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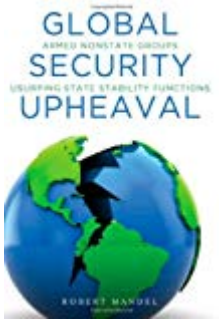
Robert Mandel. *Global Security Upheaval: Armed Nonstate Groups Usurping State Stability Functions.* Stanford Security Studies Series. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013. 304 pp. $32.50, paper, ISBN 978-0-8047-8498-6.



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Commissioned by Margaret Sankey (Air University)

Robert Mandel's book contributes a stimulating set of supporting ideas and arguments to the themes popularized in discussions of "deviant globalization."[1] His economic approach to the connections between security and the state deserves attention as part of the rising current of academic debate over the relationship between state capacity and security. He offers a direct and straightforward model, emphasizing only two factors: the character of stability and the activity of armed non-state groups. He purposefully disregards the potential operation of non-coercive groups, and the pursuit of justice and human rights.

Mandel proposes a thesis that he describes as a "devil's advocate position," which he considers a revolutionary, or at least "paradigm shattering," conception of the relationship between non-state groups and stability. He acknowledges that many readers will find his argument "counterintuitive if not objectionable" (p. 12). However, it encapsulates skepticism regarding foreign policies promoting "poverty reduction, the spread of Western democracy, the spread of a particular form of civil society, or adherence to global cultural norms" (p. 36). Furthermore, this book does appeal to an intuitive understanding that people need security first as a foundation for all other human needs. In critiquing the dominant approaches to international relations, he offers five arguments for dethroning the state as the presumptive stability provider, including the observation that in some areas non-state groups provide local stability in a manner that the state could not, due to their local, nonhierarchical, networked, bottom-up approach to organization. He emphasizes the claim that some of these groups have gained a degree of popular support and legitimate social recognition. Although the tone of the book as a whole emphasizes a rational instrumental approach to security, near the end of the book he also acknowledges that culture plays a crucial role in determining the legitimacy of power in any local context. He describes shared cultural values as a form of strength for local armed non-state groups. He

therefore concludes that power-sharing arrangements in such cases may become beneficial.

Mandel provides a solid and meticulous assessment of the concept of stability in general, separate from the presence or capacity of a state. He offers a thorough accounting of the various measures of stability and state capacity from a diverse assortment of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), think tanks, and government agencies. For any graduate student considering work in the area of state capacity, the second chapter presents a valuable review of the state of knowledge and deserves careful attention. For example, he reviews the spectrum of controversies over stability management. Mandel considers this issue with great thoroughness, noting for example the variety of ways in which analysts describe and measure stability. The discussion continues with an assessment of the causes of instability in six domains and six consequences of instability.

Mandel focuses on the period since the end of the Cold War. This approach may seem intuitive for a popular audience inundated with news reports of conflicts in many parts of the world. However, it runs contrary to the academic perspective between 2007 and 2014, which claimed that the incidence of civil wars declined after the end of the Cold War.[2]

Mandel notes that, contrary to the image of armed non-state groups engaging in direct conflict with the state, these groups represent a response to a security deficiency and sometimes have cooperative relations with states, and that their arms often come from the state. He argues that states have lost the political will to use coercive force, while men with skills in coercion have filled an active market demand for security. Although he calls this distribution of coercive power "not a collapse, but a reconfiguration," he acknowledges that this does not present a cheery picture but rather a foreshadowing of a "new Middle Ages" (p. 72).

This portrayal of the world as composed of interlocking markets for security, and multiple failures of the state-centric approach, leads Mandel to argue that "supply and demand imbalances should eventually reach a stable equilibrium" (p. 87). However, states and international organizations stand violently opposed to allowing non-state groups to reconfigure this market distribution. Their resistance creates unpredictable chaos and violence. Therefore, not only in the name of market efficiency but also for the sake of reducing human suffering, he argues for greater acceptance—in principle—of the possibility that armed non-state groups could provide security in ways that meet market demands. He claims that "these changes in the international setting call for major analytical shifts and significant deviation from standard responses" (p. 2).

Mandel focuses on five principle ideal types of armed non-state groups: criminals, mercenaries, insurgents, terrorists, and warlords. He notes, of course, that these do not represent mutually exclusive or consistent categories; many groups shift from one form of operating to another. From the broad generalizations given so far, the reader might plausibly infer that Mandel might consider Somaliland and Kurdistan examples in which non-state groups provide security with local legitimacy. However, the comparisons and assessments of the twelve difficult case studies Mandel provides do not persuasively demonstrate positive prospects for stability from their activity. For example, he offers a strongly state-centric approach to Somalia but belatedly notes that "a beacon of hope exists in Somaliland" (p. 110). His argument could have been stronger with more attention to the ways in which conditions in Somaliland (and Kurdistan in northern Iraq) exemplify his arguments. He paints the Taliban in generous terms, and draws some support from the case in which the Yakuza of Japan responded quickly to the desperate human needs caused by a very destructive earthquake in Kobe, Japan, in January 1995, while the government struggled belatedly to respond

and tried to excuse its failures. The comparison of these cases leads to the commonplace observation that criminal groups tend to respond to economic incentives and that those who accept the status quo offer more promising prospects for power sharing and stability, compared to the disruptive behavior of rebels, terrorists, and warlords. Although, in the main body of the work, Mandel takes a relatively positive approach to the prospect of armed non-state groups becoming a more prominent source of security, the book does not end on any naive note. In chapter 7, Mandel gives full attention to the grave risks of "private coercive stability promotion complexes" (p. 187). In sum, these groups present a strong threat to democracy and the protection of human rights.

Mandel extracts two main points from his thorough and meticulous survey of this topic: avoiding blanket support for central state governments and avoiding blanket opposition to armed non-state groups. Because many states already engage in some forms of de facto power sharing with non-state groups, he argues for greater openness to this possibility under narrowly specified conditions. He discusses the continuing relevance of sanctions and the importance of dialogue and intelligence in the process. He also cautions against taking global security governance transformation too far and against discarding the traditional global security governance norms. This book offers many examples, thoroughly assessing diverse challenges in promoting stability and security for people in specific local contexts. In sum, Mandel has succeeded in stimulating fresh, deep deliberation about concepts and subjects often taken for granted in public consciousness and the policy world. Even if the reader finds some of these provocative arguments unpersuasive, the process of wrestling with these contentions provokes a healthy conscious awareness of the limitations of previously unquestioned assumptions.

Notes

[1]. On deviant globalization, see Michael Miklaucic and Jacqueline Brewer, eds., ***Convergence: Illicit Networks and National Security in the Age of Globalization*** (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2013).

[2]. For example, the ***Human Security Report 2013*** argued, "With respect to civil wars, the emergent and still-growing system of global security governance discussed in Chapter 1 has clearly helped reduce the number of intrastate conflicts since the end of the Cold War." Andrew Mack, et al., eds., ***Human Security Report 2013: The Decline in Global Violence: Evidence, Explanation, and Contestation*** (Vancouver: Human Security Press, 2013), 11, http://www.hsrgroup.org/human-security-reports/2013/text.aspx. See also Andrew Mack, "Global Political Violence: Explaining the Post-Cold War Decline," Coping with Crisis Working Paper Series (New York, NY: International Peace Academy, March 2007), https://www.ciaonet.org/attachments/10192/uploads.

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