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Shadow orders: clandestine non-state power in the international system

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Citation

Bastrup-Birk, J. T. N. (2026, January 20). *Shadow orders: clandestine non-state power in the international system*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4287813>

Version: Publisher's Version

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This research seeks to establish whether there are observable and consistent patterns in the behaviours and characteristics of different clandestine non-state actors – specifically, terrorist, insurgent and criminal organisations – with respect to challenging the authority of the sovereign state and projecting political power. In order to do so, it introduces a bespoke analytical framework that is applied to the granular comparative analysis of three groups: the 'Ndrangheta branch of the Italian mafia, al Qaeda 'core' and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC).

The dissertation's central argument is that clandestine non-state actors need to be understood as independent, quasi-sovereign agents of political change capable of articulating complex policy choices, establishing micro spheres of influence and adopting the range of levers of power available to states, albeit typically at a smaller scale. It also argues that these actors are adept at forging external relations and strategic partnerships – in effect 'foreign' policies – and that technology has increased their ability to connect, trade and cooperate as effective cross-jurisdictional networks.

SHADOW ORDERS

Julien Bastrup-Birk



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Clandestine non-state power in the international system