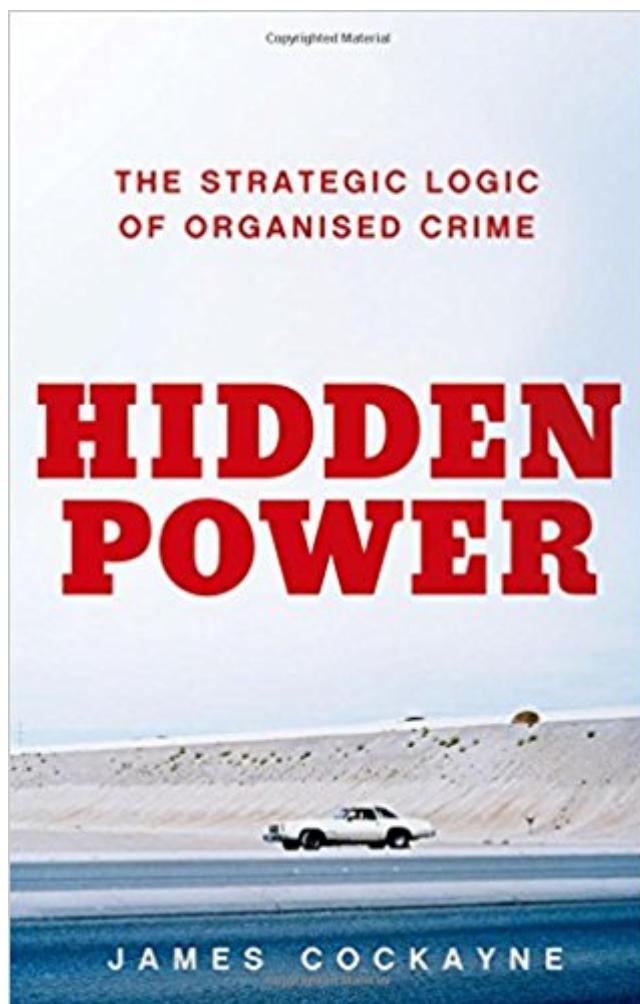


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Hidden Power: The Strategic Logic Of Organized Crime



Synopsis

What should we make of the outsized role organized crime plays in conflict and crisis, from drug wars in Mexico to human smuggling in North Africa, from the struggle in Crimea to scandals in Kabul? How can we deal with the convergence of politics and crime in so-called 'mafia states' such as Guinea-Bissau, North Korea or, as some argue, Russia? Drawing on unpublished government documents and mafia memoirs, James Cockayne discovers the strategic logic of organized crime, hidden in a century of forgotten political-criminal collaboration in New York, Sicily and the Caribbean. He reveals states and mafias competing - and collaborating -- in a competition for governmental power. He discovers mafias influencing elections, changing constitutions, organizing domestic insurgencies and transnational terrorism, negotiating peace deals, and forming governmental joint ventures with ruling groups. And he sees mafias working with the US government to spy on American citizens, catch Nazis, try to assassinate Fidel Castro, invade and govern Sicily, and playing unappreciated roles in the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

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Customer Reviews

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A fascinating read, this thought-provoking book shows how little we really know about the workings of our society and the interactions between our governments, big business, and organised crime,

both at national and international levels. Cockayne's scholarly research reveals the unexpected mingling of these apparently discrete and mutually exclusive groups that is both scary and highly relevant to the world today. In doing so he examines a series of well-known incidents and throws new and astonishing light on them. If you are intrigued by intrigue you will be engrossed by this book.

Organized crime, drug trafficking, assassinations, political corruption and violence... a nail-biting read by the aptly named Dr Cockayne. Everything you ever wanted to know about the very cosy relationship between the mafia and government and the similarities in the strategic decision making process of organized crime groups and more legitimate businesses. Told through page-turning brilliant writing, the book examines some of the most interesting episodes of recent history from Tammany Hall and the Gangs of New York to Cuba and the Bay of Pigs. Cockayne tells amazing stories that wouldn't be out of place on a TV crime show, except for the fact that its all true! In a world of Brexit, Trump and Duterte this is a must read for anyone interested in power, politics and the increasingly close relationship between the state, organized crime and business.

This is a thoroughly researched, fascinating account of organized crime -- weaving the theoretical and historical into a compelling argument about how the criminal "underworld" and political "upperworld" intersect and, at times, reinforce each other. It reminded me somewhat of Sarah Chayes' recent monograph on kleptocracy, insofar as both authors have an elegant style, one that uses literary reportage and historical case studies to underpin new conclusions about corruption, organized crime, and political systems. Over the past few years, a slew of "analysts" seem to have magically appeared in response to a high demand for research on organized crime -- unfortunately, this has (at times) resulted in a cottage industry of half-baked "studies" on transnational criminal networks. This is clearly not the case for Cockayne, who has produced a book of real academic heft and intellectual rigor. I was also very persuaded by his understanding of organized crime vis-a-vis its ability to reproduce, mimic, and/or appeal to a Foucauldian understanding of governmentality and social control. Highly recommend.

Organized crime is intertwined with politics, military and business. It is more present in, and has more implications on, our lives than we actually realize. James Cockayne is well aware of this collision of powers and his book is the first one that help us develop a strategic approach to counter this present threat. How are we to prevent mafias from infiltrating global politics? How do we prevent

states from working with, or acting like mafias? And how can states act strategically against these criminal groups whose whole strategic approach is intended to keep their power hidden? These are the central questions that Cockayne successfully addresses in his new fascinating book. He accurately and thoughtfully dissects how criminal actors define their goals, the resources they have and the constraints they faced in mobilizing and deploying those resources to achieve their goals. This is done through the analysis of previously untapped declassified documents, mafia leaders' memoirs, police, judicial and parliamentary proceedings, which make for a fascinating read. Cockayne leads the reader in the exploration of the "dark side" of power, with juicy anecdotes and insights in the Gangs of New York, the collaboration between the Mob and the US Navy in WW2's invasion of Italy, Lucky Luciano, the Cuban mafia, all the way to today's Mexico and Africa's Sahel. The result of this work is the development of 6 types of strategies that criminal organizations adopt when competing with states and useful considerations on how to deal with these different positioning strategies.

This well-crafted book not only provides some incredible accounts of how organised crime has shaped the course of history, but also how it may impact on the future, specifically its influence on peace and transition processes. The relationship between organised crime and various insurgent groups is a critical element to understand for all of us who seek to work toward lasting peace in the troubled regions of the world.

Academic texts can be quite dry. But not this one. The author has spent a lot of time in archives dredging up incredible stories of criminal cooperation with politicians around the world. And he makes those stories come to life. The result is an incredible journey through Tammany New York, Burma, Sicily, The Bahamas, Cuba... you name it. But it's not a conspiracy theory book. The research underlying all this is well documented and the book is a lot of fun.

Well researched and deeply insightful, "Hidden Power" is a must read for anyone who wants to understand how organized crime influences domestic and international politics and how it helps driving war and shaping peace. It's also a gripping yarn with fascinating stories of the CIA's collaboration with the mob to remove Fidel Castro from power or the Sicilian mafia's rise as a political force following World War II.

A real page turner! Grounded in newly uncovered primary data and thorough research, this complex study on global organized crime was still very accessible, compelling, and relevant to today.

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