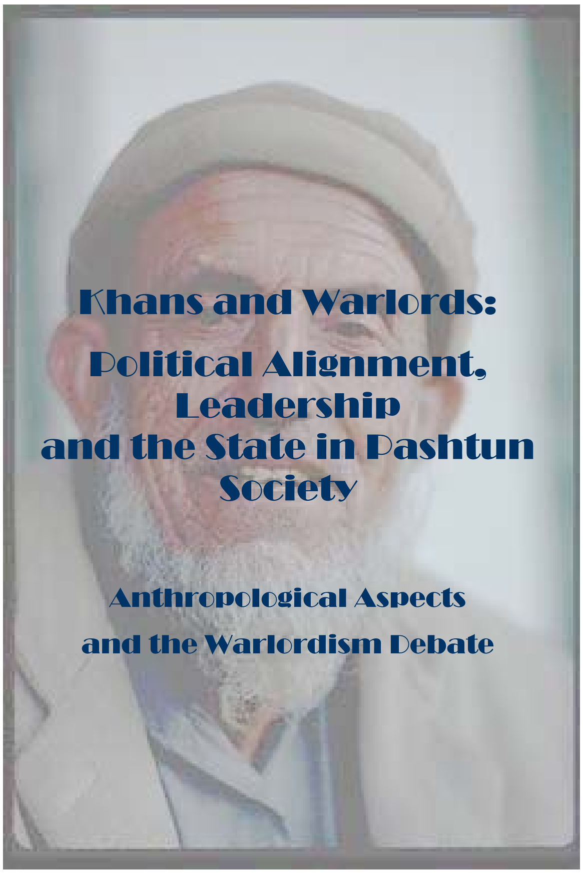
Khans and Warlords:

Political Alignment,
Leadership
and the State in Pashtun
Society

Anthropological Aspects

and the Warlordism Debate

PART II

Warlordism and the Privatization of War

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PART 2

WARLORDISM AND THE PRIVATIZATION OF WAR

In the recent past, reports of the international press on the political processes in Afghanistan are lavish with undefined terms. In daily news reports in, political representatives are on occasion indiscriminately referred to as tribal leaders, clan chiefs or simply as warlords. Not only incidents in Afghanistan, but also in other countries entice correspondents to blur terms that seem to lack analytical precision. In contemporary international politics, the ongoing debate about various occurrences which are related with a vague notion of warlordism have caused a stir of interest among a great range of commentators. Political and scientific analysts have recently been trying to clarify the term so as to reach higher analytical precision (cf. Bollig 2001; Elwert 1999; Reno 1998; Rich 1999 and others). Such an undertaking is only promising if substantially supplemented with empirical observation. Consequently, topical activities of so-called warlords have been examined on the basis of a collection of regions continuously reappearing as a quintessence of warlord politics. Primarily Afghanistan, Colombia and a wide range of African countries such as Somalia, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo or Sierra Leone are, among others, standard cases in order to illustrate warlord politics. Is the selection purely coincidental? Without doubt, warlord politics is operational within the international borders of other countries too. But the listed countries share at least some common features which are generally seen as providing a political environment in which warlord politics is thriving. First, they are located within boundaries of bureaucratically weak states. Second, they draw upon one or various commodities with a relatively high market value. The control of commodities such as precious stones, raw materials, ores or narcotics is an essential resource for political control as well. Third, in conjunction with a structurally weak state, some countries are marked by political systems being suggestive of persistent tribal or clientelistic networks. Fourth, foreign actors have a significant influence on domestic politics. Private actors such as foreign traders or foreign political powers such as other states manipulate domestic politics by selectively advocating and sponsoring leaders of a faction. Such a faction serves as a door-opener that is either able to give access to lucrative business or to consent to an advantageous political strategy that meets the interests of a foreign political actor. In turn, the material and financial support helps a warlord to extend and reinforce the control of his warlord-type chiefdom.

It is thus not surprising that the debate on warlordism mainly argues along two lines, both functioning as indispensable completion to the other: the institutional flaws of a weak or collapsed state on the one hand and a political environment that provides for the privatisation and commercialization of war on the other hand. The latter grows within a vacuum which is a corollary of the former.

The intention of this chapter is to give a resume of the recent debate on warlord politics and related phenomena that have contributed to increase the analytical precision of the term *warlord*. In order to bring out more clearly the political, economic and cultural environment of warlord politics, I try to contextualize important characteristics related to *warlordism* on the basis of recent description of concrete situations which are termed or may reasonably be termed as *warlord politics*. The suggestion made is to explain warlord politics by means of the theoretical concept of markets of violence and its underlying rational instrumentality of violence (Elwert 1997). Ideally, the arguments serve as a supplement to the debate over contemporary political occurrences in the Afghan setting in general and their effectiveness on Pashtun homelands, more specifically. In doing so, the treatise on warlord politics will finally be related with the most relevant suggestions made in the previous chapters. The theory of person-centred politics as well as the underlying theoretical assumptions that favour a focus on the calculated rationale of the decisions of political actors are largely convergent with the premises made in explaining warlordism that can be interpreted as an expression of the privatisation of war. Initially, a solid and credible classification of the warlord phenomenon must be grounded with a theoretical framework. Since warlordism is a complex phenomenon and thus momentous for a wide range of social and political constituents, an explanation revolves around several topics. Unfolding within a fragile political environment of weak states, it deals both with questions of leadership figures without legal office as well as within a non-bureaucratic organization that is largely deficient of a state-based legal system and a state-run system of law enforcement compared with a "regular" state. Furthermore, inherent in warlord politics is the public use of force, at least in its first stages of formation, though the consolidation of the power of warlords may require the enduring control of armed forces. Therefore, warlord politics also addresses questions of public violence. As a consequence, a theoretical underpinning of an explanatory model for warlord politics may discover useful concepts in various branches of social science. An Anthropology of War and Conflict may offer conceptual foundations that possibly help in explaining why people resort to violent means in order to achieve political goals. Debates within the subfield of Political Anthropology may clarify the issue of political legitimacy (versus legality) in a warlord-dominated setting. Likewise, a transactionalist perspective with its underlying rationale of action within political anthropological models (cf. Barth 1959) adopted in the previous chapters may serve as an appropriate explanation for political alignment. Accordingly, before embarking on a description of warlord politics and its wider social and political repercussions, a brief theoretical positioning of the warlordism debate will be given beforehand in the following.

9. The theoretical framework of the warlordism debate

In the recent past, reports of the international press on the political processes in Afghanistan are lavish with undefined terms. In daily news reports, political representatives are on occasion indiscriminately referred to as *tribal leaders*, *clan chiefs* or simply as *warlords*. Not only incidents in Afghanistan, but also in other countries entice correspondents to blur terms which seem to lack analytical precision. In contemporary international politics, the ongoing debate about various occurrences which are related with a vague notion of warlordism have caused a stir of interest among a great range of commentators. Analysts of political and social sciences have recently been trying to clarify the term so as to reach higher analytical precision (cf. Bollig 2001; Elwert 1999; Reno 1998; Rich 1999 and others). Such an undertaking is only promising if substantially supplemented with empirical observation. Consequently, topical activities of so-called warlords have been examined on the basis of a collection of regions continuously reappearing as a quintessence of warlord politics. Primarily Afghanistan, Colombia and a wide range of African countries such as Somalia, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo or Sierra Leone are, among others, standard cases in order to illustrate warlord politics. Is the selection purely coincidental? Without doubt, warlord politics is also operational within the international borders of other countries. But the listed countries share at least some common features which are generally seen as providing a political environment in which warlord politics is thriving. First, they are located within boundaries of weak or failed states. Second, they draw upon one or various commodities with a relatively high market value. The control of commodities such as precious stones, raw materials, ores or narcotics is an essential resource for political control. What is more, with criminal activities warlord-type groups play either on the confined monopoly of violence and the coercive effect of the use or threat of violence so as to generate proceeds: hostage-taking, extortion rackets and raiding are part of that. Third, in conjunction with a structurally weak state, some affected countries are marked by political systems being suggestive of persistent tribal or clientelistic networks. Fourth, foreign actors have a significant influence on domestic politics. Private actors such as foreign traders or foreign political powers, such as other states, manipulate domestic politics by selectively advocating and sponsoring leaders of a favoured faction. Such a faction serves as a door-opener that is either able to share or to give access to a highly lucrative business or to consent to an advantageous political strategy that meets the interests of a foreign political actor. In turn, the material and financial support helps a warlord to extend and reinforce the control of his warlord-type chiefdom.

It is thus not surprising that the debate on warlordism mainly argues along two lines, both functioning as an indispensable complement to the other: the institutional flaws of a weak or collapsed state on the one hand and a political environment that provides for the privatization and commercialization of violence on the other hand. The latter grows within a vacuum which is a corollary of the former. The intention of this chapter is to give a resume of the recent debate on warlord politics and related phenomena that have contributed to increase the analytical precision of the term *warlord*. In order to bring out more clearly the political, economic and cultural environment of warlord politics, I try to contextualize important characteristics related to *warlordism* on the basis of recent description of concrete situations which are termed or may reasonably be termed as *warlord politics*. The suggestion made is to explain warlord politics by means of the theoretical concept of *markets of violence* and its underlying rational instrumentality of violence (Elwert 1997). Ideally, the arguments may serve as a concise supplement to the debate over contemporary political occurrences in the Afghan setting in general and their effectiveness on Pashtun homelands, more specifically. In doing so, the treatise on warlord politics will finally be related with relevant suggestions made in the previous chapters. The theory of person-centred politics as well as the underlying theoretical assumptions that favour a focus on the calculated rationale of the decisions of political actors are largely convergent with the premises made in explaining warlordism that can be interpreted as an expression of the privatization of war. Initially, a solid and credible classification of the warlord phenomenon must be grounded with a theoretical framework. Since warlordism is a complex phenomenon and thus momentous for a wide range of social and political constituents, an explanation revolves around several topics. Unfolding within a fragile political environment of weak states, it deals both with questions of leadership figures mostly without legal office as well as within a non-bureaucratic organization that is largely deficient of a state-based legal system and a state-run system of law enforcement compared with a conventional state. Furthermore, inherent in warlord politics is the public use of force, at least in its first stages of formation, though the consolidation of the power of warlords may require the persistent control and use of armed forces too. Therefore, warlord politics also addresses questions of public violence. As a consequence, a theoretical underpinning of an explanatory model for warlord politics may discover useful concepts in various branches of social science. An Anthropology of War and Conflict may offer conceptual foundations that possibly help in explaining why people resort to violent means in order to achieve political goals. Debates within the subfield of Political Anthropology may clarify the issue of political legitimacy (versus legality) in a warlord-dominated setting. Likewise, a transactionalist perspective with its underlying rationale of action within political anthropological models (cf. Barth 1959) adopted in the previous chapters may serve as an appropriate explanation for political alignment. Accordingly, before embarking on a description of warlord politics and its wider social and political repercussions, a brief theoretical positioning of the warlordism debate will be given beforehand in the following.

By definition, it is immanently inconceivable to ponder on warlord politics without tackling the relevant topics that deal with violent types of public conflict. Among the several scientific discourses, the relevant subject matter classically comprises a wide variety of categories of violent conflict ranging from warfare to feuding (Otterbein 1994). In congruence with Elwert's suggestions (1997) and based on the findings of Otterbein (1997: 171fff.), theories of warfare operate with two major models for explaining the existence and survival of war as a constant in human history. Primarily, a distinction can be made, whether public and organized violence is seen as a function of irrational aggression and frustration which is innate in human beings as a biological reality. However, theories that favour innate aggression and frustration as the basic cause for organized warfare are no longer advocated strongly (Otterbein 1994; 173). But with differing models that largely reject any deterministic value of irrational emotive causes for organized public violent action, unanimity is equally rare. Within this wide range of theories, we can again make a distinction whether theorists adopt either a cultural-materialist or a cultural-mentalist approach (Orywal 1996: 19f.). The advocates of a cultural-materialist approach consider structural conditions as the major determining factor shaping human behaviour and thus the behaviour in conflictive situations. Determining structural conditions may consist of demographic, economic or political factors or the kin-related framework. With regard to the relative impact of each factor as the main cause for conflict, the opinions not only differ considerably, but have constantly been adjusted through time (ibid.). The cultural-materialist debate on causes for public conflicts is coined by terms such as biological or cultural selection and applies the whole repertoire of theories of evolution (e.g. maximization of genetic representation and suchlike). In the context of warlord politics, we can hardly start from the idea of territorially and culturally closed systems which are marked by a high degree of collective action that would qualify for either a cultural or a biological selection. However, a probabilistic application of structural factors is useful. In particular, structural features such as specific types of a political organization, deprived economic conditions or kinship structures may occasionally facilitate the formation of warlord politics. Considering warlord politics mainly as a result of a specific type of exceptional leadership, 'the great man theory' from an evolutionary viewpoint would postulate that capable leadership must be interpreted on the basis of inheritance. Accordingly, leaders arise owing to their biological superiority (Sinha 1995: 10). Certainly, it is of great importance to analyse the structural framework out of which a political leader is able to come up as well as the social and personal attributes attached to him. But evolutionary terms are not helpful in analysing warlord politics, as it requires a theoretical perspective that is able to deal with the changing dynamics of a complex environment and which should take into account social and cultural constructions, too. Alternative theories prove to be more meaningful in explaining warlordism. Even if occasionally not paying enough attention to structural conditions, cognitive-idealistic theories are more plausible in order to explain organized public violence for the purpose of this paper. Cognitive-idealistic theories are influenced by ideas postulated by the ethological model of co-evolution. That is, genetical predispositions exist. But they are far from being deterministic. Rather, their potentials are subject to cultural shaping through the process of socialization. Thus, culture may either encourage or suppress specific values behaviours. For instance, the capacity of aggression and violent behaviour can thus rather be suppressed by attaching a negative or little desirable connotation to it. A functional equivalent may offer alternative ways of reaching a defined goal (Orywal 1996: 20). In a different cultural context, a violent and martial behaviour may be encouraged: everyday practice and persons serve as examples in that aggressive reactions are encouraged. All the more, refraining from a violent response to a challenging action may even result in social sanction. Similar mechanisms are normative in Pashtun society where *pashtunwali* and codes of honour are still very active in specific situations and to various degrees according to the context.

Cultural dispositions impact on the goals which are desired as well as on the strategies applied in reaching them. Similarly, the learning theory suggests that human behaviour is culture-specific and learned. That is, through processes of identification and imitation, culturally desirable and successful behaviour is likely to be imitated and adopted as norm (Orywal 1996: 22). Provided that aggressive actions in public prove to be successful in reaching desirable goals, they will likely to become a standard. , all the more, if not culturally discouraged, nor sanctioned by juridical systems or legitimate authorities. Examples such as leaders may serve the same function: they signal desired and successful behaviour (ibid.). On the basis of the brief outline of the basic paradigms of cognitive-idealistic theories, we can sum up that behaviour which is positively valued in a cultural context is likely to be rewarded, all the more if desired goals can be achieved. Negative sanctions should be avoided. Therefore, an idealised behaviour in a cultural context will conform to the pertinent values and normative expectations. The reward is paid off with material commodities or symbolic wealth that is striven after. This in turn portrays the individual utility as a result of a specific action. In the theoretical approach of *rational choice*, the evaluation of a behaviour according to the relative success of the ensuing results is commonly subsumed under the notion of *homo oeconomicus*. The underlying conception of man suggests individuals who rationalize their actions according to their costs and utilities, respectively. An individual is constantly seeking for the utility maximization of his actions. With behaviours that are culturally constructed, it is important to mention the quality of wanted "goods": the economic reference of the assessment of an actor's behaviour touches upon material as well as symbolic types of capital (Orywal 1996: 24ff.). For instance, social and personality attributes of political leaders may more or less conform with cultural values, which in turn are indicative for successful action:

> Leaders operate within a social and cultural environment. When a political community allocates and agrees to the authority of a leader, it also allocates and agrees to the codes of performance and values expected in leaders. [...] Skillful leaders respond to these expectations by mobilizing their social and personality attributes. (Kurtz 2001: 42)

For a *rational choice* interpretation, also the opposite causal direction is plausible. Namely, specific, culturally sound attributes of behaviour or personal qualities must be effective. Since it is exactly that set of attributes which proves to be successful, at least from the perspective of a rationally interpreting individual. Again, a political actor attempts to anticipate the consequences of an action. The probability of an expected success of a specific action is at the core of such an assessment. The more probable a specific action is capable of engendering the desired consequences, the more likely an action will be preferred among alternative options. Culturally biased normative categories are the completion of the process of assessment. The balance of costs and utility is extended by the cultural variable. That is, cultural features such as values and normative expectations measure not only the desired goals of an action, but also the type of the applied strategies (Orywal 1996: 25f.). Is violence as an optional strategy sanctioned negatively in a cultural context? Or is violence as a strategy in order to realize one's goals encouraged? As a consequence, *action theory* examines violence as a strategy on the basis of individual *utility maximization*. Largely consistent with a theoretical foundation that favours to interpret conflictive occurrences in line with the concepts of rational choice and utility maximization, warlord-type conflicts and civil wars centre upon following explanations:

- Warlord conflicts arise from conditions where the functional state is weak of absent. Consequently, important functions such as public law and order, security and social services are lacking. In assessing options rationally, the population may give over their allegiance to alternative "providers" if they are more promising in assuming at least some public functions, even if this involves supporting unlawful activities.
- Warlord-type activities entail some risks of being prosecuted. However, in a political environment of a weak or "tacitly approving" (and possibly collaborating) state, formally criminal activities and infringements are unlikely to be sanctioned. By comparing the advantages of gaining power and exploiting a profitable business with the inconveniences of punishment, formally unlawful activities are more attractive within a framework of ineffective law enforcement.
- Within a framework of ineffective law enforcement and as result of breakdown of an operative state's monopoly of power, the control as well as the use of violent means may promise to maximize the economic utility, given that the control of non-state coercion does not face severe impediments.
- As explained previously in fuller detail, the cultural basis may serve as a channelling factor. Yet, cultural values are not stable and also subject to change. For instance, with Pashtun society, one might assume that the cultural repertoire reinforcing martial and belligerent qualities increases plausibility for applying violence as an accepted means for confronting conflicts. One should not forget: after decades of war, in Afghanistan a complete generation of young men has grown up seeing nothing more than war and violence as a means for political struggle. This helps to foster a culture of violence. Consequently, violence serves as a model.

Conclusive remarks will resume the theoretical ideas again. A theory of *markets of violence* starts from the idea of civil wars of warlord-type to have a rational basis. That is, rational calculation forms the basis for involved actors in the relevant decisions to be made. Violence is an option for leading political actors provided that it is purchasable and serves as the most appropriate means to achieve (and thus maximize) economic and political goals. Whether the control of privatized means of violence is liable to prosecution may reduce the attractiveness of violent means. Hence, a functional law enforcement system of the state doubtless acts as a deterrent. Furthermore, the cultural legitimacy of the use of violence in conflicts may also have an effect on the likelihood to resort to violent methods. However, critical questions are imperative. Are all involved actors capable of following a decision based on rational choice? Does the common population benefit from the economic achievements based on coercion? Can we attribute the allegiance of a large part of the common population to a rational decision-making process which takes into account the fatal consequences a resistant behaviour may have? Is mere opportunism, if only to avoid perils, also a consequence of rational choice given that the behaviour is enforced to a certain degree? Despite the apparent soundness of a theoretical framework based on rationality of public violence, fears, emotions, uncertainty-avoidance strategies and existing resistance as a consequence of idealistic and political motives should also be taken into consideration.

10. Markets of violence

A plausible theoretical framework in order to recognise the political preconditions and to understand the functioning of warlord politics is offered by theoretical approaches which discusses public violence against the background of *markets of violence*. As has been shown, unlike explanations that associate public violence with irrationality and emotions, a theory of markets of violence examines the exertion of public violence by assuming a calculated rationale as the underlying driving force for the process of decision-making of individuals:

> Civil wars and conflicts dominated by warlords seem to be irrational events. The very arousal of this impression is in itself systematic. The protagonists and their representatives cite venerable traditions of hate, revenge and religious-moral obligations as justifications for their activities. However, these justifications, which sometimes seem well-founded in western eyes, are no more than a smoke-screen concealing the actual events which are predominantly based on economic motivations. (Elwert 1999: 85)

Denying negative emotions being involved in warlord conflicts would certainly simplify the reality. In warlord-led civil wars, political, ethnic and religious matters prove to have a widespread appeal for followers. The politicization of religious and social matters is regularly intermingled with hatred and subsequent irrational actions. To integrate the apparent reductionism, Elwert draws a consistent distinction where means and goals differ variously in their significance for the actors involved. A first distinction is made between groups of actors involved in civil wars and conflicts dominated by warlords: for protagonists and their representatives, economic goals are the key stakes for their motivation. But the leading actors are dependant on the rank and file: political and military followers, agents, fighter “infantry” and sundry favourites. While for the latter actor groups, pecuniary gains or mere opportunism also account for joining the venture, other purposes should be considered, too (ibid.). Ethnic, religious and social tensions or the political struggle for freedom may be manifest in collective expressions of anger, hate, acts of revenge, violent infringements and similar emotions and actions devoid of any strategic rationality. In those contexts, negative emotions are instrumentalized by the leading actors. But the self-stabilised structure of warlord conflicts owes its continuation mainly to “a profit-oriented economic system which combines violence and trade as a means of access to commodities” (ibid.). In summary, warlord conflicts and civil wars are essentially markets of violence in which ethnic, social and religious tensions are instrumentalized for political goals of the leading actors. Thus, a theory of markets of violence implies that the acquisitive behaviour of the dominant actors accords with the behaviour of entrepreneurs pursuing profit. The surface of the conflict predominantly suggests other issues to be the source of the tensions. Most civil wars and violent riots within states entice observers to interpret conflicts as featuring aspects of moral, religion, world-view, power conflicts, honour, freedom, ideology, revenge or struggle for freedom. This is certainly true if we consider the wide range of varieties of civil wars and conflicts with regard to their complexity in both the issues at stake and the form of conflictive arrangements. Nevertheless, under this surface of moral, religious or political concerns, Elwert suspects that a self-perpetuating system is functional which "links non-violent commodity markets with the violent acquisition of goods" (ibid.: 86). This system is based on a guiding principle that we also find in classical commodity markets: the exchange of goods derived from their exchange value. Even though this concept of markets of violence does not fully stand comparison with the definition of markets in the normative sense of economic science, the central idea must focus on the behaviour of the actors involved. The central actors in such violent market systems are accordingly not driven by hate, revenge or political ideologies. Rather, they employ rational and calculated strategies in the pursuit of economic profit. This is congruent with the strategy of the entrepreneur in a capitalist system. However, a simplified concept of the primacy of an orderly organized economic system within warlord areas must be reconsidered and revised, since markets of violence are deficient of the type of social order in "normal" times (ibid.). It lacks the monopoly of violence with its inherent rules and sanctions which discipline actions that are non-conform to the conventional regulations of the state. As a consequence, distinctive characteristics differentiate warlord-like systems from conventional economic systems within a state that claims the exclusive monopoly of violence:

(a) In markets of violence, contracts between warring or trading parties can be breached (ibid.: 87).

(b) Deliberate violence is a regular means and an efficient tool for achieving economic aims. Unlike "normal" entrepreneurs, warlord entrepreneurs also use violence as an instrument for the generation of revenue (ibid.).

(c) Markets of violence often trade with commodities which are either strongly regulated, restricted or even banned from trade within "conventional" markets which are subject to national or international laws.

What scholars, who advocate the theory of violence, attempt to show is on the one hand to reveal economic motives behind warlordism. On the other hand, some of them stress the systemic character which lies behind such conflicts. Hence, contrary to the impression of warlord conflicts to be chaotic, disorganized and unpredictable events, Elwert places great emphasis on the systemic nature of such conflicts (1999: 88). Many alternative causes of emergence of civil wars and warlord conflicts disregard the conditions for the durability of such conflicts. A theory of markets of violence explains the relative stability and permanence of conflicts with the systemic nature of their organizational framework. And a concept of system implies reproduction. Reproduction, in turn, is either built on mutual dependence of the involved actors or a result of a constellation of coercive authority in which agents of violence hold the whip hand, or mostly a combination of both. That is, by controlling force and economic resources, a warlord can sustain a system in a time and within a violence-open area where violence has the most convincing arguments for weaker and dependant actors who in turn hinge on protection as well as the benevolence of warlords. These effects become even more acute if the conditions of the traditional economic sectors deteriorate dramatically. This increases the dependency on the system of markets of violence for all actors involved, since it establishes alternative income sectors for those dependant on wages and for the self-employed (Elwert 1999: 94). Moreover, due to the gradual collapse of the traditional economic sectors, the number of alternative economic options is being reduced significantly. This may increase the degree of dependency and undoubtedly adds to the worsening of the economic situation, particularly if facing the lure of higher wages and profit opportunities in the violent market sector (ibid.).

10.1 Preconditions and development

How does warlordism come about? Under what circumstances are warlord conflicts more likely to arise? In connection with the situation in many African countries, which are repeatedly used as prime examples for warlordism, the collapse of the state in terms of its functional significance is mentioned as the principal cause for intra-state conflicts. Michael Bollig refutes the assertion that warlordism is a new phenomenon. It is an African specificity neither. By means of historical comparison, precursors of today's warlords can be found in the Chinese warlords who had been operating before the Kuomintang seized power and after the fall of the Manchu dynasty (1926–27). Furthermore, the pervasive machinations of mercantile agents throughout the entire African continent during the 18th and the 19th century were able to bring forth very similar aspects to the ones associated with present-day warlordism (Bollig 2001). As suggested earlier, a synchronic evaluation shows several incidents in many parts of the world which can be subsumed the label warlordism. A list of potential countries has been given above. In spite of the varied guises, all cases share a common set of characteristics to some degree. This substantiates the application of a single term, though in their commencement, further development, in their political setting as well as in terms of applied methods, the relating conflicts may differ in the form and in the accentuation of single elements.

10.1.1 The weak state

Ultimately, every contributor to the debate concurs unanimously with one another on the function, or rather dysfunction of the state as a prominent prerequisite for the formation of warlord politics. A dysfunctional or –in large parts of various countries– an absent state is often referred to as *a weak state* or *a collapsed state* (Rich 1999; Reno 1998). What indicators characterize a state to be a weak state? Mainly, if administrative and arbitrating institutions of the state are ineffective, a state may lose control as well as legitimacy among the population. The partial or complete loss of the monopoly of violence on the part of the state is the most significant consequence. In turn, the lack of a coercive state monopoly is the starting point of warlordism, since it creates a vacuum of power. Eppler gives an account of the congruence of warlordism with the political situation in weak states by taking inventory of dysfunctional states in Africa. A political map (excerpted from the German weekly magazine *Die Zeit*) differentiate between several categories of states south of the Sahara: (1) states which are judged to be *fully functional*, for the most part located in the southern corner of the continent. Besides the southern African states, also Ivory Coast and Zimbabwe belong to this category. At least the former made headlines due to incidents that proved the ineffectiveness of the state to exert control. Throughout late autumn in 2002, a rebel army took control of the north. This induced the government to engage French forces as well as private mercenaries. The example not only shows the deficient accuracy applied in the classification, but also the potential dynamics and inclination towards warlordism in other countries; (2) another cluster of states are classified as being in a state of *advanced disintegration of the state*. Nearly any other sub-Saharan country is subsumed under this category, if not added to the third category: (3) states in a condition of *overt or completed disintegration of the state*. The last category comprises countries, such as Burundi, Congo (both), Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and some others. States in a condition of *overt or completed disintegration* are characterized by distinctive features: The state's monopoly on force is largely broken or challenged and is typically confined to one or a few centres. The infrastructure, the education system and the healthcare system have collapsed. The basic care of the population is endangered (Eppler 2002: 50ff.). Quoting the author of the article, Grill, Eppler points out the public disappearance and oblivion of areas, where the media is absent. In doing so, a *terra incognito* is created, in which the absence of a legal and legitimate monopoly of violence engenders a power struggle between competing forces. For instance, around the turn of the century, fractions of resistance, rebel units, army fractions from neighbouring countries, tribal militias as well as a variety of warlords were competing in the Democratic Republic of Congo for political power and for the access to material treasures. This was only possible after the collapse of the regime of dictator Mobutu (governing the state Zaïre, then). Not only relating to the Congolese and other African states, but also in view of the unclear situation in other countries, a critical remark is required if political systems of sovereign states are compared with collapsed states. Is it useful to define *states* consistent with the mutual and mostly tacit recognition among the international community? The international law does not define the structural nor the constitutional arrangement of a nation-state, even though in the course of ongoing debates on human rights, this relativism is contentious. Furthermore, recognition in practice does rarely demand any explicit text of declaration. Recognition is an effect of a conduct implying an intent. That is, the recognition of a nation-state as a subject of international law is conditional on a manifestation of intent: a non-state may be recognised by other states and thus treated as a subject of international law, if they foster international relations. The option of the recognition of a government under international law does not imply a judgement on the inner state legitimacy or legality of the recognised government either (Kimminich 1997: 106–110). To sum up, the international law and its recognition practices as a terminological gauge for a definition of a nation-state does not take account of de facto situations to a sufficient degree. Even the formulated preconditions based on a common theory of states does not give a standard for legitimacy nor an account for a *de facto* situation within a state. It provides the basic trinity of elements that justify to speak of a state: an appropriate ratio of unity of (1) the people (nation), (2) the territory and (3) the governmental authority (ibid.: 1997: 113). But in resuming the Congo case, how can we differentiate operatively a political representative of the state Zaïre from warlords without international recognition, if he was likely applying very similar methods like the latter? For Mobutu and other despots, the state with its revenues has been (and still is in many countries) considered as their private property and treated as such (Eppler 2002: 52). As a consequence, political actors, whether official incumbents or private warlords, should categorized according to their methods applied in order to gain or maintain control. Is violence selectively tolerated as a means to achieve private goals, or is the use of violence monopolized and subject to general legal and transparent regulations, which would systematically and objectively impose penalty on the infractions. Furthermore, not only legal aspects, but also aspects of legitimacy should be considered. At last, the nature of interest of the political leader should be examined critically. That is, do political activities and the spoils serve the public interest or rather (or solely) the private interest of the political leaders and their favourites? After all and despite all objections, this paper attempts to bring into focus alleged warlords and warlord-like politics, which include "those prepared and able, by force or its threat, to deny ideological and operational space to a state and who put forward […] an unarticulated alternative to citizenship" (Chan 1999: 164). Accordingly, official state representatives will not fit into this category. But consistent with the reservations made above regarding the blurry line between the various status of political actors, one should always bear in mind that (western) preconceptions of a bureaucratic nation-state with its functions and agents occasionally do not apply to *de facto* realities. Apart from being in contrast with the official state, the indicators introduced above describe in general terms, by what features warlord politics can be characterized: the private nature of the goals; the arbitrary use of violence to achieve them; the absence of a legal system; the lack of the monopoly of violence. Manifestly, systematic warlordism comprises additional attributes of considerable importance. However, an analysis of the prerequisites for the formation of markets of violence must resume the absence or dysfunctionality of law enforcement of the state as well as the disintegration of the monopoly of violence. Against this background, Elwert offers an unexpected explanation for the bearing of the use of violence on the part of the state as a model even after its collapse: "state intervention contravenes the notion of legitimate use of violence which exists among the people and thus legitimates counter-violence or an imitation of this despotism at the lowest level" (1999: 95). Thus, Elwert ascribes the public violence at a lower level also to the activities of a despotic state. It promotes the use –or rather misuse– of violence as a socially acceptable means in conflict. Hence, the prevalent *command state* with its arbitrary use of violence is held responsible for fostering a culture of violence. In a *command state*, "the authority present has priority over laws, contracts and other written regulations" (ibid.). Consequently, the arbitrariness of the state agents with the relevant side effects is considered to be accountable for the beginning of many African civil wars. Subsequent to the weakness of law enforcement in violent-open areas, a stage of self-help and self-defence is an option. This self-help functions as a substitute for the lack of the security of the legal system. Frequently, it takes violent form. How a culture of self-help and self-defence with its violent means of achieving justice in a more legitimate, but less legal sense can slide into warlordism is shown by Elwert on account of specific episodes in Somalia (Elwert 1999:

95f.). Groups of herders had long since been in possession of fire weapons. Independently of clan courts or state justice, the armament enabled them to secure their rights to water places. Rather than intervening, the state approved this privatisation of law enforcement. This helped reducing public expenses by alleviating the task of the state, given that the public safety was balanced or regulated in some way. But after the closure of the frontier to Ethiopia, the situation for the nomads deteriorated. The traders, who have been dealing with the nomads for a long time, were affected too. Subsequently, the traders procured weapons for the nomads in abundance. The militia of *Gadabursi* was created. The militia discerned the economic opportunity, while the weapons facilitated profitable economic activities: (1) the acquisition of food; (2) the hostage-taking for the extortion of ransom; (3) the enforced collection of street tolls from food aid transports; (4) the selling of extortion rackets, such as the "imposed protection" to drug smugglers. Such activities turned out not only to be a resort to the economic predicament, but a more profitable activity than herding (ibid.: 96ff.). The Somali example shows the emergence of economic opportunities in a situation, that enables the private use of violence to become effective, if the monopoly of force of the state is nonexistent. Moreover, it is a substantiation of the thesis of markets of violence. That is, overt entrepreneurial considerations become active also behind the violent scene. In the Somali example, traders are the driving force by sponsoring the armament of the nomads without neglecting their own interests. Another aspect presumably accelerates and intensifies the violent face in the process of privatisation of war: "if confronted with a rapid economic development […] 'self help' which is intended as a means of achieving justice is then an obvious option" (Elwert 1999: 95). Economic deprivation and change lowers the inhibition level before using force as a means of acquisition. However, the lack or inefficiency of the monopoly of force together with economic opportunities and deprivation do not alone precipitate a market of violence with the complementary privatisation of law. Even beyond the "normal" times, places and models, i.e. the standard bureaucratic nation-state being in charge of monopoly of violence, alternative models for *violence control* exist. For instance, segmentary societies produce alternative institutionalized methods for channelling violence. Feuds, expulsion and non-state executive institutions, such as the Pashtun *jirga*, provide manageable forms of social control which enjoy a high degree of legitimacy: "Even unregulated violence may lead to the establishment of routines, it will not, however, result in the formulations of rule" (Elwert 1999: 86). In areas, where alternative regulations exist, the authority of the state is often very limited. Therefore, the diverging line should not only be made, where the bureaucratic state contrast with non-state forms of violence control, which may have equivalent functions for channelling the public use of violence. Elwert operates with the term *violence open areas*. The term delineates areas that lack a predictable and regulated channelling of violence and thus social order in contrast to alternative models of social order. Violence open areas are a vital precondition for the emergence of markets of violence (ibid.). For Somalia, similar objections are appropriate:

> Somalia […] relegated to being one of the world's chief examples of a "failed state" – and assumed to be a land of lawlessness and chronic, criminally opportunistic, conflict. But while there is no functioning, recognised central government, that does not mean Somalia is nowhere governed. Local structures operate in some parts of the country; militias or unrecognised administrations have established themselves in others, and elsewhere Somalis live relatively peaceful lives without benefit of state structures. (ICGa 2002: 1)

In practice, it may be difficult to draw a sharp line between violence open areas and areas where non-state models of channelling of violence are predominant. Stages of transition complicate the matter. For, in particular areas, one would hardly deny the existence of a state's presence. But the mere physical or administrative attendance of the state does not entail its effectiveness per se. West African Benin provides a further exemplary case how reactionary politicization develops within a political environment, in which a functionally deficient civil service and law enforcement turns violence to be a legitimate means for re-establishing "justice". Before the turn of the last century, in south western Benin a civic militia formed as result from public discontent concerning the ineffectiveness of law enforcement of the state. At that time, the region was abound with marauding gangs of criminals. Domestic and foreign groups were raiding, rioting and raping. The conception of legality of the countermovement did not go beyond vigilantism and retaliatory measures. The police and the public administration were not longer capable of preventing the increasing number of criminal acts nor did they keep up with an appropriate efficiency of criminal prosecution (Eppler 2002: 34–36). The "Bakassi-Boys" of Aba, a town in southern Nigaria, serve as a classical example for privatization of violence "from down below". Criminal bands have been terrorizing the citizens for years. Their main business was the collection of extortion racket threatening to use force. Police-officers did not interfere. Their low salary was an ineffective incentive to expose oneself to danger. After another vicious crime, an angry mob of citizens gave vent to their anger and executed many of the miscreants. Subsequently, the citizens and traders signed on unemployed young men as a professional protection force. Up to today, those "Bakassi-Boys" are sponsored by monthly contributions. Besides, the governor himself also contributes to the project of the private militia (Eppler 2002: 36–39).

The cases show up contexts in which violence-open areas are nurtured. The examples demonstrate various patterns of how violence-open areas may develop. While some features are context-specific, other characteristics allow to formulate constants:

- The absence of the state, its administration and law enforcement provides an environment in which violence-open areas may develop.
- Not merely the absence but also the ineffectiveness of the state, its administration and law enforcement may lead to the creation of unchecked violence.
- Even if physically present, security force do not meet their functions. Regularly, this results from a lack of reasonable incentives for the public servants, such as a sufficient payment. This in turn engenders corruptive practices.
- As in Benin, violent groups which make use of the ineffectiveness of functional state, are developing into a privatized business of violence. This may provoke counterviolence of

violent civil rights movement, which in turn apply the use of violence without transparent constitutional basis. Rather, retaliatory measures which lack legal proceduralization and transparent governance.

- The non-state control of a violence-open area is a result either of the need of the population's desire to secure the public order or of an opportunity for rising warlords and their adherents to take advantage of the situation in order to pursuit their business.
- In violence-open areas, protagonists arise. They are leaders of a newly organized group or movement (Benin). If not, they draw upon traditional allegiance, such as kinship (Somalia).
- The collapse of a functional state may, but need *not automatically* result in the development of persistent warlordism based on a sustainable economization of violence. The motives of the protagonists are a decisive factor.
- At least in the beginning of violent movements and civil militias, the driving motives are mainly either political, social, religious or ideological in nature, as will be shown in the following.

10.1.2 Ideological beginnings and the gradual economization

Warlords as actors in markets of violence are not dependant on the state. They renounce the state's authority. In order not to imperil their business, they reject the state and attempt to evade it. Warlords do not want a state (Eppler 2002: 53). But a warlord refrains oneself from fighting the state actively. At least, crushing the state is not his top priority. However, if his business is at stake, violent and aggressive attempts of the state to put a stop to warlordism and its unlawful activities will face resolute reactions. This has mainly two reasons. First, the power of the warlord depends on the highly profitable business running in markets of violence. The endurance of his mere economic existence is at stake. Second, in case of subsequent restoration of a functional state and a legal system, warlords must fear of being charged with and prosecuted for various offences. In addition, warlords and their adherents would possibly have to face informal retaliatory measures on the part of victims who endured many infringements during the arbitrary rule of warlordism. Nonetheless, the contention of a principal despise for any institutional equivalent to the state reveals some weakness on closer inspection. Many revolutionary movements and politically motivated insurgent groups appear to teach another lesson: programmatically, they strive either for an own state, another state or a state based on equality and unbiased justice (Eppler 2002: 31). In the beginning of their existence, instead of attempting to eliminate the authority of the state, liberation movements aim to transfer the monopoly of violence to other hands. Most typically, in the first stage of civil wars, the efforts to establish an alternative state are paired with motives which are profoundly political. In general, civil wars have a background of social, cultural and economic tensions (Waldmann 1999: 64). In the Northern Irish conflict, the clash between confessional groups gives evidence for religious motives. On the Balkans, smouldering ethnic cleavages broke out after they had been covered up by the Tito regime. Additionally, religiously motivated hostilities aggravated the conflict. In the case of Latin America, ethnic or religious tensions were less important for enflaming violent conflicts, given the low degree of ethnic or religious segmentation in Latin American societies. Rather, an intertwined pattern of regional and social disparities was held responsible for stirring up numerous hotspots of violent crisis for the last decades (ibid: 65). Thus, a reasonable number of evidence suggests political motives, religious convictions and ideologies to be the initial forces in civil wars. But on closer examination, the process of escalation of civil wars unveils a more differentiating dynamics. While in the first stage of civil wars non-economic motives are effective in initializing conflicts by mobilizing distrust and discontent among the population, economic motives prevail as soon as the conflict becomes stable. Markets of violence "generally originate in conflicts of a non-economic nature. The continuation of violence is, however, based on economic motives or unconscious economic behaviour" (Elwert 1999: 101ff.). In Colombia, two rebel groups[1] fight for the control of an extensive area in Colombia. Nearly half of all Colombian administrative communities are under the control of either party. Originally, they were composed of political-revolutionary fighting units with the declared purpose of tackling the rural poverty and aiming at improving the economic and political situation of the deprived population. The declaration from 1965 put emphasis on nationalist ideas as well as on popular democracy by seizing, or renovating, the power of the state:

> El objetivo de la lucha armada era tomarse el poder del estado para establecer un gobierno democrático y popular capaz de liberar [a Colombia] de los monopolies y la oligarquía criolla, así como garantizar la igualdad plena entre [los colombianos], otorgando libertades democráticas [...] garantizando el respeto por la dignidad humana y el libre desarrollo de todos los colombianos. (ICGb: 6)

But meanwhile, Eppler among others (Waldmann 1999) query whether the rebels foster rather their private business than their political goals. Do they trade with drugs in order to realize particular political issues which they profess? Or do they exercise force with the sheer intention of securing their profitable business? It is as well highly questionable whether Colombians themselves are able to discern the political and social character of the insurgents' motives (Eppler 2002:33). Some take the rebel group *Abu Sayyaf*, operating in southern Indonesia, for a politically and religiously motivated organization. Others doubt the ideological nature of their activities and point to the pattern of their criminal daily business, such as commercialized hostage-taking. Most likely, they are both Muslim extremists and an entrepreneurial organization involved in criminal business (ibid: 31). A similar combination can be identified with many groups. As a rule, they profess religious fundamentalism, ideologies or political convictions. Behind the scenes, they run a profitable business, comprising predominantly illegal activities. Waldmann has examined a variety of civil wars. His concern are the subsequent stages which develop according to the functional logic of the privatization of violence. The formulated stages of the "auto-dynamics of violent processes" attempt to describe the conditions under which a movement of resistance with political goals and ideological motives converts into a violent organization in which "violence is and end in itself" and violence is becoming self-sustaining (Waldmann 1999: 70–76). Figure 3 illustrates the functional logic underlying this development.

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[1] The FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas) with approx. 15.000 fighters and the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional) with approx. 6.000 fighters.

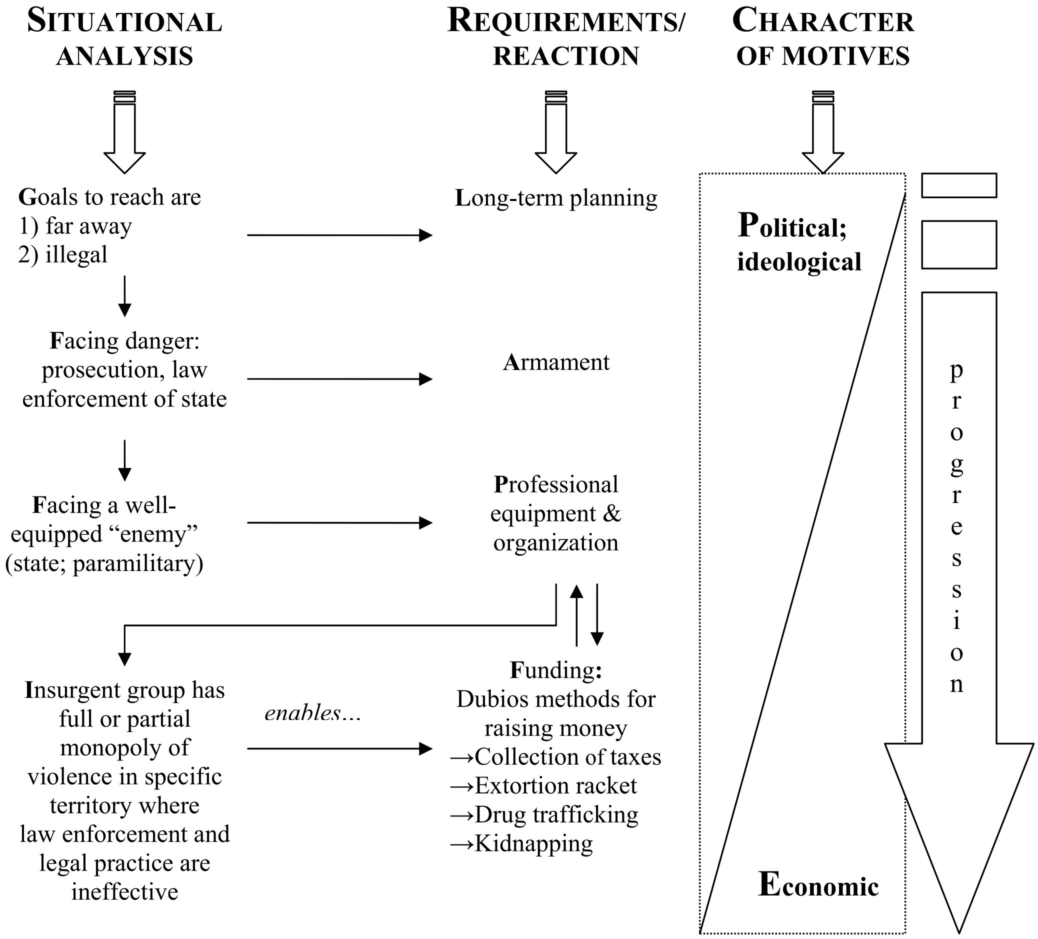
SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS
REQUIREMENTS/ REACTION
CHARACTER OF MOTIVES
Goals to reach are
1) far away
2) illegal
Long-term planning
Facing danger: prosecution, law enforcement of state
Armament
Facing a well-equipped "enemy" (state; paramilitary)
Professional equipment & organization
Insurgent group has full or partial monopoly of violence in specific territory where law enforcement and legal practice are ineffective
enables...
Funding:
Dubios methods for raising money
→Collection of taxes
→Extortion racket
→Drug trafficking
→Kidnapping
Political; ideological
Economic
progression

Figure 3:
Auto-dynamics of the escalation process in civil wars: Based on Waldmann (1999: 70ff.)

In accordance with the stages of escalation elaborated by Waldmann, civil wars regularly follow an auto-dynamic pattern in the course of the actions (1999: 70–72). Accordingly, the self-independisation of violence is a result of a self-reinforcing process which is unleashed by mostly subversive goals of political, ideological or religious character at the point in time. Given that the goals of the insurgents are momentous and far away, the long-term project requires an organization and an equipment of professional quality. This in turn calls for an immense amount of funds and in all probability a gradual professionalization in terms of logistical infrastructure, equipment and training. As soon as the insurgents start building up armed forces, such as organized civil militias, they are increasingly dependant on financial revenues. For, they must satisfy the need of the armed forces. Furthermore, the organization demands constant rearmament due to circumstances that have developed in the meantime: First, they face to an ever greater extent the prosecution of the state, provided the latter has the necessary resources and the military potency. Second, as in Colombia and elsewhere insurgents may have brought a territory under their control. This entails the necessity to impose their monopoly of force on their controlled territory. Organized forces and the threat of the use of violence serve (a) as a means of exerting pressure for upholding the control and (b) as a disincentive so as to deter the population from revolting or betrayal; (c) additionally, armed forces in the context of an apparent monopoly of violence, such as a rebel's privatized militia may also offer an alternative to a chaotic, violence-open area, where the use of violence is prone to arbitrariness; (d) after having experienced a despotic and unpredictable rule of a repressive "law enforcement" of an authoritarian state, the civilian population may even strongly approve of a presence that guarantee protection and public security. But after the violent process of escalation, as shown in table 3, has progressed, that organizations tend to

> lead a life of their own and that they have their own interests, mainly to preserve themselves. Be it a terrorist cell, militia, a guerrilla movement or a revolutionary army, all these organizations of violence tend to develop in the same way. Once they have been created they tend to develop a dynamic of their own and tend to degenerate to apparatuses of violence. (Waldmann 1999: 71)

Waldmann and others attribute this stage of development to the immense financial need of the rebellious movement as well as to the elaborated professionalization of the organization. Members of the organization and the militia is becoming more and more highly dependant on the movement itself in economic terms. After all, the organization provides jobs and opportunities. In the wake of worsening economic conditions, this should not be underrated. But why then do rebel groups usually "fish in troubled waters" to feed the greedy mouths of their violent machinery? Mostly, warlord systems do not arise in isolated areas, nor are they fully detached from a wider economic context. Provided that the surrounding state has not entirely lost its functional capability, the law enforcement will hardly leave a stone unturned in trying to impede business activities of the insurgents on a regular and legal basis taking place or extending outside their controlled area. Thus, "when such easily accessible, political and morally unproblematic resources are absent, the rebels are often forced to resort to dubious methods for raising money" (Waldmann 1999: 71). As a consequence, they are increasingly active in criminal business, such as robberies, kidnapping or extortion to better their financial situation (cf. chapter11.8).

Rebellious groups begin as reactionary organizations and pose as freedom fighters. If the conflict last for too long, they must face the question as to how they can justify their existence (ibid.: 72). In the course of their existence, the political and ideological rhetoric has never ceased. The responses to this problem can vary:

(a) Permanent reaffirmation so as to justify the state of emergency that require violent vigilance and the privileges of irregular fighting groups.

(b) Constant provocation may trigger a counterattack of the opposing party. This gives reason for upholding the violent apparatus with its restrictions. "Under the pretence of of mutual attack, a 'balance of horror' is established in shich different militant groups help each other to stay alive" (ibid.).

(c) Pretence of legitimacy to their right of existence through the assumption of quasi-state functions (ibid.). That is, by protecting a population group from an external enemy, they seek to replace the dysfunctional or weak state in many spheres: public security, protection, job provisions, social welfare. Such activities create economic dependencies which not merely justify the organization's existence but also ensure political allegiance.

(d) Ignorance or repression of possible protest and resistance. The use of coercion instead of respecting the voluntary consensus is a vital constituent of organizations in the realm of privatized violence (ibid.).

To summarize the argument, violence becomes private when the original political goals appear to be become a means for attributing legitimacy to the business of privatized violence. The real goal as now become less to achieve the original non-economic goals, but to maintain the system based on privatized violence. In the model of conflict escalation, the first state can be described as the initial phase when the mobilisation centres around political and ideological motives. Typical of the first step is that the long term goals, be they of social revolutionary or of ethnic nature, do not get out of sight. Moreover, organizations of violence are closely connected with supporting popular sectors. Public allegiance is mostly not enforced, but voluntary by nature. Some indicators hint at the fact that civil wars have reached the second stage of escalation (Waldmann 1999: 73):

- *Internal factional tendencies*: Battles between rivalling factions increase. Internal splitting is more likely to occur in that leaders leave their troops and offer their armed services to everyone who is able and willing to pay enough. The establishment and dissolution of alliances are unpredictable and immediate. Alliances become unstable. This is symptomatic and momentous for a growing violence market.
- *Growing economization and the violence market*: The trade with violence and the force & arms trade undergoes a continuous process of economization. That is, the use of violence is becoming less a question of "the right political side", but is subject to a market price. Violence is purchasable and. Instead of being the last resort for the solution to a conflict, violence is steadily converting to a profaned and purchasable service. The original non-economically motivated declarations proclaimed during the initial stage of escalation loose importance. Instead, economic and calculating power politics comes into effect.
- *Detachment from population:* The population's interest is becoming left out of consideration. Neither is it longer included in the political decision making process, nor are social

deliberation and social backing the primary goal: “Instead it becomes an object of exploitation, bribery and forced recruitment. […] distinction is no longer made between population groups that belong to the enemy’s and to one’s own faction” (ibid.).

- *Degeneration of the channelled monopoly of violence*: The “state within a state” is on the verge of collapse. The overt and unrestrained use of violence for private purposes is a corollary of the increasing factionalism and marketing of violence. Violence is used individually to make money. Violent acts as a result of revenge and envy occur indiscriminately. The border line between diverse and incompatible motives for the use of violence becomes increasingly blurred: Political violence and ordinary violence mix up. The same armed group may appear as fighters for liberation and another time as gang of bandits: “The right of the strongest becomes the dominant means of socially imposing one’s will” (ibid.).

The illustrated model as a means for describing the auto-dynamics of civil wars is useful in explaining many forms of warlordism. In particular, the transition from a socially backed movement with a democratic countenance to the privatization of war gives some explanation of how the control of violence can convert into a type of currency within a system in which market conditions seem to be effective. A fundamental argument of the debate must be the instrumental character of political goals. Whether in internal conflicts of Afghanistan, in Central Asia, in Colombia or in many conflictive regions in Africa: political goals, the struggle for social justice, religion or ideology does not lack in any rhetoric programme irrespective of the length of the conflict. However, reactionary rhetoric may only serve as a means for mobilizing public allegiance and as a justification providing the right to exist. Consistent with the model of auto-escalation of civil wars, the discrepancy between pretended goals and unfeigned intentions enlarges in the course of events. In spite of the plausibility of the model for the formation of warlord-like conflicts, it is not applicable to every phenomenon in full details. The initial emergence of ideology, religion or social politics is not always as evident as with conflicts, such as the civil wars in Colombia, Moçambique, Northern Ireland or on the Balkans. In addition, in the course of civil wars, new actors join forces to confront the very movement that have triggered off the conflict. For instance, the forces of the paramilitary units in Colombia are induced to fight the insurgents to a lower extent for ideological reasons. Rather, they are at the disposal of a wealthy economic and political elite as well as of big landowners (Eppler 2002: 42). They are solely instrumental in protecting and maintaining the political and social status quo. In this respect, they epitomize the archetype of organized purchasable violence. Many other occurrences are taken into account insufficiently. Numerous manifestations of warlordism have placed great emphasis on ethnic and clan basis. In Somalia or in Afghanistan, ethnic and tribal fractures were of utmost significance for the formation and mobilization of political alignment. Ultimately, the cultural framework of conflicts should not be ignored. As suggested in theoretical considerations in a previous section, cultural values and practice are functional in shaping the handling of conflicts. To conclude, facing the diversity of warlordism-type conflicts requires a differentiation of unlike motives, forms and development which may be responsible for warlordism.

11. Types of warlordism

Warlords emerge in a variety of forms. Arising from a wide range of political circumstances, conditions of the state, sorts of underlying motives, biographical backgrounds of the actors, their cultural basis as well as depending on various types of business, warlords may be classified according to the mentioned features.

11.1 Violence from below

The state's monopoly of violence has often been challenged by revolutionaries and insurgents from down below. That is, when groups feel oppressed, they start resisting the authorities by means of organized violence. Political rebels and revolutionary groups are ideologically highly motivated. Initially, their goals are political and ideological by nature. Commercial interests are of minor significance. They aim at revolutionizing the state. Often, they claim an own state. They regularly undergo a change with regards to the importance of the goals. They fit in the model of auto-escalation illustrated previously. As a consequence, the commercialization of their activities and the brutalization of their methods increase in the course of their existence. (Eppler 2002: 30–41). Revolutionary groups in Latin America, self-help militias in many African regions where unchannelled public violence has gotten out of hand due to an ineffective law enforcement of the state as well as religiously motivated liberation militias in Central and south eastern Asia can be subdivided into this category.

11.2 Violence from above

Most often as a reaction to unchecked public violence that presents a threat to wealthy landowners and the economic and political elite. They feature a specific set of characteristics: they are usually well paid, well trained and professionally organized. Paramilitary units carry out the violent "menial tasks" on instruction of a concealed elite. An economic elite sponsor the organization. However, the operations are clandestine by nature in that customers prefer staying obscured. Supposedly, paramilitary activities are commissioned not only by the wealthy economic elite, but also by the state's political elite, the justice or the army. Frequently, paramilitary and army are alleged to be interconnected (Eppler 2002: 42–48).

11.3 Local warlordism

On a local level, warlords with little impact beyond their confined spatial sphere of activity. Their authority draw on local integrity and heroism. In the local parlance, influential villains among South African Shanti communities are termed *warlords*. In remote areas, local warlordism may arise: "…Druze of Lebanon, in their mountain fastness, with their internationally-educated leadership, represented a highly sophisticated and enlarged variant [of warlords]" (Chan 1999: 168ff.). While as a rule in order not to endanger the basis of their authority, they resist forced encroachments of the state, but do not wish to overcome the state.

11.4 Frontier warlordism

Here the exceptional locality at national frontiers allows protagonists to take advantage of informal dealings with neighbouring states or influential powers. Without significant attempts to expand their political influence, "frontier warlords" remained committed to a local integrity (ibid.: 167). My suggestion is that the exceptional locality together with a weak or non-existence law enforcement and military control in the border areas leads to a situation of authority deficiency. For instance, the junction of cross-border trade provides the opportunity to levy customs duties and tolls. This may add to the accumulation of wealth which is a prerequisite for the formation of warlordism. The armament of a militia is essential, for the "frontier business" is subject to be challenged by opponents. For Chan, the Karen of Burma were one example. They "had an international trade in opium, and this manipulation of a capital substance sustained their struggle" (ibid.). The frontier regions in Central Asia where a clandestine and profitable drug trade is run as well as the border area mainly inhabited by Pashtuns between Afghanistan and Pakistan may serve as a further examples.

11.5 Warlords of international crime

If warlords fund the violent maintenance of their business with the trade of prohibited commodities, such as drugs or weapons, they match this category. Chan draws a distinction between "who use international crime, and drug barons, […] who exist on the narrow basis of crime and its rewards" (ibid.). The latter, such as the drug barons in Colombia, since they wish to operate a parallel economy to that of the state and therefore are dependent on the state, because "it either facilitates or disguises, or officially denies and thereby permits unofficial room for their own international trade" (ibid.). For Chan, they do not fit into his definition of warlords due to the lack of a long-term strategy to compose or represent alternative forms of sustained political organization. For him, true warlordism resists the state and should strive "for a wider agenda to do precisely with the inadequacies, demarcations and exclusions of civil society" (ibid.). As a consequence, Mujahedeen warlords in Afghanistan are in accordance with the category in the case of them engaging in international sale of the harvested opium.

11.6 Client warlords

They act as the instrument of other states. As such, they are more used than using and may therefore be called clients. Client warlords are frequently dependent upon the funds of the manipulating external actors, such as states.

11.7 Partisans and liberation leaders

The loose usage as well as the vague comprehension of the term *resistance* is a consequence of the complex and concealed phenomenon. First, protagonists of resistance movements and freedom fighters may relate any conflict with a *just rebellion* or a *just war*. Second, behind declarative terms, mere justifications and pragmatisms may be involved (Chan 1999: 168). The complexity in terms of hidden motives and the potential change which the conflict may undergo in the course of conflict events, the true nature of liberation and resistance militias is not an easy task to grasp. The precedent chapter has addressed the topic in fuller detail. Crucial for classifying resistance movements as a type of warlordism is the integration in a market of violence. That is, their authority draws on the threat to use violence so as to secure their commercialized goals within a political environment where the state is weak or absent. Thus, warlords also function as a substitute for the state. In Afghanistan, after emerging triumphant from the *Holy War* against the Russians and their corrupt Afghan puppet government the Mujahedeen warlords offered themselves as an alternative to a despotic state. The rhetoric of *Holy War* attracted many Afghans to join, since it had great plausibility. However, after having expelled the Russians, influential warlords have been fighting one another, each claiming mundane power.

In view of the great variety of warlordism, it should never be ignored, that in empirical reality, the appearance of pure forms of the described categories is improbable. Rather, each type of warlordism is likely to consist of combinations of aspects found in alternative forms. For example, the Afghan Mujahedeen, whether of Pashtun, Hazara, Usbek or Hazara origin, may be seen as liberation movements. In addition, they may be labelled as local warlords, for they exploit tribal affiliation as a source for legitimating their authority. Given that drug trafficking is essential in funding their fight, they may be deemed warlords of crime too. With reference to manipulative strategies of foreign powers, such as the USA, Pakistan, Tajikistan or Iran, one can hardly deny the significance of external sponsorship for particular Afghan factions during the past conflictive decades. As such, they could reasonably pass for client warlords. Furthermore, each warlord-type can be discussed on the topic of whether it presents an example for violence from down below or violence from above, respectively. Therefore, "the typology can coalesce into itself and is useful only for static and descriptive work, particularly given the limitations of understanding" (Chan 1999: 168).

11.8 Actors and commodities

Actors:

In many cases, warlord politics equals person-centred politics. To be precise, very often particular actors stand out in adopting the role of leaders. They are protagonists in markets of violence. But as such, they must be at least familiar with the businesses that foster and prosper in areas open to violence. This explains why many so-called warlords brings appropriate experience from the past:

> in the Caucasus and Central Asia the warlords emerge mainly from the circles of former black market activists. Know-how in low-level violence is helpful. This explains the attraction that *mujahidin* (fighters) trained in the Lebanon […] felt for other markets of violence.
> (Elwert 1999: 97)

The strategic know-how from military service and periods of warring was helpful for numerous protagonists in the warlord context. In warlord-haunted China after the 1920 era, various types of military commanders split from the army subsequent to the breakdown of central political authority at the national level. Rather than on the basis of ideological appeals, each faction mobilized a group of followers around the existing loyalty of subordinate officers and troops. Chinese military warlords owed much of their support to the prestige that they had been earned in the Chinese imperial army (Rich 1999: 4). In many African warlord-type conflicts, the protagonists have also regularly emerged from the existing national army. Though the situation somewhat deviates from Chinese warlordism, more recent cases of warlord conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa also result from fissures of a military networks. In Liberia, Sierra Leone and in Zaïre during the Mobutu rule, local strongmen controlled areas endowed with valuable resources. Pre-warlordism rulers who claimed central state authority –i.e. the era between de-colonization up to the early 1990ies– ensured the local strongmen's allegiance by tolerating their independency in return for loyalty. Building up a balanced patron-client network turned out to be a successful strategy. In addition, this effective patrimonial control based on skilful manipulation of rivalry between local strongmen: "Mobutu realized that his best chance for survival lay in also using opposition among factions of his patronage network to neutralize the network's threat to him" (Reno 1998: 149). This strategy also prevented the local rival entrepreneurs from executing coordinated attacks against the ruler (ibid.: 148). But finally, precisely this radical decentralization of politics together with the existence of multiple centres of accumulation led to the formation of warlord politics. Very similar political structures with slight divergences were functional in Liberia as well as in Sierra Leone. In Liberia, after the violent invasion (1989) of Charles Taylor, a former government administrator, the war has followed a clear logic: In an attempt to consolidate their political power within a coalition of interest among themselves, local strongmen and local fighters took advantage of commerce. Taylor himself has presided over commerce of various commodities (mining, timber, gold and others). As any other local strongmen, they have based their authority on control of these lucrative markets (Reno 1998: 79). By means of the revenues arising from their profitable business, they attracted fighters for a private militia in order to secure the maintenance of their business (ibid.: 94). The control of the private market using privatized coercion is much more effective than a costly attempt to seize the power of the state. “Warlords, having privatized coercion for the sake of a [local strongmen’s] faction, are under less compulsion to compete for supporters outside of commercial circles or to cultivate mass political bases” (ibid.: 107). Summarizing the sub-Saharan examples for protagonists, warlords arise again from a context of a weak or collapsed state. The functions of state authority and law enforcement is *de facto* passed on to the partial autonomy of local strongmen who control areas of valuable primary source materials. In most cases, the “monopoly of violence” is delegated to fragmented privatized militias led by private businessmen, which is even tolerated or encouraged by state authorities and viewed as a cutback in public expenditure. Some of the local strongmen have been vested with a public office or once holding a military tenure. Fighters and whole troops are easily signed on or enticed to defect given the pathetic salary of public servants. Additionally, for young men joining a militia is not merely a way of escaping poor economic circumstances, but also an opportunity to acquire prestige. Foreign mercenary soldiers present an alternative source for recruiting soldiers. Not only warlords may occasionally rely on mercenaries, but also some African states such as Côte d’Ivoire or Sierra Leone draw on mercenaries (Reno: 1998: 137ff.). The need for mercenaries and foreign forces could also seen in connection with the state’s ineffectiveness in providing extensive public service and a sufficient quality of security forces. General characteristics of privatized violence can be construed from involved actors. For example, an important characteristic with many conflicts featuring privatized violence is that the line between combatants and civilians is blurred. The current practice of civil wars and similar warlord-type conflicts regularly invalidates the distinction between combatants and civilians. Defenceless civilians increasingly become fall victim to organized public violence (Eppler 2002: 60). As soon as an ideologically based conflict such as the civil war in Colombia has reached the second, commercialized stage of escalation, civilians are more and more instrumentalized. A reign of terror aims at intimidating the civilian population so as to enforce allegiance and to suppress dissent.

Commodities:

Several commodities have been already mentioned. As a consequence of the dysfunctional state, most “regular” commodities consist of valuable primary source materials. Among them, mining products, precious stones, gold and various ores are widespread. The private control of the production enables the profitable exploitation of the raw materials. Local strongmen are integrated into an international network of trading partners. The sales returns are mainly used for the costly maintenance of the violent coercion. Commanding armed forces is a prerequisite for securing the profitable business. Therefore, purchasable private violence plays an indispensable part for many warlord conflicts. Apart from "regular" commodities, warlordism includes very often business beyond the legal fringes. While a variety of "regular" goods are also traded in black markets, internationally banned goods such as the trade with drugs have great importance in many regions. Among other criminal activities, extortion racket, protection money, kidnapping and trafficking in human beings are recurrent revenue sources.

12. Tribal fragmentation and warlordism: Somalia and Pashtun Afghanistan in comparison

Before resuming the Pashtun case again, a special case of warlordism touches upon tribal societies and their function in forming warlord-type leadership. In the media, the terms *warlord* and *tribal chief* (or *clan chief*) are used unsystematically in referring to political leaders in tribal societies. Two cases serve as brief exemplary illustrations so as to give a more detailed account of the subject matter. Both Somalia and Afghanistan are recurrently mentioned relating to internal conflicts in which clan chiefs are equated with warlords. Without doubt, Somalia and Afghanistan feature a variety of similar aspects in the respective political setting. To begin with, the most important attributes to understand the political functioning are addressed. Subsequently, the comparison tries to set off similarities and variations in both cases. Finally, a brief assessment includes a critical statement about the random use of the terms warlord and clan chief, respectively.

12.1 Somalia

In 1991, the former dictator Siad Barre was overthrown. Since then, Somalia has been without a formal government. Instead, an enormous number of weapons, determined political factions, and feuding clans have covered the “country”: “Somalia has been without a national government, civil service, national army, police force, judicial system or any of the public services which people in most countries take for granted. Having lost the capacity to maintain law and order, and to feed its own citizens, Somalia has forfeited what any country needs to have in order to claim empirical sovereignty” (Makinda 1999: 120). This may be surprising, since Somalia is largely inhabited by just one ethnic group. Unlike other Sub-Saharan African states which comprise many ethnic groups, Somalia theoretically has a better chance for moulding a sense of nationhood (ibid.: 122). The reason for this failure must be sought for in the political makeup of Somalia. For generations, the most significant factor in the formation of political groups has been the clan: “Clan and lineage affiliations also have been vital in obtaining jobs, services and favours, and in dispensing justice” (ibid.). De facto, Somalia’s political organization is based on six major clan families. In accordance with the general characteristics of a segmented society, the family groups are further split into smaller clans, sub-clans and lineages. All clans play a very important role in the political process. Siad Barr had been trying to bridge the inter-clan fractures by advancing pan-Somali nationalism. But he himself was strongly influenced by clan considerations. For example, he appointed his ministers consistent with his clan-based loyalties. Rivalries between the clans, but also within the clans between competing sections, complicate a political cohesion beyond clan loyalties. Disaccord on succession of rulers and controversial issues such as the contention for political power were major reasons for inter-clan and intra-clan rivalries. Owing to a disagreement on the occasion of the Ogaden conflict with Ethiopia, a clan alliance fractured (ibid.: 124fff.). As a consequence, the disintegration of the Somali army and the added to the intensification of the internal crisis. Then, the military has disintegrated into single rivalling clan militias. For, the military organization was in fact also based on clan loyalty, as "recruitment was done on clan lines with new recruits being put into units from their own areas and under officers from their own clan" (Makinda 1999: 127). In the early 1990s, the succession of Siad Barre set off a power struggle between the two major protagonists, Mohammed Farah Aideed and Ali Mahdi. Typically, Somali clans have played incongruous roles: as centripetal forces, they amalgamate to fight for common goals. The goal of the anti-Barre opposition forces was: the defeat of Barre. But as soon as the common ground has disappeared, Aideed and Mahdi split into rival clans again (ibid.: 129). After the dead of Aideed in 1996, the hopes for reaching an inter-tribal accord were great. Nonetheless, also the political successors are entangled in clan rules. Evidently, "faction and clan leaders view politics in zero-sum terms. […] Somalia remained in anarchic conditions, with armed militias, faction leaders and clan elders unable to achieve the compromise necessary to bring about an effective national government" (ibid.: 137). Makinda suggests not a unitary system, but a federal state based on clans to be a possible way out of these entanglements.

12.2 The comparison with Pashtun Afghanistan

Many similarities can be found between the conflicts in Somalia and the occurrences in tribal Afghanistan. Far from being surprising, the parallels develop out of comparable political structures and a wider environment akin to one another:

- Both societies are composed of patrilineal tribal segments with ramifications which subdivide every segment in further segments.
- Tribal segmentation serves as an organizational framework for building political allegiance, service networks, favours and for dispensing justice.
- Inter-tribal or inter-clan mergers are ephemeral and only function in connection with common goals. As soon as the common ground has disappeared, the cohesion splits up.
- Inter-tribal and inter-clan rivalry is frequent including the lower levels of segmentation.
- As a result of tribal structural frailty, national cohesion is weak. In Somalia as well as in Afghanistan, the construction of a nation-state was only possible either under a rather despotic regency or when tribal factions are granted extensive autonomy.
- Armed forces were very often aligned according to tribal or clan allegiance. Such a favouritism may easily lead to the formation of tribal militias in times when clans are at variance.
- In both countries, weapons are in abundant supply, while the arms trade flourishes.
- Both Islamic countries have recently become prone to attract religious extremist groups which have adopted strategies of privatized violence.

13. Conclusive remarks: Khans are warlords are khans?

The theory of markets of violence provides an explanatory model for a discrete form of internal state conflicts which may be equated with warlordism. According to theories of warlord-type conflicts, a defined set of preconditions must be present in order to speak of warlordism resulting from privatized violence:

(1) The existence of violence-open areas. They lack a predictable and contained channelling of violence. This is mainly a result from the collapse of the state's monopoly of force.

(2) The complete or partial absence of the functional state. That is, the state is either no longer able or willing to fulfil public service. The lack of a functional system of law enforcement together with a dysfunctional and corrupt public service is symptomatic for the weak or absent state.

(3) Warlordism-type groups have many forms. Either, they organize from down below as a reactionary violent movement. Frequently, socio-political and ideological motives stand at the beginning of the conflict. Regularly, civil militia form in response to chaotic circumstances where individualized or organized forms of violence becomes a means for material enrichment. Organized privatized violence develops from the need of an economic and political elite when they consider their wealth threatened.

Kommentar: KOMMA?

(4) Violence is purchasable. In a market of violence, privatized forms of armed forces develop. They can be either self-organized, or fighters may be signed on mostly in a context of deprived economic conditions which in turn explains the attractiveness of joining private armed forces. If existing military structures of the state are subject to disintegrative processes, private militias may arise from splinter groups of the regular army.

(5) Warlord-actors are protagonists who rest on highly profitable commercial business. They have commonly a military background or have experienced a past as a local strongman with a solid business basis.

(6) Warlord's business deals with activities which are regularly, but not always, illegal according to standard national or international law. Characteristically, the business is highly profitable and allows a significant accumulation of wealth. As a consequence, together with a state's ineffectiveness in law enforcement, criminal activities such as drug trafficking, kidnapping or extortion rackets may only develop in violence open areas where "legal" infringements remain unchecked. Furthermore, running an unlawful racket as in the drug trade, economic logic creates scarce resources which in turn results in an increase of prices. Thus, illegal business is very often more profitable, if international law enforcement with the purpose of preventing trade is unsuccessful.

A specific theoretical framework is underlying the concept of warlordism and markets of violence. Actors who attempt to maximize their advantages by assessing various options. This may certainly been true for the leaders and protagonists having privatized and monopolized violence at their disposal. But precisely the characteristics of violence open areas with their potential of intimidation of the common population and the threat to use violence against renegades and traitors reveals an inconsistency in the model. Adopting the view of the common population, the individual choice to support the power holding party (i.e. successful warlords) may be even more plausible if warlords appear as generous patrons in a quasi redistributive system. But often, the population and their worries are merely manipulated in order to ensure political allegiance in the initial stage of conflicts. But later, the population may be as well the victims of unchannelled violence and acts of revenge.

Let me resume the Afghan case in general and the Pashtun example in particular. Drawing on the most characteristic features for warlordism and privatized violence adopted by many scholars, can we assume the Pashtun Khans to be called warlords? Many characteristics fit into the warlord-type of rule. Khans rule and has been ruling for decades in a political environment of a weak or collapsed state. In recent times, Khans make advantage of insufficient law enforcement to accumulate wealth. They fit in many ways into the categories of warlord actors previously described. They were often commanders in a holy war; they are regularly successful businessmen and local strongmen; they command tribal militias as a form of organized privatized non-state coercive force. However, objections are appropriate too. Tribal militias are not a novel phenomenon. Tribal *lashkars* have served with the purpose of securing tribal security as well as executing decisions based on democratic local *jirgas*. Traditionally, the activities of Khans have always included the active efforts to ensure political allegiance by “feeding the people” in a redistributive system. Not a recent occurrence, this must be seen in the context of rivalry between leaders. Certainly, the intervention of foreign actors has endangered the balance of power. Foreign powers have supported political actors such as local Khans in order to achieve their strategic goals. The increasing abundance of money and weapons has contributed to the imbalance. By defining warlordism, a significant task will be to classify alternative forms of political organization within former states that lack features of a regular state with the monopoly of violence. Together with Elwert, segmentary societies must be considered as an alternative and manageable form of social control and political organization, despite all inherent tendencies towards fragmentation. In this context, a possible way to solve long-term conflicts in regions where tribal societies are dominant, but national unity has been made impossible due to tribal factionalism, has been suggested earlier by Makinda (1999): A federated system for both Afghanistan and Somalia may be an appropriate option as in other societies where centrifugal forces are structural. Alternative concepts of the composition of states need to be accepted due to the variation of fragmented version of nation-states:

> Through two decades of war and chaos, age-old institutions of local self-government have continued to function in many areas. Whether urban mahallas or guzars, kinship groups, or tribal entities, these have always been, and remain today, the primary focus of loyalty and even identity. As Afghan-born scholar Nazif Shahrani has pointed out, these are the essential and unavoidable units in Afghan society and certainly the only ones that enjoy widespread credibility. (Starr 2001)

But sceptics to the option of federalism in Afghanistan fear that this would lead to deeper divisions among diverse ethnic groups. Additionally, a federated Afghanistan would support the creation of personal fiefdoms of warlords. Warring factions have regularly called strongly for a federalist system. The argument goes that in a country like Afghanistan, "where illiteracy is abundant, the economy is in shambles and land and other natural resources are not evenly distributed across the country, federalism would lead to warlordism" (Zakhilwal 2001). Together with foreign actors who have been supporting and instrumentalizing political forces for decades, education and economic perspectives appear to be the fundamental cause for systematic violent conflicts, since: only the one who has a true alternative option is not forced to join any violent organizations which offer a doubtful opportunity in a prevailing market of violence. Figure 4 shows some prerequisite conditions for both, leadership of the Khan type and leadership of the warlord type.

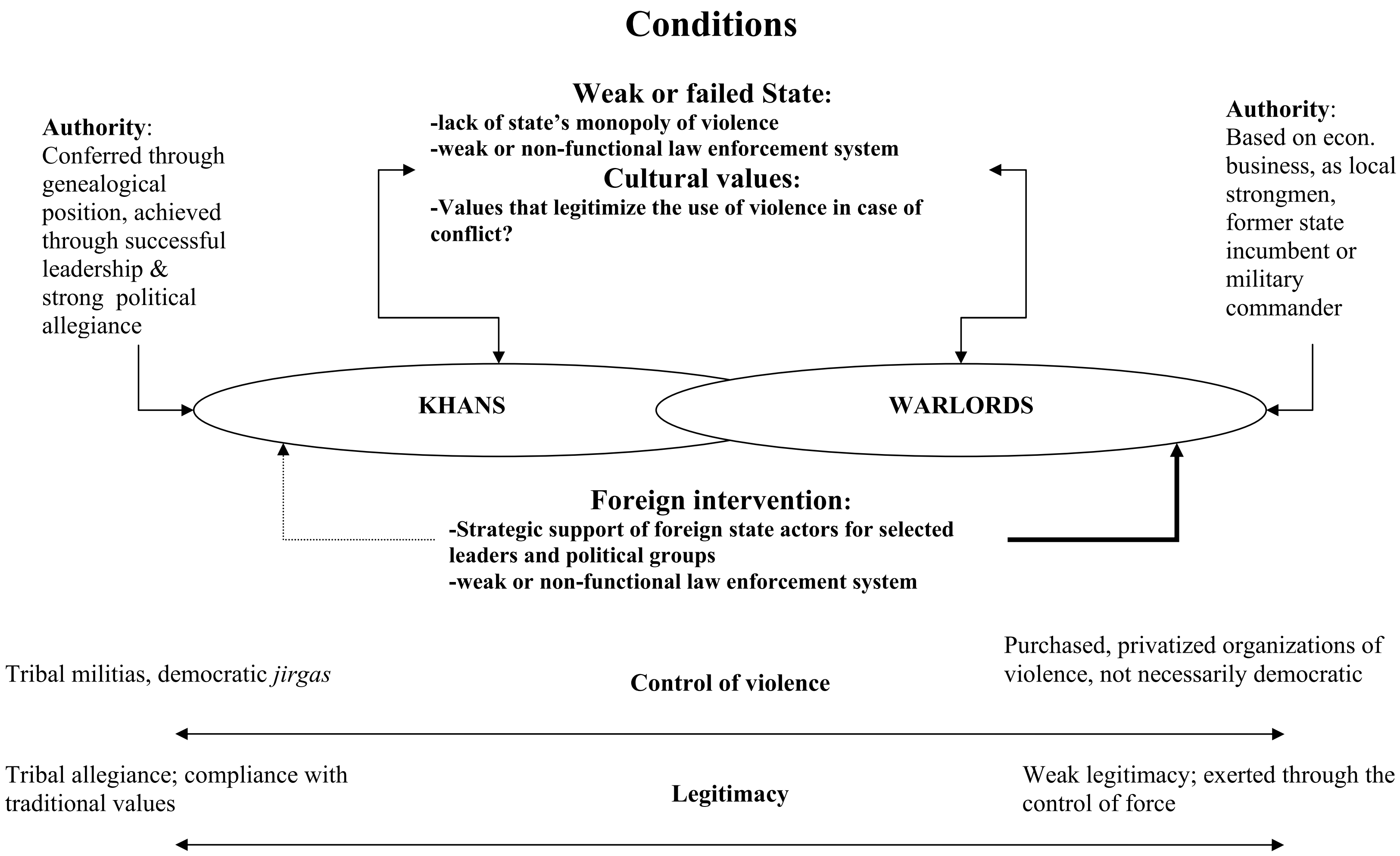
Conditions
Weak or failed State:
-lack of state's monopoly of violence
-weak or non-functional law enforcement system
Cultural values:
-Values that legitimize the use of violence in case of conflict?
Authority:
Conferred through genealogical position, achieved through successful leadership & strong political allegiance
Authority:
Based on econ. business, as local strongmen, former state incumbent or military commander
KHANS
WARLORDS
Foreign intervention:
-Strategic support of foreign state actors for selected leaders and political groups
-weak or non-functional law enforcement system
Tribal militias, democratic jirgas
Control of violence
Purchased, privatized organizations of violence, not necessarily democratic
Tribal allegiance; compliance with traditional values
Legitimacy
Weak legitimacy; exerted through the control of force

FIGURE 4: *Khans and warlords: conditions and distinguishing features*

For both contexts, a weak state may be a prerequisite to a certain degree. For, both are dependant on political allegiance. Khans and warlords alike may function as a substitute for the state. That is, they "feed the people" in a redistributive system. With Khans, political legitimacy and authority is derived from their ability to provide for their adherents in order to secure allegiance. With warlords, this is seldom an absolute prerequisite, since they have an apparatus of armed forces which function as an instrument for intimidation in order to secure by force in a violence-open area. Also the source of authority differs. While Khans are integrated into a system of cultural webs of meanings and regulating institutions, such as the *jirga*, warlord-controlled areas very often lack any normative framework of social control. The features *control of violence* and *legitimacy* provide not enclosing categories. Rather, each of the characteristics serve as a continuum. The legitimacy of Khans is largely based on indicators, such as the compliance with cultural values, a position of descent and thus tribal-based allegiance. Warlords typically "acquire" their legitimacy by creating a system that secures "allegiance" by (threatening with) force. Warlords as actors in a privatized market of violence purchase their apparatus of force with funds made in a profitable business, which in turn requires protection by means of an organized system of force. The aspect of the features to provide continuums becomes clear, when the economic success of a Khan is not longer dependant on traditional legitimacy. Additionally, a Khan's business may also feature warlord-type characteristics. For instance, this has happened in Afghanistan, when the war has brought new types of leadership. Major tribal leaders (Khans) usually left the country, while –among others– military commanders and local strongmen became dominant (Roy 1989: 73–81). Foreign support (Pakistan, Russia, Iran and others) for selected groups has brought in enormous funds and weapons. This process certainly changed the political balance significantly.

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