Shadow orders: clandestine non-state power in the international system
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PART II: **Towards a framework: a structured and illustrated review of existing theory**

CHAPTER 3 – Policy choices and strategic direction

Whilst clandestine non-state actors can be conceptualised in broad terms according to their position in relation to the state (see previous chapter), deconstructing their intricate characteristics and behaviours calls for more granular as well as empirical analysis. In order to meet this requirement, and as highlighted in the methodology (Chapter 1), this investigation introduces a bespoke analytical framework providing: **(a)** a vehicle for systematic and comparative analysis across different types of organisations, all the while allowing for contextual nuance; and **(b)** through this approach, a means of addressing the thesis' central research question and accompanying hypotheses. To that end, the next three chapters are organised around the main components (or 'levels') of this analytical framework, namely: groups' ability to formulate policy choices and establish strategic direction; their organisational structures and configurations as power-wielding entities; and, finally, their ability to draw on various levers and instruments of power in pursuit of their objectives.[140] These components, this thesis proposes, essentially amount to the 'building blocks' of clandestine non-state power. As (once again) detailed in the methodology, these same levels of analysis and accompanying detail were identified through a process of qualitative content analysis, involving the structured labelling, cataloguing and review of data as a basis for identifying themes and patterns within both the theoretical literature and real-world case study examples drawn from different contexts around the world.[141]

In turn, this first framework chapter, which is focussed on the policy choices and strategic direction of clandestine non-state actors, is calibrated around the exam's overarching research question in so far as it seeks to ascertain whether these actors deliberately and strategically project power, including as a means of challenging the authority of the state. It is also firmly geared towards testing the thesis' first hypothesis, which posits that clandestine non-state groups display the characteristics and logic of *political* actors, including with respect to carving out (local) spheres of influence, securing strategic partnerships and initiating – or indeed discontinuing – armed and criminal campaigns. Critically, by outlining the various components that make up clandestine policy choices and shape groups' strategic direction, it explains how these actors display significant agency with respect to setting objectives, including with respect to territorial control, designing political and armed campaigns and building alliances.

3.1 Strategic aims and interests – the political nature of clandestine organisations

As we have seen, at a most basic level, clandestine groups have in common that they seek to challenge the authority of the state in one way or another. The extent to which their efforts are calibrated around such a central political aim is heavily reflected in the literature. In his 1937 treatise, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Mao Tse-tung famously posited that "without a political goal, guerrilla warfare must fail."[142] In turn, and reflecting upon various generations of resistance and rebel movements, Baljit Sign and Ko-Wang Mei thus refer to guerrilla warfare as "a war of totality" that was ultimately aimed at creating a new political order.[143] Carl Schmitt provides a similar account in his *Theory of the Partisan* (1963), highlighting both the "intense political

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[140] The framework is also summarised in tabular form in **Annex C**.

[141] Some of these theoretical contributions can be found within the terrorism, insurgency, and criminological literature, whilst others can be extrapolated from the study of wider political theory as well as sociological paradigms. Meanwhile, real world case study examples provide a basis for discerning identifiable and repeatable patterns relating to clandestine organisations of different denominations. Once again, the full list of the groups examined alongside the theory is provided in **Annex A**.

[142] M. Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, U.S. Marine Corps Publication, FMFRP 12-18, April 1989, p. 42.

[143] B. Singh and K.W. Mei, *Guerrilla Warfare*, India Quarterly, Vol.21, No.3, July-September 1965, pp. 285-310.

engagement that distinguishes the partisan from other fighters" and his focus on fighting on "a political front."[144] Observers of insurgencies throughout the generations such as David Galula, John Nagl and David Ucko have similarly emphasised the extent to which these are driven by political forces which, in turn, need to be placed at the forefront of any response.[145] The potential implications of this steady crescendo of arguments were brought to their logical conclusion by early 21st century commentators such as Barak Mendelsohn and Michael Chertoff, who described the potential for non-state political aspirations to supplant, or at least threaten the survival of, the international and sovereign state system.[146]

To be sure, such political manifestations can be traced back to antiquity, whether through the actions of the mounted and relatively non-hierarchical Scythians who fought Alexander the Great at the battle of Jaxartes in 329 BC or the nationalist Jewish Zealots who conducted targeted assassinations and raids against the Roman garrison at Masada in AD 66.[147] This same rejectionist theme of fighting the illegitimate (political) oppressor has appeared with increased frequency over the past four centuries as a central aim of myriad of non-state groups – perhaps in no small part a reflection of the rise of the nation state. Illustratively, 17th century Protestant Huguenots persecuted by the French Catholic government fled the country in large numbers, subsequently building settlements across Europe as well as in the United States and Africa. Later, British imposition of the far-reaching Stamp Act in 1765 set about a chain of events which led to the American Declaration of Independence and a war that mobilised a vast network of revolutionary cells under the devolved leadership of a non-state political authority: Congress.[148]

Political sentiment became a defining feature of the Napoleonic campaigns of the early 19th century (themselves born out of a revolution) which, *inter alia*, witnessed Spanish and Portuguese Guerrillas rising against the French army during the Peninsular War of 1808-1814 (it is in this context that the term first emerged).[149] Similarly, the Boer Wars of the late 19th century, which featured 'citizen soldier' commandos, were catalysed by British annexation of the South African state of Transvaal.[150] Around the same time, in Somalia, 'Mad' Mullah Muhammad Abdille Hassan declared a *jihad* (or holy war) against Italian, British and Ethiopian 'infidel' colonial forces, spurred on by a vision of a Somalia united in a Muslim brotherhood that transcended clan divisions – an aspiration communicated adeptly through the emotive medium poetry.[151] Given these antecedents, it is perhaps unsurprising that it was a clandestine

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[144] C. Schmitt (Translated by G.L. Ulmen), *Theory of the Partisan: Intermediate Commentary on the Concept of the Political,* New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2007, pp.14-15.

[145] See E. Cohen *et al*., Principles, imperatives and paradoxes of counterinsurgency, Military Review, March-April 2006, pp. 49-53; and D. H. Ucko, *The Insurgent's Dilemma: A Struggle to Prevail*, Oxford Academic (online edition), 2022.

[146] See for example B. Mendelsohn, *Sovereignty under attack: the international society meets the Al Qaeda network*, Review of International Studies, Vol. 31, No. 1, January 2005, pp.45-68; and M. Chertoff, *The Responsibility to Contain: Protecting Sovereignty Under International Law*, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 88, No. 1, February 2009, pp.130-147.

[147] Some commentators such as Kent P. Jackson have argued that the term 'Zealot' did not take hold until AD 68, midway through the Jewish revolt. See K. P. Jackson, *Masada and the World of the New Testament,* Brigham Young University Studies, Vol. 36, No. 3, 1996, p.132. See also S. Appelbaum, *The Zealots: The Case for Revaluation*, The Journal of Roman Studies, vol. 61, 1971, pp. 155–170.

[148] T. H. Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots: The Revolution of the People*, Hill and Wang, New York, 2010, pp.121-123.

[149] See for example J. De La Pisa, *Napoleon's Nightmare: Guerrilla Warfare in Spain (1808-1814) - The French Army's Failed Counterinsurgency Effort*, Small Wars Journal, October 2011, pp.6-13

[150] F. Pretorius, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, Human & Rousseau, 1999, pp. 111-145 and F. Pretorius, *The Boer Wars: How did the wars in South Africa shake British prestige so badly and cause a major re-evaluation of military tactics in the years before World War One?,* www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/boer_wars_01.shtml.

[151] *Sayyid Maxamed Cabdulle Xasan: Somalian Leader*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017, ahttps://www.britannica.com/biography/Sayyid-Maxamed-Cabdulle-Xasan. See also J. Fergusson,

non-state organisation, the Serbian nationalist Black Hand, that precipitated World War I when one its members, Gavrilo Princip, assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. [152]

The Great War further catalysed sub-state political forces, including within the context of the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans from 1916, which was fuelled by the ambition to create a new, pan-Arab order. Meanwhile, the Russian revolutions of 1917 and rise of Lenin's Bolshevik party set the stage for subsequent generations of Marxist and communist insurgencies. Two decades later, World War II featured a wide cast list of partisan and resistance groups all the while re-writing the clandestine warfare rulebook and paving the way for post-war anti-colonial and independence movements around the world. From Algeria, which ultimately gained independence from France in 1962, to Malaya and Indochina, localised armed political campaigns gained momentum, whilst the Vietnam war demonstrated how a homegrown insurgency united around a common political aim could prevail against a superpower.[153] A similar feat would later be replicated by the Mujahideen in Afghanistan following the Soviet Union's invasion of the country in 1979, shaping the political narratives of modern Islamist non-state groups.

Clearly, the aim of challenging the existing political order is not limited to clandestine organisations. Indeed, this aim is in fact overtly pursued by many non-violent political movements and opposition parties around the world. However, as we have already seen, clandestine organisations differ from other organisations in their decision to pursue their objectives through policy and strategy choices that are usually considered to be either illegitimate, illegal, or generally outside of the accepted 'rule book' by the prevailing state actor or the international community (which, of course, is formed of a collection of states). Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of clandestine organisation is their tendency to stray beyond existing political and legal structures (although they may choose to do this as part of a blended strategy), and 'cross the Rubicon', adopting violent, co-optive or otherwise subversive approaches as the means through which to secure their interests. While this tendency is perhaps most obvious in the case of guerrillas, rebel movements, violent insurgencies and terrorist organisations whose efforts are typically calibrated at the overtly violent overthrow of the state, it can similarly be observed in the objectives of organised crime actors, who typically pursue the symbiotically connected goals of financial profit and political power.

A large body of evidence thus places the emphasis on organised criminal groups' (often calculated) erosion of the state's political authority through the deliberate co-option of institutions as well as their embeddedness in systems of governance. American organised crime Special Attorney Earl Johnson Jr. once commented that "political corruption is not a primarily legal problem" but is instead "quite logically, a political problem."[154] Louise Shelley goes further, describing attempts by organised crime to penetrate global politics as well as undermine democratic rule and, ultimately, the very concept of the nation state.[155] In a similar vein, James Mittleman and Robert Johnston were amongst the first to describe the global

The World's Most Dangerous Place, Inside the Outlaw State of Somalia, London: Transworld Publishers, 2013, pp. 227-228.

[152] These historical trends are described in more detail in Annex B covering seminal moments in the evolution of clandestine movements.

[153] France's war against the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) escalated rapidly into urban warfare to the extent that by 1956, over half a million French troops were deployed in Algeria. The British, meanwhile, were also having to develop their own counterinsurgency doctrine within the context of the 1948-60 Malayan Emergency guerrilla war fought between the Communist Malayan National Liberation Army and the Commonwealth armed forces.

[154] E. Johnson Jr., *Organized Crime: Challenge to the American Legal System*, Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, Vol. 54, Issue 2, Summer 1963, p. 127.

[155] L. I. Shelley, *Transnational Organized Crime: An Imminent Threat to the Nation-State?*, Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 48, No. 2, Winter 1995.

political economy of organised crime, whilst painting a picture of criminal actors as politically savvy, rational, profit-maximising and risk-reducing agents seeking to exploit opportunities presented by globalisation and market liberalisation.[156] Examining more localised manifestations of organised crime, contemporary observers such as Alberto Alesina, Salvatore Piccolo and Paolo Pinotti point to highly calculated attempts by organised crime to subvert the political machinery through strategies such as pre-electoral violence aimed at influencing the behaviours of voters and politicians.[157] Other commentators such as Catalina Uribe Burcher highlight a strategic focus on promoting institutional weakness, subverting the public sector and exploiting 'democratic vulnerabilities' as the means of furthering criminal interests.[158]

The political nature of organised crime and its protagonists is further supported by the examination of different organisations throughout the ages. Illustratively, the origins of modern organised crime can be traced back at least to 19th century Sicily, where *Mafie* militia groups previously employed by wealthy landowners as a bulwark against a Socialist revolt began to turn against their patrons, extorting payments and laying alternative power structures. Indeed, various Mafia branches have long openly professed a rejection of the Italian state and its institutions, particularly within the country's southern regions. The era of the American Prohibition that followed the passing of the Volstead Act in 1920 subsequently witnessed infiltration and co-option of both the political establishment and judicial structures at an unprecedented scale. In 1920s rural China, meanwhile, outlaw bandit gangs wielded significant political power, operating autonomously from the state.[159] Variations of these dynamics would reappear in more contemporary contexts. Pablo Escobar, the head of the infamous Colombian Medellin Cartel, famously cultivated political ambitions that culminated in his election as an alternative representative in the Colombian National Congress, a position that granted him legislative immunity as well as a platform from which to lobby for the repeal of Colombia's extradition treaty with the US.[160] More recently, senior members of the western-backed government of Afghanistan such as Hamid Wali Karzai, the brother of the president, were involved in the country's narcotics trade to such an extent that they arguably became indistinguishable from drug kingpins.[161]

Clearly, strategies and tactics adopted to pursue political and financial ambitions can evolve over time, including through the decision to steer away from clandestine activities altogether or, conversely, to dial-up these same activities. Theorists examining the fundamental forces shaping such policy decisions have ranged from proponents of rational choice theory depicting clandestine as gain-maximising and risk-minimising agents to moral, cultural, and contextual relativists (or, indeed, a combination of the above).[162] Nevertheless, there appears to be a degree of consensus on the idea that clandestine groups will generally adjust their strategies

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[156] J. H. Mittleman and R. Johnston, *The Globalization of Organized Crime, The Courtesan State, and the Corruption of Civil Society*, *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations,* Vol. 5, Issue 1, January 1999, pp. 103-126.

[157] A. Alesina, S. Salvatore and P. Pinotti, *Organized Crime, Violence and Politics*, The Review of Economic Studies, Vol. 86, Issue 2, March 2018, pp. 457-499.

[158] C. U. Bucher, *Assessing the Threat of Nexus Between Organized Crime and Democratic Politics: Mapping the Factors*, International Relations and Diplomacy, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 2017, pp. 1-19. See also for K. Chin and R. Godson, *Organized crime and the political-criminal nexus in China,* Trends in Organized Crime, Vol. 9, March 2006, pp. 5-44.

[159] P. Billingsley, *Bandits, Bosses, and Bare Sticks: Beneath the Surface of Local Control in Early Republican China*, Modern China, Vol. 7, No. 3, July 1981, pp. 235–88.

[160] The alleged details of Pablo Escobar's campaign to fight extradition were provided by his brother, Roberto Escobar, in his book entitled: *Escobar: The Inside Story of Pablo Escobar, the World's Most Powerful Criminal* (2009).

[161] D. Filkins, *Death of an Afghan Godfather*, The New Yorker, July 12, 2011.

[162] See for example N. Contegiacomo, *Rational choice theory and the crime-terror nexus: how and why terrorist and organized criminal groups are working together*, 2007, https://doi.org/10.17615/yb5c-vw95.

based on their assessment of their position relative to their original aims, as a result in changes in their circumstances, or when presented with new opportunities. For example, José María Córdova[163] as well as Ben Connable and Martin Libicki[164] argue that factors influencing this decision-making process range from military gains and losses on the battlefield to opportunities to enter into political deals with the state. Alternatively, commentators such as Imanol Murua highlight the role of public sentiment and support bases in shaping the calculations of terrorist groups, including their decision to abandon violence.[165] Further nuance is introduced by observers such as Tim Krieger and Daniel Meierrieks, who emphasise the influence of external (including regional and political) strategic shocks in catalysing terrorist tactics,[166] with a similar account of organised crime is offered by the likes of Francesco Raineri and Luca Strazzari.[167]

Many of these latter dynamics once again transpire through the examination of different armed clandestine organisations around the world. Illustratively, the Jordanian Islamic Front, which acted as the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood in the country, was increasingly willing to 'play by the political rules' when it became part of the political system in 1989. Similarly, following Hamas' landslide success in the Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006, the party's Political Bureau opted (at least initially) for more pragmatic policies.[168] Conversely, Boko Haram formerly justified the start of its violent campaign in the wake of a crack-down by the state and the extra-judicial execution of its leader, Mohammed Yousef.[169] The influence of an organisation's support base on its policy decisions can be similarly observed across case studies, including in the case of the Basque terrorist group ETA's decision to abandon violence, or the Lebanese Hezbollah's decision to aid the Assad regime in fighting the Islamic State from 2011 onwards – a reflection of growing concerns within its political constituency about the rise of anti-Shia movements in the region.[170] Meanwhile strategic shocks with a direct bearing on the policy choices of clandestine non-state actors include the Arab Spring, which not only catalysed new movements in the Middle East and North Africa but also provided strategic opportunities for pre-existing players. For example, entire consignments of heavy calibre weapons looted from Libyan arms depots were smuggled across the Sahel to Jihadist

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[163] J. M. Córdova, *Cómo terminan las insurgencias: en busca de la victoria del gobierno*, Revista Científica, Vol. 17, No. 28, Bogotá, October-December 2019.

[164] B. Connable and M. C. Libicki, *How Insurgencies End*, RAND: Santa Monica (CA), 2010, pp. 25-76.

[165] I. Murua, *Ending ETA's armed campaign: How and why the Basque armed group abandoned violence*, New York: Routledge, 2017. See also: A. Perlinger and L. Weinberg, *How Terrorist Groups End*, Countering Terrorism Center Sentinel, Vol. 3, Issue 2, February 2010.

[166] T. Krieger and D. Meierrieks, *What Causes Terrorism?* Public Choice, Vol. 147, No. 1/2, April 2011, pp. 3-27.

[167] L. Raineri and F. Strazzari, *Organised crime and fragile states: African variations*, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), March 2017.

[168] N. Kubikova, *Political Inclusion as a Key Factor to Moderate Islamists: The International Community's Choice of Policy Impacts on Hamas's Pragmatic or Radical Tendencies*, Perspectives, Institute of International Relations, Vol. 17. No. 2, 2009, pp. 139-161

[169] To date, the conflict has resulted in the death of at least thirty thousand people and the displacement of over two million. See for example '*Why Boko Haram uses female suicide-bombers*,' The Economist, October 2017, https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2017/10/23/why-boko-haram-uses-female-suicide-bombers; and M. Okwuchi Nwankpa, *The Political Economy of Securitisation: The Case of Boko Haram, Nigeria*, The Economics of Peace and Security Journal, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2015 pp. 32-39.

[170] See D. Byman and B. Y. Saab, *Hezbollah in a Time of Transition*, Atlantic Council, November 2014, p. 2. Reciprocally - and as well as promoting Shia interests - the group's popularity amongst its base is also tied to the perception that Hezbollah offers a means of social mobility and political ascent within Lebanon, particularly amongst the working class. See for example: M. Alami, *The Role of Hezbollah Among its Shia Constituents*, Atlantic Council, February 2018, available online at: http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/the-role-of-hezbollah-among-its-shia-constituents

groups in Mali by Tuaregs formerly employed by Muammar Gaddafi, catapulting Jihadist territorial gains in 2012.[171] For organised groups, enabling strategic developments, 'black swan' events and shocks have ranged from conflicts, as seen in the cases of the Balkans, Sahel, Latin America, and Afghanistan, to the breaking down of previous monopolies, such as within the context of the Colombian cocaine trade. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic fuelled a lucrative black market for medical products, whilst also offering an opportunity for criminal organisations to provide humanitarian 'aid' or small loans to local communities and businesses, thus increasing their social and political legitimacy.[172]

3.2 Geographical spheres of influence

One of the many contributions emanating from the fields of international relations and political science relates to the concept of spheres of influence, or the consolidation of power within a specific geographic area or territory. Spheres of influence, or "international formations that contain one nation (the influencer) that commands superior power over others"[173] have long formed the bedrock of geopolitics and accounts of great power rivalry. These have also been used as a reference and starting point for different theories describing the calculations and rationales of as well as relations between (state) powers operating within the international system. For example, Structural Realists have argued that a power will typically yield territory to a peer competitor that possesses a stronger material interest in that same territory, whilst proponents of ideological distance theory suggest that a larger power will "steadfastly oppose ceding an ideologically homogeneous small[er] power to the sphere of an ideologically divergent peer competitor."[174] Critically however, contemporary thinkers such as Van Jackson have argued that the concept of spheres of influence carries relevance beyond interactions between states given that it describes practices of control and exclusion that can be found within any hierarchy.[175]

In theory, the notion of spheres of influence can thus be extended to the realm of clandestine non-state actors, helping to explain their propensity towards exerting sway over defined geographical zones. Their control over domestic – or 'home' – territories may thus be expanded upon via the annexation of, or forays into, 'away' territories, both in their near-abroad and further afield. This line of argument might further posit that the carving out of spheres of influence can occur at different levels even within the clandestine 'order'. On the one end of the spectrum, this might consist of 'micro' spheres of influence, such as when hyper-local criminal gangs attain dominant status in neighbourhood housing blocks located in inner-city areas. Actors operating on the other end of the spectrum may instead look to secure much larger territorial pockets, as reflected in the aims of groups such as the PLO, ISIS, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), al Shabaab and the Viet Cong. The study of organised crime also demonstrates the extent to which the forging of new spheres of influence may be shaped by illicit business opportunities. Illustratively – and displaying a common feature of modern organised crime networks – Mayer Lansky, a key figure of the early 20th century underworld who had made his fortune in the gambling business, gradually

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[171] See for example E. Basar, U*nsecured Libyan Weapons - Regional Impact and Possible Threats*, Civil-Military Fusion Centre, November 2012.
[172] J. P. Sullivan and R. J. Bunker (Reviewed by G. Frias), *COVID-19, Gangs, and Conflict*, *Journal of Strategic Security, Vol.* 14, No. 2, January 2021, pp. 122–25.
[173] A. Etzioni, *Spheres of Influence: A Reconceptualization*, in Lights Out For Oil? The Climate After Paris, The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, Summer 2015, p. 117.
[174] E. N. Resnick, *Interests, ideologies, and great power spheres of influence*, European Journal of International Relations, Vol. 28, Issue 3, June 2022, pp. 563–588.
[175] V. Jackson, *Understanding spheres of influence in international politics*, European Journal of International Security, Vol.5, Issue 3, October 2019, pp. 255-273.

expanded his operation beyond New York, including within the lucrative market that was pre-revolution Cuba.[176]

Realists and other defenders of the state paradigm have been quick to point to the relatively large body of literature that argues that such non-state spheres of influence and control often coalesce and extend outwards from fragile contexts characterised by weak governance and/or the absence of the state.[177] This argument is usually closely tied to the assumption that the absence of (formal) governance systems both constitutes a source of legitimacy for non-state actor and offers them the freedom of movement required to subvert or undermine the state. Thus, Herbert Wulf posits that "in weak and failing states, and in many post-conflict situations, the state typically lacks the capacity to protect its monopoly on force."[178] Comparing the Italian Mafia with drug gangs in Mexico, Central America and Colombia, Daron Acemoglu *et al.* similarly conclude that "these organisations appear to have partly filled the void created by a weak state."[179] Taking a more macro view, a recent United States National Intelligence Council Memorandum concluded that these protagonists thrived in "a more divided and contested global landscape" characterised by "less adaptable institutions and greater capability and resourcing available outside [of] governments."[180] Even then, the view that the ability of clandestine non-state actors to exert influence is merely a product of governance or development failures may be oversimplistic. For example, such a position does not fully explain how right-wing movement such as the Reichburger in Germany or white supremacist groups in the United States have emerged within the context of highly developed, democratic nations.

Other observers have injected more nuance into the debate. For example, thinkers such as William Reno,[181] Peter Reuter,[182] as well as Stephen Ellis and Mark Shaw[183] emphasise the extent to which clandestine non-state actors may also end up serving the interests of state actors, including with respect to the management, protection and collection of illicit rent. This suggests a degree of overlap, if not symbiosis, between the spheres of influence of state and non-state actors, particularly when the latter operate as part of state-sanctioned governance systems and, therefore, as instruments of state rule. Accordingly, Paul Staniland explains that even wartime political orders may "range from collusion and shared sovereignty to spheres of influence and tacit coexistence, to clashing monopolies and guerrilla disorder."[184] Separately, a rounded analysis of factors enabling non-state spheres of influence should also likely account for their ability to project power across different domains, including within the cognitive and informational realm, aided by the global proliferation of modern information technologies.

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[176] See for example M. Gosch and R. Hammer, *The Last Testament of Lucky Luciano: The Mafia Story in His Own Words,* Enigma Books, New York, 2013. Certain elements of Luciano's account were nevertheless disputed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation who considered him an unreliable character.

[177] This was also one of the key arguments put forward by American neo-conservatives the early 21st century.

[178] H, Wulf, *The Privatization of Violence: A Challenge to State-Building and the Monopoly on Force*, The Brown Journal of World Affairs, Vol. 18, No. 1, Fall- Winter 2011, p. 137.

[179] D. Acemoglu, G. De Feo, and D. De Luca, *Weak States: Causes and Consequences of the Sicilian Mafia*, Review of Economic Studies, No.87, 2020, p. 538.

[180] *Non-State Actors Playing Greater Roles in Governance and International Affairs*, National Intelligence Council, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, July 2023 (Approved for release May 2024), pp. 1-7.

[181] See W. Reno, p. 437.

[182] P. , *Systemic Violence in Drug Markets, Crime*, Law & Social Change, No.52, Issue 3, September 2009, pp. 275-284.

[183] S. Ellis and M. Shaw, *Does organized crime exist in Africa?,* African Affairs, Vol. 114, Issue 457, October 2015, pp. 505–528.

[184] P. Staniland, *States, Insurgents and Wartime Political Orders*, Perspectives on Politics, Vol. 12, Issue 2, June 2012, p. 243.

3.3 External relations: cooperation and competition

Attempts to carve out defined spheres of influence can also help to explain some of the dynamics underpinning inter-group and (as briefly introduced above) state-non state relations. Indeed, clandestine organisations of all denominations demonstrate a propensity to forge partnerships in pursuit of their strategic goals, although the forces and drivers shaping these relationships have been the subject of considerable debate over the years. May Darwich thus posits that (armed) non-state actors not only "challenge state authority in the international system through the use of violence and military means" but are also capable of "maintaining foreign relations and carrying out what looks like foreign policy with other non-state actors during both war and peace times."[185] More granularly, some scholars have argued that cooperation between militant organisations is most likely when these face substantial repression from the state and/or when groups share a similar ideological outlook, typically resulting in material cooperation.[186] Others, such as Samuel Mulliins and Adam Dolnik, offer a somewhat alternative position, claiming instead that "there are numerous instances of cooperation between terrorists and criminals at different levels."[187] According to Phil Williams, cooperation among criminal organisations is "widespread, even though it typically remains fragile and can easily be broken down."[188] In a similar vein, Manuel Castells posits that the "internationalisation of criminal activities induces organised crime from different countries to establish strategic alliances to cooperate [...] on each other's turf through subcontracting arrangements and joint ventures" in what amounts to a (global) "network enterprise."[189] Writing about international terrorism, Brian Phillips similarly suggests that interorganisational relationships are one of the key determinants of a group's longevity.[190]

In turn, examples of inter-group cooperation throughout the ages are plentiful. During the American Prohibition era, Charles 'Lucky' Luciano, the 'boss of bosses' who became the leader of New York City's five big Italian criminal families, promoted the idea of a National Crime Syndicate, also known as 'the Commission', which sought to manage disputes and establish both operating guidelines and deconfliction mechanisms.[191] Strategic cooperation between criminal actors would later become a central characteristic of modern organised crime – the means through which to connect different specialised functions along transnational supply chains. Thus, European wholesale cocaine importers such as the 'Ndrangheta branch of the Italian Mafia and Albanian organised crime groups both collude with each other and with cocaine-producing cartels in Latin America. Inter-group partnerships and cooperation structures is also a recurring feature of (international) terrorist, rebel, rejectionist, guerrilla and

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[185] M. Darwich, p. 2.

[186] C.W. Blair, E. Chenoweth *et al.*, *Honor Among Thieves: Understanding Rhetorical and Material Cooperation Among Violent Non-State Actors*, Harvard Dataverse, 2021, https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/PHUSUM.

[187] S. J. Mullins and A. Dolnik, *Relations between violent non-state actors and ordinary crime*, in L. Fenstermacher, L. Kuznar, T. Rieger and A. Speckhard (eds), *Current Multi-Disciplinary Perspective on Root Causes, The Role of Ideology, and Programs for Counter-Radicalization and Disengagement*, Topical Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment (SMA) Multi-Agency and Air Force Research Laboratory Multi-Disciplinary White Papers in Support of Counter-Terrorism and Counter-WMD, 2010, pp. 219-227.

[188] P. Williams, *Illicit markets, weak states and violence: Iraq and Mexico,* Crime, Law & Social *Change*, Vol. *52*, No. 3 2009, pp. 323–336.

[189] M. Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (Vol. 3), End of Millennium, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, p. 172.

[190] B. J. Phillips, *Terrorist Group Cooperation and Longevity*, International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 58. No. 2, June 2014, pp.3 36-347.

[191] *Lucky Luciano*, Organised Crime (1897-1962), https://www.biography.com/people/lucky-luciano-9388350. Luciano allegedly later offered to contact his criminal connections in Sicily to aid the Allied advance into Italy during World War II. See also J. Tagliabue, *Villalba Journal: How Don Carlo (and Patton) Won the War in Sicily*, New York Times, May 1994.

insurgent movements. Illustratively, ten Palestinian factions (of very different sizes) favouring armed activity and the derailment of the Oslo Accords joined forces in 1993 under the auspices of Damascus-based Alliance of Palestinian Forces (APF).[192] In a similar conceptual vein to Luciano's criminal Commission, the Alliance demonstrated how even non-state actors could establish 'supra' (and, indeed, quasi-multilateral) structures to promote cooperation. Al Qaeda, moreover, considered the forging of partnerships with franchised or aligned groups around the world its core purpose and as being critical to achieving its strategic aims. More locally, Iyad ag Ghali, a Tuareg powerbroker who rose to prominence in the Sahel as the leader of Ansar al Din, developed strategic partnerships with secular rebel groups in northern Mali to expand his organisation's influence before turning on those same groups and consolidating his political control over trading centres such as Timbuktu.[193]

At the same time, clandestine non-state organisations can also find themselves competing to the point of (at times) open warfare. Returning to the theme of spheres of influence and non-state power projection, a useful concept that can be borrowed from the field International Relations theory is that of the Thucydides Trap, which Harvard's Graham Allison describes as the increased likelihood of war when an emerging power challenges a ruling one (the term draws on the threat that Sparta saw in the rise of Athens at the time of the Peloponnesian War in 431 BC).[194] Despite a prevailing tendency to view war as the prerogative of the state, a number of observers have argued that such a structural pattern is indeed discernible at the sub-state level.[195] Illustratively, Michael von der Schulenburg, a former United Nations Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, argues that whilst volent conflicts amongst armed non-state actors have always existed, these have "for the first time since we have nation states [...] replaced interstate wars as the dominant form of organised violent conflicts."[196] Other thinkers have similarly commented on the tendency for violent conflict to emerge as a result of "contested incompatibility between two or more [non-state] parties"[197] as well as on the propensity for strategic competition over political and/or market dominance.[198] For example, Archim Wennmann describes violence between non-state actors as "a means to enter markets controlled by a competing group" as well as method of arbitration between competing entities.[199] Phil Williams similarly posits that "whilst cooperation among criminal organisations is widespread, [...] it typically remains fragile and can easily break down."[200] Sean McFate, for his part, describes the emergence of 'durable disorders' in which enduring and often-inconclusive clashes between armed non-state actors have become a

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[192] See for example A. Strindberg, T*he Damascus-Based Alliance of Palestinian Forces: A Primer*, Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 29, No. 3, Spring 2000, pp. 60-76.

[193] See also *Mali Jihadist Leader in Secret Talks with Northern Groups*, Agence France-Presse, January 31, 2023.

[194] G. Allison, *The Thucydides Trap*, Foreign Policy, June 2017, https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/09/the-thucydides-trap/. See also L. Whyte, *The Real Thucydides Trap*, The Diplomat, May 2016, https://thediplomat.com/2015/05/the-real-thucydides-trap/.

[195] See for example, B. J. Steele and J. L. Amoureux, *Hizbollah, Israel and the Perversity of Just War*' in E.J. Heinze and B. J. Steele (eds.), *Ethics, Authority, and War: Non-state Actors and the Just War Tradition*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 179.

[196] M. von der Schulenburg, *The Era of Armed Non-State Actors – Risks of Global Chaos*, Oxford University, https://conflictplatform.ox.ac.uk/cccp/research/michael-von-der-schulenburg-the-era-of-armed-non-state-actors-risks-of-global-chaos.

[197] I. Briscoe, *A violent compound: competition, crime and modern conflict*, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, November 2015, p. 1.

[198] See for example C. Gürer, *Strategic Competition: International Order and Transnational Organized Crime*, Security Insights Vol. 69, George C. Marshall Center for Security Studies, September 2021.

[199] A. Wennmann*, Crime and Conflict*, GSDRC, University of Birmingham, March 2015, https://gsdrc.org/professional-dev/crime-and-conflict/

[200] P. Williams, p. 325.

standard feature of the international system, signalling a return to pre-Westphalian norms when states did not enjoy a monopoly over the use of force.[201]

Such adversarial dynamics can once again be evidenced through the study of different clandestine organisations. Returning to the generally insightful era of the American Prohibition, Alphonse 'Scarface' Capone, who controlled the Chicago Outfit crime syndicate that dominated the city's underworld in the mid to late 1920s, famously demonstrated the propensity for inter-gang rivalry to spill into violence when he ordered his men to pose as policemen and gun down seven members of the rival Bugs Moran gang in what became known as the 1929 St Valentine's Day Massacre.[202] Such dynamics would become a defining characteristic of modern day Mexico, where competition between cartels over the control of the lucrative cocaine trade has escalated into all out inter-gang turf wars. Reflecting the logic of the Thucydides Trap, this violence has in no small part been catalysed by the rise or entry of new players seeking to displace existing actors, as seen in the case of the Sinaloa's Cartel's encroachment onto Tijuana and Gulf Cartel territory or the aggressive expansionist policy of Los Zetas, a Gulf Cartel splinter group counting former elite soldiers amongst its ranks.[203] In another illustrative example, the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club has a longstanding history of violence with its arch-rival, the Mongols Motorcycle Club, who wrestled territorial control from the Angels in Southern California in the 1980s. The 'war' between the groups led to a range of alliances and partnerships in what can almost be described as a gang-based balance of power (the Mongols, for example, are allied with the likes of the Bandidos, Sons of Silence, Outlaws and Pagans). Clashes between the two organisations and their allies have, over the years, been deadly and included everything from targeted killings to spontaneous shootouts in casinos and bars. Thus, in 2008, a member of the Bandidos killed the Hell's Angels San Francisco President, Mark 'Papa' Guardado, whilst the Hells Angels assassinated the leader of the Pagans Bronx Chapter in New York in May 2020.[204] The bad blood between the motorcycle gangs runs so deep that the Mongols reportedly have a dedicated "Respect few, fear none" tattoo worn by those within the group who have killed or injured a member of the Hells Angels.[205]

Similar altercations and rivalries are also observable within the context of armed non-state groups such as insurgencies and terrorist groups. From 2013, Shia Hezbollah fighters became increasingly present in the conflict in Syria, siding with the Assad regime as a counterweight to the proliferation of (primarily) Sunni armed groups in the country,[206] a trend most clearly illustrated by the territorial gains made by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). "The idiot," explained Hassan Nasrallah, the party's former secretary general, "is the one who watches the conspiracy crawling toward him but doesn't move."[207] Going on the offensive early against rival and opponent factions was therefore considered a means of protecting the group's interests whilst the political balance in Syria was still in flux. Factionalism between groups also

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[201] S. McFate, *Durable Disorder: The Return of Private Armies and the Emergence of Neomedievalism*, London School of Economics, August 2011.
[202] See also See *Solving Scarface: How the Law Finally Caught Up with Al Capone*, Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Archives, March 2005 and Al Capone, US National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals/capone.html.
[203] See for example I. Grillo, *El Narco: The Bloody Rise of Mexican Drug Cartels*, London: Bloomsbury, 2012, pp.77
[204] E. Shanahan and W.K. Rashbaum, *Hells Angels Accused in Brazen Killing of Rival Biker Gang Leader*, The New York Times, 22 July 2020.
[205] D. Shields, *The Infamous 'One Percenters': A Review of the Criminality, Subculture, and Structure of Modern Biker Gangs*, Justice Policy Journal, Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring 2012, p. 20.
[206] Other aims included opening a new front against it's arch enemy, Israel, in the Golan Heights. See M. H. Ali, *Power Points Defining the Syria-Hezbollah Relationship*, Carnegie Middle East Centre, March 2019, https://carnegie-mec.org/2019/03/29/power-points-defining-syria-hezbollah-relationship-pub-78730.
[207] *Ibid*.

emerged between Sunni organisations - most notably al Qaeda-affiliated Jabhat Al Nusra and ISIS. Indeed, the tensions between the two organisations ranged from distrust to takeover attempts (ISIS' ex-leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, declared al Nusra to be part of his organisation), to outright violence.[208] Such divisions demonstrated that ideological similarities alone may be insufficient to guard against competition over either territory and/or support bases. To be sure, the experience of wider contexts such as Libya and Sahelian states suggests that hostile relations between groups vying for political or economic control has been a common characteristic of contemporary armed conflicts, which have become more protracted in recent years.[209]

The above example of Hezbollah's alliance with the Assad regime also re-introduces the theme of state–non-state relations, which have again been the subject of theoretical debate. Paul Staniland, for example suggests that bargains and deals between state and armed non-state actors, including relating to shared sovereignty and tacit coexistence, are common within civil war contexts, shaping patterns of governance and violence and, ultimately, wartime political orders.[210] Taking more of an 'outside in' lens, observers such as Idean Salehyan highlight the extent to which foreign states employ or delegate activities to clandestine non-state actors within the context of proxy conflicts, even if this may result in losing a degree of foreign policy autonomy.[211] Moreover, in *States in Disguise* (2016), Belgin San-Akca explains that the processes and decisions involved in forging state–non-state alliances are not solely the product of state decisions as indeed, non-state actors equally select their foreign (state) patrons on the basis of their mutual ideological and strategic interests.[212] Bridget Coggins similarly discusses the concept of "rebel diplomacy," in which armed actors "engage in strategic communication with foreign governments or agents, or with an occupying regime they deem foreign."[213] Reyko Huang adds that such 'proto-diplomacy' is typically aimed at enhancing actors' international credibility and recognition while constituting a "choice for rebel groups seeking political capital within an international system that places formidable barriers to entry on non-state entities."[214]

Additional nuance can be found within the organised crime literature which, on the whole, describes a relational dynamic that extends beyond a binary distinction between state and non-state elements. For example, Luca Raineri and Francesco Strazzari posit that "the relationship between criminal groups and the state is subject to significant variation and evolution across time and space, ranging from predatory to parasitic and symbiotic models."[215] Iztok Prezelj and Nina Vogrinčič similarly describe the notion of 'state capture' involving complex mutual relations and "a corrupt nexus among organised crime, business, politics, security services and the judiciary" that can extend to entire regions.[216]

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[208] See D. L. Byman and J. R. Williams, *ISIS vs. Al Qaeda: Jihadism's global civil war*, Brookings, February 2015, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/isis-vs-al-qaeda-jihadisms-global-civil-war/.
[209] See for example W. R. Avis, *Current Trends in Violent Conflict*, K4D, University of Birmingham, March 2019.
[210] P. Staniland, pp. 243-264.
[211] I. Salehyan, *The Delegation of War to Rebel Organizations*, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 54, No. 3, June 2010, pp. 493–515.
[212] B. San-Akca, *States in Disguise: Causes of State Support for Rebel Groups*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 140.
[213] B. Coggins, *Rebel Diplomacy: Theorizing Violent Non-State Actors' Strategic Use of Talk*, In A. Arjona, N. Kasfir et al. (Eds), *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p.107.
[214] R. Huang, *Rebel Diplomacy in Civil War*, *International Security,* Vol. 40, Issue 4, Spring 2016, p. 89.
[215] L. Raineri and F. Strazzari, p. 2.
[216] I. Prezelj and N. O. Vogrinčič, *Criminal and networked state capture in the Western Balkans: the case of the Zemun clan*, Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, Vol. 20, Issue 4, December 2020, p. 547.

Supporting elements of the above theory, the historical analysis of these state–non-state relations indeed suggests that these are most visible during periods of multipolarity or increased contestation in the international system, when states tend to look for proxy or indirect (and, therefore, deniable) levers of influence aimed at gaining a comparative advantage over competitors. Between 1650 and 1730, in the aftermath of the Peace of Westphalia, European powers increasingly turned to private maritime raiders known as privateers to erode other economic influence indirectly on the high seas in an early example of state-sponsored proxy warfare.[217] American revolutionaries later received support from Spain and France, whilst in Spanish Louisiana, France recruited a network of informants that included fishermen and members of the clergy to report on British movements and intentions.[218] Proxy warfare using such actors subsequently became a feature of the 'War of 1812' fought between the United Stated and Britain and of Napoleonic campaigns in a pattern that would later become a regular feature of 20th century warfare. Thus, the First World War saw the inclusion of clandestine actors within larger warfighting campaign plans following the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans.

Following World War I, Irish Republican Army guerrillas led by Michael Collins during the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921) received significant support, intelligence and direction from the Dublin centre.[219] The Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939 fought between Nationalists and the left-wing Spanish Republican government involved a heavy element of external and proxy interference described by Hugh Thomas as a "world war in miniature." [220] On the one side, the conflict featured the provision of equipment, weapons and 'advisers' by Italy and Germany to the Nationalist Rebels, including German JU-52 aircraft and volunteer pilots who transported Franco's Morocco-based troops across the strait of Gibraltar to take part in combat operations.[221] On the other (Republican) side, the Soviet Union directed popular resistance 'guerrilleros' trained in guerrilla warfare schools operated by the Soviet NKVD mission in Loyalist Spain.[222]

State backing of clandestine non-state resistance and subversive organisations subsequently became a prominent feature of the Second World War. In the early years of the war, the heavy military setbacks suffered by Great Britain compelled it to explore alternative approaches to undermine the Axis advance. Partisan movements operating in occupied territories and behind enemy lines offered a means of eroding and degrading enemy morale and cohesion or, as Winston Churchill somewhat more dramatically put it, "set Europe ablaze."[223] Thus, British

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[217] C. J. Nolan, *The Age of War of Religion, 1000 - 1650*, *An Encyclopedia of Global Warfare and Civilisation*, Volume 2, Greenwood Press, London, 2006, p.682; and L. Sicking, *Neptune and the Netherlands: State, Economy and the War at Sea in the Renaissance*, History of Warfare Volume 23, Brill, Leiden, 2004, pp. 422-423.
[218] See for example L. D. Ferreiro, *Brothers at Arms: American Independence and the Men of France and Spain Who Saved It*, Borzoi Books, New York, 2016.
[219] M. Mulholland, review of *The Republic: The Fight for Irish Independence, 1918-1923*, Review No. 1516, http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1516.
[220] R. Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: the British Battalion in the International Brigades 1936-1939*, London: Routledge, 2004, p. 3.
[221] Germany's support to Franco was later formalised by way of a Condor Legion (essentially an integrated task force) which contained both ground and air elements as a means of coordinating Luftwaffe sorties with tactical land-based activity. See W. A. Musciano, *Spanish Civil War: German Condor Legion's Tactical Air Power*, Aviation History, December 2006, http://www.historynet.com/spanish-civil-war-german-condor-legions-tactical-air-power.htm.
[222] The NKVD, for instance, ran six guerrilla training schools. B. Whaley, pp.49-61 and B. Volodarsky, *Stalin's Agent: The Life & Death of Alexander Orlov*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp.182-189.
[223] P. Howarth, Undercover: The Men and Women of the Special Operations Executive, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, London, 1980, p. 3

Special Operations Executive (SOE) and American Office of Strategic Services (OSS)-supported elements recruited clandestine cells, conducted high profile assassinations and acts of sabotage and disseminated anti-German propaganda amongst local populations. Interestingly, the choice of the term 'OSS' by its founder, US American General William Donovan, reflected his sense of the 'strategic' importance of intelligence and clandestine operations in modern war."[224] The era witnessed a continuation of some of the evolutions witnessed in the Spanish Civil War through the implementation of formal training camps and programs for irregular agents. An illustrative example of this was the Camp 'X' training centre, located along the north shore of Lake Ontario on a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation site (a deliberate cover), where agents were instructed in sabotage and guerrilla warfare.[225] The Allies also produced doctrine and instruction manuals with colourful names such as the *Partisan Leader's Handbook* and the *Art of Guerrilla Warfare*, intended as an *aide memoire* to agents. Although classified at the time of publication, these were translated into several languages, including French, Dutch, Norwegian, Polish, Malay and Chinese, out of operational necessity. In turn, and somewhat ironically perhaps, many of these products found their way into the hands of post-war insurgencies who employed them against the very countries who had authored them.[226]

Unsurprisingly, the (non-state) clandestine playbook became a regular feature of the Cold War, a period during which two superpowers, unable to confront each other directly on the battlefield, routinely turned to proxy and deniable instruments of power to undermine each other's influence in various political theatres around the world. Declassified Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) documents from the early 1960s thus reveal the ways in which the Agency recruited exiled Cuban and other foreign commercial pilots as part of covert American proxy operations aimed at countering Communist influence in the resource-rich and newly independent Republic of the Congo (today's Democratic Republic of Congo).[227] Around the same time, in Laos, the US secured the loyalty of powerful tribal drug lords in its attempts to thwart the spread of Communism across the region.[228] The US was not alone in its support of proxy groups. China acted as a state sponsor to Viet Minh during the First Indochina War, providing it with weapons and equipment,[229] and (alongside the Soviet Union) similarly supported and equipped the Viet Cong insurgency fighting US forces in Vietnam.[230] In the mid-

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[224] *'What was OSS?', The Office of Strategic Services: America's First Intelligence Agency*, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Publication, March 2007, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/intelligence-history/oss/art03.htm.

[225] The camp also served as a centre for the production of forged documents, including passports and three-dimensional and full-scale replicas of targets, some of which were used in the planning phases of Heydrich's assassination (Operation Anthropoid). Underwater demolition devices and one-man submarines were tested in the lake. See W. Stevenson, *A Man Called Intrepid: The incredible WWII Narrative of the hero whose spy network and secret diplomacy changed the course of history,* Guilford (CT): The Lyons Press, 2000, pp.196-198.

[226] *The Secret Agent's Pocket Manual 1939-1945: The Original Espionage Field-Manual of the Second World War Spies*, London: Conway (Bloomsbury), 2009, p.26.

[227] D. Robarge, *CIA's Covert Operations in the Congo, 1960-1968: Insights from Newly Declassified Documents*, Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 58 No.3, Central Intelligence Agency, September 2014. See also F. R. Villafana, *Cold War in the Congo: The Confrontation of Cuban Military Forces 1960-1967*, London: Transaction Publishers, 2012, p. 37; and J. Prados, *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA*, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publisher, 2006, p. 326.

[228] A. W. McCoy, *The Costs of Covert Warfare: Airpower, Drugs, and Warlords in the Conduct of U.S Foreign Policy*, New England Journal of Public Policy, Vol.19, Issue 1, Article 14, September 2003, p.223. See also M. Aldrich *et al*, *New Opium War*, CIA Library (declassified August 2001), https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP73B00296R000300060028-3.pdf

[229] Chinese-supplied artillery and 37mm anti-aircraft guns played a critical role in Giap's hard-fought defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and in the Vietnam War.

[230] See F.C. Parker, *Vietnam and Soviet Asian Strategy*, Asian Affairs: An American Review, Vol. 4, No. 2, Nov-Dec 1976, pp. 94-116.

1980s, in Afghanistan, the US again reciprocated by funnelling equipment, including Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, via Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) to anti-Soviet resistance groups fighting the Soviet Union under the banner of the Mujahideen. [231]

Manifestations of support for clandestine non-state actors endured beyond the Cold War. Just as Damascus had allowed the Kurdistan's Workers Party (PKK) to reassemble itself on Syrian territory in the 1980s, the Taliban offered a sanctuary to a Qaeda during the 1990s, while Pakistan similarly provided support to both the Taliban and the Kashmiri Lashkar-e-Taiba as a means of pursuing its foreign policy interests.[232] Some of this support, including Iranian support for groups such as the Lebanese Hezbollah, Iraqi Badr, Houthis in Yemen and elements of the Syria resistance, can loosely be placed in the category of proxy campaigns aimed at countering Israeli, US and Sunni (including Saudi) influence in the region.[233] Other state–non-state connections have revealed themselves to be more fluid. Illustratively, the infamous arms dealer Viktor Bout, was reportedly employed by US Department of Defence contractors in the early days of the Iraq War to transport supplies and material required for the war effort, all the while enjoying close ties to the Russian political establishment.[234] Indeed, Russia began fine-tuning its own use of militias, criminal elements and private security companies around the world – including the Wagner Group, an opaque collection of private military contractors – to project its influence in the Donbas, Middle East as well as North and Sub-Saharan Africa. [235]

3.4 Strategic logic and sequencing

"The whole secret of successful fighting," George Bernard Shaw wrote in *Arms and the Man,* "is to get the enemy at a disadvantage; and never, on any account, fight him on equal terms."[236] For his part, Basil Liddell Hart once commented that guerrilla warfare was "far more intellectual than a bayonet charge."[237] His comment hinted at the extent to which clandestine operations

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[231] US support for the Mujahideen reached US $650 million by 1987. See B. Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995, pp.180-181. Some of the commanders who benefited from this support – a case in point being Jalaluddin Haqqani, founder of the Haqqani network – went on to serve in the Taliban government after the movement came to power in 1996 and would become a thorn in the side of NATO forces two decades later. See for example M. Rosenberg, *Founder of Haqqani Network Is Long Dead, Aide Says*, New York Time, July 2015.

[232] See for example E. Schricker, *The Search for Rebel Independence: A study of the Afghan and Pakistani Taleban*, Sage Journals, Vol. 4, Issue 1, January 2017, pp. 16-30.

[233] This is despite occasional ideological differences between the regime and local beneficiaries. Afshon Ostovar, for example, highlights some of the differences between the Houthi Shia ideology and Iran's. The latter are proponents of Zaydi (rather than Twelver) Shiism who do not recognise the supreme authority of the Iranian leadership in religious affairs.

[234] Bout's aircraft, registered under the company Irbis Air, were allegedly subcontracted by US Air Mobility Command and KBR (owned by Halliburton) according to *The Spiegel*. See '*Trapping the Lord of War: The Rise and Fall of Viktor Bout'*, Spiegel Online, October 2010, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/trapping-the-lord-of-war-the-rise-and-fall-of-viktor-bout-a-721532.html. Bout's arrest by US authorities in Thailand triggered diplomatic tensions between Washington and Moscow, the latter of whom included Bout's prosecuting attorney on a list of US officials barred from entering Russia. See N. Hong, *'Convicted Arms Dealer Viktor Bout Returns to U.S. Appeals Court,'* The Wall Street Journal, October 2016, https://www.wsj.com/articles/convicted-arms-dealer-viktor-bout-returns-to-u-s-appeals-court-1477825206.

[235] See for example A. MacKinnon, *Russia's Shadowy Mercenaries Offer Humanitarian Aid to Clean Image*, Foreign Policy July 2020, available online at: https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/22/wagner-group-russia-syria-libya-mercenaries.

[236] B. Shaw, *Arms and the Man* (edited by R. Blatchford), London, Pearson Education Ltd., 1991, p. 46.

[237] P. Satia, *Centralité des marges: Les campagnes britanniques au Moyen-Orient pendant la Grande Guerre*, Les Éditions de l'EHESS, Volume 71, Issue 1, March 2016, p. 95.

reflected a clear strategic logic and accompanying planning processes. In turn, the dominant traits discernible within the strategic approaches typically favoured by clandestine non-state actors have a long lineage. As early as the Second Punic War of 218-201 BC, the Roman Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus caused controversy in Rome when he instructed forces to shy away from direct engagement with Hannibal's superior forces, whilst at the same time attacking his supply lines – an asymmetric logic that would become known as the Fabian Strategy.[238] In the 6th century BC, the Chinese General and strategist Sun Tzu similarly drew a distinction between 'direct' and 'indirect' methods of attack, arguing that the two "in combination give rise to an endless combination of manoeuvres."[239] Inevitably, such tactics would re-emerge as well as ebb and flow throughout history, although growing in prominence in the modern, post-Westphalian era. In 17th century Canadian Quebec (then *Nouvelle France*), the French found themselves at war against the Iroquois Confederation who took umbrage to France's support for their traditional enemy, the Algonquins. The Iroquois avoided pitched battles and instead favoured paddling down rivers on canoes to strike isolated villages and outposts far behind the French line, often at night.[240] Such asymmetric tactics – which the French labelled 'petite guerre' – would subsequently become a significant feature of the American Revolution of 1765-1783. [241]

The American Civil War of 1861-1865 witnessed the emergence of guerrilla-style tactics, which were employed by the *jayhawkers* pro-Union vigilante militia and Confederate *bushwhackers* in Kansas and Missouri.[242] Tactics and experience gained during the Civil War would also migrate to criminal gangs such as the Dalton Brothers, Reno Gang and personalities such as Jesse James, who himself had fought as a *jayhawker*. [243] These same themes would of course return in amplified forms during the 20th century, most noticeably following the outbreak of World War I. Famously, T.E. Lawrence 'of Arabia' and Arab fighters under the command of the Sheriff of Mecca and his son, Emir Faisal, employed offensive guerrilla tactics to pin down Ottoman formations, targeting infrastructure, cutting communication lines and destroying railways and bridges.[244] Indeed, World War I solidified an

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[238] Fabius' use of strategic patience and indirect encounters with the Carthagian army earned him the name of 'Cunctator' (delayer). P. Hunt, *Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus, Roman Statesman and Commander*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, available online at:
https://www.britannica.com/biography/Quintus-Fabius-Maximus-Verrucosus
[239] Sun Tzu (translated by Lionel Giles), *The Art of War*, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 2002, p. 56.
[240] Illustratively, one raid conducted in August 1689 involved a raiding party of 1500 Iroquois warriors aboard 150 canoes. See J.C. Castex, *Combats Franco-Anglais de la Guerre de Trente Ans (1618-1648) et de la Ligue d'Augsbourg (1688-1697)*, Vancouver: Les Editions du Phare-Ouest, 2012, pp. 203-207.
[241] See for example W. J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier, 1534-1760*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983 p.122.
[242] T. O'Bryan, *Bushwhackers,* Civil War on the Western Border: The Missouri-Kansas Conflict:1854-1865*, Kansas City Public Library, www.civilwaronthewesternborder.org/encyclopedia. For a more detailed analysis of civil war dynamics in Kansas, including the 'sacking' of Lawrence see J. M. McPherson, *Battle Cry Freedom: The Civil War Era*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, pp.145-159.
[243] See Pinkerton: *Over 160 years of innovation: From Protecting Mid-Western Railways to Providing Corporate Risk Management to Clients Across the Globe*, www.pinkerton.com.
[244] This approach would later be codified by Lawrence in his seminal work, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926), which *inter alia* highlighted the merits of incorporating guerrilla warfare within wider military offensives. See T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Chatham: Wordsworth, 1997. The text would influence future generations of strategists and insurgents. Additional insights into T.E Lawrence's psychology and philosophy on leadership and strategy are offered in Basil Liddell Hart's memoirs. See B. H. Liddell Hart, *Memoirs*, Volume I, London: Cassell, 1965, pp.345-349. See also P. Knightley and C. Simpson, *The Secret Lives of Lawrence of Arabia*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., Ontario, 1969, pp. 66-73 and M. Brown (ed.), *T.E. Lawrence in War and Peace: An Anthology of the Military Writings of Lawrence of Arabia*, London: Greenhill Books, 2005.

earlier historic trend in which non-state actors became formally included in states' campaigns plans, paving the way for the widescale incorporation of clandestine non-state partisans in the Allied war strategy during World War II.[245] By the onset of the Cold War, the stage was set for the rapid migration and spread of 'tried and tested' asymmetric warfare principles, methods and approaches to groups located around the world.

While observers such as Walter Laqueur have highlighted the influence of contextual factors such as culture, technology and geography in shaping actors' irregular (armed) campaigns,[246] the historical and theoretical literature recurrently points to common concepts, objectives and stratagems as constituting the bedrock of the clandestine playbook. These include avoiding direct confrontation with stronger (state) adversaries and carefully sequencing activities as part of longer-term campaigns of political influence ultimately aimed at unseating these same adversaries. Reflecting *inter alia* on France's experience of counter-insurgency warfare in the Algerian War, [247] David Galula argued in his seminal work *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (1964) that the strategies of guerrilla groups ultimately gravitated around challenging the local ruling power with a view to replacing that same power (including through the control of a territory's administration, police and armed forces).[248] Galula's thinking thus rested heavily on the notion of power contestation between opposing (state and non-state) factions. Paraphrasing von Clausewitz, he also posited that an insurgency would pursue its objectives "methodically, through a protracted struggle", using all available means: both violent and non-violent.[249] Revolutionary war, he concluded, had "its special rules, that differed from those of conventional war."[250] The inherent disproportion of strength between state and non-state actors could indeed be compensated for by a few critical asymmetric strategic advantages. These included the insurgent's ability to choose when to initiate conflict, sustain fluid as well as protracted campaigns ("insurgency is cheap, counter insurgency costly," he argued), and win-over the local population through his "ideological cause," ultimately separating the insurgency physically and morally from the state.[251]

Galula's writings both overlapped with and drew on concepts formulated by Mao Tse-tung, articulated in *On Guerrilla Warfare* (1937) and *On Protracted Warfare* (1967). The latter highlighted the value of small mobile units, securing base areas and employing hit and run tactics as a stepping stone to eventually operating as a larger, conventional force.[252] "We must strike the weak spots in the enemy's flanks, in his front [and] in his rear" he wrote, also emphasising the importance of waging war "everywhere" in order to cause the "dispersal of his forces and dissipation of his strength."[253] Mao's teachings were important in that they argued that offensive capabilities and tactics alone could not secure the ultimate success of a

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[245] Such a logic was, to a lesser extent, also applied in the trenches of Europe, through Germany's development of a cadre of specially trained *Stormtrooper* 'shock' troops from 1915 onwards and the formation of elite Italian *Ardito* units in 1917 specialising in breaching enemy defences.

[246] W. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study* (first published 1976), New York: Routledge, 2018.

[247] France's war against the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) escalated rapidly into urban warfare during the Battle of Algiers (1956-7). By the end of 1956, over half a million French troops were deployed in Algeria. The conflict ultimately resulted in Algeria's independence in 1962.

[248] D. Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964, p. 3.

[249] Galula further suggested that there were three primary manifestations of non-state power-taking: revolution (or a sudden, explosive upheaval), plot (i.e., a coup d'état) and insurgency (or a protracted, methodical struggle). Ibid p. 3-4

[250] Ibid, p. x.

[251] Ibid, p. 5-9

[252] These documents outlined the tactics developed fighting both the Japanese and the Chinese Nationalists.

[253] M. Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare* (translated by S.B. Griffiths), 1961 In *'Mao Tse-tung on Guerrilla Warfare'*, FMFRP 12-18, US Marine Corps, 1989, p. 54.

rebellion. Instead, these had to be complemented by economic, social, psychological and above all, political, objectives and corresponding structures.[254] Echoing aspects of Clausewitz's notion of 'people's war', Mao famously stressed that securing popular consent for a rebellion was primordial and that the guerrilla's "relationship to the masses is that of the fish to the water."[255] Mao further expanded on these basic principles by outlining a sequenced, 'three phase' approach to guerrilla warfare. In the first 'strategic-defensive' phase, the guerrilla "retreated in space but advanced in time." This was to be followed by a 'strategic stalemate' phase focused on waging indirect guerrilla warfare and exhausting the enemy. Finally, a third 'strategic offensive' phase would involve an evolution to more conventional fighting following strategic gains by the guerrilla alongside the (political) control of territory.[256] Whilst largely consistent with Mao's writings, Galula nevertheless argued (with echoes of Sun Tzu) that the insurgent's transition to conventional warfare need not necessarily mark an end to the use of guerrilla tactics, positing that "revolutionary war remains unconventional until the end."[257]

This distinction between conventional and unconventional forms of warfare is explored in detail by Stephen Biddel who, in *Nonstate Warfare* (2021), builds on the concepts of earlier thinkers such as Charles Tilly by describing military conduct as occurring along a spectrum spanning from Fabian style irregular warfare to Napoleonic-style warfare featuring massed armies.[258] Biddel thus challenges the assumption that armed non-state actors can simply be characterised as waging "irregular warfare using lethal but militarily unsophisticated 'asymmetric' means" and state actors as capable of conducting "high-intensity, conventional combat [employing] large, uniformed, heavily armoured formations."[259] Instead, he argues that non-state armies may at times demonstrate the ability to fight more 'conventionally' than state armies, particularly when these benefit from higher levels of institutional maturity whilst conversely, state actors may resort to 'unconventional' methods at times of necessity.[260] "Real actors' actual military behaviour," Biddel adds, "is so interpenetrated by the intuitive elements of each as to make the distinction mostly misleading."[261] Critically, he also posits that the "scale of resources needed to wage state-like mid-spectrum warfare has now shrunk to the point where many non-state actors can fight effectively in this style – if their institutions are up to the job."[262]

Biddel's contribution to the debate is valuable, not least because it re-introduces the idea that there may be consistent forces at play – such as the internal cohesion and politics of any organisation (whether state or non-state) – that shape their strategic calculus and approach to war fighting. In doing so, he once again hints at the theme of non-sate actors demonstrating many of the characteristics of state behaviour, including the ability to combine different tactics and war fighting approaches. This last axiom was applied by the Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap against the French during the First Indochina War and, subsequently, against

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[254] J. Wong, *The Ties That Bind: Chairman Mao, Che Guevara and Al Qaeda*, Small Wars Journal, May 2016, pp.1-3.
[255] M. Y. M. Kau and J. K. Leung (eds.), *The Writings of Mao Zedong: 1949-1976: Volume I (September 1949 - December 1955)*, New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1986, p. 632.
[256] See for example L. Katzenbach Jr. and G. Z. Hanrahanpp, *The Revolutionary Strategy of Mao Tse-Tung*, Political Science Quarterly Vol. 70, No. 3, The Academy of Political Science, September 1955, pp. 331-332.
[257] D. Galula, p. 11.
[258] S. Biddel, Nonstate Warfare: *The military Methods of Guerillas, Warlords, and Militias*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021, p. 7-12.
[259] Ibid, p. 2.
[260] Ibid, pp. 3-4.
[261] Ibid, p. 7.
[262] Ibid, p. 8.

the United States during the Vietnam War.[263] Here, and like Sun Tzu, Mao and T.E. Lawrence (whom he had diligently read), he effectively blended conventional and irregular tactics to suit the strategic circumstances in which he found himself at any given point.[264] Biddel's thinking also reinforces the argument that non-state actors are capable of developing sophisticated strategic postures – a position that echoes Lawrence Freedman's description of, this time, terrorism (as opposed to guerrilla warfare writ large) as going beyond a normative concept, and effectively amounting to a strategy that combines motives and the instrumental application of methods.[265]

Moving beyond the debate on 'forms' of warfare (i.e., conventional versus unconventional), analysis of both the theoretical literature and historical case studies highlights the extent to which public sentiment features perhaps disproportionally in the strategic outlook of armed non-state actors.[266] Scholars such as Patricia Hoffman, Ambreen Javed, Paul Staniland, as well as Dan Cox and Alex Ryan, have all to various degrees echoed Mao's idea of the guerrilla, insurgent or terrorist 'fish' swimming within a wider 'sea' of popular support and underlined the extent to which securing sympathetic constituencies often constituted the bedrock of armed non-state actor strategies.[267] Such a tenet is aptly summarised by John Mackinlay and Alison Al-Baddawy, who explain that such actors are "a product of an environment and population, and to be successful their modus operandi has to be continuously sympathetic to their surroundings."[268] The symbiotic relationship between clandestine non-state actors and their support base also introduces a variation on Biddel's concepts, namely that such actors may also be acting along a *political continuum* involving the creation and maintenance of constituencies spanning across the state–non-state divide. These same actors may thus choose to erect their own alternative governance systems or participate in formal political processes, such as by running for national elections (even, at times, whilst continuing to fight armed campaigns).[269] Indeed, such a strategic approach offers a pathway through which to transition from non-state to state-like morphologies short of overthrowing or supplanting the existing regime outright.

Manifestations and combinations of the above dynamics are discernible in organisations spanning across geographic and historical contexts. For example, the guerrilla's overall emphasis on securing popular support played heavily within the context of the Cuban Revolution, which, although dating back to 1956, remains striking to this day – not least given

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[263] The British, meanwhile, were also witnessing insurgent tactics within the context of the 1948-60 Malayan Emergency guerrilla war fought between the Communist Malayan National Liberation Army and the Commonwealth armed forces.

[264] Diep employed many aspects of conventional warfare against French General Navarre, including the coordinated use of artillery and (engineer) breaching parties. See for example P. B. Davidson, V*ietnam at War: The History, 1946-1975*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991, pp. 223-234.

[265] L. Freedman, *Terrorism as a Strategy*, Government and Opposition, Vol.42, No.3, Special Issue on Politics in the Age of Terror, Summer 2007, pp. 314-339.

[266] There are, even here, exceptions. For example, some observers have argued that armed non-state actor groups relying on the extraction of local natural resources were less likely to cultivate supportive social and ethnic support bases. See J. M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2006.

[267] See P. D. Hoffman, *The Essentials of Guerrilla Warfare*, Air University Press, 2000; A. Javed, *Resistance and its progression to insurgency*, Institute of Strategic Studies (Islamabad), Vol. 30, No.1-2, Spring/Summer 2010, pp. 171-186; P. Staniland, *Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia*, International Security, Vol. 37, No. 1, Summer 2012, pp. 142-177; and D. G. Cox and A. Ryan, *Countering Insurgency and the Myth of "The Cause"*, Journal of Strategic Security, Vol. 8, No.1-2, Spring/Summer 2015, pp. 43-62.

[268] J. Mackinlay and A. Al-Baddawy, *'Successful Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies'* in *Rethinking Counterinsurgency*, RAND Counterinsurgency Study Volume 5, 2008, p. 7.

[269] See for example M. S. Shugart, *Guerrillas and Elections: An Institutionalist Perspective on the Costs of Conflict and Competition*, International Studies Quarterly, Vol.3 6, No. 2, June 1992, pp. 121-151.

that it was initiated by a small band of fighters sailing from Mexico to Cuba across rough waters aboard an overcrowded motor cruiser.[270] Within days, most of the revolutionaries were killed by army patrols, leaving less than twenty fighters to spearhead a rural guerrilla campaign that lasted until 1958. During the latter, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara's application of *foco theory* (or *foquismo*) reflected Mao's emphasis on gaining the support of the rural population, whilst also highlighting the catalytic role of the guerrilla in igniting political uprisings.[271] In his 1960 treatise, *Guerrilla Warfare*, Guevara argued that all the necessary conditions for a revolution need not necessarily exist for a guerrilla campaign to succeed and that instead, these could be created by an insurrection led by a small vanguard of determined fighters.[272] An additional precedent set by Guevara was his determination to export *foquismo* after the Cuban Revolution, something he attempted in Congo and Bolivia.[273]

Vo Nguyen Giap expanded on this concept in Southeast Asia, concluding that success in protracted wars involving foreign powers required not only maintaining the support of the local population but also undermining that of a foreign actor's domestic population. Such wars, in other words, were not so much won or lost on the battlefield but instead through the adversary's ballot box, with its electorate ultimately constituting its 'centre of gravity'. Thus, whilst the 1968 Tet Offensive proved a military failure for the North Vietnamese, it did demonstrate that the Viet Cong was still a potent adversary capable of large-scale operations, further eroding American domestic support for what was proving to be an increasingly unpopular war.[274] Meanwhile, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) similarly demonstrated the extent to which the notion of popular support could be widened to include multiple international audiences, diasporas and communities spanning across jurisdictions from the mid-1960s onwards. More localised examples of activities aimed at securing popular consent endure in contemporary contexts. For example, Sahelian extremist groups such as *Ansar al Din*, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and *Jama'a Nusrat al Islam wa al Muslimeen* (JNIM, which evolved out of the al Qaeda franchise), have emphasised the delivery of basic public services and even building schools in northern Mali as a means of gaining the support of the local population.[275]

Organised crime actors, the theory suggests, similarly demonstrate an awareness of the social environment within which they operate, often attempting to secure localised support and/or

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[270] J. Gordon, *Twelve Who Made a Revolution*, Southern Review, Vol. 51, No. 4, Autumn 1966, pp. 340-349.

[271] The central principles of *foco* theory were developed by French intellectual Regis Debray, drawing on Che Guevara's revolutionary principles. See for example R. Blackburn (ed.), *Regis Debray: Strategy for Revolution*, London: Jonathan Cape,1970. For a detailed analysis of the role of other actors, including the *llano* (or urban underground), in the Cuban revolution see M.D. Childs, *An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara's Foco Theory*, Journal of Latin American Studies Vol. 27, No. 3, Cambridge University Press, October 1995, pp. 593-624.

[272] E. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971, p.143.

[273] Mao himself labelled Che as an 'internationalist' when the two met in November 1960. "*Memorandum of Conversation between Mao Zedong and Ernesto 'Che' Guevara,*" November 19, 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 202-00098-01, pp. 1-14. Translated by Zhang Qian. http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115155.
Moreover, given his own experience of planning the overthrow of the Batista regime from Mexico alongside Fidel Castro, Guevara, an Argentinian, readily recognised the value of both foreign fighters and external sanctuaries as part of an armed campaign.

[274] The emphasis on demoralising and shaping the perceptions of foreign audiences would of course become a key tenet of more recent terrorist organisations such as al Qaeda and the Islamic State.
In his classic think piece, *Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars,* Andrew Mack connects this political focus to the mobilising power and increased cohesion of the insurgent, contrasted with that of those whom he is fighting. See A. Mack, *Why Big Nations Lose Small* Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict, World Politics, Vol. 27, Issue 2, January 1975, pp. 175-200.

[275] K. Zimmerman, *Salafi-Jihadi Ecosystem in the Sahel*, American Enterprise Institute, April 2020, pp. 2-5.

patronage amongst the population and political establishment. One set of early 1930s commentators thus pointed to the "alliances between those frowned upon by law and the allegedly respectable fold who profited from their misdeeds."[276] The economic character of the phenomenon implies that in many contexts (and particularly – but not exclusively – in lower income countries), local communities may directly benefit from or even actively depend on illicit commerce to meet their basic needs. Indeed, the connections between organised criminal groups and their environment are often deep-rooted and multifaceted, making it, as Regine Schönenberg and Annette von Schönfeld explain, "difficult to distinguish between light and shadow."[277] A recurrent characteristic of criminal actors thus consists of their ability to embed themselves within the social fabric in a way that extends across the state–non-state divide, including through their links to the political establishment. This approach reflects overlapping interests across the various social cleavages and 'stakeholders' (local communities, political elites and so on) with whom they interact.[278] Building on this theme, Louis Rawlings observes that "organised crime, when performed by the leaders of communities, tends to acquire the legitimacy of official policy."[279] Moreover, some theorists suggest that organised criminal actors show an acute propensity to exploit periods of political transition, including from authoritarian rule to multi-party democratic systems. As John Ishiyama notes, political parties during these periods require a combination of voter support and finances, whilst criminal actors reciprocally are in search of political patronage and protection.[280] In other words, criminal access to, or influence over, segments of the population constitutes a fundamental component of the political infiltration and 'state capture' process.

Illustrative cases of organised crime dependence on, or exploitation of, public support abound within the case study literature. In Colombia, Pablo Escobar famously encouraged the collusion of, and cultivated support amongst, local citizens by handing out cash to the poor as well as funding low-income housing in Medellin.[281] In Somalia, pirate gangs have over the years gained a degree of support and legitimacy with local clans, not only as an employer but also by protecting local communities from illegal fishing by foreign fleets trawling Somali waters.[282] Various observers have thus highlighted the extent to which the piracy phenomenon must be situated within the context of localised resistance to the loss of livelihood (both from illegal fishing and toxic dumping), and the extent to which the entire business model relies as much on local support and influence over governance systems as complex 'logistical tails' to homeports.[283] During the Covid-19 pandemic, elements of the Italian Mafia sought to build

[276] H. B. Chamberlin and W. B. Chamberlin, *Some Observations Concerning Organized Crime*, Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology (1931-1951), Vol. 22, No. 5, January 1932, p. 652.

[277] R. Schönenberg and A. von Schönfeld, *Introductio*n, in H. Böll-Stiftung and R. R. Schönenberg (eds.), *Transnational Organized Crime: Analyses of a Global Challenge to Democracy*, Transcript Verlag, 2013, p. 11.

[278] See for example: P. Miraglia *et al*., *Transnational Organised Crime and Fragile States*, International Center for the Prevention of Crime and the Clingendael Institute, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Paper WP 3/20212, October 2012, p.11.

[279] L. Rawlings, *Condottieri and Clansmen: Early Italian Raiding, warfare and the state*, In K. Hopwood (ed.), *Organized Crime in Antiquity*, Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2009, p. 97.

[280] J. Ishiyama, *Organized crime and political party systems characteristics in post-communist and Latin American countries*, Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties, Vol. 32, Issue 4, 2022, pp. 771-792. See also M. Di Cataldo and N. Mastrorocco, *Organized Crime, Captured Politicians, and the Allocation of Public Resources,* The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*,* Vol. 38, Issue 3, November 2022, pp. 774–839.

[281] See for example B. M. Bagley, *Colombia and the War on Drugs*, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 67, No. 1, Fall 1988, pp. 70-92.

[282] See R. Weitz, *Countering the Somali Pirates: Harmonizing the International Response*, Journal of Strategic Security, Vol. 2, No. 3, September 2009, pp. 1-12.

[283] See M.G. Frodl, Perils at Sea: Somali piracy tactics evolve; threats could expand globally, National Defence, Vol. 94, No. 677, April 2010, pp. 38-39; T. Keating, *The Political Economy of Somali Piracy*, The SAIS Review of International Affairs, Vol. 33, No. 1, Winter-Spring 2013, pp. 185-191; and A.

local legitimacy, support (and indeed leverage) by providing financial assistance such as micro-grants to struggling businesses.[284] In the Sahel, the ability of local criminal groups to marshal local political support and financing has arguably become a key feature of the overall political economy, with elements of the elite striking deals with these same groups as part of informal power sharing arrangements.[285]

Theorists have long debated the extent to which territorial control – or, at the very least, exploitation of vital terrain – constituted a central tenet of clandestine non-state actor strategic thinking. Dominic Johnson and Monica Toft, for example, argue that the concept of 'human territoriality' amounts to a fundamental evolutionary law that manifests itself in conflicts around the world, implying that this same law extends beyond the realm of state actors.[286] Toft also correlates territorial considerations – particularly the defence of self-defined (or, indeed, desired) 'homelands' – to the decision to employ violence as part of groups' overall strategies.[287] At the same time, Luis De la Calle and Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca inject an interesting definitional dimension into the debate, suggesting that territorial control acts as the differentiator between insurgency and terrorism (the latter of whom may not have the capacity to hold the ground).[288] Even then, and echoing elements of both Mao and Bidell's thinking, Sankaran Kalyanaraman situates guerrilla and insurgent tactics within a phased warfighting logic that is primarily focused on loosening the state's authority rather than immediate territorial control (even if this constitutes the eventual political aim).[289]

Unsurprisingly, the role of territory, terrain and freedom of movement (a key by-product of these variables) comes across strongly in the historical analysis of clandestine non-state movements. In his account of guerrilla warfare movements, Robert Asprey points to the role of terrain in shaping generations of European partisan movements[290] – a theme perhaps best illustrated by the World War 2 French resistance, the *Maquis*, which was named after the scrublands in which fighters, or *Maquisards*, hid from the Germans.[291] Two decades later, the Vietnam War demonstrated the benefits of jungle environments and remote topographies by allowing Viet Cong guerrilla fighters to move in and out of battle, plan operations and establish critical supply and logistics lines. Chief amongst these was the Ho Chi Minh trail – a vast network of roads, footpaths and gasoline pipelines that spanned across Laos and Cambodia, once described by the US National Security Agency (NSA) as "one of the great achievements in military engineering of the twentieth century."[292] Today, terrain continues to be exploited

Shortland and F. Varese, *The Protector's Choice: An Application of Protection Theory to Somali Piracy*, The British Journal of Criminology, Vol. 54, No. 5, September 2012, pp. 741-764.
[284] M. Johnson, *Italian mafia tightens grip on small businesses during lockdown*, Financial Times, 24 February 2021.
[285] See for example W. Lacher, *Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region*, The Carnegie Papers, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 2012.
[286] D.D.P. Johnson and M. D. Toft, *Grounds for War: The Evolution of Territorial Conflict*, International Security, Vol. 38, No. 3, Winter 2013/14, pp. 7-38.
[287] See M. Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory*, Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 2003.
[288] L. de la Calle and I. Sánchez-Cuenca, *Rebels without a Territory: An Analysis of Nonterritorial Conflicts in the World, 1970-1997*, The Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 56, No. 4, August 2012, pp. 580-603.
[289] S. Kalyanaraman, Conceptualisations of Guerrilla warfare, Strategic Analysis, Vol. 27, No. 2, April-June 2002, pp. 172-185.
[290] R. B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, Volume 1, iUniverse, 2002, p.307
[291] See for example R. Balu, *French maquis during the Second World War, Irregular Combatants or part of the national army?* 20 & 21, Revue d'histoire, Vol. 141, No. 1, 2019, pp. 81-95.
[292] The network, according to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimates, was used by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) to carry around 630,000 soldiers, 400,000 weapons, 100,000 tons of food and 50,000 tons of ammunition to South Vietnam, forming a key component of its armed campaign. See 'Spartans in Darkness: American SIGINT and the Indochina War, 1945-1975', National Security Agency Central Security Service, Series VI, Volume 7, CCH-E05-02-02, February 1998, p.94, declassified on 21 Dec 2007.

around the world by cross-border insurgencies, terrorist groups and criminal organisations. Examples include Boko Haram's safe-haven in the Sambisa Forest near the Nigerian-Cameroonian border; the use of old, mountainous smuggling trails connecting Afghanistan and Pakistan by drug traffickers; and the production and movement of cocaine by elements of the Colombian FARC under the cover of dense jungle canopy.[293]

Control of territory does not only constitute a war-fighting *means*, however (as is largely implied in the above examples), but also a strategic *end*, including as the basis for consolidating power and projecting this further afield. Some observers have in turn suggested that the *de facto* control of territory by clandestine non-state actors effectively points to a level of organisation (and, typically, corresponding administrative structures) that is in practice similar to that of states.[294] Such control also provides a means through which to formalise the relationship between non-state actors and local political constituencies. Whilst the aim of controlling territory may seem obvious within the context of armed insurgencies, guerrillas and terrorist groups seeking to overthrow or replace the existing political order, this is also highlighted as a regular feature of organised crime. Illustratively, Louis-Alexandre Berg and Marion Carranza argue that criminal violence and coercive activity is applied in a way that directly supports territorial gains.[295] However, as highlighted earlier in this thesis, the logic and definition of criminal control over territory is often more nuanced than that of traditional insurgencies or terrorist organisations, as this may instead be achieved through the 'indirect' methods of gradual co-option and systemic (economic and political) infiltration of societies.[296] Meanwhile, the work of scholars such as Gautam Basu on the concept of the 'virtual state' underpinned by globalisation as well as capital and information mobility once again re-introduces the question of whether definitions of both territorial and social control require expanding to include the digital and cyber realms.[297]

3.5 Conclusion

The critical review of the theoretical literature, supported by empirical analysis of real-world case studies, offers a number of insights that are of direct relevance to this thesis' research question. Going to the heart of the latter, the above analysis highlights the significant extent to which clandestine non-state actors of different denominations are both highly political in nature and, accordingly, bent on either challenging or co-opting the political status quo. Motivations for doing so and, subsequently, for justifying recourses to violent and criminal behaviours, are often anchored in prevailing grievances such as political marginalisation, social and/or economic inequality and perception of the state as being either illegitimate or unrepresentative. However, and extending beyond this, clandestine non-state actors may also be fuelled by expansionist as well as business ambitions, such as within the context of

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[293] See for example: P.C. Aju and J.A. Aju, *Occupation of Sambisa Forest and Boko Haram Insurgency in Northeastern Nigeria as Security Threat and Challenges to Sustainable Forest Management*, Global Journal of Science Frontier Research: Agriculture and Veterinary, Vol. 18, Issue 5, Global Journals, 2018, https://globaljournals.org/GJSFR_Volume18/3-Occupation-of-Sambisa-Forest-and-Boko.pdf.

[294] See for example *Armed Non-State Actors: Current Trends & Future Challenges*, DCAF Horizon Working Paper No.5, 2012, p. 8, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/144858/ANSA_Final.pdf; and A. I. Idler and J. J. Forest, *Behavioural Patterns among (Violent) Non-State Actors: A Study of Complementary Governance*, International Journal of Security & Development, Vol. 4, Issue 1, January 2015.

[295] L.A. Berg and M. Carranza, *Organized criminal violence and territorial control: evidence from northern Honduras*, Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 55, Issue 5, March 2018.

[296] See for example P. Williams, *Transnational Criminal Networks*, In J. Arquilla and D. Ronfeldt (eds.), *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, RAND Corporation, 2001, pp. 61-98.

[297] G.K. Basu, Globalisation, *Virtualisation and Global Politics: A Critical Perspective*, The Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 62, No. 3, Special Issue on Globalisation and the State, September 2001, pp. 359-373.

securing control over new criminal markets. Clearly, even economic-expansionist aims carry a political dimension to the extent that these are often geared towards the projection of (ultimately) political power. Building on this dynamic, this chapter has demonstrated how the concept of spheres of influence, traditionally applied within the context of interactions between states, provides a helpful lens through which to understand how power and territorial dynamics can equally play out at the sub-state level. This also implies that structural reconfiguration occurs at this same level, with such a process essentially amounting to (re)shaping micro non-state 'orders'. Meanwhile, and supporting this thesis' first hypothesis, analysis of groups spanning across different geographic and historical contexts reveals their ability to both formulate clear policy choices and align these with tactical-level plans. These choices include whether to enter into partnerships and alliances, including as a means of projecting power at scale; whether to initiate violent or criminal campaigns; and whether to pursue or engage in political dialogue. As the analysis has shown, groups are also prone to adjusting their policy objectives and tactics in light of the evolving strategic context, territorial gains and/or in order to secure popular support. The specific ways in which groups of various denominations configure themselves structurally in pursuit of these same objectives is the topic that this thesis will now turn to.