

CRIMINAL PLANNING: THE ROLE OF TRAFFICKERS, MAFIAS, AND MILITANTS IN DEVELOPING WORLD CITIES

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When we think about urban planning, the images that come readily to mind are of academically trained professionals mapping neighborhoods, conducting surveys, meeting with the public, designing infrastructure—all under the aegis of a government or private agency. People immersed in planning literature will probably think of a wider variety of practitioners and practices but will not immediately picture fundamentalist militants, mafiosi, or Kalashnikov-toting teenage boys. However, in many areas of the world, criminal or illicit nonstate groups plan and manage services traditionally provided by government: water, electricity, education, housing, security, and administration. In “Seeing from the South,” Vanessa Watson argues that today’s cities are “confronted with new spatial forms and processes, the drivers of which often lie outside the control of local government.” New actors, driven by survival instinct, “operate with [their] own logic and imperatives” that “any shifts in urban planning would need to take into account” (Watson,

2009, pp. 2261–2267). Mona Fawaz echoes Watson’s appeal, positing that Western academics, naively assuming the presence of official planners, have neglected “criminal planning.” She sees planning as a spectrum stretching from radical practices where communities develop their own neighborhood plans, sometimes in defiance of public authority, to the traditional/conservative approaches where planners operate on the basis of criteria that are said to be objective and derived from professional norms and standards (Fawaz, 2009, p. 326).

If traditional planners are to fully engage with urban reality, they need to incorporate these new actors and their imperatives into planning theory. In order to understand the global phenomenon of criminal planning, its perpetrators must be analyzed not only as criminals but also as planners. It may seem callous to consider ruthless groups like ISIS and quasi-supervillains like Pablo Escobar strictly as planners, to the exclusion of discussing their other activities; however, analyzing their motives and abilities as planners promotes a better understanding of the contexts in which they operate.

There is a great deal of academic literature that looks at urban criminal groups through the lens of injustice, violence, and corruption. Brazilian theorists and cultural critics have created a remarkable body of work that challenges the popular perception of drug traffickers as immoral menaces. In the 1990s, intellectuals like the anthropologist Alba Zaluar and the journalist Zuenir Ventura went into the favelas¹ of Rio de Janeiro to reveal the social, economic, and infrastructural exclusion of the poor from the formal city. Zaluar (1994) explicitly links the lack of services to the birth of criminal gangs, arguing that favela youths, feeling neglected and powerless, see violence as their only form of control over their lives. In his study of a trafficker-controlled favela on the outskirts of Rio, Ventura (1994) documented the extent of the gang’s involvement in governance and planning: a favela resident explains the local trafficking chief’s importance to the community by saying “everything he earns, he invests here . . . the pharmacy, the supermarket, the bakery, the butcher shop—everything here was started with his money (p. 83).” His conclusions, however, focus on parallel power as a response to government neglect, not the criminal planning itself.

M. V. Bill and Celso Athayde expanded this school of thought in the 2000s with their series of books reflecting on interviews with drug traffickers

1. The word ‘favela’ can be translated as slum, shanty town, or informal settlement. I will use the term to refer to urban settlements characterized by self-built housing and infrastructure, inadequate services, and contested land tenure status.

(Soares, Bill, and Athayde, 2005; Bill and Athayde, 2006). These documents provide a nuanced look at the paradoxical role of young traffickers as both immensely powerful within the favela and powerless to overcome their societal exclusion. Most Brazilian scholarship casts drug traffickers as symptoms of socioeconomic injustice—“the oppressed who oppress other oppressed people” (Souza, 2008, p. 61)—rather than examining the details of their involvement in governance and planning.

Unsurprisingly, most of the existing literature treats ISIS and Hezbollah as militants rather than planners, analyzing their relationships to terrorism, Islam, and regional conflict. Judith Harik’s book *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism* (2005) traces the group’s transformation from vilified faction to legitimate political party; another book, *Hezbollah: A Short History* by Augustus Norton (2014), follows a similar narrative. Because ISIS rose to global infamy quite recently, most writing on the group is either journalistic or foreign-policy oriented and focuses on the group’s extreme political tactics, relationship to al-Qaeda, or sphere of influence in the Levant.

Writing about criminal groups also tends towards sensationalism, focusing on the more cinematic aspects of their governance activities. S. Hussain Zaidi (2012), one of the principle chroniclers of Indian gang history, provides useful information on the Mumbai mafias but lingers on the flamboyant gangster lifestyle to the detriment of serious analysis. Similarly, Pablo Escobar’s bloodthirsty tactics and cartoonish exploits (747s loaded with cocaine! Hippo smuggling!) overshadow his public housing initiatives in coverage of the Medellín Cartel (Kremer, 2014). Books like *Killing Pablo* and *Pablo Escobar, el Patrón del Mal* give an excellent overview of Escobar’s tactics, the extent of his influence over Colombian politics, and the effect of the cartels on US foreign policy—but not his planning work (Bowden, 2007; Salazar, 2012).

Though the writing on traffickers, mafias, and militants makes invaluable contributions to numerous fields, an overarching discourse on criminal planning has yet to be articulated. James Holston argues that in order to work with “new identities and practices that disturb established histories” (1998, p. 49), planners must first describe the heterogeneity of current social conditions. The next section of this article responds to the challenges set out by Holston, Fawaz, and Watson by proposing a typology of criminal planning groups and activities. The categories are limited because they are drawn from the scanty existing literature that treats criminals as planners, but the classification system can expand and adapt to include a wider range of practices. Describing how these groups act as planners establishes a framework that can

be applied to other groups.

A Typology of Criminal Involvement in Planning



Figure 1.

This chart shows which planning activities different criminal groups within the three types—traffickers, mafias, and militias—engage in. Icon credit: Korawan M., Nikol Kokesova, Chameleon Design, Icon Fair, Jason Tropp, Yolmar Campos for the Noun Project.

Traffickers

Trafficking gangs are involved in the illegal sale and distribution of narcotics or arms. Drug trafficking is the largest source of income for transnational organized crime, accounting for roughly 20% of all crime proceeds and about 50% of transnational organized crime proceeds. In 2009, it was estimated that illicit financial flows related to drug trafficking accounted for 1.5% of global gross domestic product, or \$870 billion, with cocaine alone generating \$84 billion in gross profits (UNODC, 2011, p. 7). The groups I will discuss below primarily traffic cocaine, and to a lesser extent, marijuana, crack, other drugs, and weapons. Although drugs are often produced in the countryside, trafficking operations are mainly based in cities because of the proximity to

ports, transportation hubs, and large customer bases. In addition to their occasional direct involvement in planning activities, traffickers should be considered a factor in urban planning because of their heavy presence in cities and their effect on urban economies.

Trafficking Gangs

I define trafficking gangs as traffickers whose power is roughly limited to neighborhoods or areas within a city. There may be loose associations between factions in different cities, but their power usually does not extend beyond single metropolitan areas. They control specific links in supply chains rather than the entire chain. In Brazil, trafficking gangs establish power bases within favelas and sell drugs to clients both within the favela and in the city proper. As the most powerful and sometimes the only governing bodies in these favelas, gangs have provided or maintained services such as water, electricity, paving, streetscapes, transportation, law enforcement, and cultural events ranging from Easter passion plays to gay pride parades² (Glenny, 2016; Souza, 2008). Misha Glenny (2016) writes of one Rio trafficking chief that “in the absence of the state, he was the provider of both welfare and justice” (p. 79). The range of services traffickers provide varies greatly between favelas and factions. In one favela, the former trafficking chief claims that his gang distributed groceries to 1,200 families every month, in addition to supporting recreational activities and miscellaneous resident needs:

“The food baskets and the support we gave to extracurricular school activities, such as Thai boxing or capoeira classes, were all accounted for as part of our business expenses,” he explains. “But burials, prescription costs, or if anyone who couldn’t afford it needed gas, these were all extra payments” (Glenny, 2016, p. 161).

Some traffickers offer services that are denied to favela residents because of their informal status, such as giving loans to people who cannot get them from banks because they lack official addresses or access to credit (Glenny, 2016). It is popularly believed that traffickers manage and document the real estate market in some favelas, issuing deeds of sale to homeowners without recognized land tenure, although that is difficult to confirm. According to the same beliefs, they also stimulate residential and commercial construction by offering low- or no-interest loans. Most trafficking gangs enforce rules of conduct and mete out harsh punishments to offenders, sometimes running

2. Information in this section is drawn from the author’s personal and professional experience and observations in a number of Rio de Janeiro favelas between 2011 and 2014, and corroborated by the book *Nemesis: One Man and the Battle for Rio*, a journalistic account by Misha Glenny of events in Rio’s favelas during the 1990s and 2000s.

organized courts and overseeing judgment procedures. Although these rules also vary, they generally forbid theft, domestic violence, rape, pedophilia, and, of course, informing, with all but theft being punishable by torture and death (Glenny, 2016). For this reason, favelas occupied by drug traffickers are generally believed to have lower risks of petty crime and sexual violence. According to most writers on the subject, the services that traffickers offer are a form of “*assistencialismo*, the provision of basic goods, foodstuffs, medicines and loans to favela residents as a way of ensuring their loyalty” (Glenny, 2016, p. 160). Marcelo Lopes de Souza, a geography professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, writes that:

traffickers established in favelas have been diversifying their activities for many years, beyond just the sale of drugs. They often control access to water and impose all kinds of fees, amounting to real extortion. Additionally, the traffickers control a fair amount of public transportation (as the owners of the “vans” that proliferated in the 90s). Finally, they’ve gotten to the point of collecting permits from local businesses. (Souza, 2008, p. 63)

Souza considers the traffickers’ service provision to be pure extortion, an attempt to increase their profits to offset dwindling drug sales. He admits, however, that some traffickers provide seemingly selfless services meant to ingratiate them with the neighborhood, such as community meals and sporadic gifts of money to the needy, such as “a widow[, so she can] buy medicine” (Souza, 2008, p. 66). Building on Ventura’s conception of traffickers as a parallel power, Souza (2008) explains that “rules and norms are established, ordered by local chiefs; they aim to control residents’ behavior and movements in order to guarantee security and tranquility for their business” (p. 68). This control can even extend outside the favelas, as when gangs order formal businesses to close, as a way of mourning or protesting the death of a trafficker. Glenny (2016) echoes this perspective, arguing that for a prominent Rio trafficking chief, the “policy of assisting the residents where the state had simply reneged on its obligations undoubtedly reflected his personal beliefs and morality. But it was also part of his business strategy” (p. 80). Further, offering mortgage loans was “a constructive way of money-laundering, which invested the profits of the drug trade in the legitimate economy, and . . . won the approval of the community” (p. 92). In a study of water services in Rio’s favelas, Gustavo Prieto (2011) confirms that traffickers provide “a parallel network of services, as a means of maintaining/justifying their presence, or to buy the public’s support (or silence)” (p. 134). Whatever their motives, traffickers have a complex relationship to official service providers: filling in

for their absence in some cases and actively forcing them out of the market in others.

Trafficking Cartels

Cartels sell arms and drugs at a much larger scale than gangs: they control national or international supply chains, and their sphere of influence can extend over a whole city or region. In Colombia, cartels dominated the cities of Bogota, Medellín, and Cali from the 1970s to the 1990s, leading to widespread violence and destabilization of the government. Pablo Escobar, leader of the Medellín Cartel, is most notorious for waging all-out war on the government, ordering hundreds of assassinations, and being responsible for as much as 80% of global cocaine trade (Bowley, 2013). Unlike Rio's traffickers who shore up their profits with petty extortion schemes, Escobar literally had more money than he could even properly store—according to the cartel's accountant, about \$2 billion a year would be lost to water damage or eaten by rats in storage (Macias, 2015). In addition to building himself an extravagant estate, Escobar funneled money into public works projects for slums on the outskirts of Medellín. In 1979 his project "Citizenship on the March" began planting trees, offering medical care, and installing lights at soccer fields in poor neighborhoods (Bowley, 2013).

After visiting a slum next to a garbage dump, he launched an ambitious urbanization project, "Medellín Without Slums," and constructed thousands of new homes. Barrio Pablo Escobar still houses 12,700 people (Bowley, 2013); community leader Ubernez Zavala recently told a BBC reporter "we ask people to understand our joy and gratitude, what it means to move out from a garbage dump to a decent house" (Wallace, 2014). It's easy to dismiss this as a calculated attempt to buy loyalty, especially because Escobar parlayed slum residents' gratitude into popular support for his crusade against extradition and his campaigns for public office. But regardless of his motives, the fact remains that Escobar invested more in the slums than did the government at the time, donating money for roads and electricity as well as housing. Like the gangs in Rio, the Medellín Cartel under Escobar used planning as clientelism; however, Escobar's public works were closer to an unmixed blessing for slum residents, given that he merely demanded support rather than silence or obedience. A tribute to the success of his policies is his status as a folk hero: his funeral was attended by thousands of desolate mourners, many of them from Medellín's shantytowns. As one mourner commented, "He built houses and cared about the poor . . . in the future, people will go to his tomb to pray, the way they would to a saint" (Brooke, 1993).

Mafias

Mafias are criminal organizations that can be involved in smuggling, trafficking, money laundering, loan-sharking, extortion, and protection racketeering. They differ from trafficking groups because drugs are just one piece of a diversified portfolio, not their primary source of revenue. In fact, mafias sometimes support themselves through legitimate as well as criminal activities. A mafia's sphere of influence can range from a single neighborhood to a transnational network, as in the case of the Sicilian or Russian mafias.

Rio de Janeiro Militias

In Rio de Janeiro, racketeering gangs known as militias control many of the favelas that are not occupied by drug traffickers. Made up of former or off-duty military police officers and prison guards, militias provide public security to residents and businesses in exchange for monthly fees. These paramilitary groups exploit favela residents' fear of trafficking-related violence and their exclusion from public services:

They are the ones who are or were charged with upholding the rule of law, but they act outside the law, against the law, to make money not only from security but also from the exploitation . . . of the most vulnerable of urban laborers; those who do not have legal title to their homes or access to the legal system . . . they lack institutional protection. (Zaluar and Conceição, 2007, p. 91)

Rio's militias have preyed on recent arrivals from the countryside since the 1960s; the favelas they operate in are primarily occupied by migrants from Brazil's northeast, where a severe drought has driven people to the big cities of the south for decades. Recent migrants are often more likely to accept militias' exploitative fees because they are unfamiliar with the city and wary of traffic-controlled favelas. More recently, militias have begun to sell services like water, gas, and cable television, making the favelas they occupy more desirable despite the additional cost (Prieto, 2011). Like traffickers, they are involved in the real estate market, charging taxes on property sales and issuing titles and permits for new buildings (Prieto, 2011). Whereas traffickers and cartels are criminals who replace or interfere with public services, militias are more insidious: police officers withhold their protection from slums, purposely making them more dangerous in order to sell their labor at a high price. With services like water, the logic is murkier: militias are merely exploiting the government's failure to deliver infrastructure.

Mumbai Mafias

Indian mafias, locally known as organized crime groups (OCGs), have traditionally been involved in gold and liquor smuggling, drug trafficking, contract killing, and extortion. They have also played a role in housing provision and land development, exploiting inadequate government policies to turn the urban poor into a customer base. OCGs formed in the mid-20th century as slums and informal settlements started to appear. In the 1970s, government planners in Mumbai paralyzed housing construction in order to curb urban growth, leaving migrants with no choice but to live in slums. Local bosses took advantage of this deficit, providing housing, water, and electricity to informal settlements. Over the past few decades, OCGs have entered the real estate market again, this time constructing shopping centers, hotels, and housing in Mumbai (OCGs springing up in Dubai and Karachi have also employed such infrastructure development to exploit local populations). According to Liza Weinstein (2008), the OCG's entry into formal real estate development is symptomatic of India's increasingly neoliberal and globalized economy. The globalization of consumer markets reduced the demand for smuggled goods, leaving OCGs on the lookout for profitable new ventures. Fortuitously for them, "opportunities for land development were emerging just as they were seeking new areas for investment" (Weinstein, 2008). Mumbai's real estate market was booming in the 1990s, creating demand for new buildings. As in the 1970s, the government's failure to build enough affordable housing and handle rapid urbanization allowed mafias to respond to the demand. These criminal developers acquire land and permits through backdoor deals and bribery, and their projects usually go unnoticed amid what has been a large amount of new construction. The notorious mafia D-Company, run by underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, is an example of this phenomenon. Despite the fact that former U.S. president Barack Obama and current Indian prime minister Narendra Modi condemned Ibrahim's links to terrorism, D-Company's real estate business is flourishing (Mail Today Bureau, 2014). Mafia planning involvement in Mumbai both fills a real need for housing and exploits weak regulatory systems to profit from the poor.

Militants

Militants fit uneasily into the category of criminal groups because unlike traffickers and mafias, they are motivated by ideological goals or political struggles rather than profits. Their planning work aims to secure loyalty in order to further their cause, not to protect their economic interests. Defining militants as criminals is tricky because their ideological allies may defend their tactics as justified, even as their opponents will label them terrorists. Of course, groups like ISIS employ unequivocally terrorist tactics (Tran, 2014);

this is also true of criminals like Escobar, who used kidnappings and bombings to intimidate his rivals, and not far removed from traffickers who torture informers to set an example. Like the other groups discussed in this article, militants fall outside the range of actors normally associated with planning. They are illicit, unofficial alternatives to government planners. Militants' spheres of control can encompass entire cities, regions, or countries.

Insurgent Groups

Insurgent groups are involved in military struggles, often motivated by religious ideology. In one of the most dramatic examples of criminal planning in recent history, the insurgent group ISIS took complete control of the city of Raqqa, Syria. ISIS, an extremist jihadist group, works towards the goal of establishing a Sunni Islamic state by occupying territories in Iraq and Syria. In June 2014, ISIS declared a global caliphate, asserting itself as the ruler of the Muslim world (Mortada, 2014). The takeover of Raqqa is a test of the group's ability to back up this grandiose gesture, to show that it can actually govern and manage cities (Caris and Reynolds, 2014).

According to a report from the Institute for the Study of War, "ISIS has built a holistic system of governance that includes religious, educational, judicial, security, humanitarian, and infrastructure projects" in Raqqa (Caris and Reynolds, 2014, p. 4). The militant group provides all the services that a stable government would, including policing, tax collection, food distribution, and basic utilities, all for flat monthly fees. They run judicial and education systems and provide humanitarian aid alongside religious outreach. For some residents, ISIS' strict management is a relief: after years of civil war, they "will accept any authority that can restore a semblance of normal life" (Hubbard, 2014). Services are more affordable now than under Bashar al-Assad's government. However, the order that ISIS brings comes at the expense of Raqqa's formerly sociable, tolerant atmosphere. ISIS forbids many social activities, regulates women's behavior, and enforces laws with corporal punishment and executions. Overall, ISIS has succeeded in restoring a semblance of normal urban life to a chaotic region, but its very militancy and extremism may drive away the technically skilled professionals needed to run a city. Governance in Raqqa has been effective and thorough so far, but "it is yet to demonstrate the capacity for the long-term planning of state institutions and processes" (Caris and Reynolds, 2014, p. 5).

Militant Political Parties

Militant political parties are motivated by similar ideologies as insurgent groups, but their operations are generally more stable and long-term. They function within existing political structures rather than war zones.

Hezbollah, a Shi'a political party that some countries designate a terrorist organization, is one of the main actors in the reconstruction of Beirut after the 2006 war with Israel. In Haret Hreik, a suburban neighborhood that was flattened during the war, Hezbollah has developed a reconstruction plan and made significant progress toward implementing it. This is not Hezbollah's first foray into urban planning; party members have worked with the government on beautification and public space projects in the past; it is different, though, because the party is working independently and at odds with government agencies. Hezbollah's work in Haret Hreik is an opportunity to learn "how planning can be taken up at a large scale by a non-state actor and what forms it can take in that context" (Fawaz, 2009, p. 323).

Hezbollah began reconstruction of Haret Hreik in defiance of the local government, without building permits and against zoning regulations. While its work has made it possible for many former residents to return to their neighborhood, its planning process invites substantial criticisms. The party's private development agency, Wa'd, made a show of participatory planning by inviting former residents of Haret Hreik to give feedback on the new buildings, but they had little real influence the decision making (Himada, 2011). Though Hezbollah conducted a semblance of community outreach, it used manipulative tactics to secure residents' cooperation and approval. Wa'd placed a strong emphasis on beautifying the neighborhood through flashy design, without resolving the quality of life issues that existed before the bombings, such as congestion and a lack of light (Fawaz, 2009). Despite the tangible results, Hezbollah's reconstruction process lacks accountability and hinders productive dialogue about planning policy.

The Complex Relationship of Criminal Planners to the State

As the typology I've developed demonstrates, criminal planning groups play a handful of different roles vis-à-vis the formal government. In situations in which the state is absent, failed, or unwilling to provide services, criminal planners fill a desperate need and benefit underserved populations, usually the poor and racial, ethnic, religious, or caste minorities. In other cases, criminal planners use violence and intimidation to disrupt and interfere with legitimate state activities, maintaining the lack of official services by force. These two types of relationships are rarely distinct, and most criminal planners both fill in for and hinder the state, creating a symbiotic system in which the state tacitly allows the actor to continue providing services in order to shirk its own responsibilities and continue neglecting the area (or justify its absentee behavior), saving money and effort. This creates a clientelist dynamic between the criminal group and the area's residents and furthers

the criminal group's goal of gaining popular loyalty and securing territorial control in order to continue making a profit (whether from trafficking, racketeering, or construction) or advancing an ideological agenda.

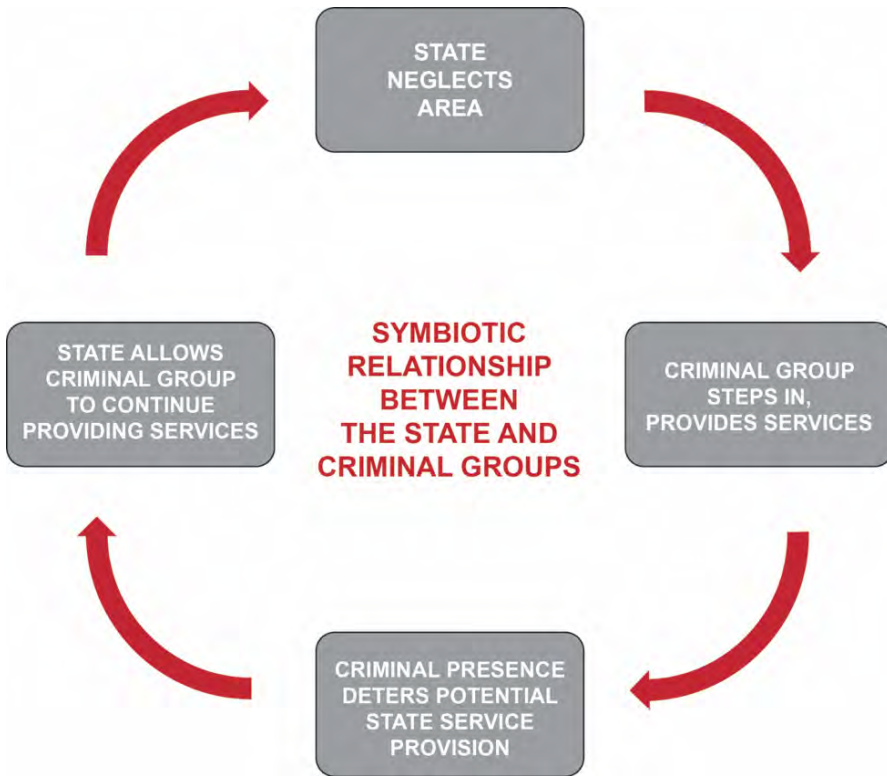


Figure 2.

This chart shows the pattern of interaction between the State and criminal planners.

Rio de Janeiro's trafficking gangs illustrate the complexity of the relationships between the State and criminal groups. Traffickers have a history of disrupting government-run slum-upgrading programs, either deliberately, by threatening government workers, or indirectly, when constant shootouts between factions and police paralyze construction (Souza, 2008). Government urbanization is tied to increased policing and territorial control, so traffickers are usually hostile to slum upgrading even when it brings much-needed services and infrastructure. On the other hand, traffickers have also taken responsibility for glaring needs that the government refuses to address. In 2010, when certain favelas faced an extreme affordable housing shortage, traffickers "mimic[ked] the actions of the state," organizing the occupation of abandoned

buildings by negotiating agreements with the property owners and distributing spaces to needy residents (Cavalcanti, 2013, p. 211). Rio de Janeiro's government eventually expelled the occupiers, but other city governments have been receptive to criminal planners' housing schemes. In Mumbai, the government permitted D-Company to illegally build housing: "the state also chose to 'supportively neglect' these activities because they addressed the city's housing shortage with minimal public expenditure" (Weinstein, 2008). Thus in some cases where the state might otherwise have finally begun to provide needed services such as housing, the presence of criminal groups in the planning arena eases the pressure on governments to take action.

Conclusion

The complexity and interconnectedness of criminal groups' planning activities necessitates further study and classification. Urban informality dominates large areas of the globe, and criminal planning flourishes in informality, making it a significant factor in planning policy decisions. Conducting research on criminal groups is made challenging by their violent and secretive tendencies, but it is crucial to understanding their operations. Without thorough knowledge of the services criminal groups provide, and the ways in which they interface with other actors, government planners operating in territories under their control risk disrupting existing systems and creating further hardships for the poor. For example, the police takeover of a large favela in Rio in 2011 led to widespread water shortages because traffickers had been overseeing system maintenance and there was no provision to replace them with legitimate workers maintained by criminals. Slum upgrading is especially prone to thoughtless disruptions of those systems: the "sudden injection of cash into a community" that they bring "arouses the interest of various parties who hitherto may not have had much time for somewhere like [a slum]," including construction contractors, formal service providers, and nongovernmental organizations (Glenny, 2016, p. 199). Lacking extensive familiarity with the communities in which they work, these actors can inadvertently cause service outages and put residents at risk.

Overlooking the involvement of criminal groups in planning activities not only inconveniences communities, it can upset the balance of power in formerly stable areas and put lives in danger. The consequences of such brash policy decisions are especially stark in the realm of public security. Residents of a different Rio favela complained that after a police takeover destabilized the gang that had previously been in control, the rules of conduct upheld by traffickers began to break down, and theft, domestic violence, and rape became commonplace occurrences (Batista Carvalho, 2013). In the case of the favela invaded in 2011, homicide rates in the favela and surrounding

neighborhoods increased by 50% the following year, with robbery and rape rates rising dramatically as well (Rousso, 2012). This phenomenon may be due to policymakers dismissing or underestimating the complexity of the governance systems that criminal groups are responsible for, and assuming that disrupting their operations will have a positive or at least neutral impact on the community. As my earlier descriptions of specific criminal planning activities demonstrates, many such groups are intimately involved with the mechanisms of everyday life, and their removal has countless short- and long-term effects—from an elderly widow going without her medication to the loss of access to financial instruments for populations excluded from the banking industry.

This is not to say that governments should condone protectionist gangs or dictatorial traffickers in the name of safety and stability. Although the traffickers' policy of executing accused rapists without due process may lead to lower rates of sexual violence, it is still the government's responsibility to provide just and organized public-security measures. However, government agencies that disrupt criminal practices are equally responsible for ensuring a smooth transition from an illicit to a legitimate system. Simply sweeping away one structure and attempting to replace it wholesale with another leaves a power vacuum that will inevitably be filled by disorganized crime, which tends to be more chaotic, violent, and unpredictable than the groups described here. Policymakers need to have a profound understanding of criminal groups in order to make sound decisions about the areas they occupy, and these groups must be treated as planners as well as criminals. Though this may slow policy changes and impede progress on official plans, it is important to remember that organized crime coalesces in the void left by government neglect and becomes entrenched as a result of societal discrimination, financial exclusion, and the refusal to provide housing and infrastructure. Governments must recognize their legacy of failing poor communities and rectify it by fully understanding the illicit systems that have sprung up in their stead.

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