. In addition, de facto states are significantly more developed and have a much more complex organization that allows for the typical social, political and economic structures that define (full) states. Also, in general, these political entities generally *want to* become states. Pegg makes this explicit in his definition of de facto states, he distinguishes “the de facto state from other entities that might exercise functional control over a given piece of territory but that either did not have political goals or had political goals different from secession to a sovereign statehood.”<sup>201</sup>

Warlords, in contrast, have private fiefdoms and do not provide public goods. They are not necessarily trying to become states, nor do they have the structural organization to do so, as they are praetorian in nature.

### **Embryonic States**

Paul Jackson attempts to make the case that warlords may become like de facto states and that we should in fact see them as ‘embryonic states’. He notes that

warlords represent an attempt to reestablish stability within anarchy.

All warlords, to an extent, are rebuilding patronage networks and the

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<sup>200</sup> Bryden 2004

<sup>201</sup> Pegg 2004: 201

means to enforce contracts – quasi-government operating a monopoly of violence within established, although flexible areas.<sup>202</sup>

Of their apparent illegitimacy, Jackson goes on to say that many states, if not most states, formed through violence. He remarks, “[t]he history of the state is littered by homicidal leaders who were precisely those who were most likely to succeed in the context of anarchy with no restrictions on the use of force.”<sup>203</sup>

Such an evolution is not out of the question. Warlords will attempt to create a more legitimate rule as soon as the opportunity presents itself. Weber notes this in relation to those who have gained power through war. He remarks: “...as soon as their domination has been stabilized, the royal power and those with vested interest in it, the royal following, search for legitimacy, that is, for the mark of the charismatically qualified ruler.”<sup>204</sup>

And, in fact, we see this occur regularly with warlords. For example, in 1997, after having stabilized his power, Taylor ran for and won the Presidency of Liberia. Recently, many warlords in Afghanistan have been attempting to be elected to national governance or to make themselves a local governor.<sup>205</sup>

However, the sort of political organization necessary to provide public goods, and thereby gain legitimacy, is very different from that employed by warlords. This would involve ideological changes in order to support the state and a much more complex government and bureaucracy to provide social and economic welfare. The warlord’s private political community dismisses the idea of public goods, which are

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<sup>202</sup> Jackson 2003: 147

<sup>203</sup> Ibid

<sup>204</sup> Weber 1978: 1143

<sup>205</sup> Though, these warlords have had difficulties in doing so, and some have not been allowed to run. (BBC 6 September 2005)

necessary for state-like legitimacy. In other words, for a warlord organization to become a state would mean that it was no longer a warlord organization.

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter examined the nature of warlord organizations and provided a deep conceptual analysis which incorporated the central features of warlords and warlord organizations. It looked at the warlord as an individual; the nature of the warlord organization as a political community; and the nature of warlord governance and command. In doing so, it was found that warlords were cohesive, singular actors. The chapter also made the case that warlords are autonomous actors and gain this autonomy through military force. It found that warlords are self-perpetuating organizations and use different strategies to acquire the personnel and equipment they need to perpetuate themselves. Finally, it was observed that even though warlords are parasitic on states, they are independent organizations. In total, warlords were defined as: non-state actors that use military power and economic exploitation to maintain fiefdoms which are autonomous and independent from the state and society.

In making this analysis, this chapter explained why warlords act as they do and integrated many of the observed features of warlordism. For instance, this chapter has argued that warlords are able to be so savage because of their enclosed political community's disassociation from society and their need to fight a particular form of asymmetric warfare which does not rely on society. It found that the warlord as an individual is so central to the organization because the non-bureaucratic warlord organization relies on this patronage as well as charismatic leadership the warlord is the central link in the patronage chain. It also found that warlords are highly concerned with economic exploitation, but that rather than being a goal of the

warlord, economic exploitation is instrumentally used. The chapter also explained how the warlord's jealously guarded autonomy and independence are what allow the warlord to act autonomously in the international system.

Based on this conceptual analysis, we are now in a position to offer some preliminary insights to the central question of this thesis: how do warlords relate with states and other international actors? We can say that warlords have their own independent and autonomous foreign relations. This means that they are free to make their own alliances, make war with whom they wish, and otherwise exist separately from the state. In other words, it seems that warlords interact in a similar way to the way that states do – using conflict and negotiation. Just as with the state, warlord's main agents are the “diplomat and soldier,”<sup>206</sup> even if they are not called that. This is, however, a superficial answer.

In order to add depth to this answer, it is necessary to use a theoretical approach to take this understanding of warlord and explain what sort of relations we can expect from them. The first step of defining the subject of study has been accomplished. The next step in the process of answering the thesis question, then, must be to demonstrate if and how we can use a Neorealist approach to theorize about warlord international relations.

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<sup>206</sup> Keohane and Nye 1971: ix

### CHAPTER 3– WARLORDS AND NEOREALISM

Chapter 2 thoroughly conceptualized warlords, thereby providing some insight into how they relate with states and other international actors. In this chapter this conceptualization will be taken and used to lay the foundation for a theoretical understanding of warlord relations.

As argued in the introduction to this study, the Neorealist approach is the best suited for describing and explaining the relations of warlords. The reason for choosing a Neorealist approach is wrapped up in the nature of warlordism. Specifically, Neorealism is the theory best equipped to get past the apparent differences between warlords and states, to analyze the political and military relations of warlords, to deal with the ‘de facto’ nature of warlordism, and to provide a description and explanation of their relations which can be integrated into traditional models of international politics.

There have been attempts to use specific concepts from (Neo)Realist theory in the analysis of armed groups. In particular, Barry Posen was the first person to consider internal conflicts using Realist notions when he applied the concept of the security dilemma to ethnic conflict.<sup>207</sup> Realism is a promising avenue for understanding internal wars because of its insights concerning the universality of human nature (that man is driven by ‘fear, honor and greed’), the centrality of anarchy, and its focus on the balance of power.<sup>208</sup> Others, including Stephen David,

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<sup>207</sup> Posen 1993

<sup>208</sup> As noted by David (1995).

Nelson Kasfir, and Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder, have followed Posen in using the concept of security dilemma to describe the nature of internal war.<sup>209</sup>

However, this chapter is not an attempt to discover the causes of internal wars and it is not an attempt to only apply a single concept from Neorealism to an armed group. Rather, this chapter is concerned with understanding the international relations of warlords. In order to do this, it is necessary to apply the entire theory of Neorealism, not just a single concept. This will involve demonstrating that any criteria that Neorealism demands of actors to be analyzed as units in the system are met by warlords.

The structure of this argument will be to first illustrate what the criteria are for using Realism to analyze warlords and then what the additional criteria are for using Neorealism to analyze warlords. This is the most effective way to make the argument because Neorealism is in effect an extension of Realism and Neorealism therefore makes assumptions about actors meeting the criteria of Realism. The specific framework which will be used to examine the Realist criteria is one illustrated by Gilpin, where the assumptions of Realism are divided into issues of group, motivation, and anarchy.<sup>210</sup> For each assumption, it will be demonstrated that warlords do meet the criteria. After this is complete, the additional criteria of Neorealism – based on Waltz's work – will be addressed and it will be demonstrated that warlords also meet these criteria. By demonstrating that warlords meet all of the criteria of Neorealism, it will be possible to conclude that the Neorealist theoretical approach can be used for analysis.

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<sup>209</sup> David 1995, Kasfir 2004, and Snyder and Jervis 1999

<sup>210</sup> Gilpin 1986

### **Realist and Neorealist Criteria**

Gilpin describes three essential assumptions of Realism.<sup>211</sup> The first is that it is focused on group rather than individual explanations. The second is that there is a focus on power and survival by these actors. Lastly it deals with actors in an anarchic system.

We can extrapolate from Gilpin's assumptions and say that these assumptions are criteria for the use of Realism for analysis. The object of study must be a group; this group must be motivated in terms of power and/or security; and, this group must exist in an anarchic system.

Beyond these basic criteria for Realist analysis, there are further criteria for Neorealist analysis. These include that the actors must be specific types of groups, based on Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, in particular they must be sovereign, functionally undifferentiated, 'like units'. Furthermore, it must be possible to make the assumption that their primary motivation is survival. As with Realism, Neorealism assumes an anarchic environment.

Prima facie it seems that warlords are not analyzable using Neorealism because they do not seem to meet the criteria. For instance, they do not seem to be the right kind of group in that they are not states. They do not seem to be motivated by power or survival, but rather by greed or grievance. Lastly, they exist inside of a state, which is considered to be a hierarchic, not anarchic system. While it may not seem to be the case at first, in fact warlords do meet the requirements for Neorealist analysis, as the following argument will make clear.

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

## GROUPS

It is often assumed that Realism only deals with states, or at the least, city-states, such as those of ancient Greece or Renaissance Italy. The implication is that other actors within a state, even one which is collapsed, cannot be analyzed by Realism. However, Realism is, in fact, concerned with the interactions of social groups in general. Gilpin illustrates the importance of groups in his discussion of the three fundamental assumptions of Realism. He notes:

...the essence of social reality is the group... This is another way of saying that in a world of scarce resources and conflict over the distribution of those resources, human beings confront one another ultimately as members of groups, and not as isolated individuals... In the modern world we have given the name “nation state” to these competing tribes and the name “nationalism” to this form of loyalty... the name, size and organization of the competing groups into which our species subdivides itself do alter over time – tribes, city-states, kingdoms, empires, and nation-states – due to economic, demographic, and technological reasons.<sup>212</sup>

Nelson Kasfir describes some of the key features of a group that could be analyzed using Realism. He specifies that we cannot treat any potential political unit as relevant members of an (domestic) anarchic system.<sup>213</sup> Specifically, he points out that there must be leaders that “have the capacity to commit their units to politics that

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid.: 305 Specifically, these are what Gilpin calls “conflict groups” based on Ralf Dahrendorf’s concept. (Dahrendorf 1959)

<sup>213</sup> Kasfir makes this point in relation to there being groups around which individuals can bond and thereby set up a security dilemma. However, it can also apply to more general units in the system. (Kasfir 2004)

their members cannot undermine.”<sup>214</sup> In other words, the groups must be cohesive. Furthermore, he notes that while such cohesiveness works well for states and their assumed “impervious containers” and “autonomous rulers”, it does not necessarily apply to all forms of social groups which are generally “informal collectivities whose membership may rapidly change and whose leaders often have little legitimacy and uncertain capacity to induce compliance among their followers.”<sup>215</sup> Thus, he concludes, it is necessary to examine the internal characteristics of the social groups in question in order to determine whether they are capable of taking part in a security dilemma – which we may extrapolate to mean that they can be analyzed in terms of Realism.

Kasfir is exactly right, some groups are more cohesively formed than others and therefore it is necessary to make an internal analysis of the group to determine if it is an acceptable actor. Kasfir is referring to the concept of ‘unitary actor’. These are actors that have a cohesive body of members which can be directed by a leadership in a structured fashion and therefore act as a singular entity in terms of motivations and goals.

Warlords meet this requirement. In Chapter 2, exactly the type of examination of the internal characteristics of the social group that Kasfir calls for was performed. It was found that warlords have a definable inside/outside boundary. The warlord organization is made up of a cohesive group which has a continually self-reinforcing organizational structure. Finally, the group is commanded by a leader, the warlord himself, who can enforce compliance to his commands. Thus it is possible to conclude that warlords have exactly the type of group which has the “impervious

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<sup>214</sup> Kasfir 2004: 62

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.: 63

container”, i.e. inside/outside boundary, and autonomous leader that Kasfir refers to as a necessary ingredient for analysis. In other words, warlords are unitary actors.

However, this is not the only requirement. Most types of armed groups are groups in this sense. But, all armed groups cannot necessarily be the object of (Neo)Realist study. One of the reasons is that some groups may not have international relations at all, if for instance, they are solely domestic actors. For example, the Klu Klux Klan may be a group, but it does not really have international relations or what we might call a ‘foreign policy’ to speak of.<sup>216</sup> Additionally, even if groups do have international relations, they may still just be the extension of another actor. For example, RENAMO had international relations, but it was better seen and analyzed as an extension of Rhodesian and South African foreign policy.

In order to be considered a relevant actor for Realism, an actor must have independent foreign relations. This demands that the actors have the ability to take part in relations across national boundaries without being constrained by another actor. In other words, the actor must be autonomous. Secondly, the actor must not be an extension of another actor’s foreign policy, but rather must be an independent actor.

In Chapter 2 it was demonstrated that warlords meet these requirements. Warlords are autonomous and independent actors. They have the military ability to rival the state and thereby maintain autonomy in their own relations with international actors. They also have the economic and organizational ability to maintain independence, including over their own foreign relations.

A further trait common to actors which are analyzable by Realism is that they are sovereign. Sovereignty is implied by the requirements outlined so far – i.e. being a

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<sup>216</sup> Traditionally, foreign policy is a term only applied to states. However, it can be used to apply to any set of relations which are conducted across national boundaries on the behalf of the actor’s interests.

unitary actor which has independent foreign relations. Clapham hinted at the sovereignty of some armed groups when he noted that “[m]ilitarily effective movements meet the most basic criterion for statehood, which is physical control over territory and population.”<sup>217</sup> In particular, Clapham points to the EPLF, UNITA, and the NPFL. Clapham also notes that these militant groups also “act like states in important respects.”<sup>218</sup> These actions include licit and illicit economic interactions and “important and sometimes formal, diplomatic relations with external states.”<sup>219</sup> However, Clapham never makes the strong argument that armed groups can be sovereign. This study can make this stronger argument.

The concept of sovereignty reflects the notion of being the highest authority over internal and external affairs. However, the exact nature of sovereignty is notoriously difficult to describe, much less define. One helpful approach for using the concept is to separate it into constituent facets. This approach is used by Hedley Bull, Robert Jackson, and Stephen Krasner amongst others.<sup>220</sup> The most basic, and useful, distinction we can speak of is between empirical and juridical sovereignty. While states have both, warlords have the former but not the latter.

### **Empirical (De facto) Sovereignty**

Being an autonomous, independent actor is central to the notion of sovereignty. The idea that autonomy and independence convey sovereignty goes back to the origins of the debate over the definition of sovereignty. Jean Bodin, the French lawyer and political thinker, noted “he is absolutely sovereign who recognizes nothing, after God,

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<sup>217</sup> Clapham 1998: 150

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.: 152

<sup>220</sup> Bull 1997, Jackson 1993, Krasner 1999

that is greater than himself.”<sup>221</sup> Bodin goes on to examine in a more detail how a sovereign must be the highest authority and not subject to authority himself:

persons who are sovereign must not be subject in any way to the commands of someone else and must be able to give the law to subjects, and to suppress or repeal disadvantageous laws and replace them with others – which cannot be done by someone who is subject to the laws or to persons having power of command over him.<sup>222</sup>

In other words, a sovereign actor is the highest authority, one which is autonomous and independent from the commands of any other actor. Sovereignty in terms of autonomy and independence may be referred to as ‘empirical sovereignty’ or ‘de facto sovereignty’.

Bodin’s account of sovereignty is exceptional in that it introduced the idea that sovereignty is indivisible.<sup>223</sup> This is opposed to the overlapping sovereignties of the medieval era. His view arose out of an ongoing debate about the nature of power which lower level magistrates held. Bodin’s contribution was to ask “what prerogatives a political authority must hold exclusively if it is not to acknowledge a superior or equal in its territory.”<sup>224</sup>

Bodin’s conception of sovereignty is foundational to more modern concepts of sovereignty in that it elicits the notion of an ‘exclusive’ sovereignty – this being the point that there can only be one final authority over any given individual. Generally, this final, exclusive authority is the state. Though, the state’s government may be

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<sup>221</sup> Bodin 2002: 271

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.: 273

<sup>223</sup> See Bodin, Franklin trans. 1992

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.: xv

split, as for instance, the United States' government is, into different branches, and in this sense it may differ from Bodin's original formulation. Nonetheless, for the purposes of international relations, sovereignty exists as a single authority, and thereby the basis was set for a system of states which had exclusive authority. This flows from the extension of the argument that "there had to exist in every commonwealth a single individual or group in which the entire power of the states was concentrated."<sup>225</sup> This applied to France, as well as other kingdoms such as England or Spain, and now applies to all states.

Typically, we speak of sovereignty in terms of control over territory, but in some cases sovereignty arises through control over people. Territorial control should not be a limiting factor because we can talk about sovereign groups that are definable by their control over people rather than any particular piece of territory. As noted earlier, Herbst points out that in the case of African states, where geography and low technology made sovereignty over territory difficult to enforce, sovereignty was expressed over people.<sup>226</sup> This personal sovereignty is applicable to warlords in relation to their effective authority over the warlord political community. However, this is not to say that warlords do not also control territory. Often warlords will formally control some piece of territory on a temporary to permanent basis. However, the basis for the warlord's sovereignty is in membership in the warlord organization, not territory.

It is in this sense that the warlord has sovereignty – it is an empirical reality of being the highest authority over individuals. This sovereignty is exclusive in that there is no other authority which also has final authority over the individuals that are members of the warlord organization. Members of the warlord organization are loyal

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid.: xxii

<sup>226</sup> Herbst 2000

to the warlord, not to the state. Although they may come under the sway of other authorities, whether religious, social, or other, these authorities are superseded by the warlord who can overrule their dictums. For Herbst, sovereignty ‘trails off’ in concentric rings as an individual is further and further from the sovereign. For warlords, the enclosed political community is defined by initiation and is exclusive, which means that those within it are under the authority of the sovereign exclusively. Thus, there is not the overlapping sovereignty that Herbst implies or which is theorized concerning the medieval period by Bull or John Ruggie.<sup>227</sup> At the same time, the warlord has complete authority to make internal policy decisions and control the foreign relations of the warlord organization. Such features are the essential constituents of empirical sovereignty and hence warlords are empirically sovereign.

This sovereignty applies even in cases where the warlord forces those under him to call him sovereign. As Bodin notes concerning the tyrant who prolongs sovereignty entrusted to him, “the tyrant is nonetheless a sovereign, just as the violent possession of a robber is true and natural possession even if against the law, and those who had it previously are dispossessed.”<sup>228</sup> For this reason it is necessary to separate empirical sovereignty, which exists as something that is possessed in fact, even if not legitimately, from sovereignty which is granted legitimately, either by a people or external governments.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Herbst 2000, Bull 1997, Ruggie 1986

<sup>228</sup> Bodin, Franklin trans.: 6

<sup>229</sup> This means that the warlord does not necessarily possess what Jackson calls ‘positive sovereignty’, which is a reflection of legitimacy by both the international community and the people (Jackson 1993). For Jackson positive sovereignty “presupposes capabilities which enable governments to be their own masters: it is a substantive rather than a formal condition.” (Ibid.: 29) This feature of positive sovereignty we have separated out into empirical sovereignty, for, it is possible to have one without the other. Jackson goes on to note that states with positive sovereignty “[possess] the wherewithal to provide political goods for its citizens” (Ibid.: 29). While warlords do not provide public goods, they do have a private political community to which they provide goods. The concept of positive sovereignty refers to a separate situation of the provision of public goods to those outside of the direct hierarchical system of the governance structure and we should not confuse the two. Thus, in the sense of providing

States are in most cases the highest authority over the population which lives within their borders, however, this is not what defines them as states. Rather, another view of sovereignty – which we can trace back to the convenient date of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 – has come to dominate thought about sovereign actors. And, although warlords are empirically sovereign, they do not possess this form of sovereignty.

### **Juridical Sovereignty**

Warlords are sovereign in the sense that they are autonomous and independent from other sovereign actors, but they are not considered sovereign by sovereign states. ‘Juridical sovereignty’ is granted recognition by the international community and signals that a state is equal to other states in the international system and, in particular, that these states will not (legitimately) interfere in the state’s domestic affairs. Juridical sovereignty not only provides ‘freedom-from’ outside interference, to use Jackson’s formulation,<sup>230</sup> but also grants the sovereign state certain privileges such as the ability to take part in international law and contracts, to be a member of the United Nations, to engage in official diplomacy with other states etc. As Jackson puts it, states have been “internationally enfranchised and [thereby] possess the same external rights and responsibilities as all other sovereign states.”<sup>231</sup> These are important privileges and they are not granted lightly.

The international community jealously guards the right to official juridical sovereignty. As a general rule NSAs are not granted juridical sovereignty. In fact,

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public goods in exchange for legitimacy, the warlord is not legitimized by a society and is not sovereign in this sense.

<sup>230</sup> Jackson 1993

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.* : 21

they are not even allowed to seem like they have sovereignty by interacting on an equal basis with sovereign states. For instance, it has been pointed out that:

when NGOs, corporations, and revolutionary movements interact directly with states, the non-states and the states are considered to operate as legal equals. Employing the logic of the law, either both or neither is sovereign. Fear of attribute recognition explains the general hesitation of government officials and senior members of international secretariats to meet with insurgents or to consider national liberation movements entitled to protection under the humanitarian laws of war.<sup>232</sup>

The basis for granting sovereignty by the international community is not entirely obvious.

Armed groups are recognized to some degree in international law, however, this is not enough to grant sovereignty. At one level, international law differentiates between insurgencies which desire to change the national government and those which attempt to combat a foreign occupation force, known as 'National Resistance Movements'. The first type gains "international legal significance only through the effective control of territory and population, i.e. through the recognition of 'pseudo statehood'."<sup>233</sup> In such a case, control of the government may lead to recognition as the sovereign state – however, the group would then effectively lose its status as an 'armed group'. National resistance movements on the other hand can appeal to the legal concept of national self-determination. In such cases, again, if the group does

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<sup>232</sup> Weiss and Chopra 1995: 100

<sup>233</sup> Noortmann 2001: 67

not come to control the state it continues to be less than sovereign, even in cases, such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) which has been observer status to the United Nations General Assembly.

Similarly, peace agreements between armed groups and states, even illegitimate warlords, “are agreements within the meaning of Article 3 of the Vienna Convention of the Law of Treaties.”<sup>234</sup> Through such agreements armed groups can obtain “international legal personality... irrespective of the recognition of states.”<sup>235</sup> Nonetheless, such recognition is clearly not juridical sovereignty and does not confer any such benefits.

Empirical sovereignty is clearly not a route to internationally recognized juridical sovereignty. Even in a case like Somaliland, where there is a government which presides over a territory, has a monopoly over the legitimate use of physical force, and even possesses popular legitimacy, the international community has not granted sovereignty. With this in mind, warlords have little chance of being granted juridical sovereignty since they do not have any bottom-up legitimacy for their rule nor do they necessarily have control over a permanent, defined territorial base.<sup>236</sup>

Importantly, juridical sovereignty cannot be partial – it is all or nothing.<sup>237</sup> This means that no matter the particular requirements of sovereignty which are met, the actor will still officially be the same as any other NSA in terms of the rights and responsibilities of sovereignty. This is true even if it is a laundry list of state-like qualities, as in the case of Somaliland. Thus, even though warlords may possess empirical sovereignty, they are still considered as ‘unsovereign’ as any other NSA.

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid.: 68

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.: 69

<sup>236</sup> The warlord’s lack of juridical legitimization is more parallel to taking with force in war, where the unit who controls a piece of territory is its owner no matter who used to own it, at least until another unit is able to take it.

<sup>237</sup> Weiss and Chopra 1995: 98

Since warlords lack juridical sovereignty, they are not granted the rights of sovereign states, in particular, the right of non-intervention. Under international law, and more importantly under international norms, intervention by one state into another is not legitimate, except in certain narrow instances.<sup>238</sup> This norm and rule protects states from outside aggression.<sup>239</sup> Warlords, of course, do not have such protection. Thus, the host state is fully legitimate in combating a warlord. In fact, the host state has a positive right to protect its own sovereignty by maintaining a monopoly on the use of force within its borders.

Lack of juridical sovereignty also means that warlords cannot formally take part in the international community. As Krasner points out, “international recognition is a constitutive act in the sense that the absence of recognition precludes the kinds of activities that recognition itself facilitates.”<sup>240</sup> If an actor is not sovereign it cannot officially contribute to the same system of connections between sovereign states. If the actor cannot contribute they cannot, in theory, take part at all. Since warlords have not contributed, they are not allowed to take part.

However, this does not necessarily mean that actors without juridical sovereignty cannot take part in international diplomacy at all. Warlords can and do take part in informal international diplomacy as well as economic relations. Although these relations are not exactly parallel to relations by states, they are comparable in motivations and execution.<sup>241</sup> This begs the question, how is this so? The international system of states has a class of interactions and relationships which are officially

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<sup>238</sup> Intervention may, for example, be legitimate for humanitarian reasons if decided so by the United Nations Security Council.

<sup>239</sup> Though, of course, such laws and norms are not absolute and can be broken if the logic of self help demands it.

<sup>240</sup> Krasner 1999: 18

<sup>241</sup> More on this in the Section III of this chapter.

closed to actors that are not juridically sovereign, yet, some actors, including warlords, do take part.

Clearly there are a set of relationships which are not dependent on 'official' recognition, but are instead based on de facto recognition. These relationships are in many ways similar to the official relations between states. They include diplomatic communications, contracts, alliances, joint-declarations of war, understandings about the treatment of prisoners etc. But, these relations are not part of the official set of rules and regulations which govern, or attempt to govern, the interactions amongst states. Such unofficial diplomacy, as we might call it, is the privilege of those actors that can demand it from states. In particular, empirically sovereign actors, like warlords, are given the concession. These relationships are at the heart of this study and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

This, then, is a conceptualization of warlordism in terms of sovereignty. Warlords are empirically sovereign but not juridically sovereign NSAs. In order to distinguish warlords from other types of sovereigns as well as some other types of armed groups, we may refer to them as 'sovereign armed groups' (SAGs). The sovereignty experienced by warlords is not equal to that bestowed on states in all ways. In a sense, SAGs are the opposite of Jackson's 'quasi-states'.<sup>242</sup> Quasi-states are endowed with absolute juridical sovereignty by other states, but they have limited empirical sovereignty. Warlords, on the other hand, have empirical but not juridical sovereignty.

Guerilla organizations, de facto states, clans, and related groups may also be SAGs. Their independence and autonomy from the state grants them empirical sovereignty, but like warlords, they do not have juridical sovereignty. However, in

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<sup>242</sup> Clapham (1996) makes a similar distinction, though, as noted above, he does not make the strong case about armed groups being sovereign.

reference to these groups it is not proper to speak of the armed group in and of itself being sovereign, rather, the society which the armed group is based on is also part of the total organization. Therefore, Sovereign Non-State Actor (SNSA) might be a more proper term. Neorealist analysis is also likely applicable to these groups, however, this study will continue to focus on warlords specifically and revisit these types of actors in Chapter 7.

Although warlords have a complicated relationship with sovereignty, they are sovereign in the way necessary for analysis using Realism. Realism focuses on the de facto relationships between international actors. Generally, it dismisses the constructs of international law and other forms of formal contracts as nothing more than a poor reflection of the reality of relationships. Realism can coherently comprehend how and why these contracts can be overridden without regret by an actor if its interests so demand it. Warlords can interact in such informal ways, even though they may not be officially recognized, moreover, they can demand that other sovereign actors interact with them in such ways.

### **Neorealist criteria**

Neorealism has more strict criteria of actors than Realism. Actors must be sovereign, as in Realism. Beyond sovereignty, an additional set of requirements arises because Neorealism is a systems theory, which means that the actors must all be effectively the same or similar in type and differ only in a set number of variables. Additionally, it must be possible to make direct comparisons between the differences in these variables.

Waltz's theory of Neorealism meets that similarity requirement by demanding that actors be 'like units'.<sup>243</sup> The basic feature of being a like unit is wrapped up in Waltz's understanding of sovereignty. He notes that to be a like unit: "is to say that each state is like all other states in being an autonomous political unit. It is another way of saying that states are sovereign."<sup>244</sup> Waltz goes on to describe sovereignty in more detail:

[t]o say that a state is sovereign means that it decides for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems, including whether or not to seek assistance from others and in doing so to limit its freedom by making commitments to them.<sup>245</sup>

In other words, being a like unit demands that an actor be autonomous, the highest authority, and independent. Such a feature is common to other structural versions of Realism as well. For instance, Barry Buzan, Charles Jones, and Richard Little also make this point in their description of 'similar units' which are defined as "the highest authority in all matters of government over their specified territory and people, including the right to wield power independently."<sup>246</sup>

Warlords are like units.<sup>247</sup> Warlords, as discussed in the previous chapter, are independent, autonomous, NSAs, which have de facto sovereignty. They decide for

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<sup>243</sup> Waltz 1979

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.: 95

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.: 96

<sup>246</sup> Buzan et al. 1986: 38

<sup>247</sup> Buzan, Jones and Little (1993) argue that Waltz need not make such an argument. The authors note that the unlike units may be evolving into, or out of like units. With, for instance, the medieval period being a middle ground between the hierarchical system of the Roman Empire and the anarchy of the European state system. They conclude: "anarchy may remain constant, but units can shift into and out of alternative pattern of differentiation of function." (Ibid.:43) This is one formulation of a 'mixed actor model'. However, it is not necessary to refer to such models or conceptualizations of Realism or Neorealism for the formulation stated in this study. The warlords which have been discussed are in fact like units.

themselves how to solve internal and external problems and are unequivocally the highest authority over their internal population. Warlords are, in the Waltzian sense, sovereign, as Waltz only refers to empirical sovereignty and never to juridical sovereignty. Waltz does not mention international recognition or other juridical sovereignty issues as a requirement. What is important for him, and other Neorealists, is the ability to 'decide for oneself' how to act. Warlords have exactly this sort of authority over their own actions.

One apparent difference is that they are not the highest authority over a stable, definable territory, as Buzan, Jones, and Little call for (though, notably, not Waltz). However, this should not preclude Neorealist analysis, for as was discussed earlier, sovereignty need not necessarily be territorially stable. Furthermore, the acceptability of the instability of territory is illustrated by the fact that Neorealism is thought to still apply to states even when their territory changes. Through conquest and defeat, a single state's territory can change significantly, as illustrated, for instance, in the radically changing boundaries of the German state from World War I to the end of World War II or the formation and then break-up of the Soviet Union. The warlord's territorial instability should be seen in a similar light – the actor continues to exist, but changes its territory depending on conquest and defeat. The dictums of Neorealism should therefore still apply.

It is a subtle but important distinction to note that warlords should be considered *likeunits*, but not *states*. Being a state demands that an actor have both the empirical and juridical aspects of sovereignty. However, being a unit in a structural analysis only demands that an actor have the empirical aspects. Though Waltz generally refers to states in his study, the theory of Neorealism is actually concerned with the interaction of like units, which Waltz is clear about. It is this confusion

between unit and state which tends to make it seem so impossible to incorporate non-state actors into Neorealism. However, by clarifying this confusion it makes sense to use the Neorealist approach with certain NSAs. Accordingly, although warlords are still to be considered ‘non-state actors’, they should be taken as being the right sort of unit for Neorealism.

Actors in Neorealist models must also be what Waltz calls “functionally undifferentiated” in that it is such undifferentiation which makes them like units.<sup>248</sup> Specifically, he requires that “[e]ach state has its agencies for making, executing, and interpreting laws and regulations, for raising revenues, and for defending itself.”<sup>249</sup> These functions are aptly chosen for it is only by having these that an actor can be a unitary, autonomous, and independent actor. Making, executing, and interpreting laws permits the actor to maintain a cohesive, unitary stance in relation to external actors, as they allow the leadership to be able to direct the entire organization cohesively enough to attain goals. The ability to raise revenues is also necessary, as it allows the actor to maintain independence. And, most importantly, autonomy can only be had with the ability to defend against aggressors.

Thus, the actors analyzed by Neorealism must not only have similar external traits, i.e. sovereignty, they must also be like each other internally. This seems to be a strange requirement coming from Waltz who goes through great pains to clarify that he is talking about systemic level relations and does not want to discuss the internal structures of states at all. We can assume that the requirement is for similar reasoning to Kasfir’s call to examine the internal structure of actors: if the actors are not internally structured in a particular way, they will not act externally in the same ways as expected.

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<sup>248</sup> Waltz 1979: 97

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.: 96

Warlords also meet the requirement of being functionally undifferentiated. Warlords have a political community and system for its governance. Although a warlord organization may not necessarily have written laws, there clearly are a set of rules which are followed by its members and methods to ensure that these rules are abided by. Also, as discussed warlords have economic systems capable of supporting the warlord organization. Finally, they have a military ability which is able to defend them from aggressors.

The exact structure of warlord organizations may differ from that of states. This seems to be in disagreement with Waltz who believes that since sovereignty forces all states to have to perform similar functions, their internal organization will converge and become similar. If we take similarity to mean that the internal organization will become bureaucratic, then Waltz fails to explain reality as many states have lost their grip on a truly bureaucratic form of governance and have fallen into what Clapham has called “neopatrimonialism” or what Reno calls the “shadow state”.<sup>250</sup>

However, if similarity means falling within Weber’s typology of governance — e.g. patrimonial, charismatic, or bureaucratic — then it is true that warlords are similar to states. For, as noted in Chapter 2, warlords usually rely on patrimonial or charismatic sources of authority. Thus, if we are to reason that ‘developing’ or failed states, which may not have strong bureaucratic structures, are potentially analyzable using Neorealism then we must also reason that warlords can be analyzed as such — and we may conclude that this is in fact the case.

Warlords also differ in their capability to carry out governance functions. For instance, warlords can usually defend themselves from the threats of failed states, but

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<sup>250</sup> Clapham 1985, Reno 2000

almost certainly would be destroyed by a great power. They are also able to project power to some extent, as for instance the LRA does when it attacks Uganda from bases in Sudan and the DRC. Of course, warlords could not project power into far off states, as the great powers can. However, most small or microstates could not project power very far either. Warlords also differ in their ability to govern, some having weak systems of governance based on simple charisma and others having stronger systems in place. This, however, is not just a feature of warlords, as states also differ in their ability to govern and is readily apparent in the observation of failed states.<sup>251</sup> These quantitative differences between warlords and states should not be seen as a liability, in fact Waltz explicitly notes that states will differ in their capabilities – this is integral to a systemic theory.

### ***Warlords and Great Powers***

Having noted that warlords will differ in capability to states, and in general will be relatively weak international actors, it is important to address the issue of whether warlords are too weak to be considered by Neorealism. Waltz, and Neorealists who have followed him, tends to focus on the great powers. This is because “...the units of greatest capability set the scene of action for others as well as for themselves” in a systems theory.<sup>252</sup> More specifically, states determine the system and NSAs must play by their rules. For instance, Waltz notes:

States set the scene in which they, along with non-state actors, stage their dramas or carry on their humdrum affairs. Though they may choose to interfere little in the affairs of non-state actors for long

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<sup>251</sup> See for instance Huntington 1968

<sup>252</sup> Waltz 1979: 72

periods of time, states nevertheless set the terms of the intercourse, whether by passively permitting informal rules to develop or by actively intervening to change rules that no longer suit them. When the crunch comes, states remake the rules by which other actors operate.<sup>253</sup>

This is an important objection for Neorealism to make because Neorealism is founded on the belief that theories should simplify the world. In the simplification process, only the most important – i.e. most powerful – actors are analyzed, for Neorealism, these are states. Therefore Neorealists require that the great powers be addressed as the primary actors if one is to have a general theory.

However, this should not discount the analysis of smaller actors. For, Waltz also notes that

[t]he theory once written also applies to lesser states that interact insofar as their interactions are insulated from the intervention of the great powers of a system, whether by the relative indifference of the latter or by difficulties of communication and transportation.<sup>254</sup>

Moreover, we might note that in regional and sometimes worldwide politics, small states can have a power balancing or other effect on great powers and in this way can make systemic changes which allow for analysis by Neorealism. Therefore, we should take it that Neorealism can be used to examine regional international relations between lesser actors.

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid.: 94

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.: 73

Warlords should be considered as powerful as small states and in some cases even more powerful. Afghan warlords have had a massive effect on Central Asian regional politics and have served in alliances with great powers, including the United States and Russia, as well as regional powers like Pakistan or Iran. In Liberia, when Taylor was still a warlord, he and his warlord organization were arguably more powerful than some of the states in the region, such as Sierra Leone. In an example which will be covered in more detail in Chapter 5, Somali warlords have had regional effects, as well as an effect on a great power – the United States – to the point of forcing the US to reassess its strategic intents. Therefore, we should consider warlords as acceptable units for analysis to at least the degree that small states are acceptable units for analysis.

Having made this final point, it is possible to conclude that warlords are minimally acceptable groups for Neorealist theoretical analysis. They are unitary actors with independent foreign relations, they are empirically sovereign, and they have similar governance structures to states. Therefore, they are sovereign, functionally undifferentiated, like units. Furthermore, while Neorealism mainly focuses on great powers, the approach can be applied to smaller powers, including warlords. Although warlords may be the right kind of actor for Neorealism, there is a further question to ask, which is whether they have the right kinds of motivations, and therefore act and relate in the ways predicted by the theoretical approach.

## **MOTIVATIONS**

The previous section found that warlords are the right kind of group, but this does not necessarily mean that we can use a Neorealist approach to theorize about them. Actors in both Realist and Neorealist accounts must be motivated to act in certain

ways, otherwise, the logic of the theory will simply not apply. For Realism, the motivation must come from the pursuit of power and security. For Neorealism, the actors must be motivated by the pursuit of survival.

Waltz specifically notes that the pursuit of survival is an assumption about the motivation of states as actors. His justification is that any “theory contains at least one theoretical assumption.”<sup>255</sup> However, his assumption is not completely invented, but is based on a generalization about empirical observations of states’ actions and motivations concerning the pursuit of power.

While it might be acceptable to simply assume that warlords are also motivated by a drive for survival, it is better to examine to what degree this is true. Therefore the argument of this section will be to first examine the factors which are typically thought to motivate warlords. Usually it is held that either they are driven by ‘grievances’, such as ethnic hatreds, or they by economic goals, i.e. making a personal profit. However, it will be shown that warlords are not primarily driven by either of these motivations, but in fact their actions are determined by the broader pursuit of power and security.<sup>256</sup> From this perspective, we can make the same jump that Waltz does to the assumption of survival as the principal motivator or action.

## **Grievance**

A conventional approach for understanding the motivations of armed groups, including warlords, is to assume that they represent grievances of certain groups within society. In particular, such explanations refer to ethnic, tribal, or nationalist drivers in society. The catch phrase that is often used is that there are “ancient

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<sup>255</sup> Waltz 1979: 117

<sup>256</sup> Also see Vinci 2006

hatreds” which come out in the form of conflict.<sup>257</sup> For example, the conflict(s) in the former Yugoslavia could be explained as the culmination of ongoing animosity between the Serb, Croat, and Muslim (Bosniak) ethnic groups. By extension the specific actions of armed groups in Yugoslavia, such as the Serb militias, could be seen as being motivated by a desire to redress these ancient hatreds. The implication is that warlordism was one of the vehicles for such conflict.

It is certainly true that some individuals, and even leaders, of armed groups may be motivated wholly or in part by grievances of various sorts, but the motivations of individuals do not necessarily cumulate in the motivations of the group. For instance, if the individual fighters are driven by a hatred of another clan, we might think that the group itself can be described as being motivated by such hatred and would make decisions in such a way.

However, it is fallacious to think that the motivations of individuals in an organization are the same as the motivations of the organization as a whole. The reason is that armed groups are unitary actors in that they have the administrative structures to function as a single unit. This means that there is a distinct group level of analysis which is wholly separate from the individual level of analysis. The implication of this is that the motivations of the individuals in the armed group, including the leader of the group himself, may be different from the motivations of the armed group as a whole.

In fact, it is empirically evident that the group-level motivations of warlords are different from the individual-level motivations. In particular, it has been observed that warlord organizations are not driven first and foremost by grievance motivations,

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<sup>257</sup> This view was exemplified by Robert Kaplan (1994b).

but rather that these grievances are instrumentally used.<sup>258</sup> Susan Woodward makes this point in reference to armed groups during the war in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>259</sup> Woodward points out that “the black-and-white portrayal of ethnic conflict that characterized discussion of the Yugoslav case is, in fact, an understandable and potent way to generate sympathy and mobilize loyalties and support for action.”<sup>260</sup>

Woodward’s approach is to take an instrumentalist or constructivist approach to identity and it is this approach which is most relevant for this study. The instrumentalist approach takes identity, usually in the form of religion, ethnicity, or nationalism, as a tool which can be used and manipulated for political reasons.<sup>261</sup> A slightly less strong version is maintained by constructivists who take a middle ground and argue that identity can be changed, but only to a limited extent.<sup>262</sup> The instrumental (and to a lesser extent the Constructivist) approach is opposed to primordialists who see ethnic identity as a permanent element of an individual’s identity.<sup>263</sup>

There is not the space or need to cover the intricacies of the numerous debates concerning these views of ethnicity and identity, however, other theorists have made the necessary argument. For instance, Isabelle Duyvesteyn makes a similar argument as is needed here in making the case that the warlords in Liberia and Somalia acted in political terms and that grievances were used toward their political goals, not the other way around.<sup>264</sup> She based her argument on the fluidity of identity and its observed use only when necessary.

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<sup>258</sup> The parallel in IR literature to the role of identity in motivating actors are moral motivations for policy.

<sup>259</sup> Woodward 1995

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.: 14

<sup>261</sup> See for instance Horowitz 1985

<sup>262</sup> See for instance Lake and Rothchild 1998

<sup>263</sup> See for instance Stack 1986

<sup>264</sup> Duyvesteyn 2005

The discrepancy can be explained in reference to the problems of mobilization and political community discussed in Chapter 2. Warlords may use several different methods to recruit and retain their fighters. Loyalty based on connection to a cause is one of these potential motivators. At the same time, the warlord political community demands that the friend/enemy boundary continually be maintained and redefined and grievances can also be instrumentally used for such goals.

Thus, it is essential to take a group level approach to understanding the motivations of warlords and to keep in mind that, as with states, the 'moral' drivers of policy are often illusionary and hypocritically used to stimulate the 'real' policies which are governed by other motivations. While these groups may say that they are motivated by a particular cause, and use this as propaganda, their actual actions are much more rational in nature. When analysts do admit the rationality of warlord's conflict, they do not generally turn to politics however, but instead they tend to turn to economics.

### **Greed**

Opposed to grievance explanations for the conduct of armed groups are those who focus on the economic aspects of conflicts. As Keen succinctly commented, "war may be a continuation of *economics* by other means."<sup>265</sup> However, it should be kept in mind that "this does not necessarily mean that the wars are caused by economic shortcomings, but rather that the conduct, and continuation, of the war is determined by economic incentives."<sup>266</sup> In other words, while an armed group may be initially motivated by grievances, their impetus for continuing to fight may be driven by the

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<sup>265</sup> Keen 2000: 27 (italics in original)

<sup>266</sup> Angstrom 2005: 11

pursuit of economic goods. Such a view has been amply discussed in the literature and even demonstrated, to a certain extent, using statistical modelling.<sup>267</sup>

It is also true that individual fighters in an armed group are often motivated by economic incentives, such as the ability to keep what they loot. Yet, as the previous section demonstrated, individual goals do not necessarily translate into group goals. The same is true for economic profit as it is for redressing grievances. While an individual may just be fighting with a warlord to make some cash, just as a soldier may join the armed forces of a nation to get money for college, it does not necessarily mean that the armed group as a whole is driven by an urge to make money, just as it is doubtful that a nation's military is directed solely by the pursuit of profit.

However, even on the group level, economic incentives seem to motivate armed groups. This is particularly the case for warlords. As Berdal notes, there is a “popular and much publicized image of the modern warlord as concerned exclusively with plunder for personal enrichment and conspicuous displays of wealth.”<sup>268</sup> It is true, *prima facie*, many warlords do make large profits from their organizations. Moreover, these ‘businessmen of war’ rely “on violence as the main instrument of their economic activity’.<sup>269</sup>

But, rather than being an end, this generated wealth is used instrumentally. Armed groups must obtain the means of fighting, from weapons to an ability to pay their soldiers. Chapter 2 illustrated the logistical needs of warlord organizations and these logistical needs must be met in some manner. Economic exploitation provides such a means. For instance, in the case of the NPFL, Duyvesteyn notes that the “[t]he wealth [generated by Taylor's business dealings] was a means to an end: it was a way to keep the NPFL going. The foreign currency that was earned was used to buy

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<sup>267</sup> Collier 2000

<sup>268</sup> Berdal 2003: 491

<sup>269</sup> Chabal and Daloz 1995: 85

equipment and train the NPFL fighters.”<sup>270</sup> Just as with states, we should not confuse the need of armed groups to make a profit in order to maintain itself and reinvest for future growth with it necessarily being only a profit making enterprise.

In general, the individual accumulation of wealth in armed groups can be explained by the nature of these organizations. Since armed groups are rarely bureaucratic organizations, with a separation between specific individuals and the structure of the group, the wealth generated by the organization must be assigned to specific individuals, and therefore it is seen accumulating in the accounts of a specific individual. It must also be kept in mind that armed groups are based on patronage models of power and, as such, the top leaders are the keystones to the patronage system and they must accumulate sufficient economic resources with which to establish and maintain the loyalty of their troops. However, this is not to say that the wealth is only meant for that particular person, nor is it to say that it is the only pursuit that drives the organization. It is more accurate to see wealth generation as a means of perpetuating the group, just as some states use conquest to perpetuate their own war machine.<sup>271</sup>

Finally, economic-based arguments, in general, overemphasize the role of profit in directing the actions of warlord groups; rather, such goals are more productively seen as one objective among many. Warlords are also concerned with other gains. For instance, they attempt to control larger territories or bigger armies. In Somalia, the various factions have continuously attempted to expand and control larger tracts of Mogadishu when possible. In northern Uganda, the LRA regularly tries to build up its army by abducting and initiating new members. Warlords also attempt to find recognition and legitimacy for their armies. Taylor regularly broadcast

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<sup>270</sup> Duyvesteyn 2005: 83

<sup>271</sup> A notable example was Hitler’s attempted drive to the Caspian region in order to attain the oil reserves necessary to fuel his army and continue his other political pursuits.

to the BBC from his jungle hideouts using satellite phones and reports from Afghanistan show that the various factions of the Northern Alliance seemed to use their special operations counterparts as prestige items.<sup>272</sup>

## **Power**

These diverse pursuits by warlords can all be summarized as a drive for power. Power, for our purposes here, can compromise anything that establishes and maintains control of men by men.<sup>273</sup> Such a definition of power is not without its faults and in general power is a concept whose definition is continually debated.<sup>274</sup> However, this particular definition is that posited by Hans Morgenthau and therefore should not be taken as too controversial in a discussion of Realism.

Power is multifaceted. The notion of power includes economic wealth, which is used to establish and maintain control of forces;<sup>275</sup> military power, which can be used to directly control territory and people; and public legitimacy, which can be used to, amongst other things, pressure enemies. These factors can all be directed at establishing and maintaining control over men. The implication is that the pursuit of wealth, like the pursuit of territorial gain or authority over larger populations, is a means to the greater end of power.

There are many specific interests that a group may attempt to attain. For instance, under such interests we might find the redressing of political aspirations, such as economic development, which I. William Zartman has called 'need' in order

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<sup>272</sup> See Reno 1999 concerning Taylor; see Moore 2003 concerning the war in Afghanistan and warlord relations with US Special Forces.

<sup>273</sup> Morgenthau 1993.

<sup>274</sup> Defining power is notoriously difficult. See Baldwin 1993 for a discussion of the various issues that must be addressed. This study uses Morgenthau's definition with the assumption that debates which apply to state power would also apply to warlords, what is important is not so much the exact definition of power but that it applies to both warlords and states equally.

<sup>275</sup> To translate this into IR theory, the attempt to accumulate external resources in order to achieve domestic objectives is referred to by Neoclassical Realists as external extraction. (Mastanduno, Lake and Ikenberry 1989)

to differentiate them from the more identity based desires, referred to by Zartman as 'creed', but above as 'grievances'.<sup>276</sup> In general, the nature of interest will be contingent and depend on the period of history in question and the political and cultural context under which policy is created. Decision makers may not even realize what it is they want, as Morgenthau also makes the important observation that we should not judge a group by what the leader thinks are his motivations, rather, we must judge it by its actions.<sup>277</sup>

But, in all cases, power is a route to such interests because it is a fungible attribute. The notion of fungibility means that one type of power can be used for multiple types of interests. For example, a gain in the number of fighters versus more money can fungibly be related because money can be used to obtain fighters and, vice versa, more fighters can be used to obtain money. While there are some restrictions on the fungibility of power, within the bounds of a discussion of warlordism, where power is usually only military or economic in nature, we can assume that most types of power can be fungible for most types of interests.

Political leaders "think and act in terms of interest defined as power"<sup>278</sup> and this pursuit of power is not limited to states, but applies to all independent political groups. Morgenthau notes that a "tendency to dominate... is an element of all human associations, from the family through fraternal and professional associations and local political organizations, to the state."<sup>279</sup> To reinforce the notion that the pursuit of power is not only a state objective, he goes on to say that "[b]oth domestic and international politics are a struggle for power, modified only by the different

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<sup>276</sup> Zartman 2005

<sup>277</sup> Morgenthau 1993

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.: 5

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.: 37

conditions under which this struggle takes place in domestic and international spheres.”<sup>280</sup>

We can conclude that warlords, like states, will “think and act in terms of interest defined as power.”<sup>281</sup> This is because warlords are bound to the same logic as other political leaders. This is that by attaining power, they can attain their other interests, because power is fungible.<sup>282</sup> They attempt to gain power through acquiring material resources, such as more troops and more weapons, land, cash, recognition etc. This power can, in turn, be used to meet any interests of the warlord or his fighters. In particular, power can be translated into the ability to remain autonomous and independent.

### **Survival**

Power ensures survival. Survival is important because it is the minimum goal of any political unit, as its leaders must assure survival if they are to pursue any other less vital goals. Put another way, even though the interests of any particular group may be different, they all share at least this one objective. This is self-evident when we consider that if there were an actor that did not feel this way, it would not be around long enough to be worth considering. As Gilpin states, while groups may seek “truth, beauty and justice... all these more noble goals will be lost unless one makes

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid.: 39

<sup>281</sup> Ibid: 5

<sup>282</sup> To this we might add that the pursuit of power by warlord organizations as a whole is reinforced by the tendency for individuals to pursue personal power. As Raymond Aron observed “[b]y participating in collective power men find satisfactions which sweep aside economic calculations and make sacrifices meaningful. The desire for power and pride in surpassing other men, are no less profound impulses than the desire for worldly goods.” (Aron 1958: 53, noted in Berdal 2003) Berdal remarks on the individual motivation for power in such warlords as Jonas Savimbi and Jokahr Dudayev, the leader of the self-declared republic of Chechnya. (Berdal 2003) Although it has already been noted that individual drives do not necessarily translate into group-level motivation, it is worth noting that there is an individual level root to the group drive for power, and therefore that the pursuit of power is no different in form than wealth accumulation or the redressing of grievances.

provisions for one's security in the power struggle among groups."<sup>283</sup> Therefore, it could be argued that power is gained in order to survive.

Waltz takes this one step further and turns this view of the relationship between the pursuit of power and survival around. He sees the assurance of survival as the single, key driving force behind states.<sup>284</sup> Waltz notes that power is that which "...provides the means of maintaining one's autonomy in the face of force that others wield."<sup>285</sup> And, "beyond the survival motive, the aims of states may be endlessly varied; they may range from the ambition to conquer the world to the desire to merely to be left alone."<sup>286</sup> These other aims may include power for the sake of power. Thus, even though wars may be partially attributable to greed or ambition, they are always motivated to some degree by fear for security.<sup>287</sup> The purpose to taking the Waltzian step and assuming that survival is the chief motivator is that it allows for systemic theorizing as it minimizes the variables for analysis.

### ***Warlords and Survival***

We can also make the jump from the pursuit of power to the pursuit of survival with the motivation of warlords. As has already been noted, the economic goals of warlords are really orientated toward the perpetuation of the organization through the fulfillment of the needs of a patronage system of authority. The same goes for the use of various forms of hatred-orientated propaganda in order to motivate men to fight and potentially die. Warlords rarely turn to the creation of truth, beauty, or justice but they do have ulterior motives. They may, for instance, wish to fill as many Swiss bank

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<sup>283</sup> Gilpin 1986: 305

<sup>284</sup> Waltz 1979

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.: 194

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.: 91

<sup>287</sup> Gilpin 1986: 304

accounts as possible, but even the most savage and uneducated warlord realizes that in order to achieve these goals, the organization must survive.

This is evident when we note the extremely long-winded nature of conflicts involving warlords. For example, even to this day, almost fifteen years after the collapse of the Somali state, the warlords in Somalia continue to attempt to hold the state back from reforming. Or, as Abiodun Alao, Mackinlay, and 'Funni Olonisakin report in their analysis of the Liberian peace process,

[i]n Liberia, the warlords were usually ready to negotiate but not to relinquish their power, which is what would have shown that they were genuinely interested in a peace settlement. In these circumstances, only enormous outside pressure could bring warlords into a peace process as effective participants.<sup>288</sup>

In other words, warlords will do what it takes to survive and only give up survival when they realize that their power is matched.

This desire to perpetuate the organization directs the actions of warlords not only against internal actors, but also external or intervening forces. For instance, Duyvesteyn notes that in Liberia the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) wanted to “prevent Taylor from taking power and to disarm his troops.”<sup>289</sup> However:

Taylor viewed disarmament as a threat to his claims to leadership. The ECOMOG interference was a threat to his almost unstoppable advance

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<sup>288</sup> Alao, Mackinlay, Olonisakin 1999: 119

<sup>289</sup> Duyvesteyn 2005: 30

and military success. To counter this threat, Taylor decided to attack and strive to expel the ECOMOG forces from Liberia.<sup>290</sup>

This logic is straightforward – Taylor may have had explicit, alternative goals, however, the only way he could possibly carry them out was to first deal with the existential threats to him and his organization. This is exactly as we expect states to act. We should therefore conclude that, like states, the warlord’s actions are orientated first and foremost toward perpetuating the organization.<sup>291</sup>

Such a non-state actor survival motive is not exceptional. Again Coker’s insights into pre-civilizational warriors are illustrative. He notes that

[b]ecause there was no political end for which the Scythians were fighting – no ideas or principles, only the survival of a way of life – they were considered to be inferior warriors to the Persians [in the eyes of Herodotus]. For them, war meant something quite different than it did for Darius, who had invaded their land for ‘strategic necessity,’ to secure a flank before advancing further west.<sup>292</sup>

The warlord, like the Scythian or so many other pre-civilizational groups, only desires to survive and fights war “without principle.”

Yet, this is from the Neorealist perspective not so different than the state. For the state too desires “only the survival of a way of life.” From this reading, Darius

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid.: 30

<sup>291</sup> This motive to survive is a natural outgrowth of any protracted conflict, no matter what the initial cause. As Van Creveld notes: “...over time any war will tend to turn into a struggle for existence, provided only hostilities are sufficiently intensive and casualties sufficiently heavy.” (Van Creveld 1991:145)

<sup>292</sup> Coker 2002: 91

himself was also acting out of the principle of survival, except for him the war was only indirectly improving the chances of his empire's success, while for the Scythians it was directly improving their survival. This again reinforces the value of Neorealism as a basis for theorizing about warlords in that the parallel between warlords and states on the most essential level can be made, even if not on the more perceptible level.

To summarize, we may see warlords as being motivated by the pursuit of power, just as we may see this as the motivation of states. Furthermore, just as Waltz makes the jump to survival as the fundamental feature, we can make the same leap with warlords. Taken together with the previous section, warlords are the right type of group and motivated in the right way to be analyzed using a Neorealist approach.

### **Rationality**

It is worth noting that, the motivation of warlords for power and survival meets what may be considered a supplementary feature of Realism and Neorealism, which is that it deals with rational actors.<sup>293</sup> For many analysts it seems that warlords are not rational because they are focused on grievances or economic gain. However, as we have seen, warlords are actually focused on the pursuit of survival, which is itself an inherently rational goal. Beyond survival, warlords focus on the pursuit of power, which is a political goal and political goals are also themselves rational in nature.<sup>294</sup>

Even though warlords are barbaric, in the sense that they are illegitimate and unconcerned with morality or the creation of society, they are nevertheless strategic.

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<sup>293</sup> In fact, Waltz's Neorealism does not require a rational actor assumption. States can indeed act irrationally, and they will pay the consequences for doing so. However, it may be thought of as a requirement in that we assume that states most of the time act in a rational manner.

<sup>294</sup> The political focus of warlords has been noted by other authors. Probably the most explicit argument for this has been made by Duyvesteyn (2005) in her Clausewitzian analysis of the conflicts in Liberia and Somalia.

This point is clearly made by Coker in his critique of Peters, whose work Coker correctly reads is based on

the idea that because some of our enemies have little to lose, they are not true warriors. They do not behave rationally... By stereotyping them as savages, Peters is really arguing that people have different *mentalities* from ourselves.<sup>295</sup>

The implication of this is that “[b]ecause they are deemed to act in this manner, they are also deemed to lack the ability to think strategically or tactically.”<sup>296</sup> These attitudes, as Coker makes clear, are dangerous because “the idea of strategy is not confined to the civilized world.”<sup>297</sup> The point is reinforced by Alex De Waal’s examination of the savage tactics used by some African armed groups, what he calls a strategy of “destabilization”, are in fact a rational, if immoral, strategy.<sup>298</sup>

The strategic and tactical prowess of warlords is amply demonstrated. Coker brings up the example of the Chechnyans who used various sophisticated tactics and strategies, even at the political level, to “multiply their combat power, a thoroughly rational technique.”<sup>299</sup> A similar argument can be made for the rationality of the LRA’s strategic use of fear as a means of multiplying their forces and fighting a political battle with the Ugandan government.<sup>300</sup>

In this sense, warlords are rational. Rationality for Neorealism is usually based on a neoclassical economic understanding of the term, i.e. that actors have

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<sup>295</sup> Coker 2002: 95

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.: 95

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.: 95; Here Coker draws on the insights of Colin Gray (1999).

<sup>298</sup> De Waal 1997

<sup>299</sup> Coker 2002: 96

<sup>300</sup> Vinci 2005

“consistent, ordered preferences, and that they calculate the costs and benefits of all alternative policies in order to maximize their utility in light both of those preferences and of their perceptions of the nature of reality.”<sup>301</sup> For warlords to be strategic in the sense illustrated above and to act to obtain and maintain security is to say that they are rational in the neoclassical economic sense.

The issue of warlord’s perceived irrationality seems to arise from the issue alluded to above in Coker’s engagement with Peters. That is that warlords have a different mentality – or to use another language, they have a different perception of reality – than states. However, within this perception of reality, the warlord does calculate costs and benefits and does make decisions based on those calculations and his preferences. In particular, this is based on his preference for survival at any and all costs. *We should therefore conclude that warlords are in theory rational* and this is nowhere better illustrated than in the warlord’s ability to fight such prolonged conflicts – something which would be impossible if he were truly not making rational decisions.

Nevertheless, the general rationality of warlords does not preclude individual warlords from making irrational decisions in practice. Time pressure and other factors can lead warlords, like states, to make irrational decisions. Neorealism does not preclude such irrational decisions, rather, it argues that the system will ‘weed out’ those actors which act irrationally – a point to be revisited later. Thus, although there are some warlords who may break the bounds of rationality, and for instance decide to allow their organization to be weakened, these warlords will be terminated and replaced by other more rational warlords.

Importantly, the notion of the driving force as the pursuit of power acts as the “signpost”, allowing us to understand international politics. This makes it possible to

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<sup>301</sup> Keohane 1986b: 11

avoid what Morgenthau called two popular fallacies: “the concern with motives and the concern with ideological preferences”<sup>302</sup> – the first is fallen into through the greed perspective and the second by grievance. This is the signpost which allows us to effectively analyze warlords using a Neorealist approach, just as it does for states.

However, before we can make that claim fully, we must address the final feature of Realism and Neorealism combined, which is that the theories deal with anarchic systems. This poses a problem for analyzing warlords since they are, of necessity, found within a state and it is not immediately clear that we can treat the inside of a state, even a failed one, as an anarchic system.

## **ANARCHY**

The previous sections of this chapter made arguments about Realism and then followed them with further arguments about Neorealism; this is not necessary in regard to the argument about anarchic systems. The reason is that Realism and Neorealism define anarchy in essentially the same way. Though Neorealism has a more rigorous conceptualization and goes into more detail and therefore this section will be based solely on the Neorealist formulation.

A central assumption listed by Gilpin as fundamental to Realism is its focus on interactions in anarchical systems. The same is true for Neorealism. Anarchy has been called “the fundamental fact of international relations.”<sup>303</sup> By anarchy, we mean a system in which there is no central governance over separate units. The current international system is made up of nation-states and all territory on earth has been claimed by one nation-state or another. They are sovereign units that are, by definition, not answerable to anyone. The sovereignty of these nation-states both

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<sup>302</sup> Morgenthau 1993: 5

<sup>303</sup> Art and Jervis 1986: 7

creates and perpetuates an anarchic system, as the units interact without a higher authority.

Anarchic systems are opposed to hierarchical ones, in which there is a government, or sovereign, that has authority over all of the units. This sovereign structures the interactions of the units within the hierarchical system. Since Neorealism only applies to the analysis of actors in an anarchic system, it does not appear possible to use it to analyze actors that exist within a state, and therefore we could not use it to analyze warlords.

However, this supposition that states are always hierarchically organized is false. The assumption is that within a state, as defined by its delineated territorial boundaries, there is a sovereign and actors are hierarchically related to the central authority. But, it is empirically evident that in some cases there is not a strong sovereign and that there may be anarchy within a state's territorial boundaries. Waltz specifically addressed such grey area cases.

### **Waltz, Anarchy, and Warlords**

Waltz specifically addresses the issue of failed states and anarchic systems, although he does not call them that and does not make any conclusions. After defining anarchic and hierarchic systems, Waltz asks the question "what about borderline cases, societies that are neither clearly anarchic nor clearly hierarchic? Do they no represent a third type?"<sup>304</sup>

In particular he address the so-called Chinese warlord period which lasted from the 1920s to 1940s. Waltz notes that

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<sup>304</sup> Waltz 1979: 116

Nominally a nation, China looked more like a number of separate states existing alongside one another. Mao Tse-tung in 1930, like Bolshevik leaders earlier, thought that striking a revolutionary spark would 'start a prairie fire.' Revolutionary flames would spread across China, if not throughout the world. Because the interdependence of China's provinces, like the interdependence of nations, was insufficiently close, the flames failed to spread. So nearly autonomous were China's provinces that the effects of war in one part of the country were only weakly registered in other parts. Battles in the Hunan hills, far from sparking national revolution, were hardly noticed in neighboring provinces. The interaction of largely self-sufficient provinces was slight and sporadic. Dependent neither on one another economically nor on the nation's center politically, they were not subject to close interdependence characteristic of organized and integrated politics.<sup>305</sup>

This reading of Chinese history leads to questions about the nature and boundary of anarchy. He remarks "[a]s a practical matter, observers may disagree in their answers to such questions as just when did China break down into anarchy, or whether the countries of Western Europe are slowly becoming one state or stubbornly remaining nine."<sup>306</sup> The essential issue here being what are the boundaries of anarchic systems? Do they necessarily lie on the juridically defined borders of states?

Waltz leaves the decision about whether or not to see such examples as anarchic or hierarchic up to argument. Beyond this he does not offer further advice on

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<sup>305</sup> Ibid.: 116

<sup>306</sup> Ibid.: 116

making the decision. It is, however, clear in what Waltz believes that it is necessary to make a decision as to whether they are one or the other. He remarks that

The point of theoretical importance is that our expectations about the fate of those areas differ wildly depending on which answer to the structural question becomes the right one. Structures defined according to two distinct ordering principles help to explain important aspects of social and political behavior.<sup>307</sup>

The following section will make the case that in fact states containing warlords are anarchic systems. In order to do this, the section will closely examine the notions of failed and collapsed states. This literature was not available to Waltz at the time he wrote on the subject, but by looking at it now, we can make the strong conclusion about the anarchic nature of warlord states that Waltz was unable to in 1979.

### **Failed States**

Failed states ‘fail’ in that they stop fulfilling the requirements of statehood – in whatever way we define a state’s requirements.<sup>308</sup> There are many ways in which a state may fail, including the inability to provide welfare, to defend its borders, or to represent a people. In particular, it is often noted that they do not have what Weber

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<sup>307</sup> Ibid.: 116

<sup>308</sup> In general, literature on failed states is concerned with examining the nature of the state and locating what exactly has failed, how it has failed, and what this means for the reconstruction of the state. See Rotberg 2003 and 2004 for more on failed states.

sees as the central feature of statehood – a monopoly on the legitimate use of force – within the territory formally under their control.<sup>309</sup>

There are countless theories as to specific factors leading states to weaken and fail. For instance, Reno argues that in some cases the rulers of a state will systematically privatize the functions of the state and loot its resources, thereby leaving a hollow shell, something he calls the shadow state.<sup>310</sup> Alternatively, the state may have weak control over specific areas due to geographic reasons. For instance, Herbst provides a compelling account of how low population densities in sub-Saharan Africa have made it especially difficult for states to maintain authority.<sup>311</sup> A state may not have the economic resources to control significant portions of its territory. Without economic resources, the institutions and infrastructure of the state, from roads to civil servants, cannot be maintained.<sup>312</sup> Protracted conflicts, begun for different possible reasons, may also eat away at a state's ability to govern. No matter the reason for failure, in some instances, the state will fail to the extent that the government loses some or all of its control over its territory.

We may refer to states that have lost their authority over definable pieces of their territory as 'fragmented states' and the areas outside the state's central authority as 'fragmented areas'. An example of a fragmented state is Columbia, with its large swathe of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) controlled territory. In some instances, the state may lose control over most or all of the territory outside of the capital city, as occurred in Liberia during that country's civil war.

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<sup>309</sup> Weber 1958

<sup>310</sup> Reno 2000, also see Reno 1998.

<sup>311</sup> Herbst 2000

<sup>312</sup> Mackinlay 2002

In the extreme case of 'collapsed states' the state has failed in that the sovereign government is missing altogether.<sup>313</sup> For example, in Somalia all remnants of a state apparatus had been destroyed by the time of the 1993 UN intervention and no effective government has reappeared since. Rather, there are multiple sub-state groups that control sections of territory or segments of the population. The same goes for much of Afghanistan during the early 1990s as well as early twentieth-century China.

### **Domestic Anarchy**

In order to rectify this we must admit that collapsed and fragmented states cannot be theoretically considered as hierarchical systems, but should rather be considered as extensions of the anarchic system. In the case of collapsed states, this is a clear comparison to make. There is in fact no central authority, no leviathan in the Hobbesian sense. This makes it a simple observation to note that the domestic system is anarchic. The different subgroups are interacting without a higher authority; as David points out, when the state collapses, "domestic groups inside a country... behave much as states do in the international system."<sup>314</sup>

David, and other theorists of domestic anarchy simply assume that this complete state of 'domestic anarchy' occurs, but we can be more precise.<sup>315</sup> Warlords (or other SAGs) arise in a state and these groups become autonomous. When there are multiple autonomous, sovereign groups which interact based on internal drives for power and security there is de facto anarchy. At first the state government may be

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<sup>313</sup> See Zartman 1995 for more on collapsed states.

<sup>314</sup> David 1997: 554-555

<sup>315</sup> As noted above, Kasfir (2002) does point out that we need to examine the internal structures of groups in domestic anarchy in order to understand their cohesiveness. However, he does not refer to the concept of sovereignty.

able to maintain some hierarchical order, but as the state government itself disappears, the state becomes a collapsed state.

A critique of using the concept of domestic anarchy is that it is not explanatory because most internal wars take place in states which still have a central government continuing to exert authority. However, this critique makes the assumption that anarchy needs to be universal within a state. Indeed, anarchy may be less than universal in a state.

In the case of fragmented states, the formulation of anarchy is slightly more complicated, but it exists nonetheless. In the areas where a state has authority, it is possible to consider the political body in control as a sovereign and the areas it controls as a having a hierarchal system. However, outside of such areas there may exist actors beyond its authority. These actors may be (empirically) sovereign in their own right. In such a system, the 'state', i.e. the body in control of a particular area and having been granted juridical sovereignty by the international community, is one actor among many. The interactions of these actors are those of one sovereign to another without a higher authority, i.e. anarchy. Thus in this situation of the fractured state, we should also see it as an anarchic system in the same way as the international system is anarchic – i.e. containing multiple 'containers' of hierarchy which relate as equals.

To put it metaphorically, it is as if the doors to a house have been open, letting in the floodwaters of anarchy but there is still one room, its doors tightly shut, in which the waters have not found their way. It is here that the family continues to live, as other groups slop around the flooded remainder of the house attempting to also shut themselves in and make their own sovereign kingdoms. Yet, the outside community

may still consider the house private property, though the neighbors may not practice what they preach.

Another, related critique is given by David, who argues that rather than the weakening of central authority causing civil wars, in some cases the strengthening of the central government is the root of conflict and sees it as a factor that disproves the “realness” of domestic anarchy.<sup>316</sup> However, the situation he points out is expected if we assume that the ‘state’, by which we mean the internationally recognized government and the areas under its own authority, is in an anarchic system with other armed groups in the same anarchic system. War breaks out between these actors because, as we would expect, when two sovereign actors interact, we are left with a classic security dilemma situation. The state begins to look more aggressive, so the armed group does the same. In return, conflict breaks out. (Chapter 4 will discuss the security dilemma in more detail.)

It might also be argued that such domestic anarchy situations are only temporary and that we should instead see the activities of warlords and related actors as an exception found only in war. This is somewhat parallel to the way in which we must reconsider Neorealist thought during periods of interstate warfare – e.g. borders between actors are overrun and change rapidly. However, the framework illustrated above is flexible and helpful in understanding not just the immediate situation in a collapsed state, but also how it evolves over time. It is possible to model the growth and shrinking of warlords in their control over areas of a state, and thus redraw the map of our anarchic system over time. This makes it possible to track the changes in the dynamic environment of a failed state.

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<sup>316</sup>David 1995

### *Test of Anarchy*

It is necessary to be cautious in the analysis so as not to see anarchic systems where they do not exist. David is right in saying that “anarchy cannot simply be assumed... rather, most states most of the time can ensure compliance.”<sup>317</sup> Collapsed states are straightforward to define as anarchic, however, fragmented states will have a government and there is often some grey area between the state simply being weak and it being fragmented. States regularly face threats to their monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Criminals, for example, are defined by their attempt to break the state’s laws and they often do so violently. However, criminals are not sovereign and their actions do not create anarchy. When the state addresses the issue of crime it does so as a sovereign to an element within its hierarchy. The differentiating factor is that the criminal does threaten the effective control of the state; in fact criminals rely on the state for providing a hierarchical system in which to exist, as noted in Chapter 2. In contrast, the warlord does rival the state and has the military power to maintain its separate sovereignty.

In order to identify fragmented states this study proposes a simple theoretical test. An area is fragmented if an official of the state government cannot enter the area of the state due to the presence of a warlord, or other SAG, with the ability to overpower any force the government can muster. This is not necessarily a one-time event, but a reasonably long-term state of affairs. Simultaneously, from this we can conclude that there is a warlord (or other SAG) present which has de facto sovereignty. Thus, the state must not only be weak, but there must also be a stronger rival able to confront and overpower it. In this way, the test is able to determine if and where an area is anarchic.

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid.: 559

For example, a taxman would in principle – bureaucratic procedures apart - easily be able to go door to door anywhere in Belgium because he would be considered legitimate. Somalia would clearly be considered anarchic because there is not even a government to take the test. While in the FARC controlled areas of Colombia a tax collector would not be legitimate, nor could the state provide the coercive ability necessary to enter the area because FARC has a relative military superiority. This area would therefore be considered lawless and Columbia a fragmented state. But if a taxman was in a Kurdish area of Turkey, where a Turkish state official might not be considered legitimate, he could go in with enough protection from the government to not be under threat because the government is significantly stronger than any possible Kurdish resistance. Therefore, we should not consider Turkey a fragmented state.

In cases where warlords are more mobile, i.e. they control people but not territory, the test is able to give us an idea of whether or not the government is able to exert authority over individuals in a similar manner. If the state is able to rely on authority over an individual or otherwise control his or her actions, it is sovereign over that individual. If the state is unable to do this, since there is another organization which has authority or control over the individual, it does not have sovereignty over the individual. The organization of individuals which are not under the state's authority is another sovereign, and the relations between this organization and the state is marked by anarchy, rather than hierarchy. This would be the case in northern Uganda, for instance, where the members of the LRA are clearly not under the authority of the Ugandan government. Therefore Uganda should be considered a fragmented state. The evidence is in the fact that in order for the government to

confront these individuals, it relies on military units, as it would if it were to confront the troops of another state.

To summarize, in a territory in which there are multiple sovereigns – the system is in effect anarchic. These sovereign actors, whether they be the ‘state’ or warlords, each consider themselves as the highest authority and are driven by the pursuit of power and need for security. Systems with multiple, undifferentiated units that are not under a central authority are, by definition, anarchic. We can therefore expect that the logic inherent in a Neorealist approach would hold in such a situation because the actors, like in the international system, are in an anarchic environment. However, it is not clear yet whether or not this domestic anarchy is ‘linked’ to the international anarchic system.

### **Closed vs. Open Anarchic Systems**

Conventionally, domestic anarchy is seen as a separate ‘closed’ system within a state, in the sense that it is insulated from and different in nature than the international anarchy that is presumed under Neorealism. As noted, others have drawn the parallel between domestic anarchy and international anarchy.<sup>318</sup> In general, these authors are attempting to explain internal conflicts, and more specifically, ethnic conflicts (particularly in order to use the notion of security dilemma to illustrate the actions of ethnic or other groups within a failed state). However, they do not connect this domestic anarchy with international anarchy. For example, David notes that when central authority collapses in a state “a *microcosm* of the international system is replicated within the state.”<sup>319</sup> In their quest to explain ‘internal’ conflicts, these authors artificially divorce their areas of study, or systems, from the outside world and

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<sup>318</sup> See for instance, Jervis and Snyder 1999, David 1995, 1997 and Kasfir 2004

<sup>319</sup> David 1997: 557 (Italics added for emphasis)

model the internal armed groups as interacting only with each other. The implication is that this difference would make integration of domestic actors and international actors within the same theoretical model impossible.

The primary reason for this separation is that it is assumed that domestic anarchy is fundamentally different from international anarchy. In particular, the difference is thought to stem from the different origins and history of anarchy within versus outside of states. For example, Kasfir notes that “within the state, anarchy does not have a priori status, rather it emerges when the state fails and it disappears when state authority returns.”<sup>320</sup> The implication here being that since anarchy is not the ‘natural’ state of affairs, actors will make decisions differently and therefore standard IR theories of their behavior will not work. However, the argument for the exceptional nature of domestic anarchy due to its origins fails for a few reasons.

Empirically speaking, it is only contingent that a domestic hierarchy will return to all areas of a state. In Somalia or Afghanistan hierarchy has not returned for over a decade. Moreover, it can be argued that hierarchy never really existed in some areas of these states. The same could also be said of areas of the DRC, and other states.

This ‘natural state of affairs’ argument arises because in general, hierarchical systems have been reified, as if it has always and will always exist in the same borders that they have now. Rather, hierarchy is itself a contingent property of a system and depends on historical circumstances for any particular area. For instance, former Soviet states were once hierarchically aligned, but now have an anarchical relationship with each other, and it is possible to imagine a future in which they are hierarchically associated again. Similarly, in Somalia the assigned borders of the state

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<sup>320</sup> Kasfir 2004: 60

once did not include the area known as Somaliland and we can imagine a future in which Somaliland is not included again. Therefore, we should not see the juridically defined borders of state as permanent, but rather accept the possibility that it may settle into separate units and vice versa.

Another objection is that neither the past nor the assumed future state of anarchy or hierarchy has necessary impact on the present actions of groups within an anarchic system. For instance, when an empire collapses or decolonizes, even though the states were once part of a hierarchic system, their actions will convert to reflect the anarchic environment. In the same way, even though a state may assume that it will one day be part of a hierarchic system, for instance as a member of the 'United States of Europe', it will continue to act as if in an anarchic system. The parallel applies to those in collapsed states. Groups may remember being part of a hierarchy, but the immediate necessities of life under anarchy demand decision-making as if, and only as if, living under anarchy for an indefinite and potentially permanent period of time.

The hidden assumption made in thinking that domestic anarchy is temporary is that actors want a hierarchical system and will work to create and maintain one, however, this is not necessarily the case. It must be kept in mind that anarchy does not necessarily mean the presence of 'chaos' and violence and therefore, actors may potentially maintain an anarchic system indefinitely.<sup>321</sup> The assumption is that actors will recreate hierarchy if they can because they do not want to live in an anarchic system. However, anarchy only connotes that there is no central authority, other authorities may be present, under which there is a hierarchy. These authorities may in fact not be in conflict with each other. For example, even at the height of its collapse,

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<sup>321</sup> I.e., it is not 'chaotic' in the sense that Robert Kaplan has referred to it. Kaplan 1994

there were still local authorities operating throughout Somalia<sup>322</sup> and there has been a return to widespread ‘peace’ in the sense of a lack of overt fighting, even though there is no effective central government. The same is true in the international system – although it is anarchic, it is generally not very chaotic. Thus, when a state collapses we should not think of the resultant situation as violent disorder, but as anarchic because there is always another authority to take control of a piece of territory. Therefore, actors could potentially live in domestic anarchy indefinitely, as there may not be enough pressure to force them back into a hierarchical system.

It might also be held that domestic anarchy is separate from international anarchy because the two systems are still separated by the juridically defined borders of the state, regardless of state failure. However, this is not the case either as armed groups, the state, and external states and other international actors treat the state shell as open, or permeable, and the two systems as linked.

Warlords clearly treat fragmented and collapsed states as an open anarchic system, which is intimately connected with the international system. They do not respect the authority of the state and treat it as a rival, not as the uppermost authority in a hierarchical system. Therefore they do not let the presence of any state or state-like authority stop it from interacting with other actors in the international system. As such, warlords relate with other international actors based on their own agenda, not the host-states.

In a fragmented state, the state’s government will not legitimize a warlord by calling it autonomous, i.e. sovereign, but its actions against armed groups demonstrate the reality of it being an autonomous actor and potentially having its own separate external relations. (This is not an issue in collapsed states, since there is no

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<sup>322</sup> Menkhaus and Prendergast 1995

government to speak of.) For instance, the state will generally try to refer to warlords as criminals or terrorists or otherwise deemphasize the fact that the armed group has de facto authority in a particular area. However, in its actions, the state will have to admit the reality of the autonomous warlord's authority. It will not try to enter the areas under control of the warlord except to combat it, as, for example, the government of Uganda does in LRA controlled areas. In other words, the state treats the intrusions into armed group controlled areas as invasions. Accordingly, while the state may wish to regulate the international interactions of the warlord, it cannot possibly do so and must simply accept the reality of its no longer being a 'buffer' between these actors and the international system. For this reason, we regularly see states admit that they cannot control drug dealing or other international actions emanating from armed groups within their defined territory.

Actors outside the domestic anarchic system also treat it as openly anarchic. While international actors have attempted to hold up the sovereignty of such states and demand that other states do so as well, the fact is, their actions do not point to such a strong view of juridical sovereignty. It is increasingly common for states to intrude upon the sovereignty of failed states, thereby demonstrating the lack of a state's effective control over territory. In particular, state militaries interact in domestic anarchy as if it were international, as for example happens in US 'snatch and grab' operations in Somalia.<sup>323</sup> Other states also invade at will – not in order to attack the 'state', but to attack specific armed groups. This is, for instance, what happened in 'Africa's World War' in the DRC, when Uganda and Rwanda (amongst other states) invaded the DRC to attack the *Interahamwe* and other militias.

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<sup>323</sup> See, for instance, Menkhaus 2004

Even international organizations make the admission that the state shell is permeable in some cases. For instance, the OLS agreement between the UN, Sudan, and SPLA demonstrated that an actor other than the 'state' could be considered as a legitimate actor to be dealt with within a sovereign state and outside of its permission.<sup>324</sup> Or, up until recently, in order to enter southern Sudan a visa was not obtained from the Sudanese state, but from the SPLA.<sup>325</sup> International aid organizations regularly accept the necessity and legitimacy of obtaining the required visa. As such, they effectively treat the armed group as the sovereign unit, not the juridically defined state.

In addition, both states and international organizations also implicitly admit the de facto nature of armed group control. As noted above, some states excuse drug dealing or terrorism that erupts from areas within their territory, which are out of their control. The international community will generally accept this as reality and not hold it against the state, either legally or morally. This is happening in Columbia or Afghanistan for instance. Similarly, the ECOMOG intervention applied economic sanctions to NPFL controlled areas of the Liberian state, but not to other areas, and in doing so, admitted the de facto authority of the NPFL. While this is not a formal recognition of the reality of a warlord's de facto control, it is an implicit admission.

We should conclude that domestic anarchy is real and linked to the international anarchic system. There is a fluid connection between the domestic actors and international actors, in that they interact as part of the same system. Actors may not rhetorically refer to the system as anarchy, and juridically speaking it is not. Empirically speaking, however, international actors do treat actors in domestic anarchy as they would actors in the international anarchic system.

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<sup>324</sup> See the OLS Ground Rules Agreement in Appendix C.

<sup>325</sup> Author's field observation, Nairobi, Kenya and Rumbek, Sudan, April 2005.

Thus it is possible to conclude that domestic anarchy is real and is open. There is a fluid connection between the domestic actors and international actors, in that they interact as part of the same system. Though actors may not rhetorically refer to it as anarchy, and juridically it is not, empirically it is and the reality is that these actors must interact as if it were anarchy. Since actors relate as in anarchy, our analysis should reflect this.

Beyond reflecting reality, by treating domestic anarchy as a continuation of the international anarchic system — i.e. ‘open system’ — rather than separate from it, it is possible to integrate the understanding of ‘internal’ warlords with external actors.<sup>326</sup> An open anarchic system has the same rules as an international one and international actors may take part in it in the same way as they do in international anarchy, i.e. as equals. While international norms may force international actors to be covert in their dealing, they still nonetheless treat the warlords inside the state as separate actors. In the same way, warlords treat the international actors as equals and interact at will without reference to the state.

In a sense, this perspective involves taking the analysis of anarchic systems from the juridical level, in which actors are defined by recognition by the international community, to the empirical level, in which actors are defined by their de facto sovereignty over groups. In effect, the map of sovereignty is redrawn. Yet, it is redrawn with the same exclusivity as the juridical map of sovereignty – thereby maintaining separate, autonomous units.<sup>327</sup> In this way, it is possible to maintain the

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<sup>326</sup> It may even be possible to treat all domestic environments as anarchies, which are more or less under the authority of regimes. This would of course be a fundamental shift in the focus of IR theory. While such a shift might help to solve some problems in the relationship between domestic and international politics, it is of a much larger scope than this study.

<sup>327</sup> I.e. there is no overlapping sovereignty as for instance Ruggie (1986) or Philip Cerny (1998) might call for.

systematic nature of Neorealism and thereby theorize about warlords and integrate these NSAs into Neorealist models of international politics.

### **(Re)Producing the System**

Before moving on, another point needs to be addressed, that is that there is a dialectical relationship between the anarchic system and warlords, just as there is between states and the international anarchic system. The domestic anarchy environment reinforces the sovereignty of units and thereby constantly reproduces itself just as the international environment does. Waltz argues that there is a self-reinforcing nature to anarchic systems because sovereign units demand an anarchic environment, since they feel themselves to be the highest authority and therefore will not accept attempts at overriding their authority. At the same time, an anarchic environment will force units to buttress their sovereignty and self help focus in the face of potentially or actually competing like units. As Buzan, Jones, and Little put it:

[i]f all the units are subject to the survival logic of self help, then the shoving and shaping pressures on them of life in the anarchy will push their range of governmental functions toward sovereignty. If all the units are sovereign, then the organizing principle among them must by definition be anarchic. Thus anarchy tends to generate like units, and like units, by pursuing sovereignty, generate anarchy.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> Buzan et al. 1993:39

Waltz describes two specific processes – competition and socialization – which further reinforce this process (a point to be brought up again in Chapter 4).<sup>329</sup>

Connected to this, the pressures of international war strengthen each individual state. Tilly made the insightful claim that “war made the state and the state made war.”<sup>330</sup> Here Tilly is referring to the formation of European states which evolved into their current, strong, cohesive structure through constant wars waged against each other which necessitated enhancing cohesiveness and the build up of power. Those states which were able to do so survived, while those that could not have gone extinct.<sup>331</sup>

Just as international war may strengthen states, wars between warlords and the state potentially strengthen the warlords (or cause them to go extinct). The argument is parallel to Tilly’s. Warlords are in competition with each other, with the host state, and (possibly) with other states. This competition forces them to strengthen their own organizational structure and economic system, or succumb. For example, as we saw, cohesiveness is a key ingredient of the actor’s sovereignty and therefore it, in particular, will be built up.

Simultaneously, this internal power struggle leads to a weakening of the state, considered as a whole, since stronger warlords can better rival the state. Thus, the warlord’s drive for sovereignty creates an anarchic system and this anarchic system further reinforces the warlord’s sovereignty. This helps to explain why internal conflicts can become so protracted – it is a self-reinforcing process.

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<sup>329</sup> Waltz 1979

<sup>330</sup> Tilly 1975: 42

<sup>331</sup> In sub-Saharan Africa the process of securing authority, i.e. building cohesion, has occurred through ‘elite accommodation’ (See Jorgenson 2004 and Bayart et al. 1996).

## CONCLUSION

This chapter's argument has demonstrated that we can treat warlords as relevant actors for analysis using a Neorealist approach. They are like units in that they have sovereignty. They are functionally undifferentiated. They are motivated and act as states do, i.e. they pursue power and security – and we can assume that this translates directly to the pursuit of survival. Furthermore, we can treat fragmented and collapsed states as open anarchic systems which are connected to the international system. While seemingly going against the grain of Neorealist theory, this subtle understanding of warlords and failed states reflects reality.

In making the argument of this chapter, it has become possible to argue that warlords should relate as predicted by Neorealist theory. Neorealism predicts that units will interact based on certain predetermined patterns. While it is traditionally held that these patterns should only apply to states, this chapter has demonstrated that they also apply to warlords. Thus, this chapter has brought us significantly closer to answering the central question of this thesis, which is how warlords relate with states and other international actors.

The next question to ask is, exactly what are these predicted relations? This chapter has only discussed the basic requirements of Neorealism; it has not discussed the features of this theory in complete detail. The next chapter will remedy this situation and begin with an examination of the basic tenets of Neorealism. Following this, the chapter will address exactly what sorts of relations we can expect between warlords and other actors in the international system. In making this examination, the thesis question will be answered.

## **CHAPTER 4– THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF WARLORDS**

The previous chapters have demonstrated that it is theoretically permissible to use Neorealism to model the international relations of warlords. It was found that warlords are sovereign, like units which are motivated by survival and that they exist in anarchic environments. These findings open up the possibility of answering the central question of this thesis – how do warlords relate with states and other international actors – in that it can be answered in the same theoretical manner that is used to describe the international relations of states. Specifically, Neorealism sets out a model which can describe how units will relate in an anarchic system.

The following chapter will describe the model and concepts that compromise the theory of Neorealism. The chapter will begin with an overview of the theory. It will then examine the specific concepts of the theory, including: the balance of power, security dilemma, and war. The examination will begin with a definition of the concept, an illustration of how it applies to states, and then a demonstration of how it applies to warlords.

### **OVERVIEW OF NEOREALISM**

The most basic feature of Neorealism is that it is a systems theory. This means that there are actors which are independent from each other, but which interact enough to create an autonomous system. It is at this systemic level that analysis takes place.

The assumption of a systems level theory is that “[i]t is not possible to understand world politics simply by looking inside of states.”<sup>332</sup> This is because by

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<sup>332</sup>Waltz 1979: 65

doing so we can only be descriptive, since if something new or different occurs, a new variable must be created to describe it. As Buzan puts it,

[a] holistic/systemic approach rests on the premise that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, and that the behavior and even construction of the parts are shaped and molded by structures embedded in the system itself. Where the effect of structure is strong, a reductionist approach is inadequate, and on this basis holism established a claim to a distinctive social science to analysis.<sup>333</sup>

Instead, it is necessary to examine the system itself in order to observe generalizations amongst actors' relations.

This systemic -level approach is beneficial for the analysis of warlords. Rather than focusing on the differences between warlords and states, and their general uniqueness, a systemic theory refuses to focus on these internal features of the actor.<sup>334</sup> In this way, we can more easily integrate our understanding of warlords into our understanding about other aspects of international politics because we can make direct comparisons between warlords and states. Therefore, it is possible to go further than simply describing how warlords relate with states and international actors; instead, it is possible to model their relations and see how they change based on what other actors do. As such, the analysis can potentially be predictive and therefore the answer to the question of how warlords relate will not just be in the past, but potentially a future tense answer as well.

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<sup>333</sup> Buzan 1995: 200

<sup>334</sup> Although Chapters 2 and 3 focused on internal features of warlord organizations, this was only necessary in order to demonstrate the validity of systemic analysis.

This system within which both states and warlords exist is both created by the interactions of the actors and influences the actors. Actors, which are all like units, directly create the structures of the system simply by acting as autonomous units that are motivated by survival. When these actors ‘bump up against’ each other they contribute to the system. The sum of their interactions is the system.

At the same time, the system shapes and constrains the political relationships between the actors. It does this through the dual processes of socialization – in which actors create patterned relations with each other – and competition – which selects for specific behaviors – between the actors. Together, these processes influence, but do not force the actions of actors in the system. Socialization means that certain patterns of interaction will be more commonly open to an actor than others, because other actors will tend toward these sorts of patterns, and that actors may not even be able to think outside of these predictable patterns when making decisions. The process is self-reinforcing, as by repeating the pattern, the actors further reinforce it. The implication of competition is that while an actor may not choose to act in a particular way, a poor choice will lead to the extinction of the actor. Since actors can learn, they will soon come to know which interactions are more or less likely to lead to extinction and will make their decisions accordingly.

In these ways, the possible actions of actors in the system are *constrained*. It is the specific patterns to which they are constrained that answers the question of how they relate. However, in order to understand specifically in what ways the actor’s relations are constrained, it is necessary to understand a little more about the nature of the system.

## **Self Help System**

The international system is a self help system. In an anarchical environment – i.e. one in which there is no actor with authority over the other actors – populated by actors desiring to survive, actors must uphold their own interests without recourse to others. This is because there is no central authority which can do so for an actor. Security is continually under threat since “some states may at any time use force, all states must be prepared to do so – or live at the mercy of their more militarily vigorous neighbors.”<sup>335</sup> This condition is termed ‘self help’. The situation is self-reinforcing as “[i]n any self help system, units worry about their survival, and the worry conditions their behavior.”<sup>336</sup>

Within a state, i.e. in a domestic hierarchy, this is not the case. The state provides a hierarchical system of authority which conditions the relations of sub-state actors. In a hierarchic system, actors do not struggle over security, but over the means of control. This is the factor that seems to deny the applicability of a Neorealist approach to warlords, as it is assumed that warlords exist inside of a hierarchic environment and are only struggling over the means of control. However, as was demonstrated in Chapter 3, warlords exist in collapsed or fragmented states, which are open anarchic systems and as such are self help systems.

## ***Warlords and the Self Help System***

As was demonstrated in Chapter 3, warlords are effectively sovereign, functionally undifferentiated, like units; in addition they are motivated by the pursuit of security, thus, warlords should be considered in the same manner as states in the system. While warlords do exist within a state, they are not part of the hierarchy, as was

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<sup>335</sup> Waltz 1979: 102

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.: 105

demonstrated in the previous chapter. Rather, warlords exist separately from the state and therefore must provide for their own security – as if the state were any other actor in an anarchical environment. The warlord is not struggling over the means of control necessarily, but rather over survival in the face of an aggressor. And, therefore, in order for the warlord, as with other actors “to achieve their objectives and maintain their security, [they] ...must rely on the means they can generate and the arrangements they can make for themselves.”<sup>337</sup>

One way that the self help situation of warlords seems to differ from the pure self help environment of the international system is that the legal implications of juridical sovereignty may seem to deter other states from attempting to directly attack a warlord within a third party state. However, this is not the case and in fact states regularly confront warlords across other state’s borders when they feel that their security is threatened. Chapter 5 will examine a particular instance of this, when Ethiopia crossed Somalia’s borders to confront groups by which it felt threatened. Furthermore, for warlords, it is clear that the state border and legal implications of sovereignty make absolutely no difference. In Chapter 6, the case of the LRA’s attacks across state borders will be examined.

### **Power in the Self Help System**

All of the actors in a Neorealist model differ, for theoretical purposes, only in the amount of power which they have. Power was defined in Chapter 3 as anything which establishes and maintains control of men by men. The purpose of power is to maintain autonomy “in the face of force that others wield.”<sup>338</sup> Waltz offers an operational definition of power, worded as: the “old and simple notion that an agent is powerful to

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<sup>337</sup> Waltz 1979: 111

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.: 192

the extent that he affects others more than they affect him.”<sup>339</sup> This definition of power is the one which will be used when discussing power throughout this chapter.

Power is measured by comparing the capability of units. This capability can be in terms of resources, territory, or other factors which allow an actor to affect another more than it is affected itself. Specifically, Waltz notes that power is determined by “size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence.”<sup>340</sup>

In the self help system, actors will seek to survive and in doing this they will try to build up their power *relative to other actors*. Actors in a self help system interact with each other and therefore their security depends on other’s interactions. This means that power must be judged in relation to another actor, since power is what assures security and security is only assured in relation to others. Thus power for its own sake, like wealth or other interests, is a luxury, the first and foremost concern must be the assurance of survival.<sup>341</sup>

### ***Warlords and (Relative) Power***

The same operationalized notion of power applies to warlords, for the same reason it applies to states, i.e. it is a generalized notion<sup>342</sup> Additionally, warlord power will also be determined by the same factors as that which determines state power – i.e., “size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence.”<sup>343</sup> These factors were all implicitly included in the analysis of warlords in Chapter 2. Specifically: warlord fiefdoms are

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<sup>339</sup> Ibid.: 192

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.: 131

<sup>341</sup> An implication of this view, noted by some Neorealists is that this may then engender a ‘relative gains problem’ for states by making cooperation more difficult (Grieco 1993).

<sup>342</sup> This definition does not preclude the argument in Chapter 3 and Waltz implicitly makes a similar case for states.

<sup>343</sup> Waltz 1979: 131

parallel to population and territory in states, their economic ability was covered under the issue of logistics, their military ability is clear, and the issue of political stability and competence is covered under the parallel traits of warlord governance and command, control, and communication. These features of warlord power can be objectively measured in the same sense that states' can.<sup>344</sup> Also, since warlords are primarily concerned with survival, they will be conscious of potential competitor's strengths and attempt to match their own gains in order to secure themselves.<sup>345</sup>

A notable aspect of warlordism is that because they are concerned with relative gains rather than absolute ones, this may make them weak at an absolute level. It has often been noted that warlords are very poor military organizations and easily defeated by organized, conventional forces. For instance, the more organized Executive Outcomes mercenary force was easily able to defeat military actors in Sierra Leone when the government hired it.<sup>346</sup> Later, a relatively small force of the British military was quickly and efficiently able to completely destroy the so called 'West Side Boyz' warlord organization.

However, this weakness and cowardly behavior should be seen as an expected outgrowth of the environment which warlords usually arise. Most warlords exist within a failed state where there are multiple sub-state actors in conflict with each other. These military actors are often quite weak relative to conventional forces, but since they are in competition with each other rather than larger, more powerful conventional forces, they can afford to be weak. When there are states evolved in the

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<sup>344</sup> Though they may appear different to those who are used to the more well defined – i.e. quantifiable – power capabilities of the state.

<sup>345</sup> Related to the issue of relative gains is Mearsheimer's theory of Offensive Realism. Mearsheimer is associated with the theory which predicts that states will attempt to maximize their relative power in order to maintain a margin of security. (Mearsheimer 2001) The ideal situation for states in the Offensive Realist's view is that they become the hegemon of a region, or even the world, and thereby have no enemies that can possibly threaten them.

<sup>346</sup> Shearer 1998

conflict, they too are generally failed states themselves, usually because of equally poor technology and training or corruption, and therefore the warlords need only be strong enough to compete with weak powers.

Therefore when outside actors, from non-neighboring states use their more powerful forces we see how weak the warlords really are. This was the case, for example, when the United States and European powers joined the Bosnia conflict. Though, it should be kept in mind, that even in such cases, warlords may be able to empower themselves enough to even compete here, as the Chechnyans have been able to do with Russia.

### **Structure, System Change, and Hegemony**

The distribution of capabilities determines the system structure and the structure is described by its polarity. This is the case because each actor in the system will have a varying amount of power relative to other actors. In some systems, multiple actors will have an approximately equal amount of power to each other and significantly more than any other lesser powers in the system, such systems are known as ‘multipolar’ systems. In other systems two actors will have significantly more power than any of the other actors, this is known as a bipolar system. Finally, a ‘unipolar’, system arises when a single actor is significantly more powerful than any other actor.

The polarity of any given system can either be maintained or transformed. The system can be transformed through the elimination of a great power, i.e. those which determine polarity, through defeating them in war or with the empowerment of another great power. The system can be maintained if the great powers systematically do so through discouraging the empowerment of another great power or by not taking

part in a system changing war, which could potentially defeat one or more of the great powers.

Given this relative nature of power, actors may attempt to attain hegemony. For, as Waltz notes “[o]rganizations seek to reduce uncertainties in their environment.”<sup>347</sup> This motivation arises naturally from the drive for security, which attempts to avert unpredictable threats. It leads actors to attempt to impose and maintain hegemony in that they will want to sustain the present system through participation “in the management of, or [interference] in the affairs of, lesser states.”<sup>348</sup> The goal of this hegemony is to maintain the system. In particular, great powers will have an incentive and ability to maintain hegemony in this way.

However, hegemony will not be sought at any cost. Actors prefer security over power and therefore they “recognize a trade-off between aggrandizement and self-preservation; they realize that a relentless search for universal domination may jeopardize their own autonomy.”<sup>349</sup> This means that states will modify their pursuit of any hegemony based on their relative level of security at the time.

### ***Warlords and Structure, System Change, and Hegemony***

Warlords will of course never be a great power in absolute terms. There is simply no way that they could obtain the necessary power capability. Therefore some Neorealists may hold that warlords should not be seen as ‘real’ actors in the system. However, Chapter 3 made the argument for warlords being included in Neorealist models to the same degree as small states are. Furthermore, even if we were to agree that we cannot truly integrate war lords into global models, this study’s question could

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<sup>347</sup> Ibid.: 198. This observation is also central to Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik’s work. (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978)

<sup>348</sup> Waltz 1979: 198

<sup>349</sup> Keohane 1986c: 174

still be answered, as a Neorealist approach would still have much to say about how warlords should and will relate with other actors.

Also, due to this weakness, warlords are unlikely to ever be able to create or maintain true hegemony over the system – even on a local level. Hegemony demands the ability to maintain a system. For warlords the system generally cannot possibly be maintained in the face of strong outside interventions. For example, as already noted, British peacekeepers were able to eradicate armed groups in Sierra Leone and recreate a hierarchical order within the Sierra Leonean state by effectively creating a unipolar hegemony over unit relations within the defined territory. In other words, they recreated the hierarchical system.<sup>350</sup>

Nevertheless, on a more enclosed, local level, warlords may be major actors in the system.<sup>351</sup> They can, for instance, create a multipolar system within a (collapsed or fragmented) state – which is how we might describe Somalia, a topic to be covered in more detail in Chapter 5. They may also hold a place within a wider regional system. For instance, the LRA should be considered one of the major actors in the East

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<sup>350</sup> In some situations the warlord is able to force outside actors to take part in a multipolar system due partially to their own power, but more importantly due to the unwillingness of outside actors to use their full power in environments involving warlords. For example, in Liberia the ECOMOG forces were clearly able to defeat any of the Liberian warlords in a ‘stand up fight’ (Alao, Mackinlay, Olonisakin 1999). Yet, these forces effectively became another faction in the Liberian warlord system. They were not able to maintain control over more than a small portion of Liberia and could not build any sort of mutual trust with the NPFL (Ibid.). This created a situation in which Liberia was effectively a multipolar system. Whereas, a truly powerful outside actor would have been able to develop a unipolar hegemony of the system – i.e. transform the system – and maintain this new system, ECOMOG could not do this. Instead, the multipolar system was maintained.

Thus, while the total military forces of the Nigerian army could have, in theory, changed the Liberian system, their unwillingness to use these forces – which would have meant effectively invading Liberia – meant that they could not create and maintain a system change. In the absolutes of traditional Neorealist theory, this would not be considered a true hegemonic or system change ability by warlords, but more of a ‘friction’ due to outside factors. However, on the local level, and *ceteris parabus*, this sort of situation is best described as the warlord(s) maintaining a system. A similar situation occurred in Somalia when the UN forces were effectively turned into another actor in a multipolar system. This situation will be covered in more detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>351</sup> In a sense, warlords, by their very nature, are an example of system change. They create anarchic systems out of hierarchic ones by eking out an existence within a state.

African system which also includes Sudan, Uganda, and the SPLM/A. This situation will be covered in more detail in Chapter 6.

### **The International Relations of States**

The profound implication of the factors detailed so far is that it is possible to describe how units will act in the system a priori. The relations of actors in a self help system will fall into certain patterns. These patterns are dictated by the nature of the system, in particular, by the distribution of power in the system. While it may seem at first glance that actors in an anarchic, ungoverned system could relate in any way they pleased, for there is nothing stopping them from doing, this is not the case. Actors in a self help system are effectively *constrained by the system* to act in certain predefined patterns due to their nature and the effects of the system.

At a general level, units will act to provide for their own security relative to other units, put another way, they act to ensure their survival. The process can be described: a unit will observe the other units that it can possibly relate with. It will then determine the relative capability of these units. If it feels that there is a security concern, in that its power is relatively lower than a possible aggressor, it will act to gain more power, relative to that actor.<sup>352</sup> In particular, units will act to prevent any unit from obtaining hegemony – which would infringe on their autonomy.<sup>353</sup>

The means of affecting the distribution of power – or balancing power – at an actor’s disposal are through making “internal efforts (moves to increase economic capability, to increase military strength, to develop clever strategies) and external efforts (moves to strengthen and enlarge one’s own alliance or to weaken and shrink

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<sup>352</sup> This follows the logic of the observe-orientate-decide-act (OODA) loop described by John Boyd. (Boyd 2004, 2004b)

<sup>353</sup> Paul et al. 2004

an opposing one).”<sup>354</sup> Put another way, the actors relate in terms of cultivating internal power, forming alliances, or making war. These actions are the basic relations which sovereign actors can take part in, although out of these some more complex patterns may form, such as the spiral dynamic created by the security dilemma. Thus the fundamental relation of actors in the international system is to balance power and this balancing will occur when there are at least two sovereign units interacting that are concerned with their own survival (and act rationally).

It is from these actions that change occurs within the system.<sup>355</sup> For example, an actor can cultivate power internally which will change the balance of power in the system by making an actor effectively ‘weigh more’ in capability calculations. This will cause other actors to need to change their level of power. These changes will then feed back into the system and cause the first actor to change its own power capability. Similarly, if two or more actors align, they will constitute a more powerful combined force. This will in turn cause other actors to align or cultivate power internally. In these ways, the distribution of power in the system will change.

It should also be noted that the balance of power is idealized, in practice it is very difficult to make effective. The most fundamental problem is that power defies measurement and there is significant exaggeration of potential rival’s power.<sup>356</sup> This will lead to insuring a safe margin of error. Therefore, it is possible that even if the system is in reality balanced, units will still build up internal power, align, or make war in order to create a margin of safety. Thus, shifts in the balance of power are expected as perceptions change, even if there is no actual shift in material capabilities.

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<sup>354</sup> Waltz 1979: 118

<sup>355</sup> Gilpin (1983) provides a much more thorough understanding of how change comes about. However, for the purposes of this study, this more limited understanding is enough.

<sup>356</sup> Sheehan 1996: 9

Thus, a systemic theory can tell us how a particular set of actors will relate. Since it describes the entire system, including feedback loops, it is possible to obtain a generalized answer. In particular, it tells us that states will relate in terms of the pursuit of security through the balance of power. The specific means to balancing power, and therefore the specific relations we can expect, are those which cultivate internal power, alliances, and war.

### *The International Relations of Warlords*

The insights about international relations made by Neorealism also hold true for warlords. It has been documented in previous sections how warlords parallel states in the requirements of the Neorealist model. The logic of this argument leads to the conclusion that it is also possible to describe and predict the international relations of warlords in the same way.

Just as for states, the actions of warlords are effectively constrained by the system to have relationships based on certain patterns. Specifically, they will act to balance power through internal power cultivation, alliances, and warfare. It is in this sense that it is possible to answer the question of how warlords relate with states and other international actors.

To summarize the answer: *Warlords relate with states and other international actors in essentially the same way as states – they seek to ensure their survival through the balance of power. Specifically, they relate in terms of internal power cultivation, alliances, and war.*

The following section will examine in more detail the specific patterns of relations that are carried out between warlords and other actors in the international system. The overall pattern of relationships is the balance of power. However, within

this there are several specific forms of relationships and these relationships will be examined below. These include: internal power cultivation through obtaining and using economic resources as well as through increasing unit cohesion. Related to these internal actions, the feedback relationship of the arms race will be examined. Alliances in terms of hard balancing and soft balancing will be examined as well the subtle relationships of diplomacy and demonstration of power. We can also expect more complex patterns to form. These include the spiral dynamics found in the security dilemma; the domestic security dilemma will be examined as well as 'mixed security dilemmas'. Also, security dilemma intensifiers and predatory motives in the security dilemma will be examined. Lastly, war will be examined, including a more detailed look at the warlord way of warfare. Each patterned relationship will be described in a general way. Then it will be examined in relation to warlords as actors, in order to see how it applies and if any modifications are necessary relative to standard formulations of the concept.

### **INTERNAL POWER CULTIVATION**

The buildup of power internally can involve all of the various forms of power. An actor may, for instance, attempt to increase the size of its army, develop new technology, or grow its economy. These processes raise the innate capability of the actor and thereby increase its intrinsic security relative to other actors.

States regularly take part in internal power cultivation. The two primary forms are to obtain and use resources and to increase cohesion. For instance, states may exploit natural resources within their territory or they may turn to the sale of their natural or other resources to external actors. They then use these funds for internal weapons development programs, infrastructure building, or other methods of

increasing power. States also attempt to increase their internal cohesiveness, such as through building a nationalist ideology. The culmination of these processes is to effectively increase the security of the state.

Although internal power cultivation is internally based, it is an international relationship in that it creates change in the international system. The change in the unit's power capability will cause other units to also attempt to change. This can then feedback and cause the initial actor to further cultivate its innate power.

### ***Warlords and Internal Power Cultivation***

Similarly, warlords attempt to cultivate their power through obtaining and using resources. In order to do this, warlords can use all of the economic independence factors noted in Chapter 2, including: self-supply, looting, purchasing, and external relations. The relative simplicity of warlord organizations makes truly internal development of power difficult. They are unlikely, for instance, to build the infrastructure necessary to mine iron deposits and then to manufacture weaponry. Rather, warlords tend to turn to looting and trade to build up their power base. In particular, warlords are inclined to exploit natural resources which they come to control. They will sell these resources to MNCs and use the profits to obtain the sources of power, such as more weapons or personnel.

In general, such resource based internal power cultivation is amply covered in the war economy literature and will not be examined in detail here. For instance, see Reno, Keen, and Duffield for examples of how warlords gain economic power and transform it into military power.<sup>357</sup> A brief example, however, will provide an idea of the complex arrangements necessary to gain the resources to maintain the warlord

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<sup>357</sup> Reno 1998, Keen 1998, Duffield 2001

organization and cultivate power. Taylor's NPFL serves as a good example of such complex relations. For instance, it has been noted that:

With control over vast territories rich in natural resources and mineral resources, the NPFL commenced the efficient and calculated exploitation of these abundant commodities. From this period, a lucrative business based on diamonds, timber, iron ore, and gold was initiated with French, Belgian, Turkish, and Taiwanese firms. To circumvent the blockade that had been placed on the ports of Buchanan, Harper and Greenville by the [ECOMOG] in 1993, these products were shipped through the Ivorian port of San Pedro. Ivorian intermediaries and their French counterparts dealt directly with the NPFL in order to avoid the export controls and restrictions resulting from the embargo. The NPFL is estimated to have made \$450 million from these illicit exports during the course of Liberia's war.<sup>358</sup>

As already noted in Chapter 2, Taylor then used the profits to build up his army.

Although these sorts of illicit relations are regularly attributed to 'immoral' warlords, we must keep in mind that states will take part in exactly the same kinds of relations in order to contravene embargos. For example, Iraq under Saddam Hussein went through extremely complex and illegal methods to sell illicit oil.<sup>359</sup> At the same time, states like Iraq have primarily used their funds to illicitly purchase weapons.<sup>360</sup>

However, there are some relevant factors which differentiate internal warlord power cultivation from power cultivation by states. In particular, the lack of juridical

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<sup>358</sup> Hutchful and Aning 2004: 210

<sup>359</sup> IIC 2005

<sup>360</sup> Langewiesche 2005

sovereignty is a disadvantage for warlords. As Reno notes, “[t]he sovereign [Interim Government of National Unity] IGNU regime in Monrovia could (and did) exercise its right to bring suits in foreign courts against firms that did business with Taylor.”<sup>361</sup> Of course, this is not too much of a disadvantage, as warlords do take part in business deals with foreign firms on a regular basis. At times, these may even be large, ‘well respected’ MNCs. For example, even with embargoes in place, Taylor did business with Firestone Tire and Rubber Company.<sup>362</sup>

Thus, economic exploitation should be seen as a route to maximizing security for warlords. Economic exploitation and profit making has been taken to be the ends of their relations, particularly by some of those in the political economy school of conflict analysis. However, this economic exploitation should not be seen as an end in itself, but rather as a means for warlords to maximize their security by increasing internal power. In other words, for warlords relations of international trade are a means of balancing power, as they are for states.

Warlords also attempt to increase the cohesiveness of their organization in order to enhance their intrinsic power. The large literature on identity issues (i.e. grievances) and warlord organizations provides an example of the sort of cohesion building practices of warlords. For example, see Woodward, Stephen Ellis, and Richards and their analyses of Bosnian, Liberian, and Sierra Leonean warlords, respectively.<sup>363</sup> One part of what these authors describe are the means by which warlords enlist support for their organization. Such support can be straightforwardly translated as cohesion building leading to increased power.

All of the motivation and C3 factors noted in Chapter 2, can be maximized to enhance cohesiveness, including the use of loyalty, economic incentive, self help, and

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<sup>361</sup> Reno 1998: 99

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> Woodward 1995, Richards 1996, Ellis 1999

coercion as well as strengthening tactics/strategies, command, control, and communication ability. Warlords will, for instance, often use ethnicity or other identity features of an organization to strengthen their authority over fighters and to increase the cohesiveness of the political community. Again, as noted in Chapter 3, the grievances that a warlord takes advantage of are often perceived to constitute the goal of the organization. Instead, these grievances should be seen as an instrumental means to build up the power, and thereby maximize the security, of the warlord organization.

### **Arms Race**

Gains in internal power, however, are only beneficial relative to other actors. If another actor makes equal gains in power, the original actor will not have changed its relative security. This can lead to a spiral dynamic known as an 'arms race'.

An arms race occurs when two or more actors attempt to increase their security through the cultivation of internal power by the development of more numerous or more powerful arms.<sup>364</sup> This spiral dynamic leads to an action-reaction pattern of the build up of weapons by each of the actors. As one actor makes a gain in power (i.e. adds more arms), this will be perceived by the other actor as a security threat, and therefore the other actor will attempt to make an equal or greater gain, and so on ad infinitum. Positive feedback between the units thereby contributes to the escalation in the production of arms on each side.

Such a simplified model of arms races does not necessarily reflect reality. The physicist/mathematician, Lewis Fry Richardson, put forward a theoretical model of

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<sup>364</sup> There can be spiral dynamics which do not explicitly involve arms. For instance, the 'Space Race' between the Soviet Union and United States.

arms races, similar to the one noted above.<sup>365</sup> However, Richardson's model is in some ways too simplified. In particular, it has been criticized for explaining only a small portion of actual international relations between states, as was argued by Martin Patchen.<sup>366</sup> The chief problem is that arms race models like Richardson's are only based on single factors for causation and therefore do not necessarily reflect the much more complex reality. For instance, Dina Zinnes notes that Richardson does not "formally link defense expenditure and the outbreak of war."<sup>367</sup> Other factors which could be incorporated include technology, inflation, domestic political competition, and culture.

Nevertheless, the basic concept of the arms race is a valuable means of explaining a specific class of relations between international actors. Though it may be unable to explain specific events, such as when hostilities will erupt,<sup>368</sup> it is clear that there is a relationship between arms buildup by international actors. At a basic level of describing such relationships, the arms race concept has significant explanatory force and provides a simple model, *ceteris paribus*, of explaining how two actors will relate and therefore it must be taken into account as a potential explanation of how an international actor will relate.

### ***Warlords and Arms Races***

Warlords can also take part in arms races. Arms racing occurs between warlords and other warlords and between warlords and states for the same reasons that it does between states. The self help nature of the warlord's environment forces him to acquire arms that will leave him with the ability to neutralize or overpower potential

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<sup>365</sup> Richardson 1960

<sup>366</sup> Patchen 1970

<sup>367</sup> Zinnes 1976: 332. Noted in Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff 2001

<sup>368</sup> See for instance, Gillespie and Zinnes 1977

rivals. Warlords may try to build up their internal power base through the same sorts of social, political, economic, and military power practices as states. They can, for instance, recruit more soldiers, obtain more high tech weaponry by importing it, increase their resource base by looting more goods from the local population etc. What differentiates the warlord from states is the nature of the weapons and that they would likely acquire the weapons in a different manner.

As noted, warlords attempt to obtain weapons and personnel without becoming too dependent on outside actors and this has an effect on arms races. It means that the warlord will often have to rely on different sources than states because since states are so much more powerful, they can threaten to infringe upon a warlord's autonomy. Therefore they will often turn to what Duffield refers to as the 'transborder shadow economy'.<sup>369</sup> This international black market, which is completely unregulated by states, has opened up arms sales to non-state armed groups. The illicit sales of arms allows armed groups to acquire weapons which twenty years ago would only be available from external, state-based allies such as intelligence agencies wishing to fund an insurgency for their own reasons. Now, the warlord does not have to accommodate any outside backer, but can instead be driven by his own motivations, as long as he has a way to fund his organization. In other words a warlord can maintain independence.

Arms races between warlords and states will most likely be asymmetric. An asymmetric arms race involves increases in offensive abilities by each side of different types of weapons. This reflects the usual asymmetric nature of conflict between a state and armed group. For instance, if the state adds more tanks to its offensive ability, the warlord may add more mines or improvised explosive devices

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<sup>369</sup> Duffield 2001: 136

(IEDs). Warlords generally are forced to take part in such asymmetric arms races with states, though in some cases the state may be so weak that the arms race is symmetric.

## ALLIANCES

Another method of balancing power is for units to form alliances with other units. This can occur when there are three or more actors in the system. An alliance between two states creates, for the intents and purposes of comparing power, a 'super-group' which combines the power of both actors into a whole. This super-group functions as a single actor in terms of the calculation of power capability by other actors in the system.

Actors may break the alliance at any time they wish, if it is no longer in their interest. Alliances do not exist as any more than a compulsive movement to maximize security for two or more actors. The official diplomatic rules surrounding alliance are nothing more than decoration. As soon as the security calculation of one or more of the actors changes, the alliance can, though not necessarily will, be broken.

Conversely, the balance of power is a fundamental force which will draw together an actor with, potentially, anyone, even recent enemies.<sup>370</sup> This flexibility of relations is an important feature of the balance of power. It demands that an actor align with another regardless of ideological or other preferences and, in the same way, an actor must be willing to cease an alliance in order to resume a balance.

It is also important to note that this demand of flexibility requires that actors potentially align with seemingly unlike actors if that is what is necessary to main a balance of power. E.g. it may be necessary for a state to align with a NSA such as a warlord. For instance, this occurred when the United States military aligned with the

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<sup>370</sup>Waltz 1979: 166

Northern Alliance in the Afghanistan War. As we shall see in chapter 6, there was also such a state – NSA alliance between Uganda and the LRA and Sudan and the SPLM/A.

Generally the weaker actors in a system of three or more actors will align against the stronger actor. As Waltz notes, “because power is a means and not an end, states prefer to join the weaker of two coalitions... The first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their positions in the system.”<sup>371</sup> The weaker states will be more appreciated on the weaker side, as they will make up a relatively larger amount of the group’s power as a whole, and therefore have more say in the direction of the group. This is true, of course, only if the group is able to minimally deter the more powerful actor.

Actors may, however, join the more powerful actor in a system. This is known as ‘band-wagoning’. It is a rare occurrence, for the reason noted above, but does occur, in particular if there is already a hegemonic actor in the system.

Furthermore, there are strong obstacles of fear which an actor must overcome in order to cooperate. In particular, actors have two fundamental concerns.<sup>372</sup> In an alliance, the possible gains may favor another rather than oneself. Since actors are concerned with relative gains, this creates a disincentive to cooperate which may only be overcome with a suitably powerful incentive to cooperate. Secondly, an actor may worry that it will become dependent on another actor’s “cooperative endeavors and exchanges of good and services.”<sup>373</sup> Doing so would limit the self help ability of an actor, and in extreme cases makes an actor lose its functional undifferentiation – e.g. it might more resemble the province of an empire.

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<sup>371</sup> Ibid.: 126

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.: 106

### *Warlords and Alliances*

Warlords form alliances for the same reason as other actors in anarchic systems. They wish to increase their security in relation to other actors in the system. When they cannot increase their internal power enough, they will seek to combine their forces with another actor in the system.

Warlords may form alliances with other warlords. For example, the aptly named Northern Alliance was made up of various warlords who had combined their efforts to balance the power of the Taliban. The Taliban presented a severe threat in that the group eventually became so powerful that it threatened the autonomous survival of warlords who resisted on their own. In order to counter this threat, smaller warlord organizations joined the Northern Alliance – which also threatened their autonomy but to a lesser extent because it was not as dominated by such a powerful hegemon – and in this way guaranteed their own continued survival.

Warlords can also form alliances with states. For example, the United States aligned with the Northern Alliance out of convenience, as both of the group's security interests approved of such an alliance. Balances of power between warlords and other warlords and warlords and states will be illustrated in Chapters 5 and 6.

Like states, warlords will form alliances based on their security interest, and therefore with anyone with whom it is in their interest to do so. Warlords will not base alliance formation on identity or other issues. This, for instance, allowed the SNF to form and then break an alliance with Ethiopia, an issue to be covered in Chapter 5, or the Christian and Animist LRA to form an alliance with the Islamic Fundamentalist Sudanese government, an issue to be covered in Chapter 6. Security is the factor which will dictate alliance formation. Therefore warlords, like states, can “adjust to a

shifting distribution of power by changing partners with a grace made possible by the absence of ideological and other cleavages.”<sup>374</sup>

Moreover, warlords have the same concerns as expected in terms of alliances. They are concerned with relative power and therefore will only form alliances when the system forces them to do so because of the presence of a more powerful threat. Also, as noted in Chapter 2, warlords are concerned with their independence and therefore will be careful to not allow a more powerful ally to limit its independence.

The means by which warlords will form alliances may be different from that employed by states. States can use more formal processes to create alliances based on extensive diplomatic relations, which are held to be legitimate by other states. Warlords, on the other hand, cannot generally take part in formal, legitimate diplomatic exchanges and official treaty or alliance creation. Nonetheless, they are able to form informal alliances with other actors, including states. In general warlords often end up in secret alliances with states, who gain from such alliances by using the warlord for their ‘dirty work’. These alliances may even be quite long-lasting and cover multiple areas of exchange. For example, the LRA formed a decade long alliance with the government of Sudan, which involved arms trading, joint military operations, and basing rights.

In general, the balance of power, as Neorealism describes it, is a good model of the relations of warlords with other warlords and with states. It is a *de facto* arrangement of powers that occurs compulsively. The place of trust, loyalty, norms, and formality is completely erased, as actors align and break alliances to meet their interest. These alliances can therefore include warlords if doing so is convenient and beneficial to the security interests of the actors.

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<sup>374</sup> Ibid.: 125

## **Typology of Balancing**

The balance of power obtained via alliances can be further subdivided into hard and soft balancing.<sup>375</sup> Warlords take part in both forms of balancing.<sup>376</sup>

### ***Hard Balancing***

Hard balancing occurs when actors “adopt strategies to build and update their military capacities, as well as create and maintain formal alliances and counter alliances, to match the capabilities of their key opponents.”<sup>377</sup> In other words, hard balancing is the classic balancing behavior which Neorealist literature usually focuses on. An example of hard balancing would be the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which was formed between Western powers to balance the Soviet Union and its allies’ power.

Hard balancing seems to occur less frequently between states and warlords, but it does happen. The impediment to visible alliances is the inability of warlords to take part in formal alliances with states because such alliances would be considered illegitimate in international law. However, it should be kept in mind that, even in the balance of power between states, it is often the case that states make illegitimate and secret alliances with each other.<sup>378</sup> It is these more secret, but no less demanding, alliances that we would generally see between a state and warlord. At other times an alliance between a state and warlord may not be formal, in the sense that there is no

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<sup>375</sup> Paul et al. 2004

<sup>376</sup> Paul et al. (2004) also bring up the concept of ‘asymmetric balancing’. Warlord balancing is itself a form of asymmetric balancing and therefore the concept will not be discussed as a separate form here.

<sup>377</sup> Waltz 1979: 3

<sup>378</sup> Secret relations between states are also common. States may use secret alliances in order to gain strategic advantage, as occurred for in the lead up to World War I. They may also be necessary for ideological reasons, for instance, Iran had secret relations with Israel during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s but could not make these public because of the non-acceptance of Israel of a state by Muslim nations and for internal public opinion reasons. In these situations it becomes necessary for analysts to adopt inference as the method of proof.

explicit treaty, but may otherwise be a strong and expected alliance. The alliance between the United States and Northern Alliance would be an example of such an alliance.

### ***Soft-Balancing***

Soft balancing falls short of formal alliances and is not as focused on purely military activities. It involves developing ententes, limited security understandings between states, limited arms build ups, and collaboration in international institutions.<sup>379</sup> Soft balancing can also involve economic and public relations alliances between states. These activities can potentially be escalated into hard balancing military alliances.

The reality of soft-balancing is still not fully accepted. For instance, Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth argue that the concept does little to explain current international relations.<sup>380</sup> Beyond 'practical' applications of the concept, in some ways it does not even align with basic precepts of Neorealism, which is more focused on 'high politics'. Whatever the end-state of the debate on soft-balancing, it can be addressed in the case of warlords without necessarily arguing that it is a concept which is acceptable in Neorealist theory.

Soft-balancing also occurs with warlords. In many cases, a state and warlord will have similar interests in containing the power of a mutual rival, but not take part in formal bonds because of concern with international legitimacy or other issues. For instance, a state may turn a blind eye to incursions by a warlord in its territory if it feels that the warlord is weakening a rival neighboring state. At other times, a warlord and state may form understood economic alliances. For example, whether or not the DRC (then known as Zaire) had a formal alliance with Savimbi, there were clearly

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<sup>379</sup> Paul et al. 2004: 3

<sup>380</sup> Brooks and Wohlforth 2005

some 'understandings' and economic collaboration over diamonds. However, collaboration in international institutions and similarly official forms of soft-balancing will be off limits for the warlord.

### **Diplomacy and Recognition**

A related point to note is that states take part in diplomacy and attempt to be recognized by other states. They do this in order to increase their internal strength, such as by obtaining aid, and to facilitate alliances. In both ways, states increase their relative level of security. Although such diplomacy cannot disregard the balance of power in a system, it can facilitate it.

Warlords also attempt to improve their security by taking part in diplomacy and gaining recognition.<sup>381</sup> Diplomatic relations strengthen warlords internally by allowing them to access external resources, which help to build internal power. They also facilitate alliances. As Clapham notes in regard to African insurgents (a point which also applies to warlords):

...the functions of international relations for African insurgents were, in many respects, little different from those for recognized states. Insurgent leaders, like heads of state, used international contacts in order to strengthen their own control over their domestic political structure, gain access to external resources, and so far as possible ensure their own survival.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Other armed groups take part in diplomatic relations. It is a standard method used by insurgents to gain international backing, such as by the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Public diplomacy for armed groups involves largely the same methods as diplomacy used by states and includes appointed diplomats and objectives such as gaining economic aid.

<sup>382</sup> Clapham 1996: 223

For example, Reno details how Taylor used his business connections to conduct diplomacy with the United States government. He explains:

[Taylor] engaged a Washington, D.C., firm that also represented a consortium member [with which Taylor was doing business]. With the firm's help, Taylor could publicize his plausible argument that the Nigerian intervention represented a threat to Liberian sovereignty.<sup>383</sup>

Here we see Taylor acting exactly as we would predict a survival orientated actor to act. He used diplomacy, if only a form of 'public diplomacy', to ensure the survival of his organization by attempting to gain the U.S.' support against the threat of a Nigerian invasion.

### ***Demonstration of Power***

However, in order to take part in diplomacy, an actor must be recognized by other relevant actors. States are recognized *a priori* by other states as sovereign actors which can potentially be aligned with. Warlords, however, must provide proof that they can be aligned with. The standard method used to do this is to demonstrate power. In addition, demonstrations of power grant the warlord the ability to improve its power internally.

Warlords demonstrate power in order to facilitate alliances. The relative power of warlord organizations is not easily calculated, since they do not necessarily control a territory, as a state does. In order to remedy this, the warlord must demonstrate that

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<sup>383</sup> Reno 1998: 101

he has some power, such as by taking and holding territory, defeating government troops, moving a civilian population etc. In doing so, the warlord's power can be calculated by states and, if it is found to be in their interest, an alliance can be formed. For example, when the United States decided to invade Afghanistan and remove the Taliban from power, it turned to the warlords of Afghanistan who had demonstrated some power in the state – the Northern Alliance – who controlled around 10% of the state's territory.

Warlords also demonstrate power because by doing so they may improve their chances of recruiting individuals who are willing to join the organization. This is similar to standard insurgency doctrine which prescribes that insurgents use highly visible attacks as a way to promote their cause and force the state to react to them. By forcing the state to acknowledge them, the insurgency promotes its cause – since like-minded individuals in the state will find a central force to congregate around – and thereby strengthens its forces by gaining new recruits. It also serves to solve the coordination problem.<sup>384</sup>

Also, by being seen as an alternative to the state, an armed group may be able to attract external resources or funding from states. Warlords are notorious for such practices. For example, they will demonstrate their ability to control a resource, as for instance, Taylor did in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Though Taylor had no legal right to natural resources, he could demonstrate control over diamond and timber resources, which allowed him to negotiate deals with international corporations for the resources. These corporations, which are driven by the pursuit of profit, look to exploit the natural resources and will share profits with the warlord in exchange for

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<sup>384</sup> Collier 2000

access or delivery of the raw naturalresources. Again, we see the high relative value of empirical sovereignty versus juridical sovereignty.

The warlord need not even demonstrate present control over resources, but only the possibility of future control. He can then simply sell the future rights for natural resources to a corporation. As Clapham notes:

Insurgents [by which Clapham also includes warlords] could trade on the expectation that they might eventually come to power, and raise what were effectively insurance premiums from foreign firms which were anxious to protect themselves against the possibility. Given that the French state oil company, Elf-Aquitaine, depended heavily on Angola for its supplies, it was no more than commercial prudence for some of its senior managers to maintain close contacts with the [Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola] MPLA government, while others did so with Savimbi and UNITA.<sup>385</sup>

Thus, Savimbi need only demonstrate potential power and capability to gain resources. These resources then, of course, can be turned into power capabilities, i.e. the profit is used to buy weapons and thereby to increase the internal power of the warlords.

In a sense, juridical sovereignty can be seen as a form of power, one which warlords do not possess, and therefore warlords need to compensate for this. Recognition of sovereignty by other international actors grants actors some assumptions about their overall power capability and this can be traded in for real

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<sup>385</sup> Clapham 1996: 234

power. Moreover, juridical recognition may grant power in itself in that it allows an actor to take part in international organizations or obtain the benefits of formal diplomacy. Warlords do not innately have such power, rather they need to demonstrate that they are empirically sovereign. In doing this, the warlord can obtain some of the benefits of sovereign recognition, such as the ability to form (informal) alliances. Yet, they are never able to gain some of the more formal benefits of juridical recognition of sovereignty, such as the ability to take part in official international organizations. Nevertheless, warlords still can take part in relations with other actors that can be modeled in terms of power distributions, for juridical recognition is only one form of power amongst many.

## **SECURITY DILEMMA**

Even though the balance of power may be defensive in nature, tension and conflict in anarchic environments is still rife. This is because, even without innately aggressive actors in a system, a security dilemma relationship arises between actors. The security dilemma occurs because states, or other units, will attempt to provide for their own security. In doing this they will amass power for defensive purposes. This amassing of power may then be perceived to be for offensive rather than defensive purposes to other actors. The perception of potential offense leads the other actors to amass power themselves for defensive purposes but, again, this may be perceived as being for offensive purposes and it is herein that the spiral of the security dilemma begins.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Barry Posen, who first applied the concept of the security dilemma to internal actors, puts it eloquently:

“the condition of anarchy makes security the first concern of states. It can be otherwise only if these political organizations do not care about their survival as independent entities. As long as some do care, there will be competition for the key to security – power. The competition will often continue to a point at which the competing entities have amassed more power than needed for security and, thus, consequently begin to threaten others. Those threatened will respond in turn.” (Posen 1993: 104)

Thus, it is the same factors which lead to the balance of power that also contribute to the security dilemma.

The security dilemma arises any time there are one or more units in an anarchical system which are motivated by survival.<sup>387</sup> John Herz first referred to the concept of the security dilemma in 1950 and, more recently, Jervis updated and refined the concept by applying game theoretical modeling to it.<sup>388</sup> As already noted, Posen applied the security dilemma to non-state groups, specifically to ethnic conflict, in 1993.<sup>389</sup>

### **Domestic Security Dilemma**

Posen notes that the collapse of imperial regimes can be viewed as a problem of “emerging anarchy.”<sup>390</sup> He argues that in the collapse of empires, such as the Soviet Union, the sovereign disappears and sub-state groups, whether ethnic, religious or cultural, will seek security. Posen goes on to illustrate the security dilemma and demonstrate how it is applicable to security situations within a state.

After imperial collapse, the security dilemma is modified by the fact that groups will attempt to rebuild, either on their own or with the help of international actors, the state structures. This will lead to apparently different dynamics than are typical for international security dilemmas. For instance, actors may be driven towards acts of ethnic cleansing in order to obtain security. This occurs because unlike in interstate models, Posen’s model sees dispersed groups as the units of the security dilemma. These groups, because they are not enclosed, may be mixed together with other groups. For example, Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks were mixed in

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<sup>387</sup> Waltz 1979

<sup>388</sup> Herz 1950, Jervis 1978

<sup>389</sup> Posen 1993

<sup>390</sup> Ibid.: 104

cities of the former Yugoslavia. As the groups attempt to gain security, they may come to perceive the other groups as threats and therefore want to separate themselves out. The offensive version of this is to forcefully separate out the threatening group, i.e. ethnically cleanse the area.

### ***Warlord Security Dilemma***

The warlord security dilemma more closely resembles the traditional international security dilemma than it does Posen's domestic formulation. This is because warlords are unitary actors that are separated out from society and formed into an enclosed community, unlike Posen's formulation of dispersed groups. As was discussed in previous sections of this study, warlords are unitary actors in that they are made up of individuals and these individuals are cohesively bonded enough to have an effective leadership. While they may not necessarily be connected with a single territorial area, they will be separated from the external population, possibly literally separated into a roving band or base-camp of some sort. Therefore the dynamics of these actors will differ from more amorphous ethnic, religious, or cultural groupings.

Moreover, we can expect that warlords will more closely follow the ideal security dilemma than the types of non-state groups that Posen is referring to. The cohesiveness of the warlord unit makes them more purposeful, and therefore, potentially, more predictable in the security dilemma. Like states, warlords can have a defined foreign policy and automatic reactions to perceived threats. This is unlike more amorphous ethnic groups which may react to a threatening stimulus, but do so in a more divided manner, with for instance, some subgroups or individuals being more aggressive than others.

Thus, we should expect to see security dilemmas between warlords and other actors. In fact this does occur. However, for the warlord, unlike Posen's formulation, security dilemmas will potentially involve states. We can refer to these as 'mixed security dilemmas'.

### **Mixed security dilemma**

The security dilemma was applied by Posen and others to NSAs in relation to other NSAs. However, as has been argued, the anarchic system which warlords exist in is open and therefore other states may possibly be involved. This means that the security dilemma can take place between warlords and other armed groups and warlords and states.

The mixed security dilemma can occur when warlords exist in both collapsed and fragmented states. In a collapsed state, the warlord may interact with other warlords and states outside of the boundaries which define the collapsed state. For instance, in Somalia such a mixed security dilemma occurs between Somali warlords and Ethiopia. The Ethiopian state feels threatened by the warlords within Somalia because they are obvious security threats that may either support internal Ethiopian threats, as with al Ittihad, or may be direct threats themselves. At the same time, Ethiopia's defensive maneuvering may be perceived as a threat to warlords. This case will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

In fragmented states, the warlord may enter into a security dilemma with the host state itself as well as with neighboring states. For example, the LRA presents a threat to Uganda simply by existing as an entity which is not under the authority of the state within its boundaries. The LRA also presents a security dilemma for the

Sudanese state, as it may attack inside Sudan. This example will be covered in more detail in Chapter 6.

### ***Mixed Security Dilemma and Intervention***

An additional benefit of the mixed security dilemma approach is that it can help explain intervention in terms which Neorealism can accept. When states fail and warlords appear inside of them, from a Neorealist perspective it seems that there is no reason to care. In fact, it is a positively beneficial state of affairs because failure and warlords weaken the potentially threatening state. Therefore it would seem like states should accept the presence of failed states, possibly even promote them, and certainly not intervene in them to end this less threatening situation.<sup>391</sup>

Interventions do, however, make sense if one considers that an armed group can enter into a security dilemma with a neighboring state. For example, as Taylor (and other warlords) grew in power, he came to represent a threat to neighboring states; eventually this threat led to an intervention. Similarly, warlords in Somalia were considered to be threats. Whether or not the warlord's actions were for defensive purposes, neighboring states might perceive his actions as offensive threats and this would lead them to take actions to obtain increased security. The action used to obtain an increase in security in the face of the threat is intervention. Thus, the logic of mixed security dilemmas can not only help to explain these armed group-state relations, but also to explain a Neorealist conception of intervention.

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<sup>391</sup> One alternate possible explanation is that conflict might 'spill over' and 'infect' neighboring states. However, this does not explain interventions by non-neighboring states.

## Security Dilemma Intensifiers

The security dilemma is intensified by two possible conditions. Firstly, if it is difficult to distinguish offensive and defensive weapons, actors will not be able to signal their defensive intent and this may cause other actors to be more likely to assume an offensive intent. Secondly, in cases where offensive operations are more effective than defensive ones, actors will choose the offensive course of action, which can in turn lead to preemptive war in the event of a crisis.

Posen illustrates how both 'intensifiers' of the security dilemma are present in internal, ethnic conflicts.<sup>392</sup> Small arms are such weapons because they are innately applicable to offensive and defensive operations. Moreover, small arms are usually the weapons of choice for armed groups because they are inexpensive, upkeep is easy, and they are destructive when used in bulk.<sup>393</sup> It is also intensified because small military forces can generate large amounts of terror in order to move a population. This gives an advantage to first strike capability. Therefore, we can expect that the security dilemma of armed groups, in ethnic conflict situations at least, will be intensified.

The warlord security dilemma also contains such intensifiers. Warlords in general rely on small arms. In addition, offensive operations are much more effective for warlords than defensive ones because of their particular style of asymmetric warfare. The warlord usually does not have many troops relative to states and he cannot rely on society to shield him, as insurgents can. Therefore the warlord must rely on the quick and dirty fighting that we associate with warlordism – i.e. the warlord way of warfare – in order to overcome these asymmetries. This form of warfare does often value offensive operations over defensive ones.

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<sup>392</sup> Posen 1993

<sup>393</sup> Klare 2004

## **Predatory Security Motives**

Jervis and Snyder also use the concept of the security dilemma to explain the relations of actors in a failing empire. They add to this a discussion of the interaction of predatory and security motives. They note that:

The purest type of security dilemma is a situation in which security is the overriding objective of all the protagonists, yet attempts by one party to increase its security reduce the security of the others. At the opposite end of the spectrum some conflicts may be driven entirely by the desire of one or both parties to exploit or dominate the other for reasons that would not diminish even if security were not in jeopardy.<sup>394</sup>

Snyder and Jervis admit that there are normally mixtures of security and predatory motivations by actors. They find that the security dilemma itself can give rise to predatory behavior, as well as “zero-sum conflicts of interest and inimical exclusive identities.”<sup>395</sup> At the same time, predatory strategies can create or exaggerate the security dilemma.

This interaction of security and predatory motivations affects warlords in particular because they are by their very nature predatory actors. They often rely to some degree on forced conscription and looting in order to sustain their organizations. This means that they must take part in predatory activities. The warlord’s predatory nature leads it to be almost continuously fighting wars. Thus, although the warlord

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<sup>394</sup> Snyder and Jervis 1999:19

<sup>395</sup> Ibid.: 23

organization may only be defending its autonomy and surviving as an organization, its actions are almost always perceived as threatening. Moreover, warlords are concerned with their own continuing autonomy, and since they necessarily exist within a state, they will naturally be a security threat to the state. This is because states are existentially concerned with maintaining a hierarchy of authority within their territory and therefore they will feel threatened by warlords. Together these factors lead to an intensification of the security dilemma and makes it more likely to lead to outright conflict.

## WAR

War is an infamously difficult term to accurately define and conceptualize. More or less inclusive definitions of the term are argued, often depending on reference to Clausewitz's formulation of the definition of wars as "simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means."<sup>396</sup> For instance, on one side of the debate, M. L. R. Smith argues that "[a]ll war, be it 'low intensity' or otherwise, is inherently the same and can therefore be understood, in its entirety, within the Clausewitzian strategic paradigm."<sup>397</sup> This includes all kinds of actors, whether state or non-state. On another end of the spectrum, many conflicts between groups, even all contemporary conflicts, are not war, *per se*. For instance, Rupert Smith argues that:

[w]ar no longer exists. Confrontation, conflict and combat undoubtedly exist all around the world – most noticeably, but not only, in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Palestinian Territories – and states still have armed forces which they use as a

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<sup>396</sup> Clausewitz 1989: 100

<sup>397</sup> Smith 2003: 35

symbol of power. None the less, war as cognitively known to most noncombatants, war as battle in a field between men and machinery, war as massive decisive event in a dispute in international affairs: such war no longer exists.<sup>398</sup>

Moreover, there are several possible categories of war. For instance, John Mueller brings up just a few, including:

- major war or wars among developed countries,
- conventional civil war,
- colonial war,
- ideological war,
- unconventional civil war (under which includes terms such as new war, ethnic conflict, clashes of civilization),
- and policing wars.<sup>399</sup>

Within each such category, the primary question could then be asked again, i.e. is it a war *per se* or simply the use of methods of warfare. However, these debates need not be addressed in this study, for the notion of warfare which is central to this study is that which is specific to Neorealism.

Neorealism acknowledges two types of war. What can be termed 'hierarchical war' is fought over control of the means of governance in the state by actors within the state. The other type of war, which can be termed 'anarchic war', is fought over survival between like units. Such anarchic war is a means of balancing power. Thus, it is the objective of warfare which differentiates it. It is often thought that warlords

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<sup>398</sup> R. Smith 2005: 1

<sup>399</sup> Mueller 2004

only take part in hierarchic war. In fact, as the following discussion will make clear, they take part in anarchic war, since their primary goal is survival.

### **Hierarchic War**

Conflict and war occur inside of states, just as it does in the international system. “The difference between national and international politics lies not in the use of force but in the different modes of organization of doing something about it.”<sup>400</sup> In an ideal state, the government is “organized to prevent and to counter the private use of force.”<sup>401</sup> Doing so maintains a hierarchical system within the state.

Within this hierarchy, the sub-state units may have political conflict over the control over the state authority apparatus. They may also escalate the conflict over its control to include physical violence. This fluidity leads to some crossover between political parties and insurgencies, both as political parties may become insurgencies and in that insurgencies may become political parties, as Hamas or Hezbollah are becoming.

What we can call ‘hierarchic war’, or civil war, occurs when separate political units seek to control the means of governance using force, rather than politics. In other words, the actors fight to determine which will be at the top authority in the hierarchy. Hierarchic war will therefore start when a sub-state actor attempts to fight over the means of governance. It will end when the state defeats or co-opts the sub-state actor, the sub-state actor takes control of the state, or the state collapses – creating an anarchic environment

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<sup>400</sup> Waltz 1979: 103

<sup>401</sup> Ibid.

## **Anarchic War**

The nature of the relations of units in a self help system can lead to war. As described above, actors in an anarchic system must provide for their own security. In some instances this means building up internal power to deter aggressors or otherwise creating a balance of power through the use of alliances. All units in an anarchic system are pursuing such security goals simultaneously. However, some of these security goals may be incompatible. For example, it may be necessary for actors to physically defend themselves from aggressors or to preemptively attack other actors in order to improve the balance of power by weakening another actor.<sup>402</sup> If the units come into physical conflict in order to rectify these incompatible goals, it is anarchic war. In this way, war “can only determine the allocation of gains and losses among contenders and settle for a time the question of who is the stronger.”<sup>403</sup>

Thus, anarchic war can be seen as, in a sense, a continuation of the attempt to maximize security through influencing the distribution of capabilities, i.e. balancing power. It is another option, other than aligning or building up power internally. This option is used when security goals become incompatible. Actors can use force for conquest, which can increase internal power, by allowing them to acquire resources. War can also weaken or even completely remove a rival, thereby influencing the power distribution in a favorable manner. Conversely, an actor must fight defensive war in order to defend itself from an aggressor.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> There is a threshold at which civil war becomes anarchic war. In a civil war the government continues to have the monopoly over the legitimate use of violence and is organized to counter the insurgent’s use of violence. Rebellions are in effect treated like crime. However, when the insurgent becomes powerful enough, the government is no longer able to live behind the illusion of countering criminals. Rather, the insurgent comes to gain autonomy from the state – sovereignty – and the nature of conflict becomes an existential fight for survival.

<sup>403</sup> Waltz 1979: 112

<sup>404</sup> In most instances, however, war will not be a prescribed course of action because of the distinct possibility that it will weaken the aggressor as well, and since units are more concerned with security than with power, it will in general be more advisable to balance power through alliances or other means. In this way, war can be deterred.

### *Warlords and War*

Having seen how Neorealism approaches war, it is possible to address warlords and war. The first point to attend to is that even within states, warlords are not fighting hierarchic wars. They do exist within host states and this may lead to the assumption that they must then be fighting a hierarchic war over control of the state apparatus. Furthering this view is that it is not unusual that warlords will profess the goal of taking over the state or some other such 'moral' pursuit as its primary goal. But, as Morgenthau rightly remarks, we must not judge policy by what is said, but what the actions are.<sup>405</sup> It is common for states to also profess moral foreign policy goals, but in fact their actions are clearly concerned with survival first.

The confusion arises because we assume that the juridical borders of a state dictate the type of warfare being fought by an actor. This is not the case however. Warlords exist within the state, but are empirically sovereign – and therefore autonomous from the state – and thus act as any other sovereign, security motivated actor should. The implication is that they are fighting wars for survival. Thus while it may be an 'internal war' in that it is inside of a state, it is still an anarchic war, in that it is over security, not control of the state apparatus. This holds true for fragmented and collapsed states.

War inside of a fragmented state for warlords is not necessarily about control of the state apparatus, rather it is about survival. Since the state's primary motivation is to monopolize authority within its borders, it is constantly attempting to destroy armed groups. However, the primary motive of warlords is survival and they will use war as a means to attain security. This means that there is a constant state of conflict

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<sup>405</sup> Morgenthau 1993

between the two incompatible organizations.<sup>406</sup> Chapter 6 will discuss such a war in the fragmented state of Uganda in more detail.

In collapsed states, the logic is similar. There are multiple warlords, or other armed groups, each with a motive to survive. In such a situation, the logic of the security dilemma causes the warlords to wage war on each other just as it does in the international anarchic system. Similarly, arms races and the inability to balance power in general will cause war to break out. Chapter 5 will discuss the warfare situation in the collapsed state of Somalia in more detail.

Warlord war inside of fragmented and collapsed states can cross international bounds as well. The warlord may compete with a neighboring state. For instance, the LRA has fought both Sudan and Uganda – a topic to be covered in Chapter 6. Similarly, an external state may combat a warlord. For example, the UN forces fought Somali warlords – a topic to be covered in Chapter 5.

To summarize, war involving warlords is not only internal, i.e. against a host state or external, i.e. against another, external state. Nor is it always against states, it may involve other armed groups, or both states and other armed groups. Rather, we can call this form of warfare ‘mixed wars’. Mixed wars are wars which have aspects of both interstate wars and intrastate wars. They involve non-state armed groups fighting against other non-state armed groups or states. This struggle takes place within more than one state or involves actors from more than one state in direct ways.

As with states, warlords will use war for conquest – to gain power – and to weaken a rival. For example, Taylor fought a war in Sierra Leone in order to gain territory rich in alluvial diamonds and thereby added to his own economic resources. The LRA uses a strategy of almost continual war with the Ugandan state to weaken it.

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<sup>406</sup> Even if the state were to give up its attempt at monopolizing authority, the logic of the security dilemma would still likely lead to conflict.

Or, during the early years of state collapse in Somalia, warlords attempted to entirely defeat their foes in order to rid themselves of rivals. And, as with states, warlords will stop fighting wars when it is in their security interests, as for instance, the warlords in Somalia have generally been peaceful since the late -90s.

Nevertheless, once survival is ensured, warlords may pursue other goals in their conflict. If for instance, the warlord is able to effectively defeat the state in its territorial area and remove the threat of extinction, he may turn toward the larger goal of conquest for other purposes. It is at this point, once the warlord has ensured the level of relative power necessary to survive, that we will see him attempt wider conquests, such as taking over a state, or in the case of Taylor, running for President. In the same way, it is only after assuring safety of its homeland that states will turn to conquest for the sake of goals that are not directly security related

### **Nature of Warlord Way of Warfare**

Based on this understanding of warlords and war, it is possible to better understand some of the seemingly inexplicable features of the warlord way of warfare – in particular its aggressive, pointless, and savage nature. Some of the usually ascribed motives of warlord warfare have already been illustrated, including greed, grievance, and barbarism. However, as has been argued the primary explanatory account of warlord warfare is given by recourse to the security motive. It is worth illustrating the explanation of some of the features of warlord warfare because in many ways war is the primary form of international relation that warlords take part in.

Warlord warfare does sometimes differ from state warfare in its extremeness – both in terms of continuousness and orientation toward conquest. In particular, unlike states, warlords are almost continually fighting wars, thus giving us their moniker.

Since warlords are a continual threat to the state, they must continually fight war. This leads to an intensification of the security dilemma and thereby to continuous war. This incessant fighting is amplified because warlords rely on warfare to gain resources, motivate personnel, and retain cohesion. As discussed above, warlord's means for maintaining autonomy involve predatory actions such as the capture of civilians in order to replenish numbers or looting in order to gain economic means. War for conquest will therefore be a continuing need of the warlord. This 'warlord paradox' – i.e. that the warlord must fight wars but wars threaten the survival of the organization and therefore should be avoided – cannot be avoided by the warlord, but only mitigated by attempting to fight wars against the weakest opponents possible.

Warlords also seem to fight protracted, 'pointless' wars, often with no chance of taking over control of the state. To outside observers it seems that the warlord fights for no reason since it is obvious that he cannot 'win' and take over the state. Some even come to believe that the warlord continues fighting solely to inflict suffering on the local population. The assumption in this view is that he *should* attempt to defeat the state because that is what internal war is all about.

However, the logic of the warlord way of warfare is clear when it is understood that the warlord fights wars for the same reason as states. In warlord warfare we should expect to see protracted conflicts which seem to be pointless. For, the warlord is not fighting to take over the state, but rather is attempting to keep a status quo, i.e. their own continued survival. For instance, Somali warlords continually undermine any peace agreement or state-building measure through sporadic, but continual, fighting. This is to be expected because continual war is central to their survival. If peace were to come to the state, they would likely be

defeated by a more powerful state army and thereby lose their fiefdom – this is a point which will be revisited in Chapter 5.

At the same time, the warlord may turn to propaganda which makes it seem as if he is fighting for a purpose, however, this propaganda is actually being instrumentally used for security enhancing purposes. For instance, the warlord may adopt an ideology of anti-communism to ensure external backing. More commonly, the warlord will maintain the rhetorical goal of overthrowing the state as a method of ensuring the loyalty of members of the warlord organization or in order to obtain resources from external supporters. The warlord may even believe his own propaganda. Or the warlord may begin his war for grievance reasons, but soon realize, as Stalin did in regard to the Soviet Union, that the only way to ensure that goals are carried out is the first ensure the survival of the group. As Stalin remarked, “[w]e can and must build socialism in the [Soviet Union]. But in order to do so we first of all have to exist.”<sup>407</sup>

It is also not surprising that the warlord conflicts take such a heavy toll on the local population. The warlord is not like the traditional guerilla, he does not need the local populations support to survive nor does he necessarily hope to take over the state one-day and thereby come to rely on popular support. The warlord political community also considers itself separate from the local political community and therefore does not have any moral responsibility for its protection. These two factors leave little to block the warlord organization from fighting a ‘dirty war’.<sup>408</sup>

There are also positive reasons for a warlord to turn to the use of rampant destruction and preying on civilians. For instance, fear is a force multiplier for those

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<sup>407</sup> Joseph Stalin, cited in Mearsheimer 2001: 31

<sup>408</sup> I.e. a war in which conspicuous atrocity and fear are used to bring about goals. See Nordstrom 1992 and Vinci 2005

fighting asymmetric conflicts.<sup>409</sup> For example, conspicuous atrocity can make control of the civilian population easier and lead to combat ineffectiveness in the rival army. With little to hold them back from using such tactics, the intelligent warlord will turn to the strategy that best ensures his goal of survival, whether or not it adheres to abstract moral precepts of a Western ideology to which he is not likely educated in nor particularly attached to. Hence, from this perspective, the barbaric violence which we associate with warlords is completely logical and, in fact, expected.

The LRA provides a good example of the logic in action. The LRA has been fighting a conflict in northern Uganda since 1987, but it is generally accepted that the LRA has absolutely no chance of defeating the Ugandan army. Yet, the LRA continues to fight on. It can continually fight the much larger Ugandan army because it uses fear to multiply its forces.<sup>410</sup> At the same time it has no popular support from the local Acholi population due to the horrible atrocities it has regularly committed on the Acholi people over the last two decades. But it can continue to fight because it has developed a system of abduction and initiation to 'recruit' new members from the Acholi people and uses extensive looting to obtain material needs.

Thus, the generally aggressive, pointless, and savage nature of warlordism – in many ways its defining features – is explicable in terms of anarchic war. Warlords are pursuing security, just as states are. However, for the warlord, the pursuit of security involves fighting a type of warfare which is by necessity: more aggressive, in that it is by definition a threat; more predatory, in order to obtain necessary goods and personnel; and more savage, in order to overcome asymmetries, than that fought by states. Nevertheless, warlord warfare and state warfare are essentially the same. In both cases the actors are pursuing security and incompatible goals in a strategic

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<sup>409</sup> See Vinci 2005 for an example of the LRA's strategic use of fear.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid.

manner.<sup>411</sup> Therefore war, as with other types of relations such as alliances, is an expected relation of warlords, which can be analyzed using a Neorealist approach.

## CONCLUSION

Chapter 3 made the argument that Neorealist approach and its conceptual tools could be applied to warlords. This chapter built on that basis and applied the approach to warlords. The theory of Neorealism was examined in detail. First it was demonstrated how warlords could fit into a Neorealist framework. This involved demonstrating how the Neorealist approach could be applied to warlords because they fulfilled the criteria detailed in Chapter 3. In practice, it meant comparing the standard version of Neorealism to a warlord version point for point. For each point, it was demonstrated that it made sense to apply it to warlords, in that it could describe and explain their actions.

Doing this made it possible to answer the thesis question of this study. It was found that warlords relate with states and other international actors in essentially the same way as states – they seek to ensure their survival through the balance of power. Specifically, they relate in terms of internal power cultivation, alliances, and war.

The details of what this answer means were then explored. This meant examining the constituent concepts of Neorealism, including:

- Internal power cultivation through obtaining and using resources and cohesion building
- Arms race
- Alliance
- Hard and soft balancing

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<sup>411</sup> This can count as an argument against calling warlord warfare ‘new war’ or otherwise qualifying it against state war in some way.

- Diplomacy and the demonstration of power
- Security dilemma
- Security dilemma intensifiers
- Predatory motives and the security dilemma
- Hierarchic war, and
- Anarchic war

Each concept of Neorealism was identified, examined, and then compared point for point to what a warlord version looks like. Apparent differences in warlord versus state versions of the concept were also examined.

In total, this provided an overview of the specific kinds of patterned relationships which we can expect warlords to take part in. These specific relationships can be taken as a more detailed answer to the thesis question. As the concepts do for states, they explain the types of relationships that a warlord will enter into with states and other international actors, depending on the circumstances.

More than just answering the thesis question, this examination has addressed the broader issue of integrating warlords into our understanding of international politics. Neorealism, of course, applies to states and now that it has been demonstrated how it applies to warlords, they too can be integrated into a Neorealist model of interstate relations. Consequently we are able to obtain a systemic level model of the relationships between warlords and other warlords as well as warlords and states or related actors. This point will be returned to in Chapter 7.

This chapter provided some examples of how the theory applies to warlords, but it has not met the testing requirements detailed in Chapter 1. For each concept of Neorealism, when it was applied to warlords, a case example was usually provided. However, in Chapter 1, a method for demonstrating the validity of the theory was

detailed. This involves first inferring hypotheses, applying the theory, and then assessing to what degree the theoretical expectations conformed to and explained observations.

The following two chapters will do just that and test to what degree the application of the Neorealist approach to describe and explain warlord international relations is valid. The case studies will examine specific warlords, describe their actions, and test the validity of the use of a Neorealist approach to analyze warlords. The structure of these case studies will be as such: first the definition and conceptualization of warlord provided in Chapter 2 will be applied to specific warlords in order to examine whether they are in fact warlords. This will also serve as a test of the value of the definition and conceptualization by determining its ability to explain the nature of particular warlords. Then the international relations of the warlords will be illustrated and explained with a Neorealist account. The validity of the theoretical account will be tested in its ability to conform to hypotheses and to explain the warlord's relations. The first case study will examine Somali warlords and the second will look at the relations of the LRA.

## **CHAPTER 5– CASE STUDY: WARLORDS IN SOMALIA**

The intent of this case study is to both illustrate and test the theoretical approach developed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 and thereby to validate the answer to the thesis question. I will use the definition and conceptualization of warlordism developed in Chapter 2 to analyze the seemingly similar armed groups in Somalia and thereby both illustrate its use and demonstrate its value for analysis. Then the chapter will demonstrate the use of the Neorealist approach to analyze the international relations of warlords in Somalia and thereby validate it as a theory for the analysis of the international relations of warlords.

This chapter will begin by giving a brief overview of the collapse of the Somali state. It will then demonstrate that the state is indeed an anarchic system. In addition, the chronological boundaries of this anarchic system will be illustrated.

The chapter will then move on to examine the various armed groups in Somalia in order to determine which groups are warlords and which are not. This is necessary because in many instances all armed groups in post-state collapse Somalia are simply lumped together as warlords, when in fact there is significant differentiation. This differentiation is important because warlords can be expected to follow the logic of units in a Neorealist framework, while other groups may or may not. The concepts developed in Chapters 2 and 3 will be used to make the comparisons.

Specifically, five different types of armed groups in Somalia will be described, compared, and contrasted using the operationalized definition of Chapter 2. These include:

- faction militias,
- warlords,
- business militias,
- court militias, and
- Islamic militias.

A broad description of the various actors will lead to the observation about whether a political community exists and if so, what its nature is. The second step in defining which specific armed groups are warlord organizations is to document whether the group is autonomous and independent from the state. Since Somalia is a collapsed state – i.e. there is no central state apparatus to speak of – the description of autonomy is largely unnecessary. The independence of armed groups will be examined in relation to their means of obtaining personnel and equipment. Finally, the purpose and motivation of Somali armed groups will be examined. From this analysis we can objectively determine which actors in Somalia are warlords. The value of the definition and conceptualization of warlords presented in this paper will be based on the degree to which it is able to differentiate the diverse armed groups and explain their actions.

The second part of this chapter will test the validity of the use of a Neorealist approach for analyzing warlords by examining their international relations. In particular, the chapter will single out two external actors with which warlords in Somalia have had relations – the UN intervention forces and Ethiopia. It is found that an effective way to model the intervention of UN forces into Somalia, and their

subsequent relations with warlords, is as an anarchic war between Somali warlords and the UN forces. Secondly, the Ethiopian-SNF alliance, especially in regard to the joint attack on al Ittihad, will be explored. It is found that in fact the situation is best described in terms of the balance of power.

The validity of the use of a Neorealist approach will be based on its ability to explain the relations of warlords in Somalia in relation to hypotheses of how warlords should act if the theory were to be true. There are several hypotheses that will be tested These include:

- Somali warlords should be more concerned with the survival of the organization than with other factors, such as grievances against particular actors.
- War should be over survival, rather than control of the state.
- Conflict between warlords and other actors should be characterized as anarchic war, not law enforcement or hierarchic war over control of the state apparatus.
- When there are two or more actors present, both of which are upholding their security interests, the security dilemma should ensue, creating a spiral dynamic of conflict-preparedness and, eventually, a balance of power through internal power cultivation, alliance, or war.
- Warlords should make or break alliances based on security interests over all other factors.

As will be demonstrated, all of these hypotheses do apply to Somali warlord relations. As such, the chapter will make the case that the Neorealist approach is useful in analyzing the international relations of warlords in Somalia in that it

describes the observed relations of Somali warlords and provides some explanation of these relations.

## **HISTORY AND CONTEXT**

The first step in this examination will be to present a brief overview of the history of Somalia which led up to the collapse of the state. This will lead to a description of the nature of the conflict. Lastly, the social context of Somali society will be examined before moving on to the examination of the categories of armed groups which have arisen in Somalia since the state's collapse.

### **Historical Background**

The beginning of the end might be traced back to then Somali President Siad Barre's decision to fight a war of the state against Ethiopia to reclaim the Somali Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Initially the war seemed to be succeeding, but the Soviet Union switched its backing from Somalia to the new communist Ethiopian government and Somalia was defeated in 1978. This defeat can be seen as lying at the heart of the fracturing in Barre's dictatorial control over Somalia.

While Barre had attempted to eliminate clanism under his 'Scientific Socialism' program, it reemerged after the Somali defeat.<sup>412</sup> Under Scientific Socialism, clan was roughly equated with class and therefore needed to be erased. A notable tactic of Barre was to create clan militias by arming them and then manipulate them into targeting rival clans.<sup>413</sup> He did this with, amongst others, the Hawiye/Sa'ad

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<sup>412</sup> Lewis 1994

<sup>413</sup> In general, Barre used patronage as his central ruling strategy. His ability to control access to economic opportunity, especially from foreign assistance, allowed him to keep clan elders and other potential elites beholden to him. (Reno 2003) Beyond patrimonial linkages, Barre also used manipulation of clan competition through his "MOD" regime – Marehan, his clan, Ogaden, his wife's, and Dulbahante, that of his son-in-law, cum head of national security.

against the Majerten/Umar Mahumud, the Dulbahante against the Isaaq/Habar Ja'lao, the Gadabuursi against the Isaaq/Sa'ad Muuse, the Harti of Kismaayo against the Ogaden, and the Majeerteen against the Isaaq.<sup>414</sup> Mark Bradbury sums up the devolution of the Somali government after its defeat by Ethiopia

in response to the internal insurgencies that emerged after the defeat in the Ogaden, the Barre regime became increasingly autocratic and corrupt. Rather than providing protection, the state became a means of repression... Clanism increasingly became the main source of patronage and protection. The responses of those excluded from the regime's patronage networks were to move outside the state and its formal economy, further undermining the legitimacy of the state and its institutions.<sup>415</sup>

The excluded did not just leave the formal economy; they also went outside of the state's monopolization of the use of legitimate force and attempted to take part in politics with private sources of violence. There was a failed coup attempt by the Majeerteen in 1978. After the failed coup attempt, two main factions formed to combat Barre. The Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) was formed out of the regrouped coup plotters. It was based in Ethiopia, but was also backed by Qadhafi. Later, the Somali National Movement (SNM), which was largely Isaaq clan based, formed because of the long-term exclusion of northerners from the southern dominated Somali state apparatus. The SNM found its economic support from the large Isaaq diaspora and, later, from the Ethiopian army.

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<sup>414</sup> Compagnon 1998

<sup>415</sup> Bradbury 2003: 12

The SNM and SSDF were destabilizing forces for Barre. At the same time he continued support of the Ogadeni Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), which caused persistent trouble for Ethiopia. In 1988, Barre and Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam signed a peace accord and Ethiopia stopped supporting the SNM and SSDF. When the Ethiopia government withdrew support from the SNM, it made a last ditch effort to defeat Barre.

A third faction, the United Somali Congress (USC) also joined the fight against Barre. This faction was made up of Abgaal clansmen, from Mogadishu, and Habar Gidir, led by the former General Mohammed Farah Aidid. Barre's response was to call on the Darod to kill Hawiye in Mogadishu. Eventually he began using artillery on them, at an extremely high cost in human life. This promoted a general uprising against the government.<sup>416</sup> The SNM, SSDF, and USC pressure on Barre, combined with the general uprising, led to the regime's fall.

The collapse of the Somali state can be traced back to January 27, 1991, when Barre fled Mogadishu. At this point the remnants of the infrastructure of the Somali state, at least that which was not already looted by Barre, was looted by the occupying militias and people of Mogadishu. In particular, much of the government's arms stores were looted. Whatever civil servants and other representatives of government who had not already fled did so then. Revenge killings of Darod clansmen, and to a certain extent all non-Hawiye, also occurred.

After the state's collapse, an Abgaal/Hawiye businessman, Ali Mahdi, was installed as president. The Isaaqs, who felt that they lost the most in the war did not accept the presidency and eventually formed Somaliland in the northwest. The SSDF went on to control the northeast and eventually formed the autonomous region of

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<sup>416</sup> Lewis 1994

Puntland. Aidid, who chased Barre out of Mogadishu, did not accept Mahdi's rule either and after a USC party congress, was elected USC chair.<sup>417</sup> Tensions rose from late 1991, and soon Mogadishu collapsed into interclan fighting.<sup>418</sup>

Immediately after the collapse the Somali state there occurred significant maneuvering of clans and occupations of new positions throughout Somalia. Barre fled to Gedo and formed the SNF. The Hawiye, divided between the Abgaal and Habar Gidir subclans, came to control much of Mogadishu, which was formally a multi-clan area.

### **Anarchic System**

At the point of state collapse and fracturing of the factions, the Somali situation became different from other African civil war contexts. In other conflicts, the state was generally taken over by one of the factions. However, in the Somalia-case, no faction was able to hold and retain the sovereignty of the state. Rather, the situation transformed into a series of skirmishes between different militias. The eminent Somali scholar, I. M. Lewis sums it up well:

In 1991/92, reactively influenced by the example of the SSDF, the SNM, USC and SPM, the general tendency was for every major Somali clan to form its own militia movement. Thus clans were becoming effectively self-governing entities throughout the Somali region as they carved out spheres of influence in a process which, with the abundance of modern weapons, frequently entailed savage battles

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<sup>417</sup> Aidid would go on to form alliances with other southern factions and this militia would become known as the Somali National Alliance (SNA).

<sup>418</sup> The immense destruction of the years of fighting combined with the starvation of the Somali people led to a UN intervention in Somalia to protect the humanitarian aid workers attempting to feed the population in 1992. The intervention will be covered in more detail below.

with a high toll of civilian casualties. The political geography of the Somali hinterland in 1992, consequently, closely resembled that reported by European explorers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, spears replaced by Kalashnikovs and bazookas. These clan areas could only be entered or traversed by outsiders (people of other clans, foreigners), with the consent of the locals and, usually the payment of appropriate fees or ‘protection’.<sup>419</sup>

In fact, it has been noted that since the collapse of the state, fighting has broken out between all clan groups.<sup>420</sup> Within this context, different types of armed groups formed in order to represent their interests in an anarchic environment, i.e. one in which there was no hierarchy of power or central law-enforcer. However, this is not to say that the situation became a featureless Hobbesian anarchy.

The armed groups and warlords in Somalia created a structural change – from a hierarchical system to an anarchic one. These armed groups removed the state apparatus which had been able to structure relationships in Somalia. Now, each group demanded that it be treated as an equal authority. Disagreements could not be solved through recourse to the state, but rather each group could only turn to itself for security. Eventually the groups ceased fighting over the control of the state apparatus altogether. As such, it was an anarchic (self help) system by definition.

Furthermore, this anarchic system was open to the international anarchic system. The armed groups and warlords crossed borders into Kenya and Ethiopia as they willed, only being stopped by a show of force by one of these states. Other states also crossed into the hitherto Somali state borders as they willed. These included the

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<sup>419</sup> Lewis 1994: 231

<sup>420</sup> Issa-Salwe 1994

United Nations intervention forces and the Ethiopian state. Both of these examples will be discussed below.

### *Extent of Anarchy*

The relative degree of anarchy has fluctuated over time in Somalia. The hierarchic system of the Somali state began to transform in the late 1980s as the state began to fail and forced actors to represent their own interests. The civil war, which lasted until 1991, was a traditional hierarchic civil war in that the means of controlling the state was being fought over. It was only after the state collapsed completely and Barre fled Mogadishu that it became clear to the actors that control of hierarchical state apparatus was unlikely. Even then, there were still battles over the 'rightful' leader of the state, and the ongoing battles between various factions of the Abgaal and Habr Gidir clans might be characterized as such. However, from this point, actors began to treat the system as more anarchic than hierarchic in the sense that actors fought less for a 'state' to control and more for local cities and resources, and even more pertinently, survival against other predatory actors.

Periodically since 1991, peace processes have been attempted in Somalia. Examples of these peace processes have included the Cairo Peace Conference and the First and Second Djibouti Peace Conferences, as well as various UN funded peace processes and conferences before, during, and after the intervention. Sometimes, warlords and other armed groups in Somalia have attempted to use their military ability on the ground in Somalia to influence these attempts at rebuilding a state. For example, an actor might attempt to control a specific city in order to convince others that he represented a constituency, and thereby gain a seat at the bargaining table. Such activities are in a sense fighting over the control of state sovereignty.

These attempts at a peace process, and thereby the tendency for the anarchic system to act like a hierarchic one, have climaxed over the last few years with the creation of the Transitional National Government (TNG). The TNG has begun to dominate political calculations of many of the actors and thereby in a convoluted sense, has meant that actors are fighting over control of the sovereign state. The implication is that consequently the system is somehow less anarchic.

This dynamic is of course not complete, as Somalia is still not a state and the 'government' does not actually reside in Somalia; nor is there a sovereign capable of monopolizing authority. However, it does seem that a system change is occurring. Most battles that occur now are aimed at creating or obstructing the national government. For example, by 2002, battles were occurring in Mogadishu between the groups who backed the TNG and those who back the anti-TNG Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC).<sup>421</sup> More recently, battles have erupted over whether Mogadishu should be the location of the TNG when it moves from Nairobi.

In the spring and summer of 2006, Somalia experienced another powerful change in the nature of the system. The Islamic courts and their militias combined into the Union of Islamic Courts. This group defeated an alliance of warlords, known as the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism, and now threatens the TNG.<sup>422</sup> This situation is still extremely fluid and poorly understood, as such it will not be addressed in this chapter.

These then are the boundaries of the anarchic system. The Somali state faded and finally collapsed in the civil war. As this was occurring the leftover actors began to treat the system as anarchic, not hierarchic. Eventually international actors came to

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<sup>421</sup> BBC 28 May 2002

<sup>422</sup> BBC 11 July 2006 and New York Time 13 May 2006

also see the system as anarchic. The UN intervened, as did Ethiopia. State building measures attempted to recreate the hierarchic system. While they failed and there is still no state-wide sovereign to speak of, there has been a tendency toward hierarchy again. Therefore, while it is possible to isolate the systemic relations of warlord actors in Somalia during most of this extended time period, the most straightforward time period to focus on is between the end of the civil war and the creation of the TNG.

Waltz demands that systems either be hierarchic or anarchic and the Somali system should be considered anarchic, at least within the boundaries noted in the previous section. There is no dominating government in Somalia and there has not been one since 1991. The collapse of the Somali state left multiple units in place and these units interacted as equals, without a higher authority. In particular, these actors have had to provide for their own security, thus making Somalia a self help system. Together, the interactions of these actors have served to create and continually renew the anarchic system. In short, Somalia is a system that a Neorealist approach applies to. The next question to ask is what are the units in the in the anarchic system and which actors were warlords.

### **Social Background**

In order to understand how armed groups, and warlords in particular, have evolved in the Somali context, it is first necessary to appreciate the nature of the Somali clan system. Somalis identify themselves by lineages, or clans, which are segmented based on six clan families that break down into various sub-clan units, all the way to the individual.<sup>423</sup> Clans are led by elders who are responsible for negotiation and dispute mediation.

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<sup>423</sup> These clans are the Darod, Isaaq, Dir, Hawiye, Rahanwein, and Digil.

An overlaid social unit is the *diya*-paying unit, composed of close relatives who contract to pay (or receive) blood-money, or *diya*, if one of the members of the group kills an individual from or raids the resources of another group.<sup>424</sup> The *diya* process is used as a method conflict resolution, short of revenge killings, and requires clan elders to negotiate a payment in return for the crime.<sup>425</sup> Clans can also interact in peaceful ways through *xeer*, a set of customary laws. The laws are precedent based and passed down through oral transmission, within and between units.<sup>426</sup> Like international regimes, *xeer* establishes norms and obligations, but does not represent enforceable laws.

In Somalia, political entrepreneurs, in general, must mobilize different segments of the clan system to support them. The mobilization can be based on proximity of relation, or they may mobilize less related groups to align against an opponent.<sup>427</sup> Clans might also form alliances with related clans in order to counter the perceived power of a rival clan (which will also have its own alliances).

Inversely, factions may form for two reasons. Because segmentation possibilities are endless within the Somali kinship system, there is ample room for factionalization based on the needs of the clan. Factionalization is also possible, however, based on the choice of particular political entrepreneurs who make their own rational choice. For example, this seems to have been the case with Usman Ato, who split with Mohammed Aidid in 1994.<sup>428</sup>

As noted above, while clans joined together to fight the Somali government, roughly equivalent to the Darod clan controlled by then Barre, after the collapse of the

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<sup>424</sup> Lewis 1988

<sup>425</sup> Menkhaus 2000

<sup>426</sup> Ibid.

<sup>427</sup> Referred to as *gashaanbur* in pastoral society, in which small lineages ally against a large lineage. (Compagnon 1998)

<sup>428</sup> Copagnon 1998

Somali state there was a process of factionalization which occurred within the major clan factions. As Ken Menkhaus noted, since 1992 there has been a “devolution of warfare to lower and lower levels of clan lineages.”<sup>429</sup> In particular, there has been significant intra-clan fighting amongst the sub-clans of the Hawiye and Darod clans. This has led to a vertical multiplication of separate armed groups.

### **SOMALI ARMED GROUPS**

Along with the multiplication in factions, there has also been a lateral growth in the types of armed groups in Somalia since the civil war.<sup>430</sup> Briefly: with the collapse of the state, the clan or ‘faction’ militias became the security providers and, often, the political representatives of the clans. However, some of the militia leaders were able to gain independence from the clan, thereby using the militias to represent their personal interests, as such they became warlords. Since the mid-90s, businessmen have started their own armed militias to defend their business interests. These militias have sometimes been outsourced to the shari’a courts that have formed throughout Somalia. Related to the shari’a court militias are Islamist militias such as al Ittihad. While these categories can overlap, and one will often evolve into another, the typology is a valuable conceptual framework with which to make comparisons.

The specific type of armed group that we are interested in are warlords, however, it is valuable to compare and contrast to identify real differences in goals and structural organization between these groups which can lead to different behaviors. Furthermore, by contrasting the different groups, the conceptualization of warlord presented in Chapters 2 and 3 will be tested in its ability to make comparisons between like actors and to explain the behavior of warlords in Somalia. This

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<sup>429</sup> Menkhaus 2003: 20

<sup>430</sup> This following typology is loosely based on WSP 2004. Also see Vinci 2006b

comparison will be based on the concepts developed in previous chapters, including: political community, C3 and governance, autonomy, independence, and purpose (motivation).

### **Political Community**

Somali armed groups can be initially defined by their constituency. Since the Somali state is collapsed, all security is private in nature. Different groups within society have created armed groups in order to provide for their security. The following section will describe the constituencies which the different armed groups represent and give some idea of how and why the armed groups formed.

### ***Faction militias***

Faction militias are the most prominent type of Somali armed group. These militias are formed along clan lines and within the clan structure. They represent the clan's political aspirations and defend its territory. Daniel Compagnon notes that clan-based armed groups naturally formed in Somalia during the 1980s when armed groups, such as the SNM and SSDF, were forming to combat Barre's government.<sup>431</sup> He also gives an idea of why this occurred, noting that the clan-based militia organization was easier

given the lack of resources (both money and weapons), the unit size requirement of guerilla warfare, and the difficulty of giving military

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<sup>431</sup> Compagnon 1998

training to individualistic camel herders, it was more efficient to opt for a military structure based on kinship segmentation.<sup>432</sup>

Faction militias are typically composed, firstly, of a ‘warleader’ who is the direct military commander of the militia and a representative of the clan. The warleader is assigned by the clan elders to lead the militia, but while he commands the fighters, they are still loyal to the clan. The tradeoff for the faction warleader is that he is completely dependent on the clan, without its backing the fighters might simply quit fighting for him. This provides the clan with leverage that can be used to control the warleader’s actions. The warleader’s ability to please the clan is based on his fulfillment of his duties to provide protection and uphold its interests as well as to provide it with spoils. Failure to do so may result in his abandonment. In this way we can see the bond between the warleader, militia, and clan. Yet, the bond goes both ways, for even though in stable periods, warleaders are typically not very popular, during periods of conflict, the clan will turn to them for help, for “the clan feel[s] that they are their savior...because they command the firepower.”<sup>433</sup>

Below the warleader there is a smaller group of permanent, trained officers and soldiers, who are under his direct control. Further down is a larger group of unpaid irregulars. These men voluntarily enlist and make up the bulk of its forces. Similar to conventional reserve systems, they are called up to fight and then can demobilize back to civilian life. Thus, faction militias are closest to what we think of as true militias in that they are the temporary armed extension of a larger civilian political community.

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<sup>432</sup> Ibid.: 77

<sup>433</sup> Interview, UN Source, Nairobi, 30 March 2005

Even though the warleader may be a representative of the clan and the different constituencies, at times, there is a clear difference between the motives and actions of the warleaders and the clan elders. This is often apparent in international or UN based peace negotiations. For instance, Menkhaus describes an episode which occurred during the Jubaland Peace Accord of 1993 in which the Ogadeni clan elders broke ranks with the Ogadeni militia leader, Colonel Omar Jess.<sup>434</sup>

### *Warlords*

In some instances, a warleader may become independent of the clan and control a militia without being connected to the clan's social and economic structure. Such men are warlords.<sup>435</sup> In most cases, militias exist on a continuum with a mixture of clan and personal loyalty. However, in extreme cases, a warleader may come to completely monopolize the loyalty of fighters and use the militia for non-clan based ambitions. In other instances, a warlord may simply create his own personal militia without benefit of the clan, though such warlord organizations are typically much smaller.

The warlord breaks off from the greater clan community, but another enclosed political community forms. This political community is made up of those who are members of the warlord organization and look to the warlord as the sole source of authority. Though most individuals in Somalia come from one clan or another, and therefore might be expected to be tied to a clan's political community, this is not always the case. Many individuals have broken ranks with the clan and lose all or

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<sup>434</sup> Menkhaus 2000

<sup>435</sup> Hussein Adam (1992) may have been the first analyst to describe the emerging political-military actors in Somalia as 'warlords'. He did this based on a comparison with the analysis of warlords in Chad, put forth by Charlton and May. (Charlton and May 1989)

most of their loyalty to it. These men, the ‘*mooryaan*’, will be discussed in more detail below .

The warlord organization is completely praetorian in nature since it does not have any civilian community. This is unlike the faction militia, which is an off-shoot of a larger, civilian political community. Thus, while the structure of a warlord militia may be similar to that of a faction militia, its directive will differ. It will be driven by the interests of the warlord and warlord organization rather than clan benefit.<sup>436</sup>

### ***Business Militias***

Initially, businessmen funded factions and warlords, but, as the conflict progressed, this was found to be a losing investment. For example, the two main factions controlling Mogadishu in the 1990s, like other factions, received backing from businessmen. However, these administrations never put in place the security and predictability which businessmen needed and they began to lose money on their ‘investment’. More generally, security was not always adequate, especially for an economy based on services and cross-regional and cross-border trade.<sup>437</sup> Clearly, more order and security was needed to promote commerce.

For these reasons, many businessmen dropped their support for other types of armed groups, including faction militias and warlords, in the late 1990s.<sup>438</sup> Thereafter, businessmen directly employed freelance militiamen, along the same militia structure outlined above, but with the businessman himself as the warleader. The businessman

<sup>436</sup> This process of ‘warlord formation’ may be generalizeable to other instances of warlord formation. For example, a similar process seems to have happened in Afghanistan and to a degree in Tajikistan. However, as noted in the introduction, this study is only focused on relations, and therefore will not pursue this point. A next step in research might be to apply this logic of warlord formation more systematically and integrate it into the theoretical approach presented in this study.

<sup>437</sup> For instance, livestock trading is a lucrative profession in Somalia. In order to move livestock to the border for export it is necessary to “negotiate multiple agreements with communities and militias to insure safe passage across vast expanses of territory.” (Little 2003: 152)

<sup>438</sup> ICG 2002

might also outsource this role to another experienced person. The militia members might be drawn in whole or part from the businessman's clan. In some cases the businessmen formed coalitions in order to accomplish militia formation and management.<sup>439</sup>

Unlike the faction militia or warlord, the businessman's militia does not have a political community. The armed group is more similar to a private military company (PMC). Individuals are paid to protect the interests of the businessman. Yet, the men still exist within another political community, usually a clan.

### ***Court and Islamist militias***

Often the businessmen outsourced their militia to the shari'a courts which have emerged in Somalia.<sup>440</sup> The courts were established in Mogadishu and elsewhere to provide some order through a shari'a law system. They were financed in exchange for maintaining social stability and providing (public) protection services. These services range from relations with factions like the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA) to clearing the road from Mogadishu to Merka.<sup>441</sup>

Related to the court militias are Islamist militias, in particular, the fundamentalist organization al Ittihad which has maintained militias at various points since 1991. Al Ittihad has controlled areas including Merka and Kismaayo and the town of Luuq in the Gedo region.<sup>442</sup> While they are organized like other types of militias, al Ittihad represents a religious group and in general bases its support on religion rather than clan or other factors, such as clan. Though the group initially

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<sup>439</sup> The effects of these coalitions were to make cross-regional and cross-border travel easier, thereby stimulating the economy via trade with Ethiopia and Kenya. This process served as reinforcement, adding to the businessmen's wealth and the power of their militias.

<sup>440</sup> Menkhaus 2003

<sup>441</sup> UNDP 2001

<sup>442</sup> Menkhaus 2002

functioned like faction militias, i.e. looking to control territory, more recently they have switched their strategy to focus on controlling courts.<sup>443</sup>

Like a businessman's militia, the court militia does not have a political community. It also is simply a privately hired group of individuals who are loyal to some other group. Al Ittihad is different, however, in that there is a political community. There is a membership based organization and the men in al Ittihad, at least those nearer the top of the organization, belong to it and feel loyal to it.

### *Warlord Separation from Society*

The previous analysis of armed groups in Somalia was based on ideal types.<sup>444</sup> In reality, there is more of a continuum amongst the different types. It is often clear that a warlord is separate from the state, especially in stateless Somalia. A more subtle distinction is necessary, however, when attempting to clarify whether an armed group is separate from society. In Somalia, the problem is particularly acute because of the ubiquity of the clan.

The difference between warlords and faction militias in particular can be subtle because of the issue of clan. This can sometimes make drawing the line between a true warlord and a warleader a political issue. The problem is compounded by the fact that it is never possible to completely divorce armed groups from clans and clan politics entirely. Rather, it is degree which differentiates warlords from faction militias in Somalia. This should not be taken to deny the ability of the conceptualization to classify group, but rather, it merely reflects reality. It will be

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<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

<sup>444</sup> By this I refer to Weber's notion of the ideal type, which "isolates those variables central to the study of a problem, putting aside those aspects of the reality which seem inessential to the analysis." (Engerman 2000: 258)

helpful to examine a specific example of the evolution of a faction militia into a warlord and the differences that can be expected between the two.

The SNF is a fairly typical example of a warlord organization which evolved from a faction militia. Initially the SNF was a clan-based, faction militia. As a United Nations Development Office for Somalia (UNDOS) report points out, “its primary role was as a militia for the Marehan clan, to protect the clan territory from external threat and to project Marehan force beyond Gedo region.”<sup>445</sup> It also seemed concerned with representing the clan’s interests in the UN backed national reconciliation process.

Eventually the SNF came to represent only its own interests. The real aim became not to represent the clan, but for the group to maintain their autonomous status and beyond this, for the militia’s leadership to “secure for themselves an attractive place at the table in a revived government in Mogadishu.”<sup>446</sup> If the SNF truly wanted to represent the interests of the clan it would have worked for local peace. Even though the SNF continued to maintain that it was simply the militia of the SNF community, it is clear from an objective point of view that it was more concerned with non-clan goals.

An example of its service to itself over the clan is described in reference to the SNF’s actions during the humanitarian aid operation in the Gedo region by the UN. The SNF diverted most of the food and other aid which was aimed at the victims of the ongoing famine in the region. They looted villagers and took cuts of the food aid from the source by charging high fees for protection to the convoys, as well as high

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<sup>445</sup> UNDOS 1998:91

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.: 91

rental rates for compounds and equipment, “taxes” on ports etc.<sup>447</sup> A UN report notes that

[i]n no instances is there any evidence that [the SNF] initiate[d] any program of response for the famine victims. On the contrary, there is ample evidence that they were responsible for the conditions provoking famine, and that they viewed famine relief as an economic opportunity – and, by extension, perceived famine victims as an economic asset.<sup>448</sup>

This is clearly warlord behavior, as it demonstrates the organization’s separation from society and orientation toward its own survival. Thus, we should conclude that while the SNF clearly began with and maintained clan connections, it was a warlord organization.

### **C3 and Governance**

The major difference between warlords and the other types of armed groups is that for the member of the warlord organization, C3 is governance, whereas members of other groups must answer to civil and cultural governance structures. In particular, the members of a faction militia are still loyal to the clan. The clan provides over-arching law to its members, which flows down from the clan elders and is based on traditional rules, such as the diya system. Both the court and business militias are also connected with the clan to the degree that they rely on clan-law for structure. Islamic militias

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<sup>447</sup> Ibid.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid.: 90

also have their own governance system, but it is not praetorian in nature, as there is a strong civilian component.

This governance structure overrides any command system by militia leaders as militia fighters are voluntary. It makes the militias very undisciplined. The reason being that discipline, especially execution, would fall under the traditional system of diya, in which grievances must be restituted for harm or loss and is therefore not frequently practiced.

The warlord organization, on the other hand, is completely governed through C3. The warlord's orders are the laws of the warlord organization. The commands of the clan leaders have very little sway over the mooryaan who make up the majority of warlord organizations. Moreover, since the warlord's power over the members of the warlord organization is based on patronage, command itself may break down if payment is not forthcoming. Nonetheless, when there is payment or other benefits, the fighters are loyal to the warlord and can be governed (i.e. commanded) effectively enough to function as a cohesive unit.

### **Purpose**

In the stateless society of post-collapse Somalia, the state no longer serves its purpose as a 'buffer' between the international system and domestic actors. Nor is there a state to provide even basic security for individuals. In this vacuum, the various armed groups discussed above have come to provide the services once reserved for the state. They differ, however, in whom they provide the services to and why they provide these services.

The faction militia is concerned with protecting the interests of the faction. This, as with the military wing of other civilian political communities, means a

concern with power and, more basically, survival. The business militia on the other hand is orientated toward the making of profit. The militia and its members would certainly be dismissed if it was felt that it would be more profitable, thus demonstrating that it is not necessarily survival that the business militia is driven by. Similarly, the court militia is meant to uphold law and order, not create its own power or survive. Al Ittihad initially seemed to be orientated toward power and survival, like faction militias, in that it tried to expand its control of towns and to defend itself from attack. However, upon defeat at the hands of the SNF and Ethiopia, a topic to be covered in more detail below, al Ittihad divested itself of a militia and thereby confirmed that it had other more pressing concerns than survival as an armed group.

The primary concern of the warlord organization is with survival. Without the survival of the entire organization, the warlord would lose his power and similarly, the fighters would lose their own individual means of survival. In other words, because of the lack of the state, the warlord organization acts as the state for the fighters and warlord – it provides security. While the warlord organization may have other interests, such as providing a means for the warlord to gain national level recognition, the first concern he and it must have is with surviving. An example of an individual warlord and his organization will serve to illustrate this point.

#### ***Example of Warlord Motivation - General Morgan***

A good example of warlord purpose in action is Mohammed Sayid Hersi's (better known as General Morgan) motives during the period which he ruled Kismaayo. Clearly Morgan was a warlord in control of territory. For example, a UNDOS report notes that 'General Morgan has been able to maintain control over the town and

prevent the rise of rival civil leaders.”<sup>449</sup> The town eventually accepted this control, for “[t]he chronic threat of attack has forced Harti clansmen in the city to embrace his authority, as the only source of protection in a war environment.”<sup>450</sup>

However, Morgan did not provide any civilian administration in the town, it was ‘essentially a garrison town.’<sup>451</sup> He assumedly did not do so for fear that he would lose power to any rival civilian government, since “in peace, most observers and local citizens believe that General Morgan would quickly lose his local support.”<sup>452</sup> This is just as Weber predicts, and as was noted in Chapter 2: “[t]he charisma of the warlord rises and falls with its efficacy and also with the demand for it; the warlord becomes a permanent figure when there is a chronic state of war.”<sup>453</sup>

Therefore, Morgan should not to be confused with a civilian leader concerned with the well-being of a civilian political community, as might be expected from a true faction militia leader. Rather, he is more accurately defined as a warlord, for he controlled the town because it is what allowed him to remain in power.

The basic means that Morgan used to do this were to create an environment of instability by fomenting clan divisions and in general maintain an environment of insecurity from which he was the only power that civilians could turn to for security.<sup>454</sup> This is just the sort of purposeful insecurity that Reno predicts warlords will create in order to gain power.<sup>455</sup> Thus, in effect Morgan and his warlord organization were living off of the town as parasites.

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<sup>449</sup> UNDOS 1998: 44

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.: 44

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.: 44

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.: 44

<sup>453</sup> Weber 1978: 1142

<sup>454</sup> UNDOS 1999: 104

<sup>455</sup> Reno 1998

Morgan needed to maintain control because without it he risked not only losing power, but also potentially his own life. For instance, the UNDOS report goes on to note that:

Morgan is a political pariah at the national level in Somalia. National reconciliation and political normalization would most likely lead to his political marginalization or even arrest. Recent international trends towards arrests of suspected war criminals makes exile abroad risky for him as well. And even local peace in Kismaayo threatens his interests, since his power base rests mainly on his ability to protect his constituency from external threat. In the absence of a threat, he would run the risk of being displaced by a civilian leadership. The fact that he belongs to a small and weak sub-clan of the Mijerteen precludes the possibility of relying on a narrow clan base to shore up his ambitions.<sup>456</sup>

In other words, without his control over the town, Morgan would lose his power, as would the fighters under him. In such a situation they would be at the mercy of other warlords, militias, or a state. Clearly Morgan should not be seen as a clan leader with grievances against other clans, for he does not even care much for his own clan. Nor was the control of Kismaayo a simple means of making money. Rather, the control of Kismaayo had much more at stake; it was driven, in essence, by an existential motivation by Morgan and his compatriots to survive.

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<sup>456</sup> UNDOS 1999: 104

## **Autonomy and Independence**

Warlords in Somalia are clearly autonomous from the Somali state, as no state exists. There is no leviathan which could assert authority over the warlords, and as will be shown below, even when the UN attempted to institute such an authority, it failed. Indeed, the warlords in Somalia are only restrained by their power capability relative to other actors.

At times this autonomy has been recognized to some extent by the international community. For example, NGOs and the UN have formed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with actors in Somalia. Though these MOUs are not official, and cannot be as these actors are not states, for all other intents and purposes they serve the same purpose as the same sort of official contracts which NGOs and the UN regularly enter into with states. (See Appendix A for an example of such an MOU.) At the same time armed groups have been recognized as actors in the peace process outside of Somalia, which has involved international states. Although, as noted in Chapter 3, this is not necessarily an admission of sovereignty, it is clearly an admission of a certain level of autonomy.

However, not all actors in Somalia are independent. Armed groups may be dependent on the clan or other internal or external actors. The following section will examine the independence of the different types of armed groups based on their solutions to the problems of mobilization.

## **Motivation**

Roughly speaking, there are two methods of motivating fighters in Somalia. Either the militia leader may rely on clan loyalty (or, in the case of al Ittihad, religious loyalty) or on direct, economic incentive. Loyalty is tied into the nature of the clan system and

is dependent, at least tacitly, on the consent of the clan. Faction militias have largely relied on loyalty. It has also become possible for militia leaders to directly enlist fighters due to the growth in freelance militiamen in Somalia and this has allowed for the growth in non-clan based armed groups, including warlord, business, and court militias.

Since the late 1980s, many young, unemployed and disenfranchised Somalis, or mooryaan, have come to urban areas, especially Mogadishu, in order to find jobs, adventure, or to fulfill ambition. These men are distinct from other parts of Somali society. Usually they have come from nomadic backgrounds or are otherwise separated from their clan.<sup>457</sup> Many are addicted to drugs, beyond the ubiquitous khat. They sometimes even speak their own distinct dialect that is “virtually unintelligible to outsiders.”<sup>458</sup>

Initially, they were concerned with finding a place within Barre’s patronage networks from which to prosper.<sup>459</sup> This was usually accomplished by affiliating themselves with a strongman who would arm them and use them as enforcers. This practice continued on after the collapse of the Somali state, as their loyalty could be sold into the patronage networks of warlords and other militia leaders.<sup>460</sup>

Since these men normally come from non-local clans, they are able to circumvent many of the rules of interclan rivalry.<sup>461</sup> Because they are ‘foreign’, i.e. not from the local clans, they were free from traditional commitment issues associated

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<sup>457</sup> There are several contributing reasons why men become freelance gunmen. Some are child soldiers who have never had an education beyond warfare. Others have been fighting for over a decade and don’t have other skills. There has been a growth in street children and war orphans because of the war. Many have been traumatized by war. The term often applied is *buufis baa ku dhacay* (“the person is suffering from mental disturbance”). Poverty is also an important factor in the motivation to fight. (WSP 2000)

<sup>458</sup> WSP 2004: 29

<sup>459</sup> Reno 2003

<sup>460</sup> See Marchal 1997 for a more detailed discussion of mooryaan.

<sup>461</sup> Not all freelance militiamen might be considered mooryaan, but the mooryaan make up the bulk.

with clan life, such as *xeer* or *diya* payments for transgressions.<sup>462</sup> Thus, looting and other generally unacceptable activities are permissible.<sup>463</sup> At the same time, the situation strengthened the patronage network since the young men would be dependent on their adopted patrons for support, rather than their customary clans. All together, this meant that there was a reservoir of freelance gunmen that aspiring militia leaders and warlords could tap into.

### ***Faction militia***

The members of faction militia are typically recruited directly from a single clan.<sup>464</sup> The council of clan elders will send representatives to each family's house looking for young men to serve. There is no history of forced conscription in Somalia and the men are all voluntary recruits. They will likely already be armed or have been mobilized before as part of a standby militia. In general, the warleaders use kinship as a "ready-made ideology"<sup>465</sup> and clan-based loyalty is the necessary basis for the formation of a militia.

The solution to the problem of motivation in faction militias is clear. Tradition and culture has created a sense of clan loyalty for most members of Somali society.<sup>466</sup> The basis for loyalty still exists and the reciprocal nature of clan loyalty, combined with rehearsed social pressures, solve the collective action, coordination, and time-consistency problems, as they have done for centuries. At the same time, the process of loyalty is reinforced through the self help environment of post-collapse Somalia.

<sup>462</sup> Reno 2003

<sup>463</sup> Another notable effect of mooryaanism is that the Somali traditional respect for the safety of non-combatants in conflict, known a *birimageydo* ("to be spared from the iron") has broken down (WSP 2004).

<sup>464</sup> Though it is possible that some are former professional fighters or freelance fighters from other clans. WSP 2004

<sup>465</sup> Compagnon 1998: 83

<sup>466</sup> This clan loyalty may be manipulated in various ways and the unit to which an individual feels loyal may grow or shrink for reasons out of his control.

Since there is no public security, groups must provide their own, and as has occurred throughout most of Somali history, this security has been provided by the clan.

### *Warlords*

The independence of a warlord depends on his ability to support himself independently of the clan's backing. Since the clan elders were necessary to motivate young men to fight, they still had to be 'kept in the loop.' What truly shifted the balance was the use of freelance gunmen. From the perspective of warlords, the chief importance of mooryaan is that their loyalty can be bought on a pay-for-service basis. In Somalia, where the average young man is at, or below, the poverty line (usually calculated at \$1 per day), the motivation to be paid for combat is strong. Immediate economic incentives provide a warlord with the tools necessary to obtain loyalty without trust. This allows the warlords to solve all of the problems of motivation set out by Collier – without using the clan's loyalty structure. And, therefore, the warlord can maintain his independence.

However, the trade-off is that the warlord cannot rely on the loyalty of these troops and must keep them from selling their loyalty to a rival. In the absence of economic incentives, such fighters may move their loyalty to another patron, set up an economic enterprise of their own, or even rebel against the patron. As one aid worker put it, "all is well if the militias are getting paid... if not, they run wild, setting up their own checkpoints etc..."<sup>467</sup> Consequently, the reliance on economic incentives, in turn, deepens a reliance on sustainable resource exploitation.

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<sup>467</sup> Interview with aid worker, Nairobi, 1 April 2005

### ***Business militias***

Like warlords, business militias use immediate economic incentive to motivate their fighters. Even though they are usually affiliated with one subclan, they rely even less on clan loyalty because business, by its nature, crosses clan lines and is not politically orientated.

In many ways, therefore, Somali business militias are more similar to mercenary or PMCs than they are to other types of armed groups in Somalia. These companies are used to perform security and other offensive or defensive military operations for private (and sometimes public) organizations. And, while P. W. Singer defines mercenaries as “individuals who fight for employers other than their home state’s government,”<sup>468</sup> the concept might also apply in this case with reference to clan, not ‘home state’. The men who organize these companies and fight for them are not doing so for political reasons, but rather as a business.

### ***Court and Islamist militias***

Court militias also rely on freelance fighters, whose loyalty is kept through economic incentives. Thus they are in essence similar to the business militia. Though, there is likely more communitarian loyalty to these organizations.

On the other hand, Islamist militias can rely on religious belief for loyalty. This loyalty can cross over clan lines. For example, in its administration of Luuq, al Ittihad also invited its members who were not part of the locally dominate Marehan clan to take part in governance.<sup>469</sup> However, this Islamic loyalty was more based in the upper echelons of the al Ittihad leadership. The lower-level fighters themselves were “composed mainly of young gunmen [mooryaan, known locally as *jiri*], whose

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<sup>468</sup> Singer 2003: 41

<sup>469</sup> Menkhaus 2002

devotion to tenets of fundamentalist Islam was negligible and who fought in the name of al Ittihad only because al Ittihad paid them.”<sup>470</sup>

### **Logistics**

The sources of Somali armed groups’ weapons and other goods are varied and depend on the region and particular history of the armed group. Nevertheless, there are some generalizations that can be made about how different types of armed groups in Somali meet their logistical needs.

### ***Faction militias***

All faction militias looted the Somali state to some degree after its collapse. This reliance on looting was a natural evolution of the Somali economic system. Under Barre, the evolution of the Somali state’s relationship with society broke down the distinction between public and private goods.<sup>471</sup> All ‘public’ property, including foreign aid, was controlled by one clan or another based on a patronage system. This allowed for a straightforward switch to a looting economy after the state’s collapse. In particular, the extensive Somali armory was ransacked by the factions, as Somalia’s strategic importance during the Cold War made it one of the most well armed states in sub-Saharan Africa.

Businessmen have also been apt to back militias, especially the faction militias of their own clans. In general, militias have been financed by businessmen for two reasons. In the short term, there are financial rewards from looting or the control over certain properties. In the long term, financing a militia is an investment gamble on

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<sup>470</sup> Ibid.: 113

<sup>471</sup> In fact, looting was widespread not just after the collapse of the Somali state, but was already practiced by Barre’s army before 1991.

potential political power. A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report details the psychology behind this:

Initially, [businessmen] feared that a new state would not be amenable to them, unless controlled by factions they supported. Once the war began to dissipate they continued to finance the faction leaders because of the clan support they drew. While reluctant to participate in politics that might affect their business interests, they could not afford to antagonize the clan and go against its political stance; supporting the clan is never illegitimate even when the clan is wrong.<sup>472</sup>

In a sense there is a mutual dependency between the clans and businessmen. This has put pressure on the faction militias to operate in the interest of business communities and thereby has limited their independence. However, as noted earlier, businessmen have tended to stop financing factions and instead turned to developing their own militias.

Many faction militias are extensions of clans which do have farming or nomadic roots and can provide food and other basic survival goods. In a similar way, the clan's diaspora in Europe and America are also common funding sources. This reliance on the clan for goods underscores the dependence of the faction militia.

Faction militias may also develop various economic enterprises on their own, including looting, the diversion of humanitarian aid and occupation of land. However, these enterprises represent the beginning of the slippery slide into independence for a warleader.

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<sup>472</sup> UNDP 2001: 151

## *Warlords*

Warlords are concerned with gaining and maintaining their independence. This is only possible if they have the economic resources to fund their militias. They therefore take part in economic activities with the goal of monopolizing the economic activities or relationships with funding businessmen and governments, at the expense of the clan. Since the collapse of the state, there had always been this balance between the militia leader who controlled the militia, and thereby the resources, and the clan, who provided motivation. The balance changed as warleaders could directly control resources or access to financiers.

By controlling finances, warlords can buy the loyalty of the men they needed as well as the equipment to arm them. However, large cash reserves are necessary for warlords to be effective, as a firefight can cost \$4,000 an hour in ammunition alone.<sup>473</sup> This means that warlords must diversify their economic exploitation in order to produce the required funds. For example, Mohammed Qanyare Afrah, based in the Dayinle neighborhood of Mogadishu, receives funds from fishing interests and a private airstrip, amongst other ventures.<sup>474</sup> Even among this diversity of economic activities, one feature is common, it is all ‘done either overtly or implicitly, at the point of a gun.’<sup>475</sup>

In general, warlords have created a range of enterprises which are given value by their ability to command force. They “[stake] claims to valuable land, towns, roads, and public assets such as airports and seaports”<sup>476</sup> They then set up checkpoints, demand payment for safe passage, tax the use of airports etc. In general,

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<sup>473</sup> Cost estimate from Menkhaus 2003

<sup>474</sup> Noted by Menkhaus 2003. Another independent warlord is Musa Suudi Yalahow, also located in Mogadishu. ICG 2002

<sup>475</sup> UNDOS 1998: 43

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.: 43

they “attempt to monopolize the more lucrative commercial opportunities in the area they control.”<sup>477</sup>

In some instances, they will occupy land and this occupation may become institutionalized, where armed groups set up fiefdoms and trade taxation for protection from other armed groups.<sup>478</sup> They have even normalized such relations, as the warlords intermarried with local women. Such fiefdoms are potentially in the interest of the farmers, relative to random banditry. Here we see Olson’s logic of the stationary bandit in effect – i.e. institutionalizing banditry is more profitable for the warlord because the peasantry has more of an incentive to be productive.<sup>479</sup>

Warlords have also utilized international aid in both tactical and strategic ways.<sup>480</sup> Tactically, warlords can coerce, extort, or manipulate (by pretending to be noncombatants) humanitarian aid agencies into giving them aid. Such aid can then be directly used for the armed group’s survival. Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps can also be tactically used to manipulate aid distribution, they can provide human shields and IDPs themselves can be used to attract more aid. Strategically, population movements can be used to dictate the placement of aid. Importantly, an ‘aid economy’, such as providing housing or security for the international agencies, can be created, which is then tapped by the armed groups for their own funding.

Many warlords provide privatized protection as a paid service. In particular, it is common practice for the UN, NGOs as well as local businessmen to hire private guards. In some cases, a warlord will effectively force the agency to rent their

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<sup>477</sup> Ibid.: 43

<sup>478</sup> Ibid.:38

<sup>479</sup> Olson 1993

<sup>480</sup> LeRichie 2004

protection services in order to safeguard the agency from potential insecurity, where, in fact, the threats may come from the warlord himself.<sup>481</sup>

Related to this, warlords may rent the services of their organizations to MNCs. This is a different situation, however, because the private corporations, unlike NGOs and the UN, are themselves in competition. Human Rights Watch details the example of the competition between Dole and Somalfruit.<sup>482</sup> The companies hired local warlords or, for liability and public relations reasons, had the farmers hire the clans for them.<sup>483</sup> The militias were used by both companies to influence farmers to sell bananas to them. In exchange the warlords made a profit.

Finally, warlords have turned to external supporters for funding. The SNF was funded by ex-Barre government figures living in Kenya.<sup>484</sup> In some cases, the armed groups acted as proxies of the foreign policies of external states, especially Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia. This has led to Egyptian and Libyan funding of, amongst others, Aidid and Ali Mahdi in Mogadishu.<sup>485</sup> Ethiopia, for its part, has funded Hadawdle (USC/PM) militia and the SNF.<sup>486</sup> In some cases this external funding is enough to seriously influence the decisions of the group being funded. In fact it is a common political attack to say that, for example, someone is a proxy for Ethiopia. However, Somali warlords are able to keep themselves independent of external states and in general are not very loyal proxies. This will be demonstrated in a later section of this chapter through the example of Ethiopia's alliance with the SNF.

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<sup>481</sup> There is a certain amount of overlap which Human Rights Watch characterized as being rather like hiring guards from the police force as a guarantee against police harassment. HRW 1995

<sup>482</sup> HRW 1995

<sup>483</sup> Apparently both were from the same Sa'ad subclan (Habar Gidir clan).

<sup>484</sup> UNDOS 1998

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid.

### ***Business militias***

Businessmen, on the other hand, are fully focused on economic exploitation. As detailed by Bradbury and Peter Little, amongst others, the economic sector in Somalia is doing relatively well, in spite of state collapse.<sup>487</sup> Moneymaking enterprises, include 'grey' and 'black' market activities like checkpoints and weapons trading, as well as 'white' activities which run the gambit from trade in cattle to money transfers to providing utilities.

Broadly speaking, in the early 1990s, businessmen focused on grey area trade in looted goods, weapons and food aid, but after the UN intervention in 1993-94, they made huge sums of money through real estate rentals, money exchange, and transport which allowed them to shift their focus to other businesses such as hospitality and telecommunications.<sup>488</sup> As with warlords, these enterprises provide the cash to buy militia loyalty as well as the weapons and other necessary equipment.

### ***Court and Islamist militias***

Court militias have been backed by businessmen, and, to some degree, by the clans themselves. This is unlike warlord and business militias that have come to find their own wealth generating activities. In exchange for their management of the militias, the courts are expected to create and maintain as much predictability as possible. This arrangement clearly limits the independence of the court militias, for without the businessman or clan's support, the court militia could not survive.

Al Ittihad also engaged in entrepreneurship in order to raise funds. For instance, they controlled the ports in Kismaayo and Merka. There has also been some attempt by al Ittihad to incorporate businessmen into their organization to find

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<sup>487</sup> Bradbury 2003, Little 2003

<sup>488</sup> ICG 2002

funding.<sup>489</sup> What differentiates them from other types of militias is that they also are funded by international, non-Somali Islamist sources. This is possible because of their cross-cutting ideology. It is not clear to what extent al Ittihad had terrorist or other subaltern funding, but they certainly have been funded by Islamic NGOs of various guises.

### ***Example – Mohammed Aidid***

Mohammed Hassan Farah Aidid is an example of a faction militia leader who was able to become a warlord by transforming the source of his soldiers and logistics, allowing him to gain independence. Initially Aidid was selected to head a faction militia, meant to protect his sub-clan the Hawie Habr Gidr. He built up his forces by using the Hawiye nomads which lived in the central region of Somalia and were impoverished because of an ongoing drought.<sup>490</sup> Aidid then armed these men with weapons captured from the Somali military.

After marching on Mogadishu, “many of the veterans of his successful campaign married or returned to their families,”<sup>491</sup> and Aidid was forced to find a new source of troops and support. He turned to the mooryaan. Since Aidid could no longer rely on the clan for loyalty, he had to provide the men with “periodic rewards of loot and shelter.”<sup>492</sup> These rewards came from all the usual sources, including: raids, the occupation of entire neighborhoods, security fees paid by businessmen and NGOs, etc.

Aidid was also left with the need to protect his reward system and this helps explain why he systematically exacerbated the IDP situation. In particular, Aidid

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<sup>489</sup> Menkhaus 2002

<sup>490</sup> Clarke and Gosende 2003

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.: 146

<sup>492</sup> Ibid.: 146

needed to make sure that no one would return to take back the homes and other goods that he had promised to his forces. In the view of Walter Clarke and Robert Gosende, who provide an accurate reading of the events, Aidid ensured that he could protect this source of support by weakening the Barre supporters and other civilians who had left the city and were exiled to the IDP camps in the “triangle of death” located between Mogadishu, Baidoa, and Kismaayo.<sup>493</sup> He did this by closing the food warehouses and cutting off the flow of aid to these camps. In doing so, this would set off the chain of events that led to the UN intervention.

In total, Aidid was able to separate himself from the clan. Through the use of economic exploitation and a patronage based system of loyalty with the mooryaan, he was able to perpetuate his warlord organization without losing out on decision-making authority. Although he continued to maintain clan links and rhetoric, he had transformed himself from a warleader to a warlord.

## Summary

The previous section has illustrated the difference between militias in Somalia and from this examination we can separate out which should be classified as warlords and which are classic militias are not. The following chart depicts the comparison between different types of armed groups in Somalia. The cells highlighted in bold and italics represent areas which meet the definition of warlord.

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<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

**Chart I.**

	<b>Political Community</b>	<b>Governance and C3</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Autonomy</b>	<b>Independence: Motivation</b>	<b>Independence: Logistics</b>
<b>Faction Militia</b>	Extension of civilian political community	Clan law and governance	<i>Representation and protection of the clan. Power and survival may be part of this</i>	<i>Complete autonomy</i>	Dependent on clan community for loyalty	Looting. Depends on clan and sometimes businessmen for support
<b>Warlord</b>	<i>Private political community, divorced from civilians</i>	<i>Praetorian</i>	<i>Power for the warlord and warlord organization, survival is most basic use of power</i>	<i>Complete autonomy</i>	<i>Use economic incentives to motivate mooryaan</i>	<i>Various forms of independent economic exploitation</i>
<b>Business Militia</b>	No political community	Contract, Based on faction militia structure	Represent and protect business interests	<i>Complete autonomy</i>	<i>Economic incentives</i>	<i>Black, grey and white markets</i>
<b>Court Militia</b>	Extension of clan	Extension of clan law and governance	Upholding of shari'a law	<i>Complete autonomy</i>	<i>Economic incentives</i>	Dependent on clan and businessmen
<b>Islamic Militia</b>	Religious political community	Own (civilian/religious) governance structure	Islamist goals	<i>Complete autonomy</i>	Religious loyalty, economic incentives	External supporters

As is apparent from this chart, the definition and conceptualization of warlordism presented in Chapter 2 has been able to effectively differentiate the diversity of armed groups in Somalia. Many of the armed groups have features in common with warlords and this causes significant confusion both by the media and academics. However, the set of concepts developed in Chapter 2 only apply in total to warlords. There is great importance in making this distinction because the warlord may relate and interact differently with both internal and international actors. Most importantly, warlords will be most concerned with the survival of the warlord organization; while other types of armed groups will have different motivations.

The previous examination also demonstrated that warlords in Somalia are cohesive, like units. They have instituted a self-perpetuating structure including

economic resources and ways to motivate new personnel. They also have a governance structure capable of allowing them to act as a single unit. This allows them to carry out their drive for survival in the anarchic system.

Furthermore, it was demonstrated that warlords are autonomous and independent organizations. There is no state which has authority over their actions. They have also used various modes of economic exploitation to obtain the equipment necessary to defend their autonomy and have used their profits to motivate mooryaan to fight for them. Thus, we should consider Somali warlords as SAGs. The implication of this is that the Neorealist approach may be used to analyze warlords.

The following section will examine the international relations of warlords in Somalia using the Neorealist approach. The hypothesis is that the theory will be able to explain their relations. In the following section, warlord's international relations with the United Nations intervention forces will be considered and then in the subsequent section, warlord relations with Ethiopia will be examined.

## **WARLORDS AND THE UN INTERVENTION**

The following section will examine the relations between warlords and the UN intervention forces. The hypothesis in the case of the United Nations intervention is that the warlords and intervention forces should relate in terms of anarchic war and that alliances, and all decision making for that matter, should be based on the pursuit of security and continuance of autonomy.

## **Background to the UN Intervention**

The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) intervention was a major internationalization of the conflict.<sup>494</sup> This intervention began with UNOSOM I in March 1992, which involved a diplomatic mission to broker peace, led by Ambassador Mohammed Sahnoun. This was followed by the importation of peace keepers to protect the Mogadishu airport. In December 1992, a US led peacekeeping force, known as the UN International Task Force (UNITAF), entered and stayed in the country until May 1993. The peace keeping force then grew to over 30,000, it became known as UNOSOM II, and this force stayed in Somalia until March 1995.<sup>495</sup>

The UN did not have the permission of the Somali state to intervene, as there was no state to negotiate with. This was taken into account by the United Nations Security Council in its decision to intervene, as permission was and continues to be a requirement for intervening in states. However, the final decision to intervene was possible because of the logic that

the normative conflict between human rights on the one hand and sovereignty and non-intervention on the other was weakened by the absence of a government in Somalia. In the case of a failed state, the respect of sovereignty loses a significant part of its relevance.<sup>496</sup>

Therefore the UN took the initiative to intervene in what it felt were “unique” circumstances.<sup>497</sup> This provides more evidence that the UN, and therefore in a sense

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<sup>494</sup> See UN 1997 for more details on the UN intervention.

<sup>495</sup> In general, these separate involvements are sometimes referred to collectively as UNOSOM and this study will continue that practice.

<sup>496</sup> Ryter 2003: 41

<sup>497</sup> The intervention was called unique in order to appease the Chinese who did not want to create a precedent for non-consensual intervention.

the international community as a whole, felt that Somalia was no longer a closed, hierarchic system, but rather could be treated as an extension of an open, international anarchic system.

The UN came to treat Somali warlords (and faction militias) as de facto sovereign, though not necessarily legitimate, actors. This can be traced back to at least the appointment of Robert Oakley, the former US ambassador to Somalia, as the head of Operation Restore Hope (the US military name of the UNITAF operation) by then President George Bush. The (controversial) plan which Oakley carried out was to accommodate the warlords in exchange for providing a semblance of order. In particular, they awarded policing and juridical powers to Aidid and Al Mahdi in the areas they controlled.<sup>498</sup> The logic behind this being that the warlords and faction militias had de facto control and to attempt to defeat them would be far too costly, both for the UN and Somalis.<sup>499</sup>

This is not to say that the warlords were legitimized, but that they were a fact and therefore had to be treated as recognized actors. For instance, a high-level UN source involved with the relations between the UN and warlords notes

de facto power gets acknowledged in any situation... it was the same here [in Somalia]... though the UN acknowledges an actor, does it grant the actor legitimacy or just remain de facto?<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>498</sup> Clarke and Gosende 2003

<sup>499</sup> The plan was and is still considered controversial because, as Laitin notes, "due to Oakley's initial decision to accommodate the warlords, and with the full expectation on the part of all combatants that there would be no significant outside force in the country after May 1994, the warlords had an incentive to resist international attempts to construct a civil society." (Laitin 1999: 162)

<sup>500</sup> Interview, UN Source, Nairobi, 29 March 2005

The general consensus is that the UN did not in fact grant legitimacy. This view has been backed by others in the UN as well as NGOs involved on the ground in Somalia.<sup>501</sup> Nonetheless, it created a logic that “only people with guns could bring the country together...”<sup>502</sup> Therefore, only the militia leaders were “permitted both to develop the agendas and to decide who else would attend the [peace building] conferences.”<sup>503</sup>

In a sense, the intervention may be seen as an example of a mixed security dilemma. As noted in Chapter 4, mixed security dilemmas occur when states feel threatened by warlords. Clearly Somalia as a state was not a threat to neighboring or further off states such as the United States, since it was a collapsed state. However, the warlords in Somalia did represent a threat to security. They exhibited the security dilemma intensifiers, such as primarily using small arms and were notoriously predatory in behavior. Accordingly, intentional states aligned in order to rid themselves of the threat through an intervention into the Somali state and direct targeting of warlords.

### *Anarchy and Hierarchy*

At the same time, the UN effectively declared war on the warlords, in the sense that it attempted to implement political goals through force. The mandate of UNOSOM (specifically, as set out for UNOSOM II, which was based on UNITAF) was to “use all necessary means” to “take appropriate action, including enforcement measures, to

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<sup>501</sup> Various interviews with UN and NGO personnel, Nairobi, May 2005

<sup>502</sup> Clarke and Gosende 2003: 148

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.: 149

establish throughout Somalia a secure environment for humanitarian assistance.”<sup>504</sup> Its main responsibilities included:

- monitoring that all factions continued to respect the cessation of hostilities and other agreements to which they had consented;
- preventing any resumption of violence and, if necessary, taking appropriate action;
- maintaining control of the heavy weapons of the organized factions which would have been brought under international control;
- seizing the small arms of all unauthorized armed elements;
- securing all ports, airports and lines of communications required for the delivery of humanitarian assistance;
- protecting the personnel, installations and equipment of the United Nations and its agencies, ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] as well as NGOs;
- continuing mine-clearing, and;
- assisting in repatriation of refugees and displaced persons in Somalia.<sup>505</sup>

In 1994, the resolution was changed to exclude coercive methods for carrying out its mission – after the war between the sides had started<sup>506</sup>

The permissible coercion which was detailed in the peace keeping force’s mandate at first seemed to fundamentally change the nature of the Somali system – specifically by instituting a ‘leviathan’ that could structure the relationships of the actors. In other words, the force’s tried to institute a hierarchic system For example, Clarke and Gosende remark that

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<sup>504</sup> UNOSOM II Mandate, based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 814 (1993), 26 March 1993

<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

<sup>506</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 897 (1994), 4 February 1994

[t]he US military [which led UNITAF and provide the bulk of the forces] decided to use similar tactics to those employed so successfully against Iraq in Operation Desert Storm – a large and robust force to overwhelm potential opposition and lessen the opportunities for losses in battle.<sup>507</sup>

The idea was that, as in traditional state formation, an overwhelming force could provide the coercion necessary to create and sustain a structure of relations within Somalia. This literally meant taking away the means of force from warlords through disarmament as well as physically patrolling and safeguarding certain areas such as the ports and humanitarian aid locations.

This is not in line with traditional or ‘first generation’ peacekeeping operations in which the peacekeeping forces attempt to interpose themselves between combatants and then act as an objective observer (and at times enforcer) of compliance by the actors toward negotiations, in the same way that a state might oversee civil suits. Rather, it seemed that UNOSOM might act as another sovereign which would provide a security blanket around the nation under which the various sovereign actors would be incorporated into a hierarchic system, with the UN by default on top. This would have made Somalia a hierarchical system, similar to a state, and, potentially, could have led to an end to warlordism as their forces would become so overpowered as to make them lose autonomy.

However, it soon became clear that rather than this, the actors simply treated UNOSOM as another actor in the anarchic system. Some actors aligned with this new,

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<sup>507</sup> Clarke and Gosende 2003: 142

international actor, specifically the Group of 12, which included the backers of al Mahdi.<sup>508</sup> Other actors aligned against the UN. Specifically there was an alliance of armed groups coming under the heading of the Somali National Alliance (SNA), which included the USC and was led by Aidid.<sup>509</sup> These actors felt threatened by the forces, when, for instance, the UNOSOM forces attempted to disarm them.

The blatant return to anarchy occurred when the SNA struck back against the UN forces on 5 June 1993. On this day the UNOSOM forces were looking for weapons stored in the Radio Mogadishu building – a radio station controlled by Aidid. In the resulting attacks 25 Pakistani soldiers were killed.<sup>510</sup>

On June 12, the UNOSOM forces counter-attacked with air and ground operations in Mogadishu. Several other battles ensued, the most famous of these battles was the so-called ‘Black Hawk Down’ episode of October 1993.<sup>511</sup> This battle involved SNA fighters and the United States’ Task Force Ranger (TFR).

Unlike the UN peacekeepers, the TFR force was assigned the task of hunting down and arresting Aidid. The strategy for doing this was to use ‘snatch’ missions, which involved deploying troops from helicopters to surround a building and capture targets inside.<sup>512</sup> These missions were thus meant to resemble policing missions, in which threats to social order were to be neutralized.

During the mission on 3 October 1993, the TFR forces were given intelligence that several Aidid lieutenants were inside a building and the task force was to arrest them. The particular location of the mission, the Olympic Hotel near the Bakara Market, was an area controlled by Aidid and his forces. When the task force troops

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<sup>508</sup> See UN Peacekeeping 1995 for more background.

<sup>509</sup> The SNA preferred that regional powers, i.e. Ethiopia, should help facilitate the reduction in conflict in Somalia. (UN Peace Keeping 1995)

<sup>510</sup> After the 5 June attack, the UN instituted an investigation which came to this conclusion. (UN 1997)

<sup>511</sup> See for instance, Bowden 1999

<sup>512</sup> Binney 2003

landed they met heavy resistance and took heavy losses (relative to losses in previous missions). In particular, the US' major technological advantage, that of its helicopters, was to some extent neutralized by the warlord's counter-tactic of launching large numbers of rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) at them simultaneously.<sup>513</sup> Using such tactics, as well as a tremendous amount of fighters, Aidid's men were able to apply significant pressure on the TFR forces and eventually rout them. The mission was considered to be a defeat by many and may be seen as (arguably) the root of the US decision to leave Somalia.

Regardless of the debate about the repercussions of the TFR mission(s), it is clear that the US and UN were attempting to create a hierarchical system in Somalia. The language surrounding the mission, such as "arrest," point toward this. The missions themselves were designed to make the most of the US weapons and tactical advantages in order to arrest specific individuals, with as little loss of US life as possible.

This is opposed to the warlord side of the equation, for whom the missions were severe existential threats. For Aidid and his lieutenants, the snatch operations were direct threats to their military organization. Their (arguable) defeat of the TFR soldiers in October forced the US to also consider the situation in existential terms, i.e. in terms more like a traditional interstate war than a policing operation.

### *Analysis – Anarchic War*

To summarize: Initially, the UNOSOM forces represented an indirect security threat for the SNA as they were aligned with the SNA's rival, the Group of 12. The UNOSOM forces then came to represent a direct security threat as they attempted to

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<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

actively disarm SNA forces. At this point, the SNA and UNOSOM forces had incompatible security goals. The SNA was concerned with maintaining its autonomy, i.e. surviving, and this involved having weapons, technicals, militiamen etc. The UNOSOM forces felt that their security was best met by disarming the SNA. The last resort for the SNA was to use physical, violent conflict to overcome this threat to its security. When the opportunity arose to combat these forces in order to coerce the actors into exiting the territory which the SNA felt was theirs, they took the opportunity and attacked. The ensuing battles were not of the nature of a sovereign power attempting to coerce a sub-power, but rather of two sovereign powers attempting to battle each other in order to maintain the power capability distribution or to change it in its favor.

It was not a hierarchic war over control of the state. There was no state to control and the UNOSOM forces certainly did not represent one. Rather, this was in effect anarchic war, where the actors were concerned with survival and the final battle would only determine the relative capability distribution in the system. This is finally illustrated by the fact that after the intervention, the SNA went back to being just another armed group amongst other armed groups – it did not become the leviathan over the state.

Nor were these battles internal in nature. For, the UN forces were clearly international, and the fact that the UN intervened without permission from sovereign demonstrates that the system was openly and internationally anarchic. Thus, the dynamic between the SNA and UNOSOM forces was one of international anarchic war.

In particular, the system was and remained multipolar. The different warlord actors interacted with the UNOSOM forces as equals. No actor was able to create

hegemony in the system. For the UNOSOM forces to have done so would have meant fighting and winning a system changing war, but they were unable to do so. Since the UN peacekeeping forces evacuation from Somalia, the system has remained multipolar. Other international actors, however, have continued to interact with warlords in Somalia.

### **ETHIOPIA, THE SNF, AND AL ITTIHAD**

Ethiopia is a major international actor in Somalia due to its shared borders and therefore its relations with warlords will serve as a good case to apply the Neorealist approach. The following section will focus on relations between Ethiopia and the SNF in regard to the two actors' relations with al Ittihad and the aftermath of the joint Ethiopia/SNF attack on al Ittihad

The hypothesis of a Neorealist approach is that the relations of the SNF, like those of Ethiopia, should be based on a logic of survival. In particular, the SNF should make and break alliances, with Ethiopia or other actors, based only on security interests. They should also go to war with actors that threaten them if that is perceived to be the only way to eliminate the security threat.

### **Regional Rivalry**

In order to understand the nature of warlord international relations with Ethiopia, it is necessary to appreciate the regional context, specifically the dynamic between Ethiopia and Arab countries. To summarize the issue, Ethiopia and Egypt can be seen as rivals for regional hegemony. An important strategic issue in particular for them is the Nile River which both countries depend on and which finds part of its source in and runs through Ethiopia before reaching Egypt. Libya has also aligned with Egypt

in a bid to counter Ethiopia's potential hegemony of the region. Furthermore, Ethiopia is a Christian, secular state with a large Muslim population, which is surrounded by Muslim countries.

Combined, these factors have led it to be concerned with Muslim radicals and terrorists as a security threat. In particular, it has been feared the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) – an organization which clearly threatened Ethiopia's security as it desired to secede from the state<sup>514</sup> – could launch or support attacks in Ethiopia.

This regional context, combined with a security concern for the general anarchy in Somalia and a desire to create a 'buffer zone' between it and its anarchic neighbor, have led to a high involvement by Ethiopia inside Somalia. This has led to a constantly shifting set of alliances and counter-alliances with Somali actors. Ethiopia has carried out its buffer strategy by setting up alliances with armed groups in control of land along its border, these have included over the past ten years, the Puntland de facto state, the USC/PM militia in Beled Weyn, the RRA, and the Marehan SNF. Egypt and Libya have backed factions in Mogadishu, for example, including for example the Aidid-Mahadi alliance. In order to balance this, the Ethiopians have backed rival groups such as the RRA in its battles with the SNA. Similarly, in Kismaayo, the SNA-SNF was backed by Egypt and Libya, while Ethiopia backed General Morgan.<sup>515</sup>

### **A Mutual Alliance over al Ittihad**

In this context of regional rivalry, buffer strategies, and shifting alliances, al Ittihad represented a threat to Ethiopia.<sup>516</sup> There is no direct evidence that al Ittihad supported

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<sup>514</sup> OLF 2005

<sup>515</sup> There is also competition over the eventual shape of the Somali state. Ethiopia tends to want a weaker state, taking a federal form. Egypt and Libya back a stronger, more centralized state.

<sup>516</sup> See Menkhaus 2002 for more on Al Ittihad.

fundamentalists which threatened Ethiopia. In fact, it seems that al Ittihad may have been against such threats to Ethiopia for fear of reprisals.<sup>517</sup> Yet, for Ethiopia the threat was perceived to be real, as al Ittihad did hold many of the same views as the radicals which threatened it and likely received funding from similar sources. Even if the threat was not immediate it still represented a security threat because if al Ittihad were to continue to gain power in the region it might have directly supported radical opponents to Ethiopia in the future. As we would presume from a Neorealist logic, Ethiopia sought to rid itself of the security threat. Ethiopia therefore had ample reason to align with a Somali actor against the threat.

During the same time period, Al Ittihad had also become a threat for the SNF. After UNOSOM's withdrawal, the SNF began to lose power relative to al Ittihad. It had already been atrophying while UNOSOM was present since it no longer had to provide security, which had been its *raison d'être*.<sup>518</sup> In parallel, al Ittihad became more relevant. It directly controlled Luuq and had security arrangements with other districts, such as Doolow and El Waq. In the district of Bula Hawa, the SNF and al Ittihad shared control.

The al Ittihad threat to the SNF was existential. In particular, while the SNF did not seem to care much about local politics and stability, and in fact positively undermined them, it did use its control over the Gedo region for credibility at the peace process bargaining tables. This reportedly was a humiliation for the then Chairman of the SNF, Omar Haji.<sup>519</sup> Moreover, the comparison of al Ittihad's 'enlightened' rule, which was stable, not very corrupt, and generally much better for

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<sup>517</sup> UNDOS points to "some anecdotal evidence that the al Ittihad movement in Gedo region did not want any association with terrorist activities inside Ethiopia, and was angry over an Islamist assassination attempt in Addis Ababa, for obvious reasons – the Luuq al Ittihad was the only fixed Islamic target in the region, and stood to pay a heavy price for terrorism and adventurism by Islamist cells elsewhere." (UNDOS 1998: 146)

<sup>518</sup> I.e. it was in the same situation as that of General Morgan, which was discussed above.

<sup>519</sup> UNDOS 1998

local residents and the international NGOs than the SNF's, further undermined the organization as it tended to progressively strengthen al Ittihad's foothold and weaken the SNF's. Moreover, al Ittihad was reportedly receiving funding from the SNF's longtime enemy, the SNA.<sup>520</sup> The threat therefore was a threat to the survival strategy of the SNF which relied on a parasitic existence off of the local population and NGOs and needed to play in national level politics and potentially provided a direct enemy in its alliance with the SNA.

The SNF and Ethiopia therefore made perfect allies for each other. Al Ittihad was a mutual enemy of both actors. The two actors were also joined in their mutual animosity toward the SNA. The SNF had been battling the SNA faction since the civil war, and Ethiopia felt threatened by the SNA's funding from its enemies, Egypt and Libya.

Sometimes the alliance is seen as Ethiopia funding and controlling the SNF as a proxy, however, this was not the case. The alliance made strategic sense for the SNF which needed an ally to effectively rid itself of the al Ittihad threat. In fact, it seems likely that the SNF exaggerated the threat posed by al Ittihad in order to gain Ethiopia's backing, although it is not possible to conclusively know whether or not this is true.<sup>521</sup> This is a common practice for warlords in Somalia; even today various factions in Somalia will promote a rival as 'fundamentalists' or 'supporters of terrorism' in order to gain international allies, such of the United States, who they perceive as being motivated by counterterrorist goals. Also, as will be illustrated below, the SNF was able to and did break off its alliance when it felt that it was no longer in its interests. Ethiopia's involvement should not, therefore, be seen as one way.

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<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

<sup>521</sup> For instance, this view was expressed in the UNDOS report on governance in Gedo. UNDOS 1998

Having determined that the threat would not fade, Ethiopia and the SNF attacked al Ittihad in 1996 and then again in June 1997. The second attack was enough to drive al Ittihad out of Luuq and Doolow. These attacks forced al Ittihad into the countryside, the Bay region, and into Mogadishu. Reportedly in Mogadishu, al Ittihad received support from the SNA. After the attack, al Ittihad fundamentally changed its tactics and ceased attempting to control towns as a 'normal' faction militia, but rather has carried out a long-term strategy of preparing Somalia for eventual Islamic rule, mostly through influencing the shari'a courts. Al Ittihad was therefore effectively defeated by the two allies, in that it no longer represented a direct security threat.

### *Analysis*

The preceding is an example of the logic of balance of power in action. Ethiopia felt threatened by Arab states and other potential threats, such as the OLF. The most specific threat to its security came from al Ittihad, which was an Islamic organization, and therefore a potential ally to Arab actors in the perception of Ethiopia. Al Ittihad, for its part, relied on external (Arab) support for maintaining its internal power and had a militia to protect itself. The SNF also saw al Ittihad as a threat since al Ittihad's actions in maintaining its security, such as by having a militia and in maintaining a more attractive rule than the SNF.

This threat led to an alliance between the SNF and Ethiopia in order to build-up their mutual power capability and thereby maintain a superior power capability. The alliance was made based only on the two actors' security interests. The point is all the more impressive since there were traditional grievances between Somali's and Ethiopia that, from an identity point of view, should have gotten in the way. But,

these grievances were quickly overcome by strategic necessity and the pursuit of security.

This balancing move left the aligned powers with a preponderance of power. They used this power to defeat their mutual enemy. This created a more ideal power distribution for both actors, since their mutual threat was removed, but it also opened the alliance up for change. Since the alliance was based on a logic of mutual security, without the benefit of this justification, the alliance could not last.

### **Changes in the Alliance**

The alliance between Ethiopia and the SNF survived the war. However, it began to change as the security calculation by each side changed. The following section will explore the changes in the alliance between Ethiopia and the SNF. The hypothesis is the same – that is that alliances should be based solely on a security calculation.

Immediately after the combined attack on al Ittihad, the alliance between Ethiopia and the SNF became stronger. After the attacks, the SNF and Ethiopian government, “appeared to have a firm, mutually beneficial alliance based on a set of common political interests – combating al Ittihad, and in opposing Aidid’s SNA.”<sup>522</sup> Ethiopia’s support allowed the SNF to effectively administer the Gedo region.<sup>523</sup> It governed using ‘emergency law’, provided regional defense against outside attackers, and controlled tax collection.

Subsequently, however, the relationship became more complex. The SNF had been part of the Group of 12, which was an anti-SNA alliance led by Ali Mahdi that came to be known as the National Salvation Council (NSC) and was also backed by

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<sup>522</sup> UNDOS 1998: 140

<sup>523</sup> Ibid.

Ethiopia. Ethiopia had been backing the ‘Sodere’ national reconciliation process involving this group

In the winter of 1997 Egypt came to sponsor a rival conference, to be known as the ‘Cairo Conference’. This would become

a watershed in post-intervention Somali politics, not for achieving its intended goal of national reconciliation, but for the process of political realignment it set in motion within Somalia, and as the shot across the bow which triggered a period of proxy wars played out between Ethiopia and her regional rivals in Somalia.<sup>524</sup>

The SNF’s decisions after the Cairo Conference are interesting to note because they demonstrate both that it was not a simple proxy for Ethiopia and that its decisions were driven by motives of survival and power. Rather than staying with the NSC and Ethiopia, which would seem rational at first glance, the NSF, under Haji, switched alliances to a Mogadishu coalition of factions. This coalition was backed by Egypt and included the SNA – the previous enemies of both the SNF and Ethiopia.

The reasoning was that the NSC-Ethiopia alliance no longer provided Haji with the maximized security and power that he needed. In the NSC, the SNF did not have the level of power that it desired, since the NSC co-chairs were General Aden Gabio, of the Darood/Aulihan/Abssame clan and Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf, of the Mijerteen clan.

Another factor came from changes in Kismaayo. The city was controlled by a Harti-Marehan (of which, the SNF was mostly made up of Marehan clansmen)

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<sup>524</sup> Ibid.: 140

coalition under Morgan. There were tensions in this alliance and in late 1997 the two sides clashed and Marehan were driven out of Kismaayo. Control of Kismaayo was extremely important because of the city's economic resources, as it was in a fertile region of Somalia, was a trading center, and was a magnet for international aid due to the large IDP population. Morgan was receiving funds from Colonel Yusuf and the Mijerteen clan. At the same time, the SNA had forces in the Jubba valley and an alliance with them would provide the SNF with its only means of retaking the key city.

In order to maximize its security, the SNF changed its alliance. The factors at stake were based on power politics. The new alliance was in line with the logic of security and maintaining a relative balance of power, for if an actor has the choice it will join an alliance which makes it "more appreciated,"<sup>525</sup> in the sense that it retains a better position relative to actors within the coalition. The new alliance also gave the SNF the weapons it needed, though now they would come from Egypt, and the allies it needed to retake Kismaayo, which it did in June 1999.

However, "whether these options were good or bad for the Marehan community in Gedo region was apparently not an issue which weighed heavily in his deliberations."<sup>526</sup> This fact would become an issue for the SNF, as the group split into two factions, one controlled by Omar Hiji and another by Ali Nur. Though, this only serves to further demonstrate that the SNF, under the control of Haji, was more of a warlord organization than faction militia, in that it was concerned with the power of the militia rather than the protection of society.

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<sup>525</sup> Waltz 1979: 127. Though it is important to note that this is only true "provided, of course, that the coalition they join achieves enough defensive or deterrent strength to dissuade adversaries from attacking." (Waltz 1979: 127)

<sup>526</sup> Ibid.: 140

After this break, alliances with states would play out at a sub-SNF level. Ethiopia aligned with the Ali Nur wing, against their mutual enemy. Ethiopia was irritated with the switch in alliances as it had its troops on the border of areas controlled by the SNF. Moreover, it was concerned that the OLF was receiving arms and training from the SNA in Lower Shabelle region.<sup>527</sup> Of course, the SNA and Haji faction of the SNF were now aligned with Egypt, thereby combining many threats into one. In April 1999, Ethiopia and the Ali Nur faction jointly attacked the SNA backed Omar Haji wing of the SNF in order to cut off the OLF – this being expected from a security calculation perspective.

### *Analysis*

The first point to note about the preceding example is that the breakup of the Ethiopia-SNF alliance clearly demonstrated that the SNF was still independent. It was able to decide “for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems, including whether or not to seek assistance from others and in doing so to limit its freedom by making commitments to them.”<sup>528</sup> Based on its perceived relative interest, it changed its alliances as it felt necessary.

The formation and breaking of international alliances in Somalia was based on interest in security and nothing more. The SNF and Ethiopia both aligned out of mutual desire to counter a security threat. When the alliance was no longer beneficial for the SNF, it broke away and formed an alliance with its erstwhile enemy, the SNA, and another state, Egypt, which offered a more beneficial alliance in security terms. Again, to reinforce the point, these alliances formed even though there were several cultural, historical, social, and even economic reasons for them not to. This further

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<sup>527</sup> UNDOS 1998

<sup>528</sup> Waltz 1979: 96

demonstrates the point that it was making decisions in terms of survival, not some grievances it had with the SNA (though there were many) or any attachments with Ethiopia. Thus, a balance of power based alliance between independent, security motivated actors formed and broke as predicted.

Such motivations are not found just with the SNF, they are common to warlords in the Somalia system. Clearly the SNA, which also considered the SNF an enemy, was making similar sorts of decisions about relative power balances. It also had hoped to take Kismaayo for some time, as it had stationed troops in the Jubba valley since 1993, just waiting for an opportunity to attack. The alliance with the SNF allowed it to do so. The conclusion is that the logic was the same.

## **CONCLUSION**

At first glance it may seem that all the armed groups in Somalia are warlords. However, after careful analysis it has been found that in fact there are at least five different types of armed groups and it is sometimes only subtle differences that separate warlords from other types of armed groups. Nonetheless, these differences are real and important, as different types of armed groups may have different motivations for acting and therefore necessitate different analytical models. By using the concepts developed in Chapters 2 and 3 it was possible to make an effective analysis of warlordism in Somalia.

It has also been possible to model the warfare and alliances between warlords and international actors in Somalia. The Somali system is clearly an anarchic one. The warlord actors as well as international actors, such as the UNOSOM forces and Ethiopian state treat it as such. During the UN intervention, the UNOSOM forces were not relating with the warlords as a sovereign policing the state, but rather as

sovereign equals fighting over the distribution of power in a system. Similarly, we should not see the Ethiopian attacks on al Ittihad as a simple proxy war. Rather, the Ethiopians aligned with the SNF to pursue mutual goals and when it was no longer in the SNF's favor, it ended the alliance. This description of warlord international relations is both an accurate reflection of reality and an explanation of why the relations occurred as they did.

The relations hypothesized by the Neorealist approach held true in Somalia. During the UNOSOM intervention, anarchic war erupted between actors, not over control of the state, but over existential survival. The security dilemma did arise between Ethiopia, the SNF, and al Ittihad. This security dilemma led to outright conflict, i.e. war, in order to redress the security threat. Alliances were made and broken based on actors' interest in survival, not grievance or greed or other factors. These patterns of relationships are expected by a Neorealist account. Furthermore, the Neorealist approach is able to not just describe, but also explain why war broke out, why there was a security dilemma between the actors and why this security dilemma led to conflict, as well as why these alliances coalesced and broke up and then reformed with other actors.

This case study has demonstrated the applicability and usefulness of the Neorealist approach for analyzing warlordism. The concepts and definition developed in Chapter 2 have been shown to be helpful in making the subtle classifications necessary to differentiate seemingly like actors in Somalia. It has also been demonstrated that it is possible to model the international relations of warlords in Somalia. Furthermore, this model is a better reflection of reality than might be found using other views, such as that Somali warlords were making decisions based on grievances. At the same time the Neorealist account has explained the relations

adequately. These were the criteria for validating the Neorealist approach to analyzing the international relations of warlords and therefore we should conclude that the Neorealist approach has been validated.

Added to this, the Neorealist account of warlord international relations also provides some theoretical predictive power that may be helpful in negotiating with and otherwise responding to warlordism in Somalia. For example, alliances between warlords and other sovereign actors should be seen through the lens of the pursuit of survival; since clan relations or other supposed loyalties have very little effect on the decision making of warlords, except as obstacles to be overcome in the pursuit of other goals. This is demonstrated in the ease by which warlords decide to break 'traditional' alliances and realign with 'traditional' enemies. Therefore, the best way to predict the future alignment of a warlord is to calculate the security payoff for the organization. This opens up the artificial blinders that made a situation like Hiji's decision to break with the NSC and Ethiopia seem so surprising to analysts at the time.

Likewise, this perspective explains how the various warlords in Mogadishu, who have been fighting each other for years, could align so quickly in order to attempt to make Mogadishu the capital for the TNG, after the TNG had discussed going elsewhere.<sup>529</sup> This event too could have been predicted if an approach to modeling their interactions was based on a drive for relative security, rather than presently perceived grievances, or even a drive for absolute power. The warlords correctly perceived that if the capital was made elsewhere, their forces would be at a disadvantage to the much greater potential strength of the TNG, which would have been bulked up by international support. Their optimal calculation in such a situation

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<sup>529</sup> BBC May 2005

was to align with each other to negotiate and thereby assure their continued relevance and strength relative to other armed groups. In the future, the Neorealist approach may again be helpful in predicting the actions of warlords in the same way.

The method of answering this study's thesis question has been tested and passed. This chapter has described and explained the international relations of warlords in terms of a Neorealist account. Additionally, there is evidence that the explanation of warlord international relations based on Neorealism is predictive. By validating the Neorealist approach it is possible to conclude that the theoretical answer to this study's question is also valid – i.e. that warlords relate with states and other international actors in essentially the same way as states. The further implication is that this theory should hold true for other warlords, since it has passed the Waltzian test of explanatory usefulness. However, theories must be tested on more than one case in order to be validated. In particular, they must be tested in more demanding cases and therefore the next chapter will do just that.

## **CHAPTER 6 – CASE STUDY: THE LORD’S RESISTANCE ARMY**

This chapter will meet Waltz’s requirement for following the test of a theoretical approach with a more demanding test case. The LRA and its international relations will be examined, since both the organization and its relations are less straightforward than the Somali warlords and their relations examined in Chapter 5. In addition, this case study examines a warlord in a fragmented state, as opposed to the collapsed state examined in Chapter 5, and thereby broadens the application of the Neorealist approach.

The LRA is a notoriously difficult to classify as an organization and the nature of its international relations are confusing. It has been variously referred to as an insurgency, millenarian cult, or terrorist group. The LRA is often thought to be a purely Ugandan insurgency, but in fact it is mostly based in Sudan and now the DRC. It attacks both Sudanese and Ugandan targets as well as the areas under the control of the SPLM/A.

It will be argued that these difficulties in classification can be amended and the LRA’s relations can be adequately modeled and explained using the Neorealist approach developed in this study. The nature of the LRA organization makes more sense when seen in terms of the concepts discussed in Chapter 2. In addition its relations – with Sudan, Uganda, and the SPLM/A – can all be described and explained using a Neorealist account, including the specific relationships of alliance, security dilemma, and anarchic war.

This chapter will begin with a brief history of the LRA, which focuses in particular on how and why the LRA formed as it did. It will then be demonstrated that

the LRA is a warlord organization, not insurgency or other type of armed group. The LRA's international relations will then be examined in relation to Uganda, Sudan, and the SPLM/A. The Neorealist approach will be applied to these relations as the explanatory model, with specific attention being paid to the balance of power between these actors.

## **HISTORY AND CONTEXT**

The roots of the conflict in northern Uganda go back, at a minimum, to the colonial period. However, the origin of the LRA as an organization occurred after Yoweri Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM) took control of Uganda in 1986. At this time, multiple rebel movements arose to combat the take over.

The Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA) grew out of the defunct Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA) and various other anti-NRM forces in an attempt to capture power from Museveni. The UPDA had credibility within the Acholi community because of its anti-Museveni stance. This allowed it to recruit soldiers with relative ease and therefore use both conventional and guerrilla tactics against the NRM and its military wing, the National Resistance Army (NRA). The UPDA also knew and used terror tactics, a point of significance to note in regards to the future of the LRA.<sup>530</sup>

Another group, the HSM, founded by Alice Auma (Lakwena) in 1987, also attempted to battle the NRA. Alice, who claimed to be possessed by a World War I era Italian named Lakwena, had significant Acholi support and volunteers. Also, as the UPDA lost some ground against the NRA, Alice recruited some UPDA units. The HSM used initiation rituals and so called 'Holy Spirit Tactics' based on Christianity

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<sup>530</sup> Van Acker 2004

and local beliefs to create a unique religious-military organization.<sup>531</sup> The LRA would go on to adopt similar tactics.

Alice's father, Severino Likoya Kiberu, attempted to reform the HSM after its defeat. While Alice had been able to rely on charisma and a willing population, Severino was forced to turn to violent means of finding support. To illustrate the point, Ruddy Doom and Koen Vlassenroot report that one of Severino's names was *otong-tong*, which translates as 'one who chops victims to pieces'.<sup>532</sup> As the LRA would also come to do because of its unpopularity, Severino was forced to rely more heavily on the use of child soldiers.

In 1987, out of remnants of existent anti-NRA movements, Joseph Kony, a high-school drop-out and former altar boy from Gulu district, founded what would become known as the LRA. The LRA was formed when the more traditional rebel army of the UPDA was combined with the decidedly unorthodox HSM. Kony began his war by taking control of a unit of the UPDA. The aviator glasses-wearing, dreadlocked Kony, who is said to be a charismatic leader, then was able to attract more volunteers from both the UPDA and the HSM. After HSM's defeat and the signing of a peace accord by the UPDA, there were no other effective military groups to represent the Acholi against the NRM/A. Given this, many veterans from both movements joined Kony. In particular, it is reported that the most brutal officers were attracted to Kony's movement because they felt that they had no where to go back to, due to the atrocities they had committed.<sup>533</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> (Behrend 1999: 107) The Holy spirit Tactics involved initiation, purification, and ritual through which members of HSM were led to believe that they were invulnerable and that other magical benefits were theirs to use, including the ability to turn stones into grenades and bees into allies. These spiritual tactics were combined with conventional tactics and an organizational structure modelled on the British colonial format (Ibid. 110). While Alice was able to win a major battle in 1986, she and the HSM were ultimately defeated in November 1987.

<sup>532</sup> Doom and Vlassenroot 1999

<sup>533</sup> Cline 2003

At first Kony's movement seemed to be a continuation of the HSM. He was "the bearer of an apocalyptic vision, a mouthpiece of a widely accepted view that the Acholi people [were] on the verge of genocide."<sup>534</sup> Like Alice, Kony claimed to be possessed by spirits, including a Sudanese, Chinese, American, and former minister of Ida Amin. He also instituted cleansing processes, initiation rites, and practiced mystical acts which, amongst other things, allowed him to make his followers invincible by ritually armouring them with *malailka*, the Swahili word for angel.<sup>535</sup> However, while the original HSM had strict moral rules of behaviour, which helped increase local popularity, Kony's movement had far looser rules, and never achieved the popularity of either the HSM or the UPDA.

The holy spirit tactics were replaced with guerrilla tactics when remnants of the UPDA, led by Odong Latek, joined Kony in 1988. Other commanders, including Tabuley and Vincent Otti (who is currently considered second-in-command) also came over to the LRA voluntarily and have continued to contribute to the guerrilla warfare tactics used by Kony. These commanders brought with them guerrilla tactics and the military experience of using terror as a strategy.<sup>536</sup> To this day, the LRA can be seen as a combination of these two movements, combining the brutal guerrilla tactics of the UPDA as well as, particularly in its training and command and control system, the spiritual tactics of the HSM.<sup>537</sup>

<sup>534</sup> Doom and Vlassenroot 1999: 22

<sup>535</sup> Behrend 1999: 114

<sup>536</sup> Van Acker 2004: 348

<sup>537</sup> The evolution of the LRA can be seen in its name changes. The initial movement was called the Holy Spirit Movement II – a blatant attempt at following the HSM. Then it became the Lord's Salvation Army, presumably to distance itself from the HSM. When many former UPDA fighters joined and the army became more of a guerilla force and held less emphasis on the spiritual side, it became the United Democratic Christian Force. Finally, with the death of Latek and return to a more spiritual basis, Kony's army became the Lord's Resistance Army in 1992.

The period of the early/mid 1990s is considered to be a major turning point in LRA strategy for two reasons.<sup>538</sup> It was at this point that the Khartoum government began supplying Kony's army with new weapons and equipment and allowed the LRA to establish bases in Sudan. In addition, Kony reportedly began to feel that the Acholi people had betrayed him. In particular, he felt this because of the 'bow and arrow' civil defence militias made up of fellow Acholis, set up by the government, and by the failure of a peace process that had been championed by Betty Bigombe in 1994.<sup>539</sup>

After this period, the LRA directed much more brutal violence at the Acholi people. Major massacres occurred at Atiak in 1995, the Karuma and Acholpi camps in 1996, and Lokung-Palabek in 1997. Similar massacres continue to the present day.

This behaviour is not uncommon in insurgencies, for, guerrilla movements that no longer feel they need the local population to survive may turn against it. This occurred during the Greek civil war, where the Communist guerrillas had access to bases in countries north of Greece.<sup>540</sup> The possession of these bases meant the guerrillas "felt free to express their profound, even murderous, contempt for the Greek peasantry among whom they operated."<sup>541</sup>

With the loss of what little popular support there was, the LRA instituted an increase in the number of child abductions. From the beginning, the LRA had considerably less support than either the UPDA or HSM, and therefore experienced difficulties in finding new recruits. This had detrimental effects on its ability to conduct a war against the NRA. Although the LRA had committed atrocities, as the UPDA before them, and used kidnapping for recruitment, as Severino's HSM had

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<sup>538</sup> Doom and Vlassenroot 1999

<sup>539</sup> Ibid.

<sup>540</sup> Joes 2004

<sup>541</sup> Ibid.: 19

done, the period after the failure of the 1994 peace process fundamentally changed the way in which the LRA operated. Starting in the mid-90s, many of the largest kidnappings occurred, such as the 1996 Aboke kidnapping, and they became a much more regular occurrence in the north.

Since then, the practice has only been further reinforced. The adoption of the Amnesty Accord in 2000 threatened Kony's ability to retain personnel who could now opt to return to society.<sup>542</sup> Kony has since lowered the age of desirable soldiers, taking higher percentages of those aged nine or ten and letting the mid-teenagers, who used to be the most desirable to the LRA, go.<sup>543</sup>

The alliance with Sudan produced significant military benefit. The LRA created rear bases in friendly Sudan which housed large numbers of LRA fighters, their wives, and other personnel. Excursions into northern Uganda were used to attack soft targets and loot goods. At the same time, forces were used to covertly fight the SPLA in southern Sudan. The LRA also used Sudan as an excellent source for weapons. At some points in the conflict, the LRA has reportedly even had better weapons than the UPDF troops.

Operation Iron Fist in 2002 and Iron Fist II in 2004 have also contributed to the strategic and operational evolution of the LRA. These operations allowed the Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF) (the new name of the NRA) to follow up and attack the LRA in southern Sudan after an agreement Uganda made with the Sudanese government. The assaults significantly weakened the LRA's fighting ability and, reportedly, forced it to leave its Sudanese bases. The UPDF's use of helicopter gunships has been particularly effective at disrupting the LRA by making it much more difficult for them to hide. The effect of these operations has been to uproot the

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<sup>542</sup> The Amnesty Accord gave blanket amnesty to all LRA fighters who returned from the bush. Refugee Law Project 2004: 6

<sup>543</sup> HRW 2002: 21

LRA and make them even more mobile. The events have combined to allow the LRA to revolutionize its tactics and have contributed to its evolution into the organization that it is today.

In response to the Iron Fist operations, the LRA dispersed itself across a wider area.<sup>544</sup> Smaller units have spread beyond the three traditional Acholi regions – Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader. In the middle of 2003 the LRA began attacking further east, into Iteso and Langi areas.<sup>545</sup> In moving to these districts, they seemed to be attempting to recruit other former rebels who also may potentially have disagreements with the Museveni regime. The Refugee Law Project reports, “the LRA came with a list of names of former UPDA rebels who had fought against the government from 1987 – 1992. They wanted to know the locations of these ex-fighters so as to activate them to fight the “dictatorial” Museveni government.”<sup>546</sup>

### *Changes in the Relationships*

The most significant recent event for the LRA has been the peace agreement between the Sudanese government and the southern rebels. The value of the LRA to Sudan in the past – regardless of analytical approach taken – has been in their use as a diplomatic countermeasure to the Ugandan government’s backing of the SPLA as well as being a militia to be used to directly combat the SPLA. Now that there is a peace agreement in place, the Sudanese may no longer need the LRA.

Relations between Sudan and Uganda changed to some extent after 1999 and greatly after 2001. The two countries had initially agreed to stop funding each other’s respective rebel group in 1999 under an agreement brokered by the Carter Center but

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<sup>544</sup> The LRA may also feel that the traditional districts of Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader cannot support them any longer because they have been fully looted.

<sup>545</sup> ICG 2004. ICG reports that “in doing this, Kony may have wanted to shift the dynamic of the insurgency away from Acholiland in order to give it a more national dimension.” (ICG 2004: 7)

<sup>546</sup> Refugee Law Project 2004: 35

the funding did not really stop on either side. In a unilateral move, President Bashir announced his intent to cease funding the LRA in August of 2001. In January 2002 the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) meeting was held in Khartoum. President Museveni made the offer to cease his country's funding of the SPLA. These presidential declarations led to more formalized agreements by both sides concerning the conflicts.

John Young notes four reasons for why Sudan and Uganda have improved their relations.<sup>547</sup> Sudan accepted that its attempt to expand Islam failed and therefore was looking to improve relations. Museveni felt increased pressure to defeat the LRA. The defeat of the LRA seemed possible with Uganda's withdrawal from Congo. Finally, the LRA was officially cast as a terrorist organization by the US and this frightened Sudan to break its ties. We can update this reasoning to include the peace deal between Sudan and the SPLA which has meant that there is no longer a need for backing.

The degree to which funding ended then is debatable, but there was surely some lowering by each side. The withdrawal of support from the LRA was supposed to be total. President Bashir announced a total withdrawal of support in 2002 and that "[w]e have no access and control over Joseph Kony... We are proceeding towards a new era based on the fact that Sudan is not supporting any opposition group in the region."<sup>548</sup> There have, however, been reports that the Sudanese government gave the LRA 'one last' (official) shipment of weapons.<sup>549</sup> This was reportedly a large shipment, meant to supply the LRA until it, assumedly, could find another arms source. Beyond this, there are reports of members of the Sudanese army who are still supplying the LRA with weapons without direct orders from Khartoum, in order to

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<sup>547</sup> Young 2002

<sup>548</sup> IRIN 2002

<sup>549</sup> Noted in multiple interviews, Gulu, January 2005

relieve pressure of LRA attacks.<sup>550</sup> This support looks to be ending as well, however, as the LRA is attacking GoS villages and military installations, which reveals at least some enmity between the two sides.

Recently, the LRA has begun attacking civilians in southern Sudan. One such recent attack occurred near Juba, deep within southern Sudan. The LRA reportedly ambushed and attacked southern Sudanese civilians.<sup>551</sup> In turn, government of Sudan forces attacked the LRA. This apparently signals a definite end of support from Sudan and broadening the conflict, however, the organizational changes that might arise from such a broadening are unclear as of yet.

### *Recent Events*

In parallel to the end of the conflict in southern Sudan, over the last year there has been an on-again, off-again peace process in Uganda. It began in the autumn of 2004 when Museveni enacted a unilateral ceasefire in certain areas of northern Uganda. This was to allow LRA leaders to meet safely and discuss the possibility of laying down their arms. During this time, the Ugandan internal affairs minister, Ruhakana Rugunda, and Bigombe, who is regarded as one of the few people that Kony trusts, led a government peace delegation. Samuel Kolo, then the LRA's chief spokesperson, led the talks in person, while Otti also took part in the negotiations.

The process was hopeful. Reportedly, Kony, who has rarely communicated directly with the outside world, offered to meet with the local Acholi leaders. Simultaneously, President Museveni, who has said in the past that he would not negotiate with 'terrorists', suggested the possibility of meeting with Kony.

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<sup>550</sup> Interview, UN Access Advisor, Gulu, 14 January 2005. Confirmed in other interviews.

<sup>551</sup> IRIN 12 April 2005

The talks came to a head on December 31st, the day the ceasefire ended. The LRA had asked for more time to review the agreement provided by the government. However, President Museveni was unwilling to grant the extra time and renewed UPDF operations began promptly on New Year's Day.

Even with this setback, the peace process continued to move forward, though at a reduced pace. Bigombe and the negotiation team continued their contact with Kolo and Kony. In February, the government declared another 18-day cease-fire. Yet, it too ended without peace on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, and UPDF and LRA attacks began again soon afterwards. Since then there have been off and on negotiations.

However, these talks have been complicated by the indictment of the LRA's leadership by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in October 2005.<sup>552</sup> The ICC has officially called for the arrest and trial of the top five members of the LRA. With the possibility that the leadership may be tried and put in prison, something which they are certainly concerned with, it is not clear how the peace process will proceed.

In the summer of 2006, the LRA began another round of high-level peace talks with Uganda via the government of southern Sudan.<sup>553</sup> At the same time, the LRA has reportedly 'reorganiz[ed] its leadership and overall structure and adjust[ed] its tactics to offset the improved performance of the Ugandan military.'<sup>554</sup> In fact, the size of its units seems to be increasing from a traditional size of four to eight fighters to ten or even fifty.<sup>555</sup> Moreover, the LRA has moved many of its forces into the DRC, thereby spreading the conflict even further. The ultimate outcome of these changes in the LRA and the peace talks are still in question and in general, the situation continues to

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<sup>552</sup> BBC News 7 October 2005.

<sup>553</sup> IRIN 28 August 2006

<sup>554</sup> ICG 2005: 2

<sup>555</sup> Ibid.

be fluid. As such, this chapter will not address these latest changes and will instead focus on the LRA up until the spring of 2005.

## **THE LRA AS WARLORD ORGANIZATION**

The LRA is sometimes defined as an insurgency, in the sense that it exists to combat the Ugandan government and is therefore fighting a hierarchic war. In some ways its history points to this, forming as it did immediately after the take over of the Ugandan government by the NRM. Its rhetoric has at times seemed concerned with overthrowing the government and clearly it attacks the Ugandan government in any manner that it can.

But it is this confusion which is partly to blame for the consistent inability of many analysts to adequately explain or predict the relations of the LRA. The LRA is not an insurgency; in fact, the LRA is best analyzed as a warlord organization. In order to demonstrate this, it is necessary to make an internal analysis of the LRA using all of the concepts examined in Chapters 2 and 3. The LRA's political community, organizational structure, purpose, autonomy, and independence will all be examined. In the examination of the LRA's independence, particular attention will be paid to the LRA's relationship with Sudan.

### **Political Community**

The LRA is an enclosed political community. Those who are members, including commanders and their wives, are supported by its structure. Those outside of the organization are divided into three groups. Either they are abductees, who are second-class members of the group, given menial jobs and not trusted until proving their loyalty. Or they are the civilians who, though they may be treated like the enemy in

that they may be harmed or killed, are potential abductees. Or, finally, they are the enemy, which includes the UPDF and SPLA.

The exact nature of the LRA's political community is still poorly understood, but it is clearly wrapped up in the organization's cult-like religion. Frank Van Acker has provided one useful way to consider it. He described this inside outside barrier in terms of religion. In his discussion of the notion of religious terrorism and notes that:

[r]eligious terrorism, as opposed to secular terrorism motivated by political gains assumes a transcendental dimension. Religious terrorists are not fighting within the rules of society as they exist, but reject these rules. They regard violence not only as a necessary expedient for the attainment of their goals, which can be religious, racial or ethnic purification, but as divinely decreed, and hence morally justified, almost as a sacramental act. What the LRA, under the absolute control of Kony, has in common with the HSM, is that it sees itself as the righteous few, those who are at once the activists and the consultants of their movement. They are outsiders from what they see as a virtual world, and terror is a traumatic intervention of the 'real' into the 'virtual' world.<sup>556</sup>

For example, the inside-outside division is reflected in the spiritual practices of the LRA. For example, it has been noted that "after the initiation, the soldiers were forbidden to touch non-initiates or wash for three days."<sup>557</sup> It seems clear that there is some form of social-religious boundary formed by the LRA and this allows it to

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<sup>556</sup> Van Acker 2004: 349

<sup>557</sup> Luker moi 1990:49

separate itself from outside political communities, including the greater Acholi population of northern Uganda and southern Sudan.

The LRA's political community is an exclusive membership and initiation based one. It is not based on a contiguous territory, for the LRA moves around the rural areas of northern Uganda, southern Sudan, and the DRC on a regular basis. Nor is it based on ethnicity, since most Acholis are clearly outsiders. Initiation through quasi-religious ritual is necessary to become a member. More to the point, one must be "chosen" to become a member, as the LRA no longer accepts volunteers – instead abduction or birth to an LRA member are the routes to new membership.

Also, as noted in Chapter 2, once chosen, one is signaled as a permanent member of the LRA. The LRA forces abductees to murder members of their own family or village. This separates them from the Acholi community and makes them outcasts. Officers in the LRA then continually reinforce this alienation and threaten potential runaways that if they return to society they will be arrested or killed.

### ***Organizational Structure and Command***

The LRA political community is a praetorian organization. It is loosely modeled on a conventional military structure.<sup>558</sup> It is composed of four brigades - Control Alter (a.k.a. 'Trinkle') which includes the overall leadership, Sinia, Stockree, and Giiva.<sup>559</sup> Each brigade is estimated to have between 300 and 800 members and consists of three battalions. Battalions have their own commanders and are divided into sub-units of around 15 or 20, lead by field commanders. All life in the LRA is organized around this military structure, including for instance schooling and homemaking.

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<sup>558</sup> Note that the force structure, operations and equipment described here are all idealized forms. In practice, the LRA tends to be much more flexible, disorganized, and *ad hoc*.

<sup>559</sup> ICG 2004

Kony – the *warlord* – is generally considered to be mad and reputedly has spiritual powers. Beyond this, very little is known about him. The list of outsiders who have met directly with Kony over the last two decades can be counted on one hand. In general, he does not give interviews and does not record speeches.<sup>560</sup> Until recently, some even questioned whether Kony was still alive and if he was, whether he was the one who was really in charge of the LRA.

Nonetheless there seems to be no doubt that Kony has significant influence over the LRA. The spirits which he says he is possessed by form the ideological heart of the organization. Kony makes the final decisions on strategy and it is only Kony who can make final decisions on ceasefires and other diplomacy.

However, as the International Crisis Group notes, “[the LRA’s] implementation is very much the responsibility of those who came to the LRA from the UNLA and UPDA and who along with Kony make up the high command.”<sup>561</sup> Specifically, these men have included: ‘Brigadier’ Vincent Otti (LRA second-in-command), ‘Brigadier’ Okello Matata (third-in-command) and ‘Brigadier’ Tolbert Nyeko (army commander, reported killed in January 2004) as well as Kolo and Kenneth Banya (who opted for amnesty in 2004).

Below the leadership, field units tend to be the operational units of the LRA and these units also serve as the LRA’s major sub-organizational political units. Field commanders are likely to be abductees who have been with the LRA for a long time and have proven their loyalty.<sup>562</sup> Each unit also has a mid-level ‘religious officer’ who

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<sup>560</sup> The Referendum magazine, a southern Sudanese magazine based in Kenya, published an interview with Kony in 2004 reportedly given by one of Kony’s former bodyguards. However, the magazine did not publish the man’s name nor is there any other collaborating evidence. While it does provide an incredible insight into Kony if it is true, there is no conclusive evidence, as of right now, to believe it to be so. More recently, Kony gave a televised interview on Newsnight (28 June 2006)

<sup>561</sup> ICG 2004: 5

<sup>562</sup> For instance, to become a field commander one must be shot at least once.

is responsible for prayer, fasting, and other spiritual duties.<sup>563</sup> During attacks and raids the groups may further split into units of 2 or 3 for maximum dispersion. Together these units can recombine into larger and larger cells and so on up to the entire LRA political community.

As a whole, the organization consists of 500 to 1,000 “hardcore fighters,” i.e. adults, probably left over from the HSM and UPDA.<sup>564</sup> These men and women are junior commanders who also assumedly have an incentive to keep the organization afloat. This nucleus is unlikely to grow, as the LRA no longer takes volunteers.<sup>565</sup>

Outside of this core group that has volunteered for the LRA, there are the abductees and those born into the LRA. The number of abductees in the LRA fluctuates, it is commonly estimated that there are approximately 3,000 at any given time. The abductees are usually young men and women between the ages of 8 and 18, though children abducted at 5 or 6 are not uncommon. Both sexes are used as porters and soldiers. However, women usually become a ‘wife’ of one of the commanders at some point and then are no longer allowed to serve as soldiers. Finally, there are those who are born into the LRA and have now grown up into soldiers. It is unclear what these children’s roles are, but it is said that they are the most brutal, since they do not have any ethical grounding outside of the organization.<sup>566</sup>

The point of illustrating the make up of the LRA is that it demonstrates that there is in fact a hierarchical, structured organization. Kony commands this organization and his orders flow down through multiple levels of officers before reaching the abductees who make up the bulk of the army.

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<sup>563</sup> Interview with UN source, Gulu, 18 January 2005. Confirmed in other interviews.

<sup>564</sup> The exact number is unknown, this number was gleaned from various interviews and analyst estimations. Some estimates put the number as low as 200 and others upwards of 2,000.

<sup>565</sup> Reported ICG 2004, confirmed in various interviews, January 2005.

<sup>566</sup> Interview with UN Access Coordinator, Gulu, 14 January 2005

## Purpose

As noted in the historical overview, the LRA formed out of the UPDA and HSM movements, which were both rebellions against the NRM takeover. Although not explicitly documented, we can assume that the LRA was also initially concerned with bringing about political change in Uganda. Yet, since then, the LRA has changed its political goals over time, obfuscated those it has hinted at, and, in general, rarely communicated with the outside world whatsoever. There have been many points at which the LRA could have clearly professed a political goal, yet they have not.

However, we can at least assume that resistance to the NRM government and a generally negative impact on the government are motivations. For example, in 2004 the Kenya based Sudanese magazine *The Referendum* published an interview with Kony in which he said, "President Museveni cannot talk peace, he is a killer and he wanted to kill me by all means. I have asked the lords of the LRA to kill Museveni."<sup>567</sup> He also confirmed that the LRA "is fighting for the application of Ten Commandments of God and we are also fighting to liberate people living in occupied Northern Uganda."<sup>568</sup>

Nevertheless, these political motivations have tended to become less important over time. Jackson specifically addressed the question of whether or not the LRA was driven by grievances.<sup>569</sup> He noted that since at least the colonial period there has been an ongoing rivalry between the northern Acholi people and southern tribes, especially the Bugandans. However, he points out that the "clarity of grievance declined as the

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<sup>567</sup> Reported in BBC News 15 April 2004. Although the interview does give a rare glance into the organization, it should be taken with a grain of salt, as it was conducted by a former Kony body guard who has remained anonymous.

<sup>568</sup> The Monitor 15 April 2004

<sup>569</sup> Jackson 2002

conflict progressed.”<sup>570</sup> This is evident from the LRA’s increase in predation on the Acholi community since the mid-90s.

In general, the contemporary LRA lacks any obvious political motivations which we might use to explain the conflict. It has no realistic political demands which it communicates to the outside world. Its complete lack of indigenous support has meant that there is not even a dialogue upon which the LRA could build political goals. Although the LRA may continue to believe that it is providing a counterbalance to the Ugandan government, this does not seem to drive the conflict in any meaningful way, since there is no political ‘center of gravity’ which it defends.

Finally, as noted earlier, there is a relationship between an armed group’s structure and the goals it has as an organization. The LRA is not structured to carry out a definable political goal. For example, insurgencies will often have a relatively large portion of its organization devoted to political issues, education, and public relations. The LRA is not organized in such a way; rather it is organized simply to survive as an organization through continual warfare.<sup>571</sup>

### **Economic motivation**

Another possible explanation for the LRA’s continuation of the conflict is that it serves as a profit making enterprise for those involved. Certainly, the LRA’s primary source of supplies is through looting. Interviews with various aid workers, officials, and analysts in the northern Ugandan region point to this.<sup>572</sup> Trucks carrying valuable goods are regularly looted, especially for anything which can easily be sold in the

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<sup>570</sup> Ibid.: 47

<sup>571</sup> Vinci 2005

<sup>572</sup> Various interviews, Gulu, Kampala, January 2005.

trading centers, such as bicycle tires or farm tools.<sup>573</sup> Similarly, the LRA will loot villages, IDP camps, and, to a lesser extent, World Food Program (WFP) food aid.

However, the value of this looting economy is limited. Jackson finds that while there were economic repercussions from the LRA in the north, in general, economic factors have not dominated the conflict. He notes that

[l]ooting did, of course, take place and there were reports in the mid-1990s of shopkeepers in Gulu selling items taken in LRA ambushes but this has never amounted to more than petty theft or a small degree of black marketeering at best. In fact, both the HSM and the LRA have been remarkably lacking in any reference to personnel gain.<sup>574</sup>

This assessment is consistent with my own recent fieldwork.<sup>575</sup> The general consensus among informants was that the LRA only takes what is necessary for their survival, usually food and medicine.<sup>576</sup> On the contrary, its members are reported to be fairly frugal.

In general, there are no natural resources to fight over, with the possible exception of fertile land. Yet, the LRA does not hold territory in the traditional sense and therefore could not take advantage of natural resources even if they did exist. It does not even control borders – a racket that has been found to be lucrative for other African armed groups.<sup>577</sup> Thus, while there is some degree of regular looting, this does not adequately explain the LRA's immensely violent operations.

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<sup>573</sup> Interview, WFP head, Gulu, 19 January 2005.

<sup>574</sup> Jackson 2002: 47

<sup>575</sup> Gathered from various interviews in northern Uganda during January 2005.

<sup>576</sup> Interview with NGO Country Director, Gulu, January 13, 2005.

<sup>577</sup> Collier 2000

### *The LRA's Existential Motivations*

The motivations for the LRA's continuance of its war discussed so far have all been instrumental in nature. The conflict is seen as a means for bringing about political change or providing economic gain. Although these motivations have played a role in the past and may continue to have some effect on the conflict, they offer only a limited explanation for the continuance of the conflict. Rather, it is helpful to consider the existential motivations behind the conflict and, more generally, the perpetuation of the LRA as an organization. These existential motivations can be seen at each level of the LRA's organization.

The highest level commanders in the LRA fear for their safety if they surrender and therefore see the LRA as their only means of survival. There is a deep-rooted distrust for Museveni and his policies. This makes it difficult for the leadership to trust the Ugandan government enough to return to society for fear that they will be imprisoned or killed. This general fear is combined with more specific fears about revenge for past atrocities. For example, Otti's massacre of hundreds of civilians from his own village reportedly weighs heavily on his mind.<sup>578</sup> Moreover, now that the ICC threatens to arrest the uppermost rank of the LRA, there is even more fear of returning from the bush.

Secondly, the rebellion has become a vocation, even more than that – simply the basis of life, for many of the men who have been involved in it for 17 years. Kony and the other top-level commanders choose their wives.<sup>579</sup> These wives and the men's children stay with them in the bush. The families of commanders are provided for and abducted teachers educate the children. They also have access to food and other

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<sup>578</sup> Interview with member of peace negotiations team, Gulu, 14 January 2005.

<sup>579</sup> Of which Kony reportedly has between 30 and 100.

resources such as clothing that they would otherwise most likely not be able to obtain as poorly educated citizens in the impoverished north.<sup>580</sup> Additionally, the top-level commanders enjoy power which is unobtainable in normal society. Since it is highly unlikely that the LRA would be absorbed into the state military, as has occurred in peacemaking cases in the past in Uganda and elsewhere, there are no professional prospects for the career military men who make up the upper-echelons of the LRA. Thus, as Walter Ochora, Chairman of the Gulu Local District Council, who has met Kony, notes “Kony is not mad. He knows what he is doing, very well. For him this war has become a way of life...”<sup>581</sup>

The junior commanders have more mixed motives. Some really subscribe to “Kony’s spiritualist path to Acholi emancipation and might continue to fight for a similar cause even if the LRA were to be defeated.”<sup>582</sup> Others, and most likely the majority, simply feel that there is nothing better for them if they were to leave and return to the impoverished life within the IDP camps. Although most members of the LRA are abducted, there is anecdotal evidence that the mid-level commanders who either volunteered or moved up from the level of an abductee do find some benefit in membership.<sup>583</sup>

This turn to war as vocation has been noted in the context of other conflicts. Similar motivations were found in Liberia and Sierra Leone during their civil wars, where the ‘lumpen’ youth joined the military units for the excitement, money, and

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<sup>580</sup> The view that the LRA is thought of as a vocation conforms to recent analyses of the LRA’s demands in any negotiated peace. For instance, the International Crisis Group notes that it is necessary to “[put] on the table a comprehensive settlement that focuses on security and livelihood guarantees for both LRA commanders and rank and file.” (ICG 2005: 8) They refer to one person close to the peace process who underscores this recommendation, remarking that “[a]lmost everything boils down to these two things. Fear for their safety and their economic future are the two things wearing on the LRA.” (ICG 2005: 7)

<sup>581</sup> Interview with Walter Ochora, Chairman of Gulu local district council, Gulu, quoted in IRIN 2003.

<sup>582</sup> ICG 2004: 8

<sup>583</sup> Noted in interviews with local residents in Gulu, January 2005.

because they ‘had nothing better to do.’ Morten Boas summarizes the point well when he notes

...War becomes a trade... Youths join armed insurgencies by connecting themselves to respected and feared warlords the advantages of doing so include everything from loot, bribes and girlfriends (for the boys) to the acquisition of power for protection and revenge. Simply possessing a gun can transform a ‘nobody’ into a ‘somebody’. The practice of war has therefore broadened from a drama of social exclusion into a way of life and a mode of production.<sup>584</sup>

This is particularly the case for those born within the LRA. Officers in the LRA are provided with ‘wives’ and to these guerilla families, many children have been born.<sup>585</sup> These children have no connection with outside society and have grown up only knowing the religious and cultural institutions of the LRA. They can be seen as the heart of the LRA’s organization – a core constituency which truly does not consider itself a part of wider society. As such, they will seek to uphold it at any cost.

Although the LRA no longer accepts volunteers and torturous abduction is the only route to new membership, even these abductees may have an interest in the continuation of the organization. After abduction there is a process of initiation through traumatization, in which the children will be ordered to torture and kill fellow abductees, especially family members. A standard method is to put victims in the middle of a circle and have the rest beat them to death.<sup>586</sup> “This process is designed to depersonalize, terrorize, and dehumanize the abductees, alienating them from their

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<sup>584</sup> Boas 2004: 212

<sup>585</sup> The exact number of such children is unknown.

<sup>586</sup> Human Rights Watch 1997

families, from their friends and from one another, by means of violence.”<sup>587</sup> In doing this, the LRA effectively creates an incentive for abductees to not return to society for fear of reprisals for killing family members and fellow villagers – thereby leaving the impression that it is only with the LRA that they can find protection and a life.

While the LRA may have some instrumental goals, it is the existential motivations which are more helpful in explaining why the LRA continues its conflict. The organization quite literally provides for the survival of its members. It also provides for secondary existential needs, such as vocation and a sense of belonging. For some it is nothing more than a survival strategy – “survival by the gun”<sup>588</sup> – while for others, those who live comfortably in the bush, it is “rebellion as career.”<sup>589</sup> Together these factors cause individuals to work for the perpetuation of the organization and it is herein that we can see the root of the continuation of the conflict. As Doom and Vlassenroot note, “it seems that Kony is no longer interested in winning a conflict, but that violence has become both a tool and an end in itself.”<sup>590</sup> Thus, in a sense, the purpose of the LRA at this point is only to continue to survive.

The LRA should not be seen as a traditional insurgent organization with set political goals that define its existence. While it may have such instrumental goals, it is a more existential organization. The organization quite literally provides for the survival of its members. It also provides for secondary existential needs, such as vocation and a sense of belonging. Finally, it provides a political community for those considered its members. Together these factors cause individuals to work for the perpetuation of the organization and thereby allow the organization to remain autonomous and independent.

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<sup>587</sup> Amnesty International 1999: 56

<sup>588</sup> ICG interview with Ugandan official, Kampala, December 2003, reported in ICG 2004

<sup>589</sup> Doom and Vlassenroot 1999: 36

<sup>590</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

## **Autonomy**

The LRA is clearly autonomous. It has been combating the Ugandan government continuously since 1986. During this time the organization has continued to carry out its own foreign and internal policy. The Ugandan government has tried to defeat the LRA militarily, but has had little success. At various times, including recently, the government has attempted negotiations as a means to end the conflict. These negotiations have failed because the LRA has simply continued to prefer autonomous existence than any possible peace offer. Though some members of the organization have taken up amnesty, the organization as a whole, led by Kony, has continued to prefer surviving as a separate entity.

The LRA is able to maintain its autonomy because of its military ability. The root of the LRA's military ability is in its highly survivable units, which allow it to combat the much larger UPDF. Specifically, the LRA units are all self-sufficient and can survive in the bush for long periods of time.<sup>591</sup> Wives and porters are brought along. The units loot their food and all other material needs.<sup>592</sup> At the same time, these units are extremely light, fast, and well coordinated. They can reportedly make it from Lira to Gulu, a distance of around fifty miles through heavy bush, in around five hours on foot.<sup>593</sup> If at any time the unit feels that abducted porters or wives are slowing it down, it will kill or release them. The units are closely coordinated by radio, or more commonly, cellular phones.<sup>594</sup> Even the smallest units are reported to

<sup>591</sup> Normally, they do not carry weapons heavier than RPGs and bring only the food necessary for survival. If the unit loots a lot of food or other goods, it will temporarily abduct adults or children to carry it.

<sup>592</sup> They are reportedly particularly fond of sugar cane which is high in energy and easily transportable. (Interview with local resident, Gulu, 18 January 2005)

<sup>593</sup> Interview with UN Access Advisor, Gulu, 14 January 2005. An incredible speed, and possibly exaggerated, but it is illustrative.

<sup>594</sup> The LRA reportedly stole radios from the Catholic Church, which still is able to track their transmissions (though they are encoded). Often the units will have to walk to known areas of the bush

have some sort of communication device.<sup>595</sup> Furthermore, this allows them to rejoin other units in order to head back to Sudan or combine into a larger attack force. In general, field commanders seem to be given a high degree of control over their unit's activities and the self-sustainable nature of the units means that they can carry out the field commander's instructions indefinitely. Finally, the LRA's light, small, fast tactics do not require heavy weapons. Units generally have RPGs for ambushes as well as assault rifles, usually the ubiquitous AK-47s. However, the LRA is notoriously frugal with its rifles and only select members of the unit, usually just commanders, have one.<sup>596</sup> The rest of the soldiers use machetes, axes, or even just a club.

The LRA's tactics make it extremely good at asymmetric (i.e. warlord) warfare and thereby allow it to survive in long-term war with the much more powerful Ugandan state. LRA combat units can outfox the much larger UPDF units and they have even learned how to avoid UPDF helicopter gunships. The ability of the LRA to be so diffuse makes it almost impossible to pin down in a decisive battle, but its ability to move quickly and form into larger units spontaneously allows it to fight offensively when need be. Finally, as noted earlier, its strategic use of fear has also acted as a force multiplier against the UPDF.<sup>597</sup> In this way, the LRA has been able to survive for two decades against the odds of forces 20 to 30 times its size – and in doing so, retain its autonomy.

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where they can receive cell phone service and occasionally must send someone to buy phone credit from a town. There are numerous stories of dirty, ragged men walking out of the bush and buying a million shillings worth of phone credit. (Gathered from various interviews conducted in Gulu and surrounding IDP camps, January 2005)

<sup>595</sup> Though they are not in constant communication, as illustrated by left over attacks after Kony called cease fires, the units are able to coordinate their movements enough to assure that there is little unwarranted overlap.

<sup>596</sup> For instance, the penalty for escape is execution, but the penalty for escape with a rifle is execution and the execution of one's family.

<sup>597</sup> Vinci 2005

## **Independence - Motivation**

The major form of motivation for the LRA is coercion. The group is notorious for its reliance on abducted soldiers, sex slaves, and laborers to fill its ranks. Human Rights Watch reports that more than 20,000 children have been abducted since 1990.<sup>598</sup> The level of abductions fluctuates but tend to go up during increased military operations by the UPDF in order to replenish numbers and during large scale looting, such as after a WFP food drop.<sup>599</sup> The horrible future that awaits those who have been abducted, in some ways worse than death, makes it a powerful threat.

The typical abduction is extremely brutal. Intimidation and beatings are followed by being forced to carry loads long distances. A process of initiation through traumatization then takes place, in which the children will be ordered to torture and kill fellow abductees. As noted earlier, a standard method is to put victims in the middle of a circle and have the rest beat them to death. Then there is 'registration,' in which each receives fifty or more lashes. This will be followed by months of hard labor, regular beatings, food deprivation, and summary execution for disobeying orders or attempting to escape. "This process is designed to depersonalize, terrorize, and dehumanize the abductees, alienating them from their families, from their friends and from one another, by means of violence."<sup>600</sup> Thereby, abduction also serves as the initiation process for becoming a member of the LRA political community.

The LRA then builds up the abductees until they are ready to become full members of the organization. The abductees may be kept as porters for up to months before being trusted enough to be an LRA soldier. This test of loyalty is more important than skill development within the organization. There is little information on set training regimes in the LRA. It last around 3 weeks. The training itself is

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<sup>598</sup> HRW 2004: 20

<sup>599</sup> Amnesty International 1999

<sup>600</sup> Ibid.: 56

probably not very complicated as most combat only involves hand weapons such as machetes or small arms for the majority of soldiers.

Voluntary members likely remain with the organization because of the previously discussed reasons, including survival and vocation. Retention, for those who are not voluntary members, is based on trauma. In particular, a side effect of the abduction process is that it guarantees retention to a degree by instilling fear of recapture into the abductees.

### **Independence - Logistics**

In order to sustain itself, the LRA has developed a procurement process, or economic system. This is not to say that the purpose of the LRA is for economic gain. As alluded to earlier, there is relatively little looting by the LRA, and what is looted tends to be the basics for survival. There is no looting of natural resource, as occurs in many other African wars, since there are no easily transposable natural resources. And in general the conflict does not make sense from an economic perspective. However, clearly, the LRA must obtain certain goods in order to remain self-sustaining.

The LRA's primary source of supplies is through looting. Interviews with various aid workers, officials, and analysts in the northern Ugandan region point to this.<sup>601</sup> For instance, the LRA will raid villages or IDP camps for medicine. The most important source of food is looting harvested crops. The LRA will often let civilians raise their crops without incident and then one day they will abduct people, usually the farmers themselves, to harvest the crops and carry them back to the LRA's camps. Combined with this looting, the members of the LRA are known for their wilderness

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<sup>601</sup> Various interviews, Gulu, Kampala, January 2005

survival skills. In total, the LRA is self-sufficient when it comes to the basics of survival.

Abduction is not just limited to being a means of gaining farm labor or soldiers. The LRA will abduct any skilled professionals it needs, whether they are doctors to treat the wounded or teachers to instruct the children of officers. In this way, the LRA can survive as a political community without the need to actually generate its own professional base. However, everything that the LRA needs cannot necessarily be gained from looting. In particular, weapons must be provided by outside actors.

### ***Weapons Procurement***

The other major means for the LRA to gain goods has been through external support. Sudan was the primary supplier of the LRA between the mid-nineties and the last couple of years, when its support officially ended.

It is not clear where the LRA obtained weapons before Sudan began supplying them. The Great Lakes, East African, and Horn of Africa regions have experienced multiple wars in the past decades and in general small arms tend to be relatively common. It is likely that the LRA was able to tap into the various networks of small arms dealing. At the same time they were also likely supplied by other armed groups like the UPDA and by taking them from government forces.

Sudan began supplying the LRA with weapons in 1994. These weapons include the standard small arms that the LRA uses, such as rifles and RPGs, as well as heavier weapons such as anti-tank landmines. Recently, the Sudanese government stopped supplying the LRA with weapons (at least to an extent) and it is not clear where future procurements will come from.

Yet, the LRA is not as dependent on Sudan for weapons as it may seem. It was able to obtain weapons before 1994 and still has weapons now that Sudanese support has stopped. In other words, it has – as a state would – diversified its sources.

The LRA is known to have stockpiled weapons that it received from Sudan over the years and these weapons have allowed it to continue fighting. As one NGO representative noted, “[t]hey were putting arms in the Imatong Hills well before Operation Iron Fist. They know how to plan for a rainy day. Besides, their supply needs are very low. They only fire something like a hundred bullets a day.”<sup>602</sup> The sites where they are buried are usually places that are difficult to remember so that even if soldiers are captured or escape, they are unable to remember where the weapons are.<sup>603</sup> This stockpiling ensures that the LRA can continue waging war for long periods even after losing access to external arms sources.

At the same time, there are others in the Acholi Diaspora community who facilitate resources being funneled to the LRA. They may or may not support the LRA methods, but they seem to believe that armed struggle is a justifiable means for overthrowing the NRM government. Acholi politicians can also capitalize on the weakening of the government.<sup>604</sup>

Compared with many other warlord organizations, the LRA is extremely frugal. The most important items are the weapons and ammunition used to maintain its independence through military force. Following closely behind that are food, water, and medicine necessary to sustain the lives of those in the LRA. Finally, the LRA obtains minimal economic surplus for stockpiling and the luxury of commanders. In all cases, the LRA is able to obtain what it needs with minimum dependence on any supplier that might limit its decision-making ability.

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<sup>602</sup> Interview with NGO representative, reported by Refugee Law Project 2004: 19

<sup>603</sup> Refugee Law Project 2004: 22

<sup>604</sup> Interview, WFP head, Gulu, 19 January 2005

In particular, while it has received external funding from Sudan, and for this it has performed services, these funds are not necessary for it to survive and thus they are not truly dependent. As one UN source put it, “they are not the type that would allow themselves to be controlled by Sudan.”<sup>605</sup> The LRA has continued to exist, and to function at similar levels, since the loss of Sudanese support and this demonstrates that the organization is independent and should not be considered a proxy.

### **Conclusions about the LRA**

Putting these pieces together, we can conclude that the LRA is a warlord organization. The LRA has an enclosed political community and the command, control, and communication system in place to effectively direct it, making it a cohesive, unitary actor. As an organization, survival is its primary motivation, as opposed to economic or other factors. And, it is this motivation which drives the organization as opposed to that derived from another state. It has used its military power to maintain its autonomy. It has the structural ability to continually recruit new personnel and motivate them to continue fighting, even if in the most despicable way imaginable. Finally, it has developed the logistical ability to perpetuate the organization indefinitely without losing too much decision-making authority. In total, we should conclude that the LRA is a warlord organization and therefore it is now possible to examine the LRA’s international relations using a Neorealist approach.

### **LRA RELATIONS WITH UGANDA, SUDAN, AND THE SPLM/A**

The LRA has several relevant international relations. However, these relations are difficult to characterize. For example, it is usually held that the LRA is fighting an

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<sup>605</sup> Interview, UN Access Advisor, Gulu, 21 January 2005

insurgent rebellion against Uganda and therefore its relations with the state are best characterized as domestic or internal in nature – in the terms of this study, a hierarchic war. However, the LRA leadership and the bulk of the organization at any given time exist inside of Sudan or the DRC, making its relations with Uganda parallel international relations. Yet, the LRA is in many ways a Ugandan organization. Most of its personnel are originally from Uganda. More importantly, its *raison d'etre* – beyond survival – has been based on Ugandan politics.

The situation is complicated by Sudan's changing relationship with the LRA. While Sudan was an unabashed ally of the LRA, the LRA's basing in government-controlled areas of southern Sudan could probably best be characterized as an invited military. A parallel might be the nature of the United State's basing relationship with Germany or South Korea. Since the 'dealignment' of the two actors, however, it is a harder to characterize relationship. The LRA is not officially invited to stay inside of Sudan and the LRA's new found penchant for attacking GoS controlled villages leads to the postulation that they are not informally accepted either.

The LRA's relationship with the SPLM/A is even more difficult to characterize. The SPLM/A clearly has had effective territorial control over large areas of southern Sudan, even before the peace process. In some ways its borders are less porous than those that define the boundary between the Ugandan and Sudanese state. For the LRA, movement into SPLM/A 'liberated' areas is just as illegal and fraught with danger as uninvited movement into a state. Moreover, now that the SPLM/A is technically part of the greater government of a united Sudan, it is very difficult to conceptualize the relationship between the LRA, its traditional ally the GoS, and its traditional enemy, the SPLM/A.

## **Neorealist Approach**

Neorealism is a valuable approach for describing and explaining the LRA's confusing international relationships with the SPLM/A, Sudan, and Uganda. The previous section made the argument that the LRA is a warlord and is therefore autonomous from Uganda and independent from Sudan. The implication of this is that its relations may be considered in terms of the Neorealist approach. As such, the LRA is best treated as a sovereign unit, like Sudan or Uganda. In this way, the LRA's relationships with the Ugandan and Sudanese states, as well as the SPLM/A are all best characterized as international in nature.

The LRA certainly treats its relations with the two states and armed group as international. It perceives itself as a separate political community that is not hierarchically controlled by either Sudan or Uganda, and certainly not by the SPLM/A. As such, its actions are guided by the logic of self help.

The other actors also treat the LRA as an autonomous actor. Uganda treats the LRA as a rival international actor by default, even though they may not do so officially, since it is forced to relate with the LRA as a rival military, not criminal organization. While the LRA was aligned with Sudan, Sudan treated the organization as an equal ally. Although it is impossible to know the exact nature of the relationship between the two actors, it can be safely assumed that it was a two-way alliance, not dependent to patron relationship. Finally, the SPLM/A also treats the LRA as a rival.

Based on this view of the LRA and its relations, we can make some hypotheses about what its relations should be like. Rather than placing the balance of power between Uganda and Sudan, it is more explanatory to place it between Sudan, Uganda, the LRA, and SPLM/A. The difference in the two views is that the LRA and

SPLM/A are considered to be primary, rather than proxy, actors in the balance of power. Additionally, we should hypothesize that:

- The LRA is fighting an anarchic war with Uganda and the SPLM/A
- The LRA was in an alliance with Sudan
- This alliance was based on interests of security by both actors
- Once the alliance ended, the LRA and Sudan should become mutual threats
- The LRA, SPLM/A, Sudan, and Uganda balance of power fluctuates depending on security calculations by each actor

The following section will demonstrate that the above hypotheses are valid. It will illustrate the LRA's relationships with each actor – Uganda, Sudan, and the SPLM/A. For each relationship it will be demonstrated that the relationships can be described in terms of Neorealist patterned relationships and that the theory is able to explain these relationships as well as provide potential predictions.

### **Relations between the LRA and Uganda – Anarchic War**

There are some reasons to treat the relationship between the LRA and Uganda as one of insurgent to counterinsurgent.<sup>606</sup> Throughout its history, the LRA has acted aggressively in attacking government forces and civilians in northern Uganda. In reply the NRA and UPDF have used three counterinsurgent strategies over three eras of the conflict.

- They have used search and destroy methods to find, attack, and kill LRA members.

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<sup>606</sup> There are some qualifications to make, in particular, there are rumors of profiteering by high ranking UPDF officers abroad in the north. In particular, there is talk of officers making land purchases and otherwise gaining from the insecurity in the region. There is undoubtedly significant corruption involved in the conflict, but the lack of hard evidence makes these issues difficult to theorize about and, moreover, they do not seem to have consequences for the broader counterinsurgent strategies.

- They have adopted a ‘protected hamlet’ strategy, in which they have relocated northern Uganda residents into IDP camps and set up defensive perimeters around these camps.
- The third method has involved all out attacks inside of Sudan against LRA base camps using helicopters and large units (i.e., the Iron First operations).

However, rather than seeing the relationship between the LRA and Uganda as insurgency to counterinsurgency, we should see the relationship as one of anarchic war. There are several reasons to characterize the relationship in this way.

The LRA is not fighting a war for control of the Ugandan state. Even though at times its rhetoric has pointed to a war for control of the state, its actions have pointed in other directions. It has little if any political ideology or plan for a Ugandan state which it would rule, other than an oft-repeated call for ‘governance of Uganda by the 10 Commandments’. The LRA does not attempt to mobilize support amongst any group within Uganda. Nor is it systematically organized in such a way as to create a change in the state or to come to control the state apparatus. The LRA has no such organization and should not be considered an insurgency, nor therefore, should it be held that it is fighting an insurgency. Rather, the war in northern Uganda should be seen as an effort by the LRA to perpetuate itself, i.e. to survive. In other words, it is fighting an anarchic war.

Accordingly, the Ugandan government does not treat the LRA as a policing matter carried out by a hierarchical authority over a sub-state organization. Initially, many of its counterinsurgency strategies were attempting to do just that, but their failure is illustrative of the point. The government has been forced to accept that it must treat the LRA as an enemy to be fought in a war. It uses the full force of is

military to attack the organization, just as it might against another state.<sup>607</sup> It also negotiates with the LRA in the peace process as it might with a state with which it hopes to end a war.

The difference is subtle, but important because it answers some of our questions about the conflict. For example, this characterization of the conflict as anarchic war helps to explain why the LRA has fought such a ‘pointless’ and ‘protracted’ war – two oft-noted depictions of the conflict. It is true that there is no point in the conflict in the sense that the LRA does not have a specific goal that can be obtained in the manner of hierarchic, civil wars. Instead, the goal of the LRA is to survive and this means continuing the conflict indefinitely since it needs the conflict in order to maintain itself as an organization, and assumedly, the Ugandan government will never accept the existence of an autonomous actor inside its defined borders. This then also helps to explain the repeated failure of any attempts at peace negotiations. The LRA will never allow peace because peace would mean an end to its autonomy and the existence of itself as a separate entity. Similarly, the Ugandan state will never allow the existence of an autonomous entity in its territory.

### **Relations between the LRA and Sudan – From Alliance to Security Dilemma**

The LRA’s relationship with Sudan is often characterized as one of a dependent armed group as the proxy or extension of the Sudanese state’s foreign policy, however, the relationship is better characterized as an alliance. Again, there are several reasons to see the relationship in this light.

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<sup>607</sup> There are some doubts about the Ugandan government’s true desire to vanquish the LRA. However, there is no clear proof of a conspiracy by the government to keep the LRA around for political reasons. Indeed, its actions point the other way and the government has shifted significant military power toward defeating the enemy. The recent alliance with the SPLA and GoS, in particular, points to a true desire to defeat the LRA militarily.

The LRA is an independent organization. This was demonstrated in the above section based on mostly on the logic that the LRA survived as an organization before Sudanese funding and in general has the ability to remain autonomous without the backing of the GoS. The point is backed up by the fact that the LRA has continued to survive after losing Sudanese support.

Furthermore, if the LRA truly were an extension of Sudan we would expect it to more exactly reflect Sudanese foreign policy, in the same way that we expect in other wings of the Sudanese government, such as its army. This is not the case. The implication of this is that the GoS would not have the necessary leverage to control the LRA as a proxy and that therefore the relationship would be characterized as one of negotiations between actors.

The relationship between the LRA and the GoS should be characterized as an alliance. Two separate actors with their own interests formed a relationship which is mutually beneficial. The alliance increased the security of Sudan by providing it with an ally to fight its enemies – Uganda and the SPLM/A. The alliance also brought benefit to the LRA through the increase of its power relative to the Ugandan state, since it was able to have more weapons and equipment with which to fight, as well as basing rights.

The alliance was made regardless of any identity issues – it was purely based on security motives. As noted, the LRA is a Christian/Animist organization and the GoS is Islamic Fundamentalist. These identities are at odds with each other and from an identity perspective there would be no reason for them to join. In particular, animism is wholly unacceptable to Islamic thought. Instead, it has been the pursuit of security that has led to the alliance. The LRA aligned with Sudan when peace talks failed with Uganda and Kony realized that he would need to continue the conflict with

a backer. In parallel, the Sudanese state needed an ally to balance Uganda's support of the SPLM/A.

Finally, now that the alliance has been broken, it makes sense for both actors to revert to a relationship of mutual threat, prone to the security dilemma. Sudan made peace with the SPLM/A for wider reasons having to do with regional and global level politics. This has left no need for it to continue an alliance with the LRA, for there is no longer a security threat. Since there are two security obsessed actors in close proximity, we should expect a security dilemma to form between the two because they may each be a potential security threat.

This did in fact occur and the LRA has begun fighting GoS troops and raiding GoS villages. It was even reported that Kony threatened to attack the Sudanese government if he felt threatened. In an interview he remarked, "I want to tell the Sudanese lords to keep away from us because if they attack us as they have done this month [March], we will fight and set their villages on fire."<sup>608</sup>

Moreover, with this threat coming from the LRA, it seems that the GoS has begun actively combating it. Sudan and Uganda signed an agreement to allow the Ugandan military to track the LRA anywhere in Sudan and that Sudan would join forces with the SPLA and Ugandan military to hunt the LRA.<sup>609</sup> This turn of events – i.e. to an anarchic war – was to be expected when a security dilemma between the LRA and Sudan formed.

### **Relations between the LRA and SPLM/A – Anarchic War**

The LRA is clearly fighting an anarchic war with the SPLM/A. The SPLM/A like the LRA was up until recently a non-state armed group and therefore it is obvious that

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<sup>608</sup> Reported in IRIN 20 April 2004

<sup>609</sup> IRIN 11 October 2005

there was no state apparatus which the LRA could hope to control through conflict with the SPLM/A.

It might be held that the LRA is fighting its war with the SPLM/A in order to appease the Sudanese government, in exchange for support of the LRA's war against Uganda. This is true to an extent. Initially it seems that the LRA began fighting the SPLM/A as an exchange in its alliance with Sudan. The GoS used the LRA as another militia front to target the SPLM/A. These attacks were sometimes made jointly with the Sudanese military. Interviews with returned LRA soldiers give an idea of the sort of war going on between the LRA and SPLA. One returnee describes the situation:

After the training, we were given guns and right away went to fight the SPLA. We fought many times against the SPLA, especially laying ambushes for the SPLA. We would wait along the road for the SPLA to collect the food which was brought from Uganda and then attack them. Kony told us that the Ugandan government is assisting the SPLA. We often fought the SPLA and UPDF together.<sup>610</sup>

Human Rights Watch interviews point to at least one such battle in 1995 in a camp called Biroka in southern Sudan and another in 1997 south of Juba.<sup>611</sup> This would have been relatively soon after the GoS had begun funding the LRA and long before any reconciliation process between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the conflict between the SPLM/A and LRA has continued on even past the peace agreement between the SPLA and GoS. Very soon after making peace

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<sup>610</sup> HRW 1998b

<sup>611</sup> Ibid.

with the Sudanese government, John Garang declared war on the LRA.<sup>612</sup> Whether or not it is agreed upon that the LRA and SPLM/A were fighting as proxies of Uganda or Sudan, it is clear that now that both groups are no longer backed by either country, the war is one between the two groups on their own.

The LRA's relationship with the SPLM/A makes sense from the perspective of a survival orientated organization in a self help environment. Just as it is in the LRA's interests to defend itself from state aggression, it is also in its interests to defend itself against a non-state aggressor like the SPLM/A. The SPLM/A liberated areas border the areas of southern Sudan which are inhabited by the LRA. Two militarized actors in such close proximity were bound to have conflict because of the security dilemma, in that even if neither one actively preyed on the other, their defensive maneuvering would still create an image of threat for each other and lead to conflict. Thus, while even though the historical record is too spotty and biased to say which group was the initial aggressor, we would still predict that there would be conflict.

### **SPLM/A Relations with Sudan – From Hierarchic to Anarchic War**

Another relationship in the security complex involving the LRA, Sudan, and Uganda is that between the SPLM/A and Sudan. While war between Sudan and the SPLM/A at first seemed to be a hierarchic one, in its later stages, including the period in which the LRA has been active, it can be characterized as anarchic war. (See Appendix B for more on the nature of the SPLM/A, the civil war, and its relationship with Sudan.)

The war between the SPLM/A and GoS began as a civil war and was best analyzed as such. The SPLM/A was an insurgency using guerilla tactics to combat the

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<sup>612</sup>New Vision 2005

government of Sudan and 'liberate' areas of the south. However, as the war went on, the SPLM/A coalesced into a definable entity which had long-term authority over fairly well defined areas and strong authority over a well defined population. Briefly, this occurred as the SPLM/A came to not only control, but also effectively govern, large swaths of territory and people. Indeed, so ingrained was this control, the United Nations developed a relationship with the SPLM/A, known as Operations Lifeline Sudan (OLS), which effectively treated the SPLM/A as a recognized international actor. In other words, it gained empirical sovereignty and other actors confessed this sovereignty, at least tacitly.

By the late nineteen-eighties, the conflict between the GoS and SPLM/A is better described as anarchic war, not civil war. The war was no longer an insurgency of an armed group to government controlled territory. Rather, it was of one military based in well-defined territory battling another army which had its own well defined area. The rhetorical purpose of the war remained that of changing a state apparatus, but it had continued on for so long and each side had developed into such cohesive units, that the dynamic of the war was more like an anarchic war. For example, the purpose of many of the later battles was to control small tracks of land in order to bolster negotiation efforts. This is the sort of fighting that states take part in. It was no longer a question of "settling questions of authority and right" but rather of "determine[ing] the allocation of gains and losses among contenders..."<sup>613</sup>

The war fits well into a systemic, Neorealist account. The sovereign state of Sudan had an interest in maintaining its borders against the incursions of the armed group, the SPLM/A; the same could be said for the SPLM/A, it looked to maintain its borders against a sovereign Sudan. The two actors were alone in their fighting of the

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<sup>613</sup> Waltz 1979: 112

war, as it was a self help system. Both sides enlisted whatever means to power that they could, including aligning with other regional actors.

Now that there is 'peace' in Sudan, the situation seems to have changed, though by how much is open to debate. For example, it still seems as if the two sides have their own independent foreign policies, with for instance, each side dealing separately with Uganda over the matter of the LRA. One way to characterize the situation is that the SPLM/A and Sudan have aligned. Having decided that continued fighting was in neither of their interests, the two units have ended their conflict and combined their resources. The alliance is formal, but not as it may seem, a simple formation into a state, since it is possible for the south to secede from the north. Although this characterization of the current relationship between the SPLM/A and GoS is not fully explanatory, it is suitable for the discussion in question – that being the impact on the relationship with the LRA.

### **Relationship between the SPLM/A and Uganda - Alliance**

Although it is generally agreed that there was some sort of relationship, the extent of the relationship between Uganda and the SPLM/A is not entirely known. Estimates range from moral support to joint military operations.

Museveni claimed that his support for the SPLM/A had been “moral support” and humanitarian assistance. After the agreements between Sudan and Uganda in 2002, the Ugandan foreign minister, James Mugame, admitted support for the SPLM/A, but mitigated it by noting that the support was not military in nature. His tone in the interview gives an idea of how Uganda hoped to contextualize the issue. For instance, Mugame notes: “[t]here is a lot of confusion about our support for SPLA. For us, it is a question of obligation to provide humanitarian assistance in

southern Sudan. We can't stop humanitarian assistance to the people suffering there..."<sup>614</sup> In a related interview, Museveni gave his reasons for his support for the SPLA, which he had previously admitted as being moral in nature: "We have been assisting the SPLA for self-defence from the Kony rebels Lord's Resistance Army which had backing from Sudan..."<sup>615</sup>

Part of this moral support was about a preference for a Christian and African regime in southern Sudan and this goes beyond any personal connection Museveni may have had with Garang.<sup>616</sup> Young notes that "Ugandan regimes of various political complexions have always shown sympathy for southern Sudanese dissidents and preferred to have their northern Sudanese border under the control of Christians and Africans rather than Moslems and Arabs."<sup>617</sup> We might describe this as soft balancing. However, the alliance between Uganda and the southern Sudanese is probably much more real and formal than just moral support.

A likely level of support is described by Young. "[The Ugandan government] permitted [the SPLA] to recruit from refugee camps in [Uganda], gave logistical support to SPLA operations in southern Sudan, and not infrequently crossed the border in support of the southern rebels."<sup>618</sup> This is a higher level of support that, unlike humanitarian aid, directly translates to military support. This more intensive level of support seems to cross the line from soft to hard balancing.

Some analysts have described joint SPLA-UPDF missions in Sudan – a very high level of alliance, which is clearly hard balancing. For instance, in 1995, the Sudanese government accused Uganda of backing the SPLA in attacks in southern

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<sup>614</sup> Interview with James Mugame. Reported in IRIN 2002

<sup>615</sup> Kenya Times, reported in IRIN 2002

<sup>616</sup> It is generally accepted that Garang and Museveni had a personal relationship. For example, the two were schoolmates at Dar es Salaam University in Tanzania.

<sup>617</sup> Young 2002: 5

<sup>618</sup> Ibid.: 6

Sudan. Radio Omdurman claimed that Uganda had stationed troops, tanks and artillery support inside of Sudan and had attacked Sudanese armed forces in the Parajok and Magawe areas which border Uganda.<sup>619</sup> While it is debatable whether the Uganda military was really involved in the attacks, it is not out of the question to think that it did.

It is clear that there is some level of alliance, but equally as clearly, this was not a dependent–patron relationship. Uganda never fully funded the SPLM/A or even substantially funded it, but rather it provided some moral and military support. This hardly seems enough to form a controlling bond. Aligning suited both of the actors' interests. The SPLM/A needed further allies against Sudan; additionally, spreading out its alliances also allowed the SPLM/A to broaden its support base, which further assured its independence from any one backer. The alliance also met Uganda's interests, which demanded that it to not only balance the power of Sudan, but also combat the LRA inside of Sudan<sup>620</sup>

Since the institution of the peace agreement between the GoS and SPLM/A, the SPLM/A leadership has made its alliance with Uganda public. This has become possible because the SPLM/A has become an official part of the Sudanese state and, (first Garang, but since his death now) Salva Kiir Mayardit is Vice President of the country. This alliance is more open and typical of interstate alliances. However, it is not yet clear whether the alliance is between Uganda and Sudan as a whole or just southern Sudan. In general, it is not clear how the southern and northern governments in Sudan will approach foreign policy in practice.

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<sup>619</sup> O'Ballance 2000

<sup>620</sup> Uganda even attempted to make its alliance with the SPLA official. In 1997, President Museveni went so far as to ask the Organization of African Unity to declare the war a colonial conflict, which would have allowed African states to overtly supply the SPLA with material support (O'Ballance 2000).

## **Relationship between Sudan and Uganda – Balance of Power**

The relationship between Sudan and Uganda can be characterized as an oscillating history of animosity. Direct war has never broken out between the two countries. The two countries have ample reason to feel threatened by each other. They share not only a land border, but also a civilizational border.<sup>621</sup> The Sudanese state sees itself as not so much part of Africa but of the extended Middle East and has been traditionally a Muslim and Arab dominated one. The Ugandan state is firmly centered in Africa and has always been dominated by Africans and, since colonization, Christians.<sup>622</sup> The two countries share a long land border and this land border, which for each is also the location each country's most pressing internal war.<sup>623</sup> There are also potential resource issues such as the fact that the Nile River, upon which Sudan is highly dependent, begins in Uganda and is therefore, in a sense, controlled by the Ugandan state. Finally, the two states are highly militarized from their extensive internal wars and this serves as an ever-present threat in security reckoning.

The relationship between Sudan and Uganda could be characterized as a classic balance of power. Each state perceives the other as a threat, whether or not its actions are for defensive purposes. In order to counter this threat, the two states have turned to the use of alliances with armed groups. Sudan has used the LRA as an ally – or proxy – against Uganda.<sup>624</sup> Uganda has used the SPLA as an ally – or proxy –

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<sup>621</sup> This civilizational border may really exist within the Sudanese state, specifically in the separation of the 'Arab' north from the 'African' south.

<sup>622</sup> Though, Idi Amin did take up Muslim beliefs in order to please his Libyan patron.

<sup>623</sup> There is an ethnic group, the Acholi people, who inhabit this land border and are present in both states – an issue that has led to conflict in other states.

<sup>624</sup> IRIN 2002. However, the backing of the LRA is not the only intrusion into Ugandan affairs which the GoS has made. Bashir allegedly also supported another anti-Museveni insurgency, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) – this contributed to Museveni's logic of support to the SPLA (Noted by Kiyaga-Nsubuga 2004). This group operated out of bases in the DRC and this contributed to the Ugandan government's decision to send troops to the DRC in 1997. The foreign policy consequences of this invasion were great, including a falling out with Uganda's ally Rwanda.

against the Sudanese state. In this way, the regional system has become balanced – with the implicit assumption that the balance of power is primarily focused on the two states. However, this view does not adequately explain the dynamics of the relationships.

### **The LRA and the Balance of Power**

Overall, it is better to treat the relationships between Sudan and the LRA and Uganda and the SPLM/A as alliances between autonomous actors. Beyond reflecting reality better, the alliance perspective also theoretically explains the situation better and provides a basis for predicting dynamic changes in the relationship.

The armed groups are effectively like units in the sense that they are autonomous, independent actors and empirically sovereign to the degree necessary to presume comparisons. It has been made clear that the LRA is not a proxy and that it has its own security goals. The point is made concerning the SPLA as well.<sup>625</sup> Treating the armed groups as actors in the relationship better reflects reality. Although, the actors clearly differ in capabilities, with the LRA being extremely weak relative to a state like Uganda, these differences in capabilities are expected and are what allow for system level modeling and prediction of the relations between the actors.

By treating the relationships between the different autonomous actors as alliances, from a system level the relationships appear to be a balance of power between four actors, not two. Broadly speaking, the LRA and Sudan formed an

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<sup>625</sup> The case for the autonomy and independence of the SPLA is made in Appendix B.

alliance to balance the threats from Uganda and the SPLA who had formed an alliance for similar reasons.<sup>626</sup>

Each of the units has acted within its own interests and this has created a negative feedback loop which kept the system in balance. Uganda and Sudan had a relationship which was marked by oscillating animosity. Uganda unbalanced the state to state relationship by aligning itself with the SPLM/A which was Sudan's chief rival and primary threat to its national security. In order to rebalance this equation the GoS aligned with the LRA, the Ugandan government's chief rival and primary national security threat.<sup>627</sup> In fact, Bashir referred to his aligned with the LRA in exactly these terms of balancing. For instance, in an interview he remarked:

On the previous relationship, we used to support the LRA. We used to provide them with logistics, ammunition and everything. That was a response to support Uganda used to give to the SPLA. But now the situation is different because both parties are committed to peace.<sup>628</sup>

Similarly, from the LRA's point of view, there was an overwhelming threat from Uganda and an alliance with Sudan was the only way to obtain the power required to confront the threat. From the perspective of the SPLM/A, an alliance with the like-minded Ugandan state also made sense.

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<sup>626</sup> This balance of power fits within a larger, regional security complex including neighboring states. For example, Ethiopia has switched sides between the SPLA and Sudan depending on its own internal political situation over the years. Kenya has broadly speaking attempted to take a neutral course. Egypt, which has concerns with Uganda about the Nile River but also about Sudan, has taken a complicated and balanced approach. Finally, Libya has taken an imperial view of the entire situation. While examining this regional dynamic is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is important to note that it exists and that the SPLA and LRA can be seen within the context of these much larger alliances and relations.

<sup>627</sup> Although it is not clear when the Ugandan government aligned with the SPLA; nevertheless, if it did so after Sudan aligned with the LRA, the point would still hold.

<sup>628</sup> People's Daily 2001

It was only when it became clear that the SPLM/A was no longer a serious national security threat to Sudan, that Sudan was able to truly withdraw its funding of the LRA. This is a natural extension of the security calculation. Without a threat there is no need for an alliance.

Yet, at the same time, the LRA continued to remain a threat to the SPLM/A and Uganda and therefore these actors quickly aligned against it. Furthermore, as soon as it became clear that the LRA was a threat to the GoS, it too joined the anti-LRA alliance.

This model of the situation is predictive. Now that the LRA is threatened by Sudan, Uganda, and the SPLM/A, we can predict that it will seek to create another strategic alliance. There are various regional strategic and political issues over which it could align with neighboring actors. For example, there are tensions between Egypt and Uganda over the Nile River. The LRA would serve as a suitable balance against any threats from Uganda. Also, now that the LRA has lost support from Sudan, it may be a suitable candidate for an alliance with Ethiopia. While these predictions may or may not prove true, the Neorealist approach has demonstrated its ability to provide some basis for prediction. Whereas, seeing the LRA as a proxy leaves no basis for prediction.

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter has provided a further demonstration of the validity and usefulness of using a Neorealist approach to detail the international relations of warlords. The previous case study, which focused on Somali warlords, found that these warlords do have relations along the lines of the predefined patterns predicted by Neorealism, including balancing power through alignment and fighting anarchic war with

international actors. This chapter attempted a more demanding test in that it focused on an actor which was not as clearly a warlord – the LRA – and which had more complex international relations.

The LRA is generally not considered a warlord, but it was found to be one based on the definition provided in Chapter 2. The LRA has an enclosed political community, the organization is autonomous and independent from the state, and it is motivated by survival. These are the features of a warlord organization and exclude classification as another type of armed group. In this way, this chapter has shed some light on an armed group which has been very difficult to analyze in the past.

The Neorealist approach detailed in this study has been able to effectively explain the LRA's international relations. It described these relations in regard to all the relevant actors – Sudan, Uganda, and the SPLM/A. The LRA is fighting anarchic wars with Uganda and the SPLM/A. It was aligned with Sudan, but it is no longer. In general these patterned relations produced a compelling model of the balance of power that the LRA fits into.

Most importantly, the Neorealist approach has given reasons for why the LRA has acted as it has, such as in continuing to fight the SPLM/A and in targeting GoS forces. In deducing this logic it becomes possible to make predictions about the future, such as that the LRA will look for another alliance in order to reestablish a balance of power. With prediction comes the possibility of preemptive response. In this case, it is advisable that Sudan and Uganda attempt to deny the LRA alliances with regional governments.

This case study has added to the overall argument of this thesis. The purpose of this study has been to answer the question of how warlords relate with states and other international actors. The theoretical answer to this question has been that

warlords relate in terms of the balance of power. In order to validate this answer, it was necessary to assess the predicted relations in terms of empirically observed warlord international relations. This case study has done just that and has found that the LRA has acted in the patterned relations that were expected. In other words, we have been able to say how the LRA relates with other international actors. Furthermore, based on the Neorealist account we can make conclusions about how the LRA will relate in the future.

This case study was a more demanding test than the last, as is required by the epistemological schema developed in Chapter 1, and the explanation of the warlord's international relations was found to still be valid. Having passed these tests and demonstrated the Neorealist approach's answer to the question of how warlords relate with international actors twice, we should conclude that in general warlords relate in essentially the same way as states – in terms of balance of power.

## CHAPTER 7– CONCLUSION

This study has sought to answer the question of how warlords relate with states and other international actors. The approach in answering this question was to begin by clearly conceptualizing warlords in order to not just provide a descriptive definition of warlord, but to appreciate how and why warlords act as they do. It was found that warlords are non-state actors that use military power and economic exploitation to maintain fiefdoms which are autonomous and independent from the state and society. It was also found that this definition could be operationalized in order to differentiate seemingly alike actors from warlords.

Having defined the subject of this study, the next step was to provide a means to describe warlord relations. A Neorealist theoretical approach was found to be the best way to describe and explain the international relations of warlords. However, in order to use a Neorealist approach some major conceptual hurdles had to be overcome because the theory of Neorealism was not developed to analyze NSAs.

These conceptual hurdles were overcome through an analysis of what the theory of Neorealism demands and how warlords function. It was found that warlords were the right type of group to be analyzed – they are cohesive, functionally undifferentiated, like units that are empirically sovereign. It was also found that warlord action is motivated in the right way – rather than being concerned with greed or grievance, warlords are driven by power and survival. Lastly, the nature of anarchic systems was explored in some detail and in certain kinds of states where warlords operate – specifically fragmented and collapsed states – the system is anarchic and openly connected with the international anarchic system. Thus it was demonstrated

that warlords do meet the minimal criteria of being an actor which we can use a Neorealist approach to analyze.

The next step was to describe exactly how Neorealism theorizes that they should act. Therefore, the theory of Neorealism was examined in detail. It was demonstrated how warlords could fit into a Neorealist theoretical framework based on a point by point comparison. For each point, it was demonstrated that it made sense to apply it to warlords, given the conceptualization of warlords developed in Chapters 2 and 3.

Doing this made it possible to answer the thesis question of this study. It was found that warlords relate with states and other international actors in essentially the same way as states – they seek to ensure their survival through the balance of power. Specifically, they relate in terms of internal power cultivation, alliances, and war. As with states, this formula explains how warlords will relate in different circumstances. A more detailed answer was provided through an examination of the types of relationships which warlords would form and when. These relationships patterns included internal power cultivation, alliances, arms race, security dilemma, and anarchic war.

Having given the theoretical answer to the question, it was necessary to illustrate some specific examples of warlord international relations and thereby to test if the theoretical answer was valid. This was accomplished in two case studies.

The first case study examined Somali warlords. It began by noting that the Somali state is collapsed and, at least between the end of the civil war and beginning of TNG, was an open anarchic system. The case study then moved on to compare and contrast the different types of armed groups in Somalia and thereby explained which groups were warlords and why. This served as a means of validating the efficacy of

the definition and conceptualization of warlord presented in Chapters 2 and 3. The case study then examined the international relations of two specific warlord organizations, the SNA led by Aidid in relation to the United Nations forces, and the SNF led by Haji in relation to Ethiopia. It was found that in fact the warlords did relate with these international actors as hypothesized: they followed the patterned relationships of war, the security dilemma, and alliances based on the need to ensure their survival. Thus, the case study validated the use of a Neorealist approach to describe the international relations of warlords and the posited answer to the thesis question that warlords relate with states and other international actors in such a way as to ensure their survival through the balance of power.

In the second case study, the LRA's relations with Uganda, Sudan, and the SPLM/A were examined. This case study provided a more demanding test of the theory, in that the LRA is less clearly a warlord, its relations are murkier, and it existed in a fragmented, not collapsed state. It was found that the LRA is better considered as a warlord organization and that it does relate as warlords should based on a Neorealist account. The Neorealist approach was able to adequately describe, explain, and predict the relations of the LRA by treating it as a separate actor in a balance of power relationship with Sudan, Uganda, and the SPLM/A. Thus, this case study further validated the usefulness of the theory of Neorealism to analyze the international relations of warlords and thereby to answer the thesis question.

The conclusion is that the hypothesis put forward in the introduction to this study has been found to be correct. Warlords relate with states and associated international actors in essentially the same way as states – they seek to ensure their survival through the balance of power. Specifically, they relate in terms of internal power cultivation, alliances, and war. The validity of this answer has been

demonstrated theoretically and then assessed through comparison with empirical observations. While, like other social science theoretical accounts, it is necessary to continue applying this theory and finding evidence for its validity, there is enough evidence to conclude that the question has been answered. It is now possible to explore some of the implications of this study.

### **Warlords and International Relations**

This study has brought out some specific insights into how warlords relate with other international actors. It is now possible to explain some features of their international relations which might have seemed incomprehensible before. Many of these interesting findings have been referred to throughout the text. For instance, it is possible to understand why warlords fight such prolonged, seemingly pointless wars and, moreover, what it would take to stop them from fighting such wars – i.e. the guarantee of their survival. It has become possible to explain when and why warlords will make or break alliances with states or other international actors. For example, there is a clear explanation for why the SNF formed an alliance with Ethiopia and then why it broke that alliance. It can also be understood when and why warlords will pursue other goals, such as taking over a state. For example, Taylor would only move to run for President when his security was guaranteed.

In general, warlord relations should no longer be seen in a one-sided view which assumes that they are based either on greed, grievance, or simply on an innate barbaric tendency. Their relations can be seen in the correct perspective of instrumentally ensuring survival and this perspective is a better fit to empirical reality. It explains why warlords so easily drop the façade of loyalty to a clan or ethnic group as well as why they would continue fighting a prolonged war, even when they were

losing money in doing so. Their barbarism is also put in a rational framework explaining why it occurs, rather than assuming that they are simply 'crazy' or 'evil'.

Thus we have been afforded a more rational analysis of warlords.

Moreover, instead of being left to other fields for analysis or borrowing other research methods, such as the comparative approach, warlords can now be theorized about in the same way that states can. Just as analysts have gone about applying Waltz's theory to individual states, regions, and the system as a whole, analysts can now apply a Neorealist approach to individual warlords and to regions where warlords exist such as the Horn of Africa. Thus, this study has been able to bring about, as Rich called for, the "widen[ing of] the compass and range of IR as a discipline"<sup>629</sup> in order to take into account warlordism.<sup>630</sup>

This allows warlords to be directly compared with states and the two types of actors' relations can be modeled together and this brings theoretical as well as practical benefits. The payoff is that relations between the United States and Dostum, for example, can make sense in relation to the United States' other commitments in the Central Asian region. For instance, a change in relationship between Dostum and Uzbekistan can be modeled in relation to the US and Uzbekistan's evolving alliance. Accordingly, it will be possible to model how changes in one relationship will lead to changes in the other. These relationships could potentially then be incorporated into models of the US's global balance of power.

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<sup>629</sup> Rich 1999: xvi

<sup>630</sup> It may also be possible to apply Realist, rather than Neorealist concepts to the analysis of warlords at a unit level. While this thesis has focused on Neorealism, it also demonstrated the possibility of applying Realism to warlords in Chapter 3, since Realism's requirements are sub-requirements of those for Neorealism. Thus, many of the insights which Realism brings to the analysis of state actors may also be used to analyze warlords. For instance, it may be a useful theory for understanding the psychology of warlord leadership.

## **Armed Groups and International Relations**

This study began with the call for IR as a discipline to address armed groups in its analysis of international politics. NSAs have become increasingly important in the world and have become the purview of IR to some degree, however, the NSAs which are typically covered are MNCs, IGOs, and NGOs. Armed groups are not generally entered into theoretical accounts of international politics. Terrorism is an exception to this rule, as it is increasingly becoming a major issue of analysis.<sup>631</sup> Yet, armed groups of all types are increasingly taking part in international politics and therefore must be effectively analyzed if we are to explain international politics.

The analysis that followed laid the foundation for this pursuit. Warlords are only one type of armed group, but their analysis using Neorealist theory, and therefore their potential integration into Neorealist models of interstate relations, demonstrates that armed groups can be theorized about in the same way that states are. The next step is to ask to what extent the findings of this study apply to other types of armed groups.

The degree to which the argument pursued in this study applies to other armed groups is correlated to the degree to which these groups resemble warlords in certain key features. In particular, it depends on the same argument made in Chapter 3 about the conditions which armed groups must meet in order to be considered by Neorealism. Specifically, whether the armed group is the right kind of group and has the right kind of motivation.

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<sup>631</sup> See for instance Layne 2004.

### ***Group Condition***

The group condition demanded that actors be functionally undifferentiated like units, which have empirical sovereignty. As was detailed in Chapters 2 and 3, this meant meeting several requirements including:

- the presence of an enclosed political community,
- the ability to govern and command this community of individuals and thereby make it act as a single, cohesive unit,
- the ability to perpetuate the organization while retaining independence,
- and finally a de facto autonomy and independence from the state.

In total, the actor must be a sovereign armed group.

There are other SAGs. This study has noted some of them. De facto states meet the requirements set out above. They are even more state-like than warlords. They have a civil political community, which is separate from other political communities and is often held together by nationalist ties, like states are. This political community is governed by a complex administration. In general, de facto states will have some form of military which is effectively commanded and can keep the de facto state autonomous from other states. In short, the de facto state is empirically sovereign, though it is not juridically sovereign for the same reasons noted in Chapter 3. An example of a de facto state is Somaliland.

Clans and their militias, in collapsed or fragmented states, may also be SAGs. The clan forms a political community, which in a failed state may coalesce into a cohesive unit that develops the ability to maintain autonomy. This generally means developing a militia made up of clan members, which can defend it from aggressors. The faction militias discussed in Chapter 5 are an example. It is important to note that these militias should not be taken as groups which are separate from the civilian clan

since either one without the other would not fulfill the requirements for analysis. Instead the clan and the militia together form the relevant group.

In some instances, traditional insurgencies can become SAGs. This occurs once the insurgency is able to maintain complete autonomy from the state and develops the ability to maintain independence from other actors, such as foreign governments which may support it. The insurgency will resemble the warlord in many ways except that the nature of the insurgency's political community will differ from the warlord in that it will incorporate the civilian population and rely on them to some extent – as discussed in Chapter 2. This makes it more difficult to definitively say whether an insurgency is truly autonomous from the state. However, in extreme cases, such as the SPLM/A which clearly controlled large tracts of southern Sudan and governed the people who lived there for a long period of time, it is obvious that the group was sovereign and autonomous from the state.

### ***Survival Motivation Condition***

The second condition is that groups are motivated by survival. This is a more subtle requirement to reach because while some of the actors noted above may be immediately motivated by survival, as they are in a conflict with the state or because they exist in a collapsed state, they may not be striving for these goals in the long-term.

De facto states meet this condition. They have autonomy and are clearly trying to maintain it at any cost. A cursory examination of the international relations of Somaliland points to such similarities. Somaliland has acted to maximize its security and retain its autonomy through various formal and informal diplomatic relations with states as well as its physical defense in response to the threat posed by Puntland.

Secessionist guerillas are clearly motivated by survival and autonomy from the state. They are armed groups which are trying to attain and maintain autonomy from the state and in that sense, continue to survive at any cost. An example of such a guerilla organization was the EPLF. Though of course, it is not possible to conclusively say whether an insurgent organization is a secessionist group, since this would fall into Morgenthau's fallacy of motivation – i.e. an insurgent might say that he wishes to secede, but in fact be concerned with other issues, such as overthrowing the state or acting as a warlord. Nevertheless, in the idealized form, these insurgencies are motivated in the right way.

Both secessionist guerillas and de facto states meet the conditions for analysis using a Neorealist approach. They are SNSAs and are motivated by survival; therefore they should act in a manner consistent with the patterned relationships detailed in Chapter 4. In fact, this does seem to occur. For example, the EPLF acted in a manner consistent with predictions. It fought an anarchic war with Ethiopia and did eventually achieve juridical sovereignty.

Other SAGs are not necessarily motivated in the same manner. For example, it is clear that Somali clans and their militias have been focused on protecting the clan's interests and on maintaining their autonomy from other militia-based aggressors. However, these clans tend to want the return of the state. This is unlike warlords or states which will tend to deliberately attempt to undermine any restrictions on their sovereignty. When a credible state alternative does arise, such as the TNG, we should expect that the clans will attempt to integrate themselves into a new state, whereas we

can expect that warlords will not. This has actually been the case, to some degree, with clans and warlords in Somalia.<sup>632</sup>

A similar difference arises for traditional insurgent movements. On a day to day basis, guerillas are concerned with survival and the maintenance of autonomy. However, insurgents are by definition fighting civil wars – they are fighting over the control of the government. Therefore, in a sense they are not attempting to be separate from the state. If given the chance they would allow their organization to be destroyed if it meant the ability to take over the state. Their primary motivation is thus not necessarily the maximization of security, but rather the overthrow of the state.

Therefore, strictly speaking, in the cases of clans and traditional guerillas, the Neorealist account would not completely apply. The Neorealist approach demands that actors be primarily motivated by the pursuit of security. If they are not, it means that, for instance, an actor would be best analyzed as fighting a hierarchic not anarchic war. It would also make predictions of an actor's motivation to form an alliance less exact.

However, the lines are blurrier than this. Some insurgencies, clans, and similar groups turn to anarchic war when the conflict continues on indefinitely. This may be a general tendency in warfare. For example, Martin Van Creveld argues that:

...over time any war will tend to turn into a struggle for existence, provided only hostilities are sufficiently intensive and casualties sufficiently heavy. This is because, the longer and more costly the conflict, the more likely it is that the reasons for which it was originally launched will be forgotten. The greater the sacrifices made,

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<sup>632</sup> This may be partly attributable to the fact that clans are more likely to be recognized as legitimate actors by the international community. Because of this it is more likely that they will be able to take part in external peace processes or external governments like the TNG.

the more pressing the need to justify them in the eyes of the world as well as one's own. Given that existence is the supreme goal, the result is that, on the declaratory level and often in practice as well, any prolonged war between equally matched opponents that does not peter out is likely to turn into a life-and-death struggle.<sup>633</sup>

This is particularly the case where the group comes to control territory for long periods of time. A similar argument was made concerning the SPLA in Chapter 6. Over its two decade-long war with the government of Sudan it seemed to move from being an organization concerned with overthrowing the state to one more concerned with survival in a manner consistent with state motivation.

While these groups may, given the opportunity, allow themselves to become part of state, it is possible to treat them as being motivated by survival. This is a similar argument as that made concerning anarchy in Chapter 3. Actors may perceive the future state as one in which they will be part of a state and give up their autonomy, but on a day to day basis, they can be predicted to act *as if* survival as an autonomous organization was the primary goal. In essence, the hierarchic ambitions of a clan or insurgency can be seen as a supplemental goal of the organization, to be met in situations where survival is already assured. Therefore, the theory may still be helpful in the analysis of these actors.

The extent to which this survival motivation would apply needs to be tested in the same way as the Neorealist approach was tested in Chapters 5 and 6. *Prima facie* it seems to apply, since for instance, it seems that the SPLM/A made decisions based on security maximization when it aligned with the Ugandan government. We can take

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<sup>633</sup> Van Creveld 1991:145

the Neorealist predictions to be true as long as they are qualified to apply to those instances where the armed group is not specifically in a position where it must choose between survival and hierarchic goals.

### ***Other Armed Groups***

It is also possible to extrapolate that a Neorealist approach may be applicable to the analysis of other types of armed groups, which do not meet the requirements of a Neorealist approach, by qualifying its predictions. These qualifications would have to be made based on an individual analysis of the armed group and its motivations. The degree to which the armed group differed from the conditions of a Neorealist approach would then have to be taken into account. A prediction of the armed group's actions based on a Neorealist account would be made and then it could be modified based on the particular qualifications of the group.

Take for instance an armed group like RENAMO. RENAMO meets the group requirements of a Neorealist approach. It functioned as a cohesive unit and was autonomous from Mozambique. However, it was not an independent group in that it was heavily funded and controlled by outside actors, i.e. South Africa.<sup>634</sup> In an analysis of RENAMO it would first be necessary to calculate the degree to which it was controlled by South Africa and how this might bias its decisions *ceteris paribus*. For example, we might conclude that RENAMO would make decisions on a day to day basis as to how to strategically relate with country A, but in regards to country B, it would defer to South Africa. Then in an analysis it would be possible to say that RENAMO would effectively act to increase its security in some cases, but not in others.

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<sup>634</sup> Vines 1995

Thus, while such a theoretical approach to other types of armed groups might not be a universal solution, it could provide some insight into the organization.<sup>635</sup> Again, the only real way to tell the degree to which the theory would be helpful, and therefore if it were more helpful than other theoretical approaches such as a greed/grievance approach, would be to perform case studies comparing hypotheses to observations. Thus, a next step in this line of research could be to apply the Neorealist approach developed in this study to specific armed groups in order to calculate the degree to which it was able to explain these group's international relations.

Broadly speaking, the implication is that it may be possible to integrate armed groups other than warlords into models of international politics in a rigorous manner. Just as it was shown that warlord international relations could be modeled with a Neorealist approach, the possibility for modeling other types of armed groups has been opened up. The implication is that there is the potential for a new field of research in IR.

### ***Adding Armed Groups to the Research Agenda***

The study of the international relations of armed groups should become a legitimate, separate area of study in IR. It could be similar in nature to the study of international institutions, which is a sub-field of IR that has its own assumptions and theories, but which can be integrated into the broader theories of IR. Unlike in its current residence in the field of Security or Development Studies, the field of 'Armed Group International Relations' would be much broader than just security issues. It would

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<sup>635</sup> Such a qualified approach is not necessarily at odds with similar needs in a detailed analysis of states. For instance, in the situation of hegemony as described by Michael Doyle (1986), i.e. the foreign though not domestic policy of a state is effectively controlled by another state, the state's foreign policy would be dictated by another state to some degree. This would leave us with a view of the state that is modified from traditional Neorealist account. Like the proxy example above, the state would be able to perform some survival functions, such as internal military build-up, but not others, such as alliance formation.

also include diplomacy, such as a study of the OLS agreement, as well as more theoretical questions about the nature of sovereignty and anarchy.

This thesis has laid some of the groundwork for the inclusion of the international relations of armed groups into the discipline of IR. It has, for instance, provided a bridge between the greed and grievance literature and the IR literature through illustrating how instrumentalist thinking can be a link. It has also provided a similar link between the failed states literature and systemic theories, specifically Neorealism. By delving deeper into these literatures the links can be strengthened and thereby a holistic account of armed groups and interstate relations may be possible.

There are, however, many obstacles to such integration, including that armed groups differ from each other in so many respects, that armed groups seem to be motivated by very different factors than IR normally assumes, and that IR is state-centric. This study has addressed some of these issues, such as the relationship of armed groups and sovereignty and of how hierarchy and anarchy work in failed states. In this way some of the ground work has been laid for a broader integration of armed groups into IR. At the same time a test case of incorporating one particular type of armed group – warlords – has proven that it is possible to make this sort of integration. With further study, we can come to a more exact understanding of armed groups and how they relate with states and other international actors, and in this way we will come to a more effective understanding of international politics in general.

### **International Relations Theory**

There are numerous implications for IR theory which arise from the analysis presented in this study. It is worth addressing a couple of the issues which are comparatively important for the study of armed groups. In particular, the analysis

presented in Chapters 3 and 4 uncovered some apparent contradictions in IR theory that need to be addressed more fully. These are that the notion of sovereignty in relation to NSAs should be seen in a different light and that it is also now possible to make a more subtle distinction between anarchy and hierarchy.

### *Sovereignty*

Chapter 3 developed a bifurcated understanding of sovereignty. Sovereignty was shown to consist of empirical sovereignty, which described an actor being de facto the highest authority over territory or a population. Juridical sovereignty referred to the admission by the international community that an actor is sovereign as well as the granting of the rights and responsibilities which go along with such an admission.

It was found that this distinction had significant theoretical implications for analysis. Specifically, it provided an avenue for making sense of what seemed to be a contradiction: warlords are not considered to be sovereign actors, but there is also no sovereign with authority over them, yet the assumption is that some group or another is sovereign over all territory and people. Indeed, the distinction afforded an accurate reflection of reality. This study has not been the first to make such an admission; Bull and Jackson have also done so.<sup>636</sup>

Jackson offered a similar framework of sovereignty in which states may have positive sovereignty and negative sovereignty.<sup>637</sup> Negative sovereignty is international empowerment, and is exactly what this study has called juridical sovereignty.<sup>638</sup> Positive sovereignty refers to a state having the “capabilities which enable governments to be their own masters: it is a substantive rather than a formal

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<sup>636</sup> Bull 1977, Jackson 1993

<sup>637</sup> Jackson 1993

<sup>638</sup> Based, in fact, on Jackson.

condition.<sup>639</sup> The concept also refers to a government's ability to provide political goods to citizens within its territory.

The notion of empirical sovereignty and positive sovereignty are not exactly the same, however. Positive sovereignty refers to a broader concept than empirical sovereignty. It involves not only authority, but also legitimacy, in that it also includes a state's ability to meet other, more normative, requirements of statehood – such as the provision of public goods to its citizens or the representation of a people.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study lend credence to the idea of dividing sovereignty into different forms. At its most basic, one of these aspects refers to the empirical reality of an actor's authority and what it does with that de facto reality. The other aspect refers to the perceived aspects of an actor, including its inclusion in extra-organizational groups, legal treaties, and other agreements between actors. These idealized aspects exist only as a product of formal relations between actors, whereas the empirical aspects exist as empirical realities.

This study, Jackson's, and Bull's demonstrate that such a bifurcated framework reflects reality and is a useful distinction to make. In this study, the reality of the distinction was noted in regard to non-state actors. First it was demonstrated theoretically in Chapter 3 and then illustrated empirically in regard to Somali warlords in Chapter 5. This study found such a framework valuable in that it allowed for a theoretical understanding of NSAs. Jackson was able to use it to theorize about the nature of states, specifically to what he called quasi states. Together this leads to the conclusion that the distinction is real, is worth making, and should be used by theorists in analyses of the international system.

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<sup>639</sup> Jackson 1993: 29

A next step is to further explore the nature of this bifurcated view of sovereignty in relation to NSAs. For instance, to what degree does empirical sovereignty allow non-state actors to gain some aspects of juridical sovereignty? An example is the OLS agreement between the SPLM/A, Sudan, and the United Nations.<sup>640</sup> The SPLM/A clearly had empirical sovereignty and this made humanitarian aid missions impossible without their support. In order to rectify this, the UN set up the OLS agreement between themselves and the SPLM/A, as a way to effectively regulate and organize humanitarian aid missions. However, the OLS agreement was very close to being a formal, international treaty. It was clearly written as such, in that it resembles similar treaties with states. It was not enforceable under international law, but it certainly had (and continues to have) the standing of formal law in the view of the actors. While OLS is not a conclusive proof of juridical sovereignty it is a mid-way point and one which was brought on by the SPLM/A's empirical sovereignty.

Similar questions can be asked in relation to peace processes and other negotiations. For example, during the years immediately after the collapsed of the Somali state, warlords were able to obtain seats in negotiations and various peace processes or state building attempts based on their demonstration of power. If the warlord could demonstrate that he had some constituency, or otherwise was a major authority in Somalia, then he would be invited. In other words, it was necessary to demonstrate some level of empirical sovereignty. Such questions regularly come up in decisions of which armed groups to negotiate with during or after internal conflicts. The invitations are in a sense an admission of recognition and possibly even

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<sup>640</sup> See Appendix C for a copy of the OLS Ground rules Agreement, which details the 'contractual obligations' between the two organizations.

legitimacy. Again, this is a step toward juridical sovereignty and the processes behind it and its implications need to be explored.

### *Anarchy-Hierarchy*

This study also has brought out implications for the nature of the distinction between anarchy and hierarchy. This distinction is fundamental to the study of international relations. One of the insights of this study is that the anarchy-hierarchy distinction does not necessarily take hold at the boundary of the internationally enfranchised state. Empirically sovereign units can exist within the state, making the seemingly hierarchic interior of a state in effect an anarchic system.<sup>641</sup>

As noted in Chapter 3, Waltz also wrestled with the need to differentiate anarchy and hierarchy in states with warlords. This study presents one possible solution to the problem of dividing all states, even failed ones, into anarchic or hierarchic system. It has done this through expanding the anarchic system to include those portions of the state not under the control of the state apparatus. This is a relevant defense of the value of Neorealism.

An argument against the value of Neorealism as a theory is that it does not apply to the more complicated post-Cold War, globalized international system, in particular in Africa. Philip Cerny has used the model of 'neomedievalism' to describe overlapping sovereignties in the current globalized system.<sup>642</sup> Duffield has applied Cerny's theory to the analysis of Africa and failed states more generally.<sup>643</sup> The implication of these arguments is that the conventional breakdown of anarchy and

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<sup>641</sup> This is a separate critique of the nature of anarchy from that made by Constructivists like Wendt. Wendt (1999) theorizes about the construction of anarchy. This study does not question the reality of anarchy, nor its nature. Indeed, the anarchy which is argued for is one which is the same as that in the international system and which is identical in nature to that described by Waltz.

<sup>642</sup> Cerny 1998, Cerny develops his theory from Bull's earlier work. (Bull 1977)

<sup>643</sup> Duffield 2001

hierarchy are not possible in the present international system, and therefore that Neorealism cannot be used to effectively analyze large parts of the international system.<sup>644</sup>

This study has presented an alternate approach to analyzing the current international system. Rather than relying on a system of overlapping sovereignties, this study has presented a picture of more subtly defined sovereignties, but no less rigid ones. States are bounded by borders which are defined within and by the international community. In most cases, empirical sovereignty overlaps with these defined borders. However, this is not the case for warlords (and some other armed groups) – they force us to consider empirical rather than juridical borders as the defining feature of sovereignty. In effect therefore, this study has rearranged the anarchy/hierarchy balance along empirical, rather than juridical lines. In this way, it has been possible to continue to assume the strong break between hierarchic and anarchic systems, and thereby to incorporate a seemingly blurry system into the more mechanistic – and one might argue more rigorous – view of systemic theories like Neorealism.

A further application of the thinking behind this study would be to apply the breakdown of anarchy and hierarchy based on empirical rather than juridical lines to other states and to the international system as a whole. These could be states which do not necessarily contain warlords. Then it would be possible to determine if a better analysis, using Neorealism, can be found in this way. One of the first steps in doing this would be to see to what degree other types of armed groups are sovereign – an issue discussed above.

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<sup>644</sup> Earlier, Ruggie made a more general argument that the medieval system had a different balance of anarchy and hierarchy than is present now and that Neorealism was not equipped to understand such a system. (Ruggie 1986)

## **Policy Implications**

Even more important than these theoretical concerns, the international relations of armed groups, and especially warlords, are important to understand for practical policy reasons. By making the right decisions about how to interact with a warlord or other armed group states, IGOs, or NGOs can help to ease or completely relieve the threat of conflict. In order to make the right decision about how to act, however, they must know how warlords or other armed groups are motivated and will act. Miscalculations about how a warlord will respond to changes in the environment can lead to incorrect and potentially dangerous responses.

This study has been an attempt to understand how warlords relate and to provide a basis for predicting their actions and this may be directly helpful to policy makers. For example, it has been argued that rather than basing predictions of warlord action on the assumption that they will seek to obtain material wealth, it is better to base our assumptions on their motivation to ensure their own survival and increase their power in general. This helps to understand, for example, why warlords do not simply quit their conflict once they reach a climax and begin losing money through continued conflict. It helps to understand why Savimbi continued fighting on long after losing the election in Angola and had lost his international backers. Similarly, it helps us to understand why the LRA may never end its war and why it preys on the Acholi people.

Also, the insights found in the broader study of international politics based on the theory of Neorealism now potentially become helpful in the specific case of warlords. Neorealism has produced useful insights into interstate politics, such as allowing for the prediction of a region's balance of power, and more indirectly, as a basis for incorporating other theories, such as Game Theory. These same insights may

now be applied to the international relations of warlords. Conversely, warlords may be integrated into Neorealist analyses of states and may help to provide practically applicable insights for those analyses.

From these insights we can gain direction in deciding on practical responses. For example, from a foreign policy perspective, aligning with warlords is a possibility, but relying only on monetary compensation to bring about these alliances may not be enough. Rather, making assurances to warlords about the potential for the continued existence of the warlord organization after the conflict is over may be the best way to enlist his support.

Also, in terms of ending protracted conflicts, traditional peace negotiations, which involve demobilizing the warlord's army, may not be as effective as treating the situation more like peace negotiations between states. For instance, the warlord may respond better to the idea of aligning his forces with the state's, than to demobilizing his organization altogether. Another implication is that a warlord may be more interested in becoming the governor of a province, which is effectively his and allows him to continue having a separate army, than a parliamentary representative, which would demand his move to a capital city and the disbandment of his organization.

Noting that warlords are disconnected from the society and state which they may exist in leads to useful response options as well. For instance, in demobilizing warlord fighters, we must be sure to make programs which reintegrate warlords into local political communities, instead of assuming that they still feel like they are part of those political communities. Without taking such a step, the fighters may continue to feel alienated and turn to banditry.

Finally, the general insight that warlords are best analyzed as international, not domestic actors, leads to the conclusion that they must be addressed as regional issues by coalitions of states, rather than as domestic problems for the host state. This perception of the situation could, for instance, make the argument for intervention stronger. This international perspective is also important because by beginning from the assumption that warlords are only local actors, it is significantly harder to block their logistical system.

Thus, this study may be useful in easing or abating warlord conflicts. While there is a continual debate about the degree to which theoretical understanding may helpfully inform real world decision-making, clearly there is some value to be gained. If only for this reason, the study of warlord international relations is valuable and should be pursued. The next step after this study should therefore be to illustrate in more detail the practical application of a theoretical understanding of warlordism in order to find effective ways to counter the continuing threat of warlords to international peace and security.

## **APPENDIX A – EXAMPLE OF SOMALI ‘MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING’ (MOU)**

### **Agreement for the Delivery of Humanitarian Assistance in Gedo Region of Somalia<sup>645</sup>**

This Agreement is between the SNF/JVA in Gedo Region (hereinafter referred to as the ‘SNF/JVA’), represented by all sub clan elders and political leaders currently in support of the SNF/JVA; and the International Aid Community (hereinafter referred to as the ‘IAC’) composed of all international humanitarian organizations and their local implementing partners.

#### **General Agreement**

**Article 1.** The SNF/JVA and the IAC are in agreement that the people of Gedo Region are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, and that the delivery of assistance, especially food, must receive first priority.

**Article 2.** The SNF/JVA and the IAC are in agreement that the delivery of humanitarian assistance should represent the first steps in a peace process that will aim to establish a lasting peace in the region.

**Article 3.** The SNF/JVA and the IAC agree that the internationally accepted humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, proportionality, and transparency will be adhered to during the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

#### **Responsibilities of the Two Parties**

The sub clans under the SNF/JVA hereby commit themselves to the following:

1. A complete cessation of hostilities be enforced for at least the duration of the humanitarian deliveries, including food and non-food commodities;

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<sup>645</sup> Due to the unofficial nature of relations between non-state actors and members of the aid community, this document cannot be officially attributed.

2. Allow humanitarian access to all beneficiaries who need humanitarian assistance as defined by the IAC, regardless of political or clan affiliation;
3. Guarantee the security of humanitarian staff, contractors, properties and vehicles;
4. Guarantee the safety of the beneficiaries of the humanitarian assistance;
5. Provide safe passage for humanitarian supplies through their areas of control, including the lifting of mines and control of militias;
6. Ensure the right of free movement of beneficiaries while moving to distribution centers and returning to their areas of chosen settlement, whether permanent or temporary.
7. Facilitate the IAC in conducting assessments, and the monitoring of humanitarian deliveries during and post distribution as required.

### **Responsibility of the IAC**

The IAC hereby commit themselves to the following:

1. The IAC will follow the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and proportionality in distributing humanitarian assistance to all in need, regardless of political and clan/ sub-clan affiliation;
2. The IAC will provide necessary information concerning humanitarian deliveries, including assessment and monitoring information, to the leader of the SNF/JVA in the interests of transparency.

Signed on behalf of the SNF/JVA:

Signed on behalf of the IAC:

## **APPENDIX B – AN EXAMINATION OF THE SUDANESE PEOPLE’S LIBERATION MOVEMENT/ARMY**

### **SPLM/A**

The other major warlord actor in the security complex detailed in Chapter 6 is the SPLM/A. The following appendix will provide more detail about the SPLM/A as an actor and demonstrate that it can be seen as a SAG for the purposes of analysis. This section therefore serves as a further illustration and more robust argument to that made in Chapter 6. It also provides a supplementary historical overview of the conflict in Sudan in order to better illustrate the context of the security complex.

Importantly, this appendix will mainly focus on the SPLM/A during the period most relevant to Chapter 6’s argument. Specifically, the appendix will examine the time period between the mid-1980s to around the time in which the SPLM/A was incorporated into the Sudanese government. This cut-off is also helpful because since the peace agreement between the GoS and SPLM/A, the SPLM/A has been in a transitional stage in which it has retained some of its traditional armed group features but has increasingly taken on the features of a government.

### **History**

In the late nineteen-seventies Ethiopia began supplying the armed opposition groups in Sudan with active support in response to President Nimeiri’s support for anti-Derg forces.<sup>646</sup> These opposition forces included former Anya-Nya personnel and mutinied government battalions, including the 104<sup>th</sup> and 105<sup>th</sup>, an incident which led to John Garang’s own defection from his station as a Colonel in the Sudanese military.<sup>647</sup> There were multiple separate opposition groups but the Ethiopian funded ones were able to impose order.

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<sup>646</sup> Johnson 1998. Johnson and Prunier describe the situation which led up to Ethiopia’s funding in more detail. “The overthrow of Haile Selassie in 1974 was followed by a deterioration in relations between Ethiopia and the Sudan. Nimayri was persuaded by other Arab governments to give active (if often discreet) support to Eritrean secessionists. In 1976 Ethiopia informed a Sudanese delegation, led by the then Regional Minister of Information, the late Mading de Garang, that unless Sudanese support to the Dergue’s opponents stopped, Ethiopia would begin to support Nimayri’s own internal enemies. When Nimayri did not heed this warning, Ethiopia began arming Anya-Nya dissidents then resident in the border province of Illubabor and elsewhere.” Johnson and Prunier 1993: 122

<sup>647</sup> Anya-Nya was the name of the southern forces which fought the GOS in the first Civil War. Garang had been called to the south to negotiate with the 104<sup>th</sup> and 105<sup>th</sup>.

Eventually Ethiopia backed a single commander, John Garang, which allowed for the formation of a single southern Sudan opposition group, the SPLA. Garang's monopoly on external support gave him an advantage and the SPLA consolidated its power by incorporating most of the other groups.

The first years of the SPLA were spent consolidating its power. This included contacting military leaders such as Akuot Atem and Samuel Gai Tut as well as independent Anya-Nya II bands in the south.<sup>648</sup> One issue in particular was that the SPLA was seen as a 'Dinka Army', in reference to its being made up of mostly individuals from the Dinka ethnic group, including Garang himself. The government did its best to promote this feeling.

Opposition groups in southern Sudan were first contacted by the SPLA and then incorporated as sub-units. This incorporation centralized the war against the north under the command of Garang, for once incorporated these groups were restrained from taking part in their own operations. The SPLA also moved to expand the war to areas which did not necessarily have an existent armed opposition. Johnson describes the process by which new areas were drawn into the war in the 1980s:

the SPLA generally followed a three-year pattern of drawing new areas into the war. Typically this included sending small 'mobile units' or 'task forces' to an as yet unaffected area where they undertook limited military operations and political mobilization, leading to recruitment. New recruits were sent back to Ethiopia where they spent the next year training in camps such as Bonga and Pagak. In the third year these recruits would return to their home areas to recruit among their kin and generation. Government retaliation against villages which earlier recruits were known to have come from generally drove more people over to the side of the SPLA.<sup>649</sup>

New recruits were then sent to Gambella in southern Ethiopia for training and they would come back with a full force of up 1,000 men – a battalion. This battalion would become associated with a particular region or province for which it was

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<sup>648</sup> Johnson and Prunier 1993

<sup>649</sup> Johnson 1998: 58

assigned. Several battalions could form together into divisions which would be used to conquer other areas such as the Nuba Mountains.

Initially the SPLA relied on harassment of the Sudanese military. Small, mobile units would infiltrate areas where the GoS forces were and use traditional guerilla warfare tactics to ambush the enemy. Johnson and Prunier note that during the first years of the renewed civil war, the SPLA's "tactics resembled those of the first civil war; they overran police and army outposts, but then abandoned them to be reoccupied by the government."<sup>650</sup> They were also concerned with securing their supply routes from Ethiopia.

By the mid-80s, the SPLA's growing forces were able to confine the GoS forces to smaller areas and their bases in provincial towns, these tactics were reinforced by the interdiction of relief convoys. By 1987, the SPLA could take and hold some of the GoS's smaller garrisons.<sup>651</sup> Eventually, the tactics completely changed from guerilla warfare to conventional, entrenched sieges of the major cities in southern Sudan.

The nature of the conflict, and the SPLA as an organization, began to change radically during the late 1980s and into the early 1990s. The situation changed in 1991 with the collapse of the Mengistu government, the SPLA's primary external backer. The SPLA had refused to communicate with the rebel groups that were to take power in Ethiopia. This left it without its long-time ally in Addis Ababa and, even worse, a new Ethiopia government with close ties to the Sudanese military.<sup>652</sup> The SPLA was forced to evacuate its camps and personnel from Ethiopia. In turn, this forced the SPLA to find new logistical support within southern Sudan and from other external actors.

Also in 1991, the SPLA split into factions, roughly along ethnic lines.<sup>653</sup> Riek Machar's Southern Sudan Independence Army/Movement (SSIA/M) was the most prominent of several breakaway factions which sometimes found backing from the GoS and/or had different goals from the mainstream SPLA, such as calling for secession. Factionalization is a typical outcome for insurgencies and forces the main group to consolidate its power. This held true for the SPLA.

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<sup>650</sup> Johnson and Prunier 1993: 131

<sup>651</sup> Johnson 1998

<sup>652</sup> Johnson and Prunier 1993

<sup>653</sup> Riek Machar, a Nuer leader and Dr. Lam Akol, a Shilluk leader, negotiated separate peace accords with the GoS. (Prendergast and Mozersky 2004) Scroggins 2002 provides an account of this break between Machar and Garang.

The other major factor leading to change was that the famine of the mid to late 1980s led to the creation of Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). In 1988 a quarter million people died from the famine.<sup>654</sup> Humanitarian aid organizations, including the large NGOs like Save the Children and the United Nations, were willing to provide aid for the famine, but the ongoing war presented the organizations with a significant obstacle for reaching areas deep into the south – a massive area with little infrastructure.

In order to deal with the escalating death toll United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) began making ad hoc agreements with both the GoS and SPLA in which the parties agreed to respect ceasefires along "corridors of tranquility" as well as other basic rules of access. These agreements were codified with the negotiated OLS Tripartite Agreement in 1994 and Ground Rules Agreement in 1995. While the famine, which led to the death of many of the SPLA's would-be supporters, might seem damaging to the organization, the creation of OLS led to a major restructuring of the SPLA and its further assertion of sovereignty.

### **SPLA as De Facto State**

These historical factors led to the formation of the major features of the SPLM/A. The following section will illustrate the nature of the SPLM/A organization and argue that it can be seen as being effectively similar to a warlord organization as defined in Chapter 2.

### ***Leadership and Organization***

The SPLM/A was a strongly hierarchical organization with Garang at its top for most of its history. Garang's power flows from his control over resources. Ethiopia initially chose him as the device through which their funding would flow. This allowed a centralization of the movement against the GoS which had not been possible up until then. As sources of resources waxed and waned, Garang continued to monopolize control over them and it is this which has allowed him to continue his control over the organization and keep it centralized.

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<sup>654</sup> The GoS contributed to the famine in several ways, including by funding militias and cutting off and then reselling food; while the SPLA contributed by laying siege to government towns, the strategic destruction of roads, through shooting down aircraft, the destruction of villages, and the forced requisitioning from and looting of villages (De Waal 1993).

The hierarchy of the SPLM/A is based on patronage, even if it has been regimentalized and bureaucratized to some extent. Garang's control over the inflow of resources allowed him to control where it flowed. This allowed him to determine who the members of the organization would be and maintain authority over their actions with the implicit threat of cutting them off from power. It also allowed him to control the overall direction of the organization, including the specifics of its mission and terms of negotiations with the GoS. Finally, it limited factionalization because it forced any potential factions to find their own sources of funding, a difficult proposition, though one that has clearly been met in some cases.

There is also a strong ethnic basis to authority within the organization. Many of the top members of the SPLM/A are Dinka tribesmen and related to others in the leadership. This made it possible for Machar to enlist support from fellow Nuer tribesmen who felt cheated. However, Garang was aware of the issue and adopted multi-ethnic measures to enlist more widespread support within and outside of the organization.

The SPLM/A's command and control structure is reinforced by an effective communication system. It uses radios and satellites to stay in communication. Recently, cell phone towers have even been set up in SPLM/A controlled areas.<sup>655</sup> While transportation is limited in southern Sudan due to the lack of infrastructure, airplanes and four-wheel drive vehicles do allow some movement, especially during the dry season.

The SPLM/A organization has traditionally been split into three distinct pieces. The SPLA is the army which has traditionally been tasked with combating the Sudanese state. It is the de facto core of the organization and members of the other sections generally serve in it first. The SPLM is the political wing of the organization and is responsible for the internal administration of liberated areas and for external, diplomatic relations. The Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA) – now known as the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SRRC) – is the humanitarian wing of the organization and has been tasked with interacting with the humanitarian NGOs and UN since the creation of OLS, as well as with other duties, such as providing travel permits.

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<sup>655</sup> Field observation Rumbek, April 2005

As the peace process progressed, and now that the SPLM is being incorporated into the Sudanese state, these features of the organization are changing and new divisions forming, such as ministries of education and health. However, again, this appendix will focus roughly on the organization between the mid-80s and early 00s when it was most mature, but had not begun orientating itself to incorporation into the Sudanese state.

The SPLM/A is organized like a conventional military organization, in other words it is a praetorian organization. Its almost continuous funding by and training with conventional militaries, including the United States Army, has assured this. Garang himself attended the Advanced Infantry Training Course at the United States Army's Fort Benning. The ranking and organizational structure of the SPLA is based on conventional military systems. For instance, Second Lieutenant give way to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenants, to Captain, to Majors, to Lt. Colonel's etc; squads of seven soldiers form into platoons of fifty-one, four platoons are a company, a Battalion has six companies, and three Battalions form a Brigade.<sup>656</sup> Within these units there are artillery, infantry, signals, engineers and logistics divisions.<sup>657</sup> Command is strong and discipline is relatively high.<sup>658</sup> Officers are professional, for instance, they are expected to attend Cadet Colleges before commissioning and have formalized training throughout their career.<sup>659</sup> Since the SPLA is the de facto progenitor and core of the SPLM and SRRC, its structures form the informal basis for those organizations.

This praetorian organization is combined with a budding organizational structure based along the lines of a proto-government. By late 1989, the SPLA had effective control of large areas of the southern Sudan. The regional SPLA battalions provided not only the military extension of the SPLM, but also constituted the civil-military administration for these areas. These administrative areas were intentionally organized based on the existent province structure in order to minimize any ethnic basis for conflict. The civil administration which was set up was embryonic at best and was generally concerned with controlling the population through administrative procedures rather than the direct use of force. This was not only necessary in regard to the SPLM/A's relationship with the local population, but also in regard to the various

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<sup>656</sup> Interview with SPLA Commander, Gulu, 22 January 2005

<sup>657</sup> Ibid.

<sup>658</sup> Based on field observation, Rumbek, April 2005

<sup>659</sup> Interview with SPLA Commander, Gulu, 22 January 2005

tribal and other factions in southern Sudan who have had traditional as well as more recent qualms with each other.<sup>660</sup>

In order to better work with OLS, and, importantly, to better take advantage of the outpouring of international aid, the SPLA set up the SRRA. The SRRA is legally a non-profit humanitarian organization, which is technically supposed to be impartial and independent, like other international humanitarian organizations, but it is in fact staffed by former SPLM/A soldiers, and is controlled by the SPLM organization. But the creation of the SRRA was only one of the much more complex changes happening for the SPLA. In effect, from the late 1980s, the SPLA was becoming almost a de facto state which was recognized as (de facto) sovereign.

### *De facto state*

The SPLM/A administration evolved to the point of being close to the level necessary to call the SPLM/A a de facto state, well before the peace agreement with the north. There has been a hierarchical system of command within the military and an entirely separate, at least in form, civilian hierarchy. The civilian 'government' involves multiple layers of administrative bureaucracies, including governors, country secretaries, and town mayors. There are also various branches of the administration which deal with welfare issues. These departments include: Woman and Children's Welfare, Youth and Sport, Education, Health, Administration for Police and Prisons, Judiciary, Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Agriculture and Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, Communications and Transportation, and Finance and Planning.<sup>661</sup> The SRRC is concerned with relations with the international humanitarian aid organizations and through them, welfare for the southern Sudanese; they are also responsible for controlling foreign travel into the south. There are also branches concerned with health and education. Finally, the SPLM has instituted a taxation system, work permits for foreign workers, and an education curriculum.<sup>662</sup>

Yet, the Sudanese government continued to assert its sovereignty over all of Sudan throughout the civil war. All of the government's communications attest to this. In fact, it has been standard GoS strategy throughout both main civil wars and all

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<sup>660</sup> In many cases, these feuds were actively encouraged by the GOS for strategic reasons. Johnson and Prunier 1993.

<sup>661</sup> Interview, SRRC representative, Rumbek, 5 April 2005

<sup>662</sup> Discussions with various SPLM/A and NGO personnel, Rumbek, Gulu, January and April 2005

other internal conflicts, to treat the SPLM/A and other armed groups as local rebellions or as criminals.

However, civil administrators in the south on both sides pragmatically recognized and mutually acknowledged each others jurisdictions. While these borders were not precise, it is not difficult for international actors to recognize who is in control.<sup>663</sup> This is particularly the case in

negotiating terms of humanitarian access, for example, all parties to the conflict concede unofficial maps depicting conflict zones, transitions zones, and ‘corridors of tranquility’. These negotiations imply and even chart at least temporary SPLM/A control over the regions in question.<sup>664</sup>

The SPLA de facto control over large areas of the country began in the mid-80s due to the aforementioned military victories and maturation of the insurgent strategy.

Nevertheless, the SPLA exercises a relative monopoly of force in the areas under its control.<sup>665</sup> The use of force outside of official bounds will generally result in SPLM/A court involvement. Blood feuds may fall outside of the SPLA realm of control and be settled by traditional leaders and practices, as they do in formal states in the region. However the SPLM/A will still involve itself to the extent that it can in order to maintain a general peace. This was observed during recent field work in which a blood feud was taking place over the death of a local man who was run over by another local man – the SPLM/A had taken note of the incident and enacted a curfew to ease tensions and maintain order.<sup>666</sup> There also exist roving cattle raiders and other violent gangs in the south, however, these men likely either have an affiliation with the SPLM/A or are active at a relatively low level, comparable to that seen within neighboring states like Kenya.

Beyond the GoS, the most major threat to the SPLM/A’s monopoly over the use of force has probably been provided by the so-called ‘Other Armed groups (OAGs) in southern Sudan. These groups formed into a loose coalition known as the

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<sup>663</sup> Crossly 2004

<sup>664</sup> Ibid. : 136

<sup>665</sup> Observed during field work, April 2005. Also noted by Crossley (2004)

<sup>666</sup> Fieldwork, Rumbek, April 2005

South Sudan Defense Forces (SSDF).<sup>667</sup> They can be classified into militia representatives of local populations and former members of the SPLA which have become to more or less proxies of the GoS. While these groups do threaten the SPLM/A to some extent, they pose no more of a threat to the SPLM/A than do minor rebellions in many countries throughout Africa. We can conclude that the SPLM/A does have and has had a monopoly over the use of force within its 'liberated' areas. This monopoly has been further reinforced by the SSDF's recent agreement to join the SPLA.

The SPLM/A administration has also performed many other quasigovernmental services, which are expected of sovereigns. Its humanitarian wing, set up to interact with OLS, issues standardized travel permits. Representatives also meet visitors at airports and other entry areas for registration. The Health and Education Commissions perform many of the services expected by a government. Though we should not exaggerate the capabilities of these organizations too much and must keep them in the relative perspective of the typical government services to be found in other African states with as much poverty and conflict as southern Sudan. Also, like many other governments in Sub-Saharan Africa, the SPLM/A administration is highly reliant on outsourcing to humanitarian aid organizations or at the least on using joint projects.<sup>668</sup>

There is even some degree of legitimization by the local community for the SPLM/A. However, the legitimization comes more from a mutual anti-GOS perspective than from a positive feeling toward the SPLM/A. Yet, the sentiment is "sufficiently strong that wherever SPLA troops move, they will usually be fed and tended by supportive-ish populations living in the areas under SPLA control."<sup>669</sup>

More interestingly, the SPLA has been recognized and legitimized by the international humanitarian aid community and United Nations to some extent. The various OLS agreements are predicated on the recognition that the SPLM/A is a cohesive, recognizable entity that has de facto sovereignty over areas of the Sudanese

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<sup>667</sup> See ISS 2005

<sup>668</sup> Crossley argues that the low levels of service mean that we should not treat the SPLA as a de facto state, however, it seems that he has a very high standard by which to judge the SPLA. Crossley also speak of the irrelevance of the SPLA for the day to day life of the semi-nomadic people of southern Sudan as opposed to the traditional leaders of families and villages. However, again, the SPLA seems no more irrelevant than many state government's in sub-Saharan Africa in regard to their rural population. (Crossley 2004)

<sup>669</sup> Crossley 2004: 137

state. While the agreements themselves are very careful to avoid being too specific about this, so as not to upset the GoS during the war, it is implied in the very fact that there is such an official document.

The OLS agreement also instituted certain requirements on the aid community which further added to the SPLA's official recognition. Aid organizations were required to have official SPLA travel documents. Sudanese UN staff could be taxed and rent could be paid by the UN, though the UN was otherwise exempt from taxes. The UN continues to make concessions to the SPLA to this day. For instance, forming joint programs with the SRRC, such as the Joint Taskforce on Demobilized Child Soldiers – a similar joint system implemented in state controlled areas of other disaster zones. The UN funds much of the SRRC administrative costs and otherwise contributes to the perpetuation of the organization. On the other hand, the UN refused to provide aid directly to the SPLA or the SPLM.

However, the local community continues to have its own independent role in most cases. The chiefs are seen as the legitimate authority. The SPLM/A tends to function through the chiefs, though they may overpower them if they like, due to their greater military ability. Even over the last few years with the instituting of more intrusive quasigovernmental apparatuses, the SPLM still functions through these local leaders. The SPLM/A is thus parasitic on these communities. Because of this parasitism the SPLM/A could be seen as a warlord organization, not de facto state.

### *Diplomacy*

The SPLM/A took part in extensive diplomatic relations with external states well before becoming an official part of the Sudanese state. SPLM representatives, i.e. diplomats, have been placed in 'Chapter Offices', i.e. Counsels, important countries including: African countries like South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and Rwanda; Arab countries including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Libya; as well as the United States, and the United Kingdom.<sup>670</sup> The diplomats' relationships depend on what the SPLM/A hopes to gain from the relationship. The SPLM representative to Ethiopia and the AU characterizes some of these relationships thus:

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<sup>670</sup> Interview, SPLA commander, Gulu, 22 January 2005

For instance in Egypt they tell the Arab states that the south is not against Islam. It is not an Arab conflict. In London, we promote Sudan as being important because of the colonial legacy in Sudan. He tries to make it clear that we feel that we are a victim. Try to influence the conflict. In Washington human rights is a more active issue. [Human rights] Violations are reflected in the office. ...Basically, [we ask for] humanitarian aid and intervention.<sup>671</sup>

These relationships are very similar in nature and content to those between states. Interests are promoted, whether economic or military in nature, and relationships strengthened in order to counter an enemy, i.e. Sudan.

In many cases, the relationships between the SPLM/A and other states were by default in recognition of its de facto authority. For instance, the SPLM representative to the AU notes: "in order to mediate, the AU or IGAD needs a counterpart to Sudan. A government representative."<sup>672</sup> The SPLM provided such a representative. Similarly, border issues with Ethiopia demanded representation from the de facto authority, not the Sudanese government, which has no influence in the border region. The SPLM representative notes: "[Ethiopia] need[s] to know who is responsible. If there is a problem on the border, they need a contact office; an authority to deal with the issue."<sup>673</sup>

While de facto relationships are accepted, de jure relationships are not necessarily. For example, the SPLM's relationship with the United States government typically goes through human rights groups who then lobby Congress on behalf of the SPLM.<sup>674</sup> On the other hand in Britain there is more direct communication and interaction with Parliament.<sup>675</sup>

This de facto recognition by part of the international community has generally been combined with some legitimacy. The creation of the SRRA combined with the pressures to from receiving aid and, in general, working closely with humanitarian aid agencies over a long period of time, has led the SPLA to adopt significant liberal views. The organization has adopted prohibitions against the use of child soldiers and

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<sup>671</sup> Interview, SPLM representative, Addis Ababa, 24 March 2005

<sup>672</sup> Ibid.

<sup>673</sup> Ibid.

<sup>674</sup> Ibid.

<sup>675</sup> Ibid.

other human rights violations. For instance, in the preface to the Ground Rules Agreement, the SPLM/A acknowledged its acceptance of the Geneva Conventions and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>676</sup> Its mission statements and other external communications also use the language of freedom and democracy to justify their cause. In general, the organization talks the talk of human rights and liberal democracy and this has granted it a significant public relations victory over the years. While it is not by any means comparable to a western liberal democracy, the SPLA is certainly never grouped along with many of the more terrifying insurgencies Africa. This has assured it continued aid from international humanitarian organizations as well as making it easier to justify other forms of aid from western states.

Significantly, when Machar broke off from the SPLM/A, he was represented by Lam Akol at negotiations with the UN over whether to be part of OLS. The Nasir group was excluded on the grounds that it could not demonstrate control of any territory where the UN needed corridors of tranquility.<sup>677</sup> Crossley notes the ramifications of this: “[t]he government, the SPLM/A mainstream, and numerous subsequent splinter groups suspected that by securing UN recognition, the opposition movement was securing international acknowledgement of de facto administrative control.”<sup>678</sup>

### *Motivation*

The SPLM/A has been in some ways a fairly typical rebel movement and used many of the same practices as traditional insurgencies to motivate its personnel. It has a clear ideology and mission. It also appeals to the impoverished with economic incentives and relies on many ethnic and other loyalty inducing incentives. Finally, in many instances, SPLA personnel are motivated by self-defense against a predatory northern government.

Anti-GOS sentiment was the main motivating factor of the SPLA. There has been significant marginalization of many of the tribal people in the south, denial of the basic welfare expected from a government, including health and clean water, as well as second tier needs like education and political representation. Beyond these

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<sup>676</sup> See Appendix C for a copy of the Ground Rules Agreement. These acknowledgements, however, were not legally binding.

<sup>677</sup> Crossley 2004

<sup>678</sup> Crossley 2004: 142 He goes on to note that “[s]imply by isolating the SPLM/A as the primary interlocutor, the OLS bestowed a certain pride of place on one armed movement over others.” (Crossley 2004: 142)

issues there are issues of religious, language, and racial persecution. As one SPLA Commander put it, "I believe that we are being supported because we have a cause... Our people are marginalized.... We are left behind, in darkness. That's why we took up arms and fought."<sup>679</sup>

Poverty is an issue in the motivation of individuals to fight as it is in many sub-Saharan African conflicts. Southern Sudan is one of the poorest areas on Earth. It also has high levels of illiteracy, poor healthcare, lack of employment, etc. These factors make the military one of the few sources of social movement left to young men, particularly, young men from pastoralist societies with strong traditions concerning conflict and coming of age. Consequently, the SPLA can rely on a large source of recruits for its forces. For example, it is clear in areas of southern Sudan that many of the young men in nicer civilian cloths and who are generally better off are in some way affiliated with the SPLM/A.<sup>680</sup>

Tribalism also plays a role in motivating personnel to fight in the SPLA. Individual tribes are targeted by the northern government in favor of other tribes which are selectively armed. This leads to tribal motivations to fight. However, the same tribal factors have led to factionalization within the SPLM/A. There are divisions between the Dinka tribesmen who hold the bulk of the offices in the SPLM/A, compared to minority tribes such as the Nuer. These divisions are an interesting feature of the SPLM/A because they demonstrate that there is at least some cross-tribal loyalty and enthusiasm for the organization. While there has been factionalization during some of the war, the bulk of it has been fought by a multi-tribal organization. In many ways, this resembles the multi-ethnicity found in states more than the usual mono-ethnicity of most armed groups.

### *Logistics*

The SPLM/A has developed many separate sources of funding over the years and this diversity is a basis for the organization's longevity and cohesion. External funding has come from many different sources, including from states to Sudanese diaspora. Humanitarian aid has increasingly served as a basis for funding, though only in specific areas, since the creation of OLS. Financing has come from various forms of formal and informal taxation within Sudan. Finally, there is funding, to a certain

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<sup>679</sup> Interview, SPLA commander, Gulu, 17 January 2005

<sup>680</sup> Field observation, Rumbek, April 2005

extent, from natural resource exploitation, or at least, the promise of natural resource rights to outside sources.

External funding has come from the United States, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, and Uganda at various times during the civil war. Up until 1991, Ethiopia served as its major source of support. After the change in the Ethiopian government, the SPLM/A found alternate sources. The United States has also been involved in funding the SPLA and its association demonstrates the sort of strategic thinking behind external supporters when working with the SPLA. Global Security describes the situation:

In 1996 the US government decided to send nearly \$20 million of military equipment through the 'front-line' states of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda to help the Sudanese opposition overthrow the Khartoum regime. US officials denied that the military aid for the SPLA and the Sudanese Allied Forces (SAF), described as 'non-lethal' – including radios, uniforms, boots and tents -- was targeted at Sudan. The Pentagon and CIA considered Sudan to be second only to Iran as a staging ground for international terrorism. CIA Director John Deutch made a 3-day visit to the Ethiopian capital in April 1996, where he noted that funds had been significantly increased for a more activist policy including preemptive strikes against terrorists and their sponsors. Reportedly several Operational Detachments-Alpha (also called A-Teams) of the US army were operating in support of the SPLA.<sup>681</sup>

The military nature of the funding was also hidden and included training. Most interestingly for this study, the United States, like other governments, seems to have seen the SPLM/A as a balance for Sudan, which was threatening regional stability.

Funding for the SPLA also has come from various formal and informal donations and taxes taken out by the SPLA on Sudanese civilians. Reportedly these are 10% for local staff.<sup>682</sup> There are also taxes on goods bought at local markets and in some cases a fee for car licenses.<sup>683</sup> The large southern Sudanese diaspora around

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<sup>681</sup> Globalsecurity.org 2005b

<sup>682</sup> Interview, aid worker, Rumbek, 14 April 2005

<sup>683</sup> Interview, aid worker, Nairobi, 6 January 2005

the world helps fund the organization. Inside of southern Sudan, local civilians are expected to feed and cloth the SPLA soldiers, even when they themselves are starving and receiving food aid from the World Food Program (WFP).<sup>684</sup> It should be noted that by no means are these civilians necessarily forced to provide support, in many cases they do sincerely feel a duty to help the soldiers. Though, some degree of pressure is also probable and there are, of course, instances where commanders, with or without the leadership's consent, force civilians to provide them with supplies.

Humanitarian aid is redirected by the SPLM/A for its own strategic and tactical purposes. The southern Sudan famine led to a massive influx of humanitarian aid. While there have been restrictions on the SPLM/A's use of this aid it has nevertheless been enlisted into its logistical system. As already noted, transportation and communication abilities are gained from the partnership with the humanitarian aid community. More importantly, the aid has acted as the basis for the SPLM/A's welfare system for those civilians which fall into its area of control. This allows the SPLM/A to focus the vast majority of its resources on warfare rather than administration.

There are some minor natural resources in southern Sudan which are used toward the SPLA's war such as timber, however, the most important natural resource has become oil. Large oil reserves were discovered along the border between the north and the south in Sudan and have therefore become one of the major areas of contention between the two sides on both a military and diplomatic level. The SPLM/A did not use them so much as a route to immediate economic gain, as it did not have the large infrastructure necessary for extracting oil. Rather, the oil has acted as more of a diplomatic tool used by the SPLM/A to enlist support for the organization from states interested in exploring the oil (once peace was reached).

### ***Independence and Autonomy***

The SPLM/A achieved empirical sovereignty in the 1980s. It clearly has had complete authority over its internal and external affairs since the period at which it was able to control territory continually. The de facto sovereignty admitted by the OLS agreement point to this, as does the SPLA's consulates in foreign countries, and its administration of liberated areas.

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<sup>684</sup> Scroggins 2002 describes some of these instances.

The SPLM/A has also been able to perpetuate its organization. It can continually recruit new members and motivate them to fight. It also has an organizational structure which is cohesive enough to be considered as a unitary actor.

While it has been indebted to various foreign government's for funding, it has been able to repeatedly wean itself off of those funds and continue on as an independent organization. Diversifying funding, as with investment, hedges bets and grants increased independence from any single source of funding. It has in effect given the SPLM/A the ability to negotiate better terms with any single source of funding. This kept it from becoming dominated by any single foreign entity.

It is arguable that the internal and external policy more similar to that of an idealized warlord than de facto state. Crossley makes the observation that the SPLA is best analyzed in the way prescribed by Mark Duffield, i.e. that "[t]he goal [of long term conflict] is no the long-term benefits of successful warring for society; the goal is fruitful perpetuation of war for the enrichment or empowerment of the warriors."<sup>685</sup> From this perspective, Crossley notes that "the populace is not treated as a beneficiary of conflict fought on their behalf but is, rather, a resource to be controlled."<sup>686</sup> Crossley may be correct to note that the SPLA is not efficiently analyzed as fighting a war for the benefit of the populace. Nonetheless, the best way to see the SPLM/A is in general not from Duffield's perspective that the war is about the personnel gain of members of the SPLM/A.

As with other analyses of warlords, the issues separating warlord organizations from insurgencies may often come down to the decision of whether or not the organization should be seen as being separate from society and therefore a parasite, or as a legitimate representative of society, which could not separate itself fully. It is an arguable point which depends on the particular historical period in question and subjective measures of society's relationship with the SPLM/A. For instance, does the SPLM/A's 'taxation' of local civilian's food aid demonstrate a standard, if primitive form of governance or predatory behavior? The final decision is somewhat arbitrary as the SPLM/A has the factors necessary to make it analyzable using the Neorealist approach, i.e. it is an autonomous, independent organization, which has been (arguably) motivated by survival during the second phase of the war.

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<sup>685</sup> Crossley 2004: 138.

<sup>686</sup> *Ibid.*: 145

## **SPLM/A Relations with Sudan - War**

Chapter 6 briefly illustrated the nature of the conflict between the SPLM/A and the GoS. The following section provides more detail.

### ***History of the Conflict***

The origin of the Sudanese civil war, and hence the relationship between the Sudanese government and SPLM/A, goes back to 1955 when the Torit garrison mutinied. The soldiers were joined by civilians, the police and prison guards. This popular uprising was based on structural problems which arose from the British handing over power to the northern elite and leaving the south relatively uneducated and without power.

This was due to the fact that the British indirectly ruled the south. They empowered the southern traditional chiefs. There was never extensive interest or investment in the south by the north. The official policy of 'Closed Districts' in the south kept economic investment low and this continued after independence. Similarly the colonial policy of 'benign neglect' left the south without an elite or much education beyond missionary work. As Taiser Ali and Robert Matthews note, the "separate development' of the south was not only economic but political as well."<sup>687</sup> After independence the northern elite, which was mostly Islamic and of Arab decent, monopolized political and economic power. Upon independence the Khartoum government began its policy of Arabization of the south. For instance, higher education was conducted in Arabic.

In 1969, the popular frustration with the sectarian parties helped Brigadier Nimeiri and several other officers take power through a coup d'etat. However, "having alienated both right- and left-wing forces, lacking any strong base of support at home, and cut off from his principal foreign ally, the Soviet Union, Nimeiri found himself vulnerable."<sup>688</sup> For this reason he attempted to create peace in the south. He succeeded in 1972 with the signing of the Addis Ababa agreement.

The backing the United States and discovery of oil fundamentally realigned the situation in the south for the Khartoum government. Nimeiri attempted to redefine the borders to the south to shift oil producing areas into the northern authority. He also moved northerners to key positions in the south and otherwise demonstrated a renaissance of control by the north of the south. Most importantly, Nimeiri imposed a

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<sup>687</sup> Ibid.: 204

<sup>688</sup> Ibid.: 208

version of Islamic law on Sudan, thereby fueling the discontent that had plagued the country since the enactment of the agreement a decade earlier. Nimeiri enacted the laws in order to shore up his power in the north from political opposition.

These factors, led to the creation of the SPLA. As discussed earlier, the Ethiopian government backed opposition movements and finally settled on the SPLA, led by Garang.

Again in 1985, the unions formed together, this time as the Trade Union Alliance (TUA) and used massive demonstrations and a general strike to topple the government. A transitional government was installed and the Umma Party (UP) eventually won the majority of seats in 1986 and installed Sadiq al-Mahdi as Prime Minister. The party became directly concerned with ending the conflict and this led to the Kokadam Declaration of 1986.

The so called September Laws enacted by Nimeiri continued to be unpopular and were to be overturned in December of 1988, when the National Islamic Front (NIF) party used militias and some units of the army to take power. Brigadier Omar Hassan al-Bashir was put in control of the country. He ended peace programs and returned to an attempt at a military solution for the ongoing civil war. Bashir was helped in his pursuit by the fall of Mengistu's regime in Ethiopia, the fracturing of the SPLA, and increased backing from Iran, Iraq, and China for his own government.<sup>689</sup> Hypocritically, as the government pursued a military solution it advertised for a peaceful solution through arranging engagement with the SPLM/A outside of Sudan, in order to shift attention away from the war and garner international support for the regime.

The situation changed along with geopolitics in the early nineties. Sudan backed Iraq in the Gulf War and was punished for it by the United States with a block on aid. A significant change came from the famine that began in the later 1980s which led to the OLS agreement and brought the GOS, SPLM/A and UN together into an agreement.

During the mid-nineties Osama bin Laden took up residence in Sudan in exchange for financial support to Bashir. Bin Laden's residence led to US cruise missile strikes on Sudan after the 1998 terrorist attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Sudan also became an official state supporter of terrorism which

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<sup>689</sup> Ibid

damaged its international credibility and ability to receive aid – an issue which it is currently trying to overcome through tacit and explicit support for the War on Terror.

### **Conclusion**

This appendix has provided supporting materials for Chapter 6. It argued that the SPLM/A can reasonably be theorized about using the Neorealist approach developed in this study in that it may be seen as a warlord organization or possibly a de facto state. The appendix also provided some more in depth history of the SPLM/A and its war with the GoS.

## **APPENDIX C – SPLM/OLS (OPERATION LIFELINE SUDAN) AGREEMENT ON GROUND RULES – 669**

[NB. The example which follows is the agreement signed between the SPLM/OLS. Although signed separately the content of the agreements with other movements was to all intents and purposes the same.]

This agreement is intended to lay out the basic principles upon which Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) works and to lay out the rules and regulations resulting from such principles. It seeks to define the minimum acceptable standards of conduct for the activities of OLS agencies and Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA), as the official counterpart in areas controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).

We, the undersigned enter into this agreement in a spirit of good faith and mutual cooperation in order to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance to and protection of civilians in need.

In signing this agreement we express our support for the following international humanitarian conventions and their principles namely:

- i Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- ii Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the 1977  
Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions

### **A. Statement of Humanitarian Principles**

1. The fundamental objective of OLS and SRRA is the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in need wherever they may be. Such humanitarian assistance seeks to save life, to ease suffering, to promote self-reliance, self-sufficiency and the maintenance of livelihoods. The right to receive humanitarian assistance and to offer it is a fundamental humanitarian principle.

2. The guiding principle of OLS and SRRA is that of humanitarian neutrality – an independent status for humanitarian work beyond political or military considerations.

In other words:

- i. Humanitarian aid must be given according to considerations of human need alone. Its granting or its acceptance must not be made dependent on political factors or upon race, religion, ethnicity or nationality. It must not seek to advance any political agenda. Where humanitarian assistance is inadequate to meet the needs of all priority must be given to the most vulnerable.
- ii. The passage of humanitarian assistance to populations in need should not be denied even if this requires that aid passes through an area controlled by one party in order to reach the needy in another area provided that such passage is not used for military advantage.
- iii. Relief assistance is provided solely on the basis of need: those providing assistance do not affiliate themselves to any side in the ongoing conflict.
- iv. The only constraints on responding to humanitarian need should be those of resources and practicality.

3. All humanitarian assistance provided is for the use of identified civilian beneficiaries. Priority must at all times be given to women and children and other vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled and displaced people.

4. Those carrying out relief activities under the auspices of OLS must be accountable to the beneficiaries and their representative structures in first place, and to those who fund the activities. This places the following obligations on the various parties:

- i. those rendering humanitarian aid have a duty to ensure its appropriate end use. This includes a right to monitor and participate in the distribution of humanitarian aid on the ground in partnership with SRRA.
- ii. local authorities through the SRRA must ensure that aid is distributed fairly to civilian beneficiaries. Diversion of aid from intended beneficiaries is regarded as a breach of humanitarian principles.

iii. decision-making on the selection of beneficiaries and the monitoring of the use of inputs and resources must be and be seen to be transparent and responsive to broad-based decision-making at the level of affected communities. Local authorities and relief agencies should involve local representatives of communities in the processes of targeting and monitoring of aid. Where possible this should be done through the Joint Relief and Rehabilitation Committees which include elected community representatives.

5. OLS is based on the complete transparency of all its activities. This means that local authorities have the right to expect that OLS agencies provide full information regarding the resources to be provided. In return, it is expected that local authorities will report honestly and fairly in all their dealings with OLS with respect to needs identified populations in need use of resources etc.

6. All humanitarian actions should be tailored to local circumstances and aim to enhance not supplant locally available resources and mechanisms. Strengthening local capacity to prevent future crises and emergencies and to promote greater involvement of Sudanese institutions and individuals in all humanitarian actions is an integral part of OLS's humanitarian mandate.

7. The fundamental human right of all persons to live in safety and dignity must be affirmed and supported through appropriate measures of protection as well as relief. All those involved in OLS must respect and uphold international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights.

8. Bona fide staff members of OLS agencies and others living working or traveling in Sudan under the auspices of OLS have the right to go about their business freely and without restraint provided that they adhere to these Ground Rules and to local laws and customs. In all their dealings relief workers and local authorities must demonstrate mutual respect.

## **B. Mutual Obligations**

1. All externally supported programmes and projects in SPLM/A-controlled areas must be approved by the SRRA (both locally and at SRRA head office) prior to their implementation. NGOs or UN agencies are responsible for ensuring that such approval is obtained in writing. Project implementation should be based upon a letter of understanding between the agency. SRRA and OLS which defines roles responsibilities and commitments of all sides plus procedures for resolving differences and grievances.
2. All UN/NGO workers are expected to act in accordance with the humanitarian principles previously defined: provision of aid according to need, neutrality, impartiality, accountability and transparency. This includes non-involvement in political/military activity. NGOs and UN agencies must not act or divulge information in a manner that will jeopardise the security of the area.
3. All UN/NGO workers must show respect for cultural sensitivities and for local laws and customs. Relief agencies must ensure that their staff are familiar with these laws and customs.
4. UN agencies and NGOs shall strive to offer the highest possible standards of service to their beneficiaries. This means that all agencies commit themselves to recruiting only those staff judged to have adequate technical and personal skills and experience required for their work.
5. UN agencies and NGOs must ensure that all their staff living, working or visiting Sudan are bearers of valid entry passes from the respective political authorities.
6. The SRRA must commit itself to the humanitarian principles defined above and not allow itself to be motivated by political, military or strategic interests. It should seek to provide an efficient and effective coordinated information and planning service for relief and rehabilitation activities.
7. The SPLM/A recognises and respects the humanitarian and impartial nature of UN agencies and those NGOs which have signed a letter of understanding with UNICEF/OLS and SRRA.

8. The SRRA should facilitate the flow of relief goods and services and provide accurate and timely information regarding the needs and the situation of civilians in their areas.

9. Local authorities assume full responsibility through the SRRA for the safety and protection of relief workers in areas under their control. This responsibility includes:

- i. providing an immediate alert to relief workers in potentially insecure areas
- ii. facilitation of safe relocation when necessary
- iii. protection from any form of threat, harassment or hostility from any source: relief staff or agencies are not expected to pay for such protection either of themselves or of their property.

10. UN/NGO compounds should be respected as property of these institutions. Those living in these compounds have the right to privacy and compounds should only be entered with the permission of their residents. No military or political activity should take place in these compounds and no personnel bearing arms may enter them except when the safety of their residents is threatened.

### **C. Use of relief property and supplies**

1.
  - i. All UN/NGO property including vehicles and property hired by UN/NGOs is to be controlled and moved at the discretion of UN/NGOs or their agencies, unless such property is formally donated to another party. Project agreements between NGOs, SRRA and UN/OLS should clearly define which assets will remain the property of the agency concerned and which are project assets which must remain in Sudan even when the agency concerned leaves temporarily or permanently.
  - ii. Those assets defined as agency assets remain the effective property of the agency at all times and may be removed whenever a project terminates or an agency withdraws from a location for whatever reason.
  - iii. Project assets are those which are for direct use by project beneficiaries or are integral to the running and sustainability of the project. These goods remain the

property of UN/NGOs until formally handed over to the SRRA or local communities and their leaders' decisions regarding the distribution and use of such items should be made whenever possible jointly between NGOs and local authorities under the auspices of the Joint Relief and Rehabilitation Committee following the humanitarian principles stated above.

2. UN and NGO flags are for exclusive use by these agencies.

3. UN and NGO staff will be allowed unrestricted access to their communication equipment and to exercise normal property rights. Except for emergencies, all messages should be written and recorded. Use of UN/NGO radios or other communication equipment will be limited to information on relief activities only. All messages will be in the English language. Operation shall be by a locally designated radio operator seconded and selected jointly by the local authorities and relief agencies. Whenever necessary UN/NGO personnel will be allowed to transmit their own messages.

4. No armed or uniformed personnel is allowed to travel on UN/NGO vehicles, planes, boats or cars. This includes those vehicles contracted by UN/NGOs.

#### **D. Employment of staff**

1. All UN agencies and NGOs have the right to hire their own staff as direct employees. These agencies should be encouraged to employ appropriately qualified and experienced Sudanese as part of a capacity building strategy.

2. In the cases of Sudanese staff seconded to an NGO supported project (e.g. health staff) appointments and dismissals are made by the local authority in consultation with the agency which is expected to support payment of that worker's incentives. The number of workers to be supported must be agreed jointly. An NGO or a UN agency may ask the local authorities to withdraw seconded staff considered incompetent dishonest or otherwise unsuitable for their jobs.

3. Local authorities should ensure that the Sudanese staff of UN/NGOs and especially those staff who receive special training programmes to upgrade and improve their skills are exempted whenever possible from military or other service so that they can contribute to the welfare of the civilian population.

#### **E. Rents, Taxes, Licences, Protection money**

1. No UN/NGO should be expected to pay rent for buildings or areas which are part of their work, for example, offices or stores when they have built these buildings themselves or where they are donated by the local authority.

2. In the case of public buildings which are being rented by an NGO as living accommodation a reasonable rent may be paid by the NGO/UN agency to the civil administration. Genuine efforts should be made to make moves towards standardisation of these rents.

3. All OLS agencies shall be exempt from customs duties for supplies (including personal supplies) and equipment brought into Sudan. Any taxes to be paid will be agreed between the agency concerned and the local authority as party of the project agreement.

#### **F. Implementation of this agreement**

1. All signatories to this agreement must accept responsibility for ensuring that it is disseminated to all their officials and staff working in Sudan. It should also be publicised in public places in Sudan to ensure that local communities and beneficiaries understand its principles and rules.

2. UNICEF/OLS together with the SRRA will be responsible for ensuring the holding of workshops and meetings in all key locations in which the principles and rules of this agreement are explained and discussed with all relevant personnel.

3. The SRRA is fully responsible for ensuring compliance with this agreement by the local authorities and communities.

4. Joint Relief and Rehabilitation Committees established in all relief centres and involving all relevant actors should meet together on a regular basis to plan implement and monitor the delivery of humanitarian assistance. These committees will be regarded as the custodians of the principles of this agreement at local level and responsible for ensuring that the rules are upheld and respected by all sides.

#### **G. Mechanisms for resolving alleged violations of Ground Rules**

1. In cases where allegations of non-compliance with this agreement are made, all parties commit themselves to resolving differences as speedily as possible in an attitude of good faith.

2. Where alleged violations of Ground Rules have occurred the allegation should be documented in writing by the complainant.

3. The issue should then be taken to the local Joint Relief and Rehabilitation Committee where this exists.

4. If unresolved it should then be discussed at local level with meetings between the area secretary of the SRRA the county Commissioner and the local head of the UN/NGO together with the UNICEF/OLS Resident Project Officer where appropriate.

5. If the issue remains unresolved at local level it should be referred to central authorities in writing to be dealt with by the senior officials of the agencies concerned i.e. the SRRA head office, the head of the NGO and, if appropriate the UNICEF/OLS coordinator.

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Wassink, Bart, Country Director, Me dAir, Kampala, 7 January 2005

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'Sudanese Businessman', Gulu, 15 January 2005

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Prunier, Gerard, Researcher, Director, French Center for Ethiopia Studies, Addis Ababa, 22 March 2005

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'Foreign Diplomat', Addis Ababa, 9 April 2005

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'Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Committee (SRRC) Representative', Rumbek, 5 April 2005

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'Danielle D.', International Rescue Committee (IRC), Rumbek, 7 April 2005

'Fred', Research Manager, Communication Director, Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Committee (SRRC), Rumbek, 5 April 2005

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Oduk, Rex, Secretariat, Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Committee (SRRC), Rumbek, 6 April 2005

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'Ex-Combatant', Buduburam Refugee Camp, 20 May 2006

Success Hopeson, Pastor, Buduburam Refugee Camp, 21 May 2006

'Ex-Combatant 2', Buduburam Refugee Camp, 24 May 2006

**Monrovia, Liberia**

Bellah, Reverend M. Wolo, Pastor, Monrovia, 30 May 2006

Conteh, Dr. Al Hassan, President, University of Liberia, Monrovia, 31 May 2006

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'Ex-Combatant 2', Monrovia, 30 May 2006

Mulbah, Edward, Executive Director, Peace Building Resource Center, Monrovia, 30 May 2006

Obiamiwe, Christopher, Liberia Community Infrastructure Program, Monrovia, 2 June 2006

'Aid Worker', Monrovia, 29 May 2006

'War-Effectuated Youth', Monrovia, 1 June 2006

**Tubmanburg, Liberia**

'Aid Worker', Tubmanburg, 31 May 2006

'Village Chief', Bomi County, 31 May 2006

'Ex-Combatant', Tubmanburg, 31 May 2006

'Ex-Combatant 2', Tubmanburg, 31 May 2006

**Washington, DC<sup>690</sup>**

'Aid Worker', Washington, DC, April 2006

'Analyst', Washington, DC, May 2006

'Private Military Contractor', Washington, DC, May 2006

'Senior Consultant, Defense Consulting Firm', Washington, DC, April/May 2006

'Liberia Researcher', Washington, DC May 2006

'Human Rights Researcher', Washington, DC, 16 May 2006

'Former Aid Worker', Washington, DC, April 2006

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<sup>690</sup> Note, in most cases the Washington, DC interviews were conducted over several meetings and therefore an approximate date is provided.

**Thesis Length: 99,587 words**