

The Dynamics of Criminal Governance: Networks and Social Order in Rio de Janeiro*

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Abstract. Academic analyses of crime and policing in Latin America have generally focused on the failure of state institutions to guarantee a rule of law. This study, however, argues that the persistently high levels of violence in Rio's favelas [shantytowns] result not from the failure of institutions but, rather, from networks that bring criminals together with civic leaders, politicians, and police. These contacts protect traffickers from state repression and help them build political support among the residents of the where they favelas operate. Rather than creating 'parallel states' outside of political control, then, these networks link trafficker dominated favelas into Rio's broader political and social system.

Over recent years drug traffickers based in Rio de Janeiro's favelas have attacked government buildings, bombed buses, and successfully ordered widespread business closings.¹ An outraged press and parts of the academic establishment have declared in response that parallel 'powers', 'authorities', or 'states' have emerged in the city's favelas.² These claims, however, often

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¹ On business closings see R. Penglase, 'The Shutdown of Rio de Janeiro: The Poetics of Drug Trafficker Violence,' *Anthropology Today*, vol. 21, no. 5 (2005), p. 3.

² Especially see Antônio Werneck, Elenilce Botari, and Gustavo Paiva Goulart, 'Beira-Mar negocia até míssil,' *O Globo*, 19 June 2002, p. 14; Vera Araújo, 'As novas granadas do tráfico,' *O Globo*, 9 June 2002, p. 17; Vera Araújo, 'Favelas proibidas aos PMs,' *O Globo*, 23 June 2002, p. 20; Roberto Kant, 'As favelas passaram de refúgios a feudos (Interview),' *O Globo*, p. 18; Marcos F. Moraes, 'A nação invadida,' *O Globo*, 14 June 2002, p. 7; Zuenir Ventura, 'O risco da 'Colombina,' *O Globo*, 22 June 2002, p. Sec. B 12; Ignácio Cano, 'O Estado nunca esteve presente,' *O Globo*, 23 June 2002, p. 23; Costa, 19; Maria Velez de Berliner and Kristin Lado, 'Brazil: Emerging Drug Superpower,' in *Transnational Organized Crime*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Summer), 1995, pp. 239–60; For a good synopsis of this perspective see Francisco Alves Filho and Marcos Pernambuco, 'No Front Inimigo,' *Istoé* (São Paulo), 19 June 2002, pp. 24–37. The cover of this edition of *Istoé* carries a picture of a young masked man with no shirt on carrying a shotgun with a presidential sash in green and yellow hanging across his chest.

ignore evidence that points to ties between government officials, civic leaders and drug dealers that form the basis of the ‘parallel politics’ that have emerged in the favelas and that stem from practices of clientelism that historically dominate Rio politics.³ A systematic comparative examination of favela-level political interactions suggests that traffickers have not only qualitatively transformed clientelist relations in favelas but have also developed complex and flexible networks to enable them and their allies to engage in other political activities. Through connections to state officials and civic leaders, criminals appropriate state power and social capital that make their ongoing criminal activities possible. Building on critical analyses of the democratisation process in Latin America this article explains the ways criminal organisations are integrated into local-level politics and the implications that has for the wider political system.

Violent democracy in Latin America

The endemic social conflict, persistent human rights violations and inequality that characterise Latin American politics a generation after the return of democratic rule pose a major challenge to academics studying the politics of the region. While some have ascribed these disappointments to the failure of political institutions to eliminate the vestiges of authoritarianism and transform retrograde sectors of state and society, others have suggested that violence persists in Latin America not because of state weakness but, rather, because of the existence of external social forces and organisations that not only resist efforts to extend the rule of law but also engage with state actors to promote illegal activities and rights violations.

Guillermo O’Donnell argues that endemic human rights abuse in the hemisphere stems from the failure of public institutions and has resulted in the emergence of ‘brown areas’ where the state has a ‘very low or nil’ presence and power rests in private hands reproducing often discriminatory authoritarian practices. These ‘brown areas’ emerged as a result of the debt crisis and the historic inability of the Latin American state to penetrate certain segments of society and the national territory. They contrast with ‘green’ and ‘blue’ areas where the rule of law, respectively, partially or fully

³ Elizabeth Leeds, ‘Cocaine and Parallel Politics on the Brazilian Urban Periphery: Constraints on Local Level Democratization,’ *Latin American Research Review*, vol. 31, no. 3 (1996); A. Zaluar, *A máquina e a revolta* (São Paulo, 1985), pp. 230–56; M. Alvito, *As Cores de Acari: uma favela carioca* (Rio de Janeiro, 2001), pp. 149–54, 160–4; also see Clara Mafra, ‘Drogas e símbolos: redes de solidariedade em contexto de violência,’ in Alba Zaluar and Marcos Alvito (eds.), *Um século de favela* (Rio de Janeiro, 1998), pp. 287, 295.

operates.⁴ Other scholars have built on this approach by ascribing the endemic conflict in the region to the failure of political institutions to force retrograde police bureaucracies to respect human rights or adequately strengthen judicial systems to eliminate official impunity and provide citizens with access to justice.⁵ This tendency is most apparent in several otherwise excellent volumes on the rule of law in Latin America which discuss institutional failure but do not systematically analyse the ongoing impact of active criminal organisations and their activities on the political systems of Latin America.⁶

In *Laughter Out of Place*, Donna Goldstein applies O'Donnell's approach to Rio's favelas where, she writes, 'local gangs provide a parallel state structure and alternative rule of law' offering 'housing and employment and help in times of trouble'.⁷ The problems that favelas pose stem from the breakdown of the state's ability to enforce order in these communities and the emergence of alternative, parallel, structures of political power. While Goldstein suggests a degree of police-criminal collusion in these communities she only briefly explores these issues and does not look at the extent to which criminal-state involvement supports the political systems of the favelas.⁸

This prevailing approach provides a vivid but incomplete picture of violence in Latin America. Clearly there are places in the region where the rule of law only partially exists and police and judicial reform can play an important role in resolving this problem. Nevertheless, if we focus only on institutional failure we ignore the active political constellations that promote violence and resist meaningful reforms.

Other scholars have begun to critically assess this approach by examining how actors, inside and outside the state, build political organisations that

⁴ Guillermo O'Donnell, 'On the State, Democratization, and Some Conceptual Problems: A Latin American View with Glances at Some Postcommunist Countries,' in *World Development*, vol. 21, no. 8 (1993), p. 1361, 1364; see also Felipe Aguero, 'Conflicting Assessments of Democratization: Exploring the Fault Lines,' in Felipe Aguero and Jeffrey Stark (eds.), *Fault Lines of Democracy in Post-Transition Latin America* (Coral Gables, 1998), p. 6.

⁵ Juan E. Méndez, 'Problems of Lawless Violence: Introduction,' in Juan E. Méndez, Guillermo O'Donnell and Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro (eds.), *The (Un)Rule of Law and the Underprivileged in Latin America* (South Bend, 1999), pp. 20–4; Jorge Zaverucha, 'Military Justice in the State of Pernambuco after the Brazilian Military Regime: An Authoritarian Legacy,' *Latin American Research Review*, vol. 34, no. 2 (1999), pp. 43, 70–72; Hugo Fruhling, 'Judicial Reform and Democratization in Latin America,' in Aguero and Stark (eds.), *Fault Lines of Democracy in Post-Transition Latin America*, pp. 237–8, 254–5.

⁶ Méndez, O'Donnell and Pinheiro (eds.), *The (Un)Rule of Law*; Hugo Fruhling and Joseph Tulchin, *Crime and Violence in Latin America: Citizen Security, Democracy, and the State* (Washington, DC, 2003); and Susana Rotker (ed.), *Citizens of Fear: Urban Violence in Latin America* (New Brunswick, 2002).

⁷ D. Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown*, (Berkeley, 2003), p. 200.

⁸ Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place*, p. 211.

promote ongoing violence. Diane Davis and Anthony Pereira argue that to understand social conflict in a post-Cold War environment where interstate tensions appear less relevant to questions of security than terrorism and intrastate hostilities we need to understand not just the operation and failure of formal institutions but the nature and form of irregular armed forces and how their connections to other state and social actors contribute to those conflicts.⁹ For example, we can only understand Colombia's civil war through linkages which criminals, paramilitaries and guerrilla groups maintain to each other and to 'legitimate' sectors of state and society.¹⁰ On a different tack, Teresa Caldeira argues that violence in Brazil is characterised not just by authoritarian legacies in the police but also by the ways that the wealthy have privatised urban space based on a principle of private security. These arrangements create positive factors which lead to new violent actors in the guise of private security guards and persistent support among the upper classes for a police force which directs high levels of repression against the poor.¹¹ Leigh Payne has argued that 'uncivil movements', violent exclusionary social mobilisations, can use connections with state institutions to undermine the process of democratisation and strengthen the political hand of pro-authoritarian politicians.¹² Finally, Martha Huggins has suggested that the growing activity of death squads and other forms of privatised violence in Brazil have led to changing practices of localised sovereignty which have undermined basic democratic guarantees for much of the population.¹³

These approaches go beyond earlier efforts to understand violence by examining the networks of state and social actors, institutions, and interests that actively support rights abuse and conflict. Studying the particular structure of interactions criminals have with other actors in state and society will contribute to a deeper understanding of the formal and informal factors that prevent the full protection of basic rights, and of the ongoing conflicts

⁹ Diane Davis, 'Contemporary Challenges and Historical Reflections on the Study of Militaries, States, and Politics,' in Diane Davis and Anthony Pereira (eds.), *Irregular Armed Forces and the Role in Politics and State Formation* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 5–6; Anthony Pereira, 'Armed Forces, Coercive Monopolies, and Changing Patterns of State Formation and Violence,' in Davis and Pereira (eds.), *Irregular Armed Forces*, pp. 387–90.

¹⁰ On Colombia see Mauricio Romero, 'Reform and Reaction: Paramilitary Groups in Contemporary Colombia,' in Davis and Pereira (eds.), *Irregular Armed Forces*, pp. 178–80, 202–5.

¹¹ T. Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley, 2000), pp. 78–82, 256–335.

¹² L. Payne, *Uncivil Movements: The Armed Right Wing and Democracy in Latin America* (Baltimore, 2000), pp. 1, 46.

¹³ Martha Huggins, 'Urban Violence and Police Privatization in Brazil: Blended Invisibility,' *Social Justice*, vol. 27, no. 2 (2000): pp. 123–6; Martha Huggins, 'From Bureaucratic Consolidation to Structural Devolution: Police Death Squads in Brazil,' *Policing and Society*, 7 (1997), pp. 213, 225–6.

affecting the region, and will help clarify the challenges facing favelas in Rio and, more generally, Latin American democracies today.

Violence and politics in Rio de Janeiro

Drug trafficking emerged as a powerful force in Rio in the mid-1980s, as the country underwent a transition to democracy, when Andean cocaine started to flow into Rio as part of an expansion of trafficking routes to Europe and North America. The density of favelas and corrupt policing that characterised these areas made them ideal places for the storage of cocaine in preparation for transshipment. Over time a local retail market developed and the poor drug dealers who controlled favela level operations became the public faces of a narcotics trade dominated by more powerful elements of Brazilian state and society.

While the popular press and some academics argue that Rio has become a 'divided city' where drug traffickers based in favelas stand outside ordered democratic political life, others see the problems affecting Rio in the context of an evolution of clientelist networks in which traffickers have inserted themselves into traditional patron-client relationships.¹⁴ This approach has provided important insights and a starting point from which we can look at the complex ways that criminal organisations, linked to the international black market, have affected governance in Rio.

The neo-clientelist approach stems out of work done from the 1970s onward that examines the interconnections between favelas and the city's political life.¹⁵ Elizabeth Leeds argues 'that the physical and criminal violence resulting from the drug trade is a visible and tangible form of violence used by the state and it masks a structural-institutional and more hidden violence while perpetuating neo-clientelistic political relationships'.¹⁶ Traffickers and the poor survive through a form of clientelism that operates in the spaces

¹⁴ On the 'divided city' thesis see Zuenir Ventura, 'O risco da 'Colombina,' *O Globo*, 22 June 2002, p. B 12; Z. Ventura, *Cidade partida* (Rio de Janeiro, 1994); L. E. Soares, *Meu casaco de general: quinhentos dias no front da segurança pública do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro, 2000), pp. 11–14, 264–8, 274; Rubem César Fernandes and José Augusto de Souza Rodrigues, 'Viva Rio: sociedade civil e segurança no Rio de Janeiro,' unpubl. paper presented Congress of the Latin American Studies Association (Washington, DC), 1995, pp. 11–12; on drug trafficking and clientelism see Leeds, 'Cocaine and Parallel Politics'; Zaluar, *A máquina e a revolta*, pp. 230–56, esp. 240; Alvito, *As cores de Acari*, pp. 149–54, 160–4; Marcelo Baumann Burgos, 'Dos parques proletários ao Favela-Bairro: as políticas públicas nas favelas do Rio de Janeiro,' in Zaluar and Alvito (eds.), *Um século de favela*, pp. 34–45.

¹⁵ See J. Perlman, *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro* (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 1–3, 12–17; Burgos, 'Dos parques proletários ao Favela-Bairro,' pp. 35–43.

¹⁶ Leeds, 'Cocaine and Parallel Politics,' p. 50; the title of Leeds' article, referring to 'parallel politics' does appear to suggest a sympathy with the 'divided city' approach but, when the argument is examined in detail its reliance on interconnection and clientelism are apparent.

created by a democratisation process that broke formal ties between the poor and the state.¹⁷ For Leeds, traffickers establish relations with state actors to obtain resources to strengthen their organisations.¹⁸ Through contacts with politicians and illegal activities, traffickers assemble the resources necessary to provide basic welfare to favela residents. Residents' support, and bribes to police, buy traffickers the security to continue operating and creates a system of localised criminal dominance.¹⁹

Traffickers, however, are more than just another cog in an evolving clientelist machine. They are a new type of political actor that is part of a wider privatisation of violence whose political position in poor communities stems from an appropriation of state power made possible only by the unique ways international illegal markets have expanded into Rio.²⁰ As such, their political and social status is indeterminate and fluctuating. Unlike other actors in most clientelist arrangements, drug traffickers lie outside the pale of government even while they engage with it. State legitimacy, in fact, is based partially on crime control and the suppression of banditry and neither national nor international norms tolerate drug trafficking.²¹ Nevertheless, expanding international illegal markets have put sufficient power and resources into the hands of criminals to allow them to become political actors by building support among some populations. These newly empowered criminals have difficulty dealing directly with state officials and must build mediated links into the state not just to obtain resources but also to gain access to the state power that facilitates their ongoing criminal activities. These efforts involve the deployment of an illegal network that brings criminals together with state and social actors to engage in a variety of activities including clientelism.

¹⁷ Frances Hagopian, 'Democracy and Political Representation in Latin America in the 1990s: Pause, Reorganization, or Decline,' in Aguero and Stark (eds.), *Fault Lines of Democracy*, pp. 100–2, 109–9, 126–8; on Rio see R. Fernandes, *Private but Public: The Third Sector in Latin America* (Washington, DC, 1994), pp. 25–29, 104–7.

¹⁸ Leeds, 'Cocaine and Parallel Politics,' pp. 73–6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 59–61–63–78; a similar argument is also found in Amanda Sives, 'Changing Patrons, from Politician to Drug Don: Clientelism in Downtown Kingston, Jamaica,' *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 29, no. 126 (2002).

²⁰ Martha Huggins, *Political Policing: The United States and Latin America* (Durham, NC, 1998), pp. 201–3; on urban neighbourhoods and private security see Teresa Caldeira, 'Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation,' in James Holston (ed.), *Cities and Citizenship* (Durham, NC, 1999), pp. 115, 119, 124–5.

²¹ Charles Tilly, 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,' in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 170–1; Clifford Shearing, 'Reinventing Policing: Policing as Governance,' in Otwin Marenin (ed.), *Policing Change, Changing Police: International Perspectives* (New York, 1996), pp. 285–7; Victoria Malkin, 'Narcotrafficking, Migration, and Modernity in Rural Mexico,' *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 28, no. 4 (2001), p. 101.

The political operations of traffickers and their allies go well beyond indirect links with politicians. Presidents of *Associações de Moradores* (Residents' Associations, AMs) serve as critical mediators by smoothing difficult relations between residents and traffickers and deploying various political strategies on behalf of traffickers and favela residents. This mediation is especially important since traffickers must operate within local norms of honour and reciprocity in order to retain residents' support.²² Evidence in this paper will offer comparative support for these arguments and will provide additional details about how these mediations work in different favelas. The analysis here will also show how traffickers use network mediation to control non-profit groups and how traffickers operate when they have no allies to mediate political relationships.

Social networks and crime

Networks are 'voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange'.²³ They are based on flexible links between component organisations pursuing mutual interests.²⁴ When groups need to maintain trust and cultivate long term contacts in conditions where hierarchical links prove disadvantageous, networks offer an effective alternative form of organisation that can facilitate political activity in circumstances where collaborators lack formal police protection.²⁵ Networks enable groups to work easily and effectively with a diverse and specialised set of actors while sharing needed data and withholding confidential information.²⁶ Mutual observation of member groups helps to build organisational trust and social capital, transmit norms, and transfer legitimacy.²⁷ As a result, networks enable

²² On this practice among some traffickers in one favela, see Alvito, *As cores de Acari*, pp. 140–57.

²³ Quote from M. Keck and K. Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), p. 8.

²⁴ Walter Powell and Laurel Smith Doerr, 'Networks and Economic Life,' in N. J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg (eds.), *The Handbook of Economic Sociology* (Princeton and New York, 1994), p. 323; Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, pp. 8–9; James Boissevain, *Friends of Friends: Networks Manipulators and Coalitions* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 24–8, 181–6.

²⁵ On the role of network connections in creating trust see Mark Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited,' in *Sociological Theory*, 1983, pp. 212–3; Vincente Espinoza, 'Networks of Informal Economy: Work and Community among Santiago's Urban Poor,' unpubl. PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1992, p. 52; on types of network ties also see R. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, 2000), pp. 22–23.

²⁶ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, 'The Future of Bureaucracy and Hierarchy in Organizational Theory: A Report from the Field,' in Pierre Bourdieu and John Coleman (eds.), *Social Theory for a Changing Society* (Boulder, 1991), pp. 63–87.

²⁷ Joel M. Podolny and Karen L. Page, 'Network Forms of Organization,' in *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 24 (1998), pp. 57–76; Brian Uzzi, 'The Sources and Consequences of

criminals to build positive relations with the social groups they depend on for protection and build functional, mediated, and varied connections with non-criminal actors whose expertise is of value to them. By using combinations of weak and strong ties, criminals can mediate contacts with outsiders while at the same time avoiding detection by the state.²⁸ For example, traffickers use strong intimate ties with local residents to maintain an inward based trust to build trafficker's leadership role while limiting the local roles of weakly tied state officials but still using contacts to those officials to obtain funds and build political support.

Clientelist approaches cannot adequately explain the roles of illegal networks because criminals cannot work directly and personally with politicians. The classic triadic clientelist relationship typical of Rio until the early 1990s was based on a politician establishing relations with a local broker who would provide the politician with access to a source of votes.²⁹ Existing writing is largely silent on the issue of exactly how traffickers and politicians maintain relations. While Alvito notes the important similarities between the relations politicians and traffickers maintain with residents he does not examine the dynamic intermediation process between politicians, civic leaders, and traffickers.³⁰ Leeds, on the other hand, outlines some of the dynamics of favela–state relations without examining how relations between traffickers and politicians develop.³¹ Illegal networks include elements of neo-clientelist networks but, as a result of the inclusion of criminals, operate quite differently and also go well beyond these types of relationships.

The impact of criminal organisations on politics cannot adequately be examined through a state-society framework. Like the state, organised criminals use violence to impose order and work with civic leaders to establish their legitimacy. While criminals and state actors may sometimes work together, these contacts are almost always hidden from public view since the state's legitimacy is, in part, based on protecting society against criminals.³² Like civil society, criminals cannot legally employ violence and at times they must work with state actors to accomplish their goals. However, unlike civil society, criminals have difficulty interacting directly and formally

Embeddedness for the Economic Performance of Organizations: The Network Effect,' *American Sociological Review*, vol. 61, no. 4 (1996), pp. 674–8; Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 174; Mario Diani, 'Simmel to Rokkan and Beyond: Towards a Network Theory of (New) Social Movements,' *European Journal of Social Research*, vol. 3, no. 4 (2000), p. 291.

²⁸ Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties,' pp. 212–21; Espinoza, 'Networks of Informal Economy,' p. 52.

²⁹ On types of clientelist ties see Merilee Grindle, 'Patrons and Clients in the Bureaucracy: Career Networks in Mexico,' *Latin American Research Review*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1977), pp. 43–49; on patron-client relations in Rio see Gay, *Popular Organization and Democracy in Rio de Janeiro*; Zaluar, *A máquina e a revolta*, pp. 230–56.

³⁰ Alvito, *As cores de Acari*, pp. 162–4.

³¹ Leeds, 'Cocaine and Parallel Politics,' pp. 73–6.

³² See Tilly, *op. cit.*

with the state without mediation. Thus, organised criminals operate as formal organisations in a polity that can have direct effects on political and social institutions but cannot freely interact with members of civil society or the state. Organised crime, however, cannot function without some degree of state and civic support. As we will see in the next section, criminals' political interactions are best described by how they network into state and social institutions and use those networks to accomplish their goals.

Criminal organisation in three Rio favelas

Rio's favelas and the Brazilian elites have historically had tenuous links. For many years the city's elites saw favelas as a direct threat to their modernising project.³³ Politicians, however, laboured to establish clientelist networks to gain votes from these communities.³⁴ These relations, however, changed in the 1960s when the military government began to force favelas off valuable land. In response, residents organised a state-wide interest group to pressure officials to stop removal efforts.³⁵ This began to unravel in the 1980s as criminals, who had learned organising techniques from political prisoners, gained power in favelas and undermined local civic leaders.³⁶

Today, criminals have brought a new dimension to the political activities of Rio's favelas. Illegal networks exist because of the specific needs of criminal organisations to link into the city's political and social hierarchies, building and maintaining the support of local populations, and creating an urban space that undermines and transforms the rule of law. Criminals must maintain good relations with favela residents because their silence is essential to traffickers avoiding arrest.³⁷ Through connections into state and social organisations criminals develop an apparatus to protect their operations.

Illegal networks have transformed Rio's clientelist political system. Today, a complex double patronage relationship exists in which both the state and

³³ On this see Zaluar and Alvito, 'Introdução,' pp. 7–18; also see Teresa Meade, '*Civilizing Rio*': Reform and Resistance in a Brazilian City, 1889–1930 (University Park, PA, 1997), pp. 17–44, 69–71, 91.

³⁴ Gay, *Popular Organization and Democracy in Rio de Janeiro*, pp. 21–34.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 19–21; Maria Alice Resende de Carvalho et al., 'Cultura política e cidadania: uma proposta de metodologia de avaliação do programa Favela-Bairro,' unpubl. paper, p. 26; Burgos, 'Dos parques proletários ao Favela Bairro,' pp. 39–41.

³⁶ Luke Dowdney, *Children of the Drug Trade: A Case Study of Children in Organized Armed Violence in Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro, 2003), pp. 32, 60–2; Caco Barcellos, *Abusado: o dono de morro Dona Marta* (Rio de Janeiro, 2003), p. 234; Leeds, *Cocaine and Parallel Politics*, pp. 70–73; Burgos, 'Dos parques proletários ao Favela Bairro,' pp. 44–5; Alba Zaluar, 'Crime, medo, e política,' in Zaluar and Alvito (eds.), *Um século de favela*, pp. 211–2, 218.

³⁷ Martin Sanchez-Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs and American Urban Society* (Berkeley, 1991), pp. 180–93; Centro de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos 'Bento Rubião', *Favelas e as organizações comunitárias* (Petropolis, 1993), pp. 55–8, 63.

traffickers act as patrons to favela residents while traffickers simultaneously work to gain support for themselves from the actions of politicians in the favela. When politicians want to establish links to favelas, traffickers do not operate as political brokers. Rather, political brokers (usually Residents' Association leaders) seek out and negotiate relationships with politicians. Traffickers stand to the side of this relationship and allow the broker to establish a clientelist arrangement which they effectively guarantee. The result is a new form of clientelism in which traffickers dole out portions of patronage benefits as services for their own private benefit and politicians gain votes but not actual support from the population. The function of illegal networks, however, goes well beyond this. Criminals need to control the role of state actors in favelas. Traffickers cannot countenance strong personalist ties between politicians and residents and must maintain relations to community leaders to gain access to other resources. These local leaders also help traffickers to gain control of non-profit activities and mediate conflicts with residents. We can see evidence of these activities in data obtained through participant observation and interviews in three Rio favelas: Santa Ana, Tubarão and Vigário Geral.³⁸

The research for this project was conducted primarily during an extended stay in Rio between 1996 and 1999 but was complemented by shorter research visits between 2001 and 2005. The three favelas were chosen based on their different relationships to the state. Santa Ana is a community that has largely been ignored by the state. Tubarão, on the other hand, has received extensive political investment. Vigário was long ignored by the government but became the site of a mass movement in response to a massacre that occurred in 1993. The movement's activities caused a shift in state policy towards the community.³⁹ This range of different experience provides a perspective on how politics and local problem solving operates within each community. I made initial contact with the favelas through the local Residents' Associations but my contacts spread beyond those institutions as I developed connections with the leadership of other groups working in the community and with residents more generally. This research was conducted through participant observation and semi-structured interviews over a period of three to six months in each community with numerous follow-up visits after 1999. During this work I did not tape record

³⁸ The names of the first two communities, Santa Ana and Tubarão, have been changed to protect subjects. The real name of the third community, Vigário Geral, is used because of the large secondary literature on the favela. I have used pseudonyms to protect the names of subjects.

³⁹ For more on this see Enrique Desmond Arias, 'Faith in our Neighbors: Networks and Social Order in Three Brazilian Favelas,' *Latin American Politics and Society* vol. 46, no. 1, 2004.

interviews. As a result quotations which appear in this article are not exact. Rather they are based on outlines of notes taken during interviews or participant observation and written up in detail afterwards.

Santa Ana

Santa Ana, a favela of 4,000 inhabitants, sits within a much larger complex of favelas just north of downtown Rio. During one three-month period this favela suffered daily shoot-outs between law enforcement officers and traffickers that led to numerous murders.⁴⁰ The community is oriented along a canyon-like main street that contains a number of small businesses and homes as well the Residents' Association headquarters, the drug traffickers *boca de fumo* [headquarters or point-of-sale], and *Clube Social*, an NGO that works with at-risk adolescents.⁴¹ Further up the hill, the Catholic Church maintains a crèche that cares for about 40 children.

An illegal network that brings together residents, police, traffickers, and civic leaders dominates politics in Santa Ana. At the heart of the network is Josias, the long-time president of the Residents' Association and the father of Doca, an important drug trafficker. Josias, a short, wiry, crassly funny, one-legged man with always perfectly brilliantined hair, manages the difficult relations between traffickers, residents, the AM, church activists, and the outside world. Only the *Clube Social* stands outside this network.⁴²

Internal Relations in Santa Ana

Gang members provide services to residents to maintain their support in the face of the violence provoked by drug trafficking.⁴³ These efforts include providing funds to individuals in need, maintaining some degree of order by preventing assault and theft, and supporting large-scale festivities for residents.⁴⁴

In early 1997, saying he was concerned about the violence affecting the favela, Arturo, the trafficker who controlled the complex of favelas Santa Ana sits in, asked Camilla, the head of the crèche, to help organise an event

⁴⁰ Josias, president of Santa Ana Residents' Association, 26 July 1996; Josias and Manoel, vice-president of Santa Ana Residents' Association, 13 May 1997; Josélimo, resident, hardware store owner, and evangelical Christian, 15 August 1997.

⁴¹ On the distinction between Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches see Alvito, *As cores de Acari*, pp. 165–218.

⁴² Bête, organizer of *Clube Social*, Martinha, director of *Clube Social*, and Andrea, older resident and director of *Clube Social*, 4 June 1997.

⁴³ Camilla, organiser of Catholic crèche, and Michele, worker in crèche, 14 August 1997.

⁴⁴ Josias and Jânio, Santa Ana Residents' Association treasurer, 11 June 1997; Josélimo, 15 August 1997.

for residents. She reported that Arturo said he felt that people would follow her. She readily agreed and, in consultation with a nun who lived in the favela, came up with the idea for a *feira julina*, a traditional party involving allegorical square dancing. Camilla wrote a budget and delivered it to Doca who approved a slightly smaller amount that included funds for training and costuming dancers. Many adolescents jumped at the chance to participate and with the traffickers' funds Camilla hired a choreographer, a tailor, and a DJ. The group trained in the crèche, at the time the favela's only large enclosed space.⁴⁵

Of course, Camilla could not do everything on her own. The leadership of the AM helped to file papers with the local police precincts to close the street to ensure that no police operations occurred during the party.⁴⁶ The Residents' Association leadership also worked with traffickers to remove cars from the main street to open up space for festivities.⁴⁷ To supplement the traffickers' funds, Camilla asked each dancer for a small contribution towards their costume and, in exchange, offered the dancers' families booths along the main street to sell food or drinks during the party.⁴⁸ Camilla had offered the *Clube Social* a booth to help in their fund raising but Bête, the leader of the *Clube*, told other officers that '[t]he perversity of traffickers is that they do this for the community while they hurt the community'. She added that if the *Clube* attended they would be showing support and said that '[p]eople do not understand that accepting money is how people are brought into trafficking ... Camilla should know better'.⁴⁹ Ultimately, the party went well. Groups danced until dawn, residents drank in the streets, and for the first time in a long while the favela relaxed.

The collaborative efforts that made the *feira julina* possible reflect how traffickers depend on civic actors to accomplish their objectives. While criminals have resources, their complicated legal and social position obliges them to work through other groups. For example, they depended on Camilla for the support that she could get from other favela residents. By working with a respected leader traffickers could reach out to critical local constituencies, such as parents and the elderly, they normally had little contact with, but who nevertheless suffered from the violence their activities generated. Traffickers also depended in a very concrete way on Josias who helped convince residents to move cars and who filed papers with police precincts to ensure some degree of safety during the party.

Despite his connection with Doca residents respect Josias. Camilla noted that it was good that Josias was president because without him she argued

⁴⁵ Camilla, 25 July 1997.

⁴⁶ Josias and Jânio, 11 July 1997.

⁴⁷ Josias and Jânio, 11 July 1997.

⁴⁸ Bête, Martinha and Andrea, 4 June 1997.

⁴⁹ Observed meeting of leadership of social club, 26 May 1997.

traffickers would simply impose one of their own on the Residents' Association. As it was, Josias could act as an intermediary between residents and traffickers in negotiating difficult issues. On one occasion, noting that many residents had grown tired of the noise generated by the traffickers' *baile funk* [hip-hop ball], Josias secured Doca's support to put together a competing samba party to provide alternative entertainment. The presence of this second event cut down on the number of *bailes* the traffickers hosted and provided groups not interested in the *bailes*, usually middle aged and older residents, with an alternative social option.⁵⁰ Josias also negotiated with a business owner to allow her to leave her store partially open when dealers demanded that stores close after a trafficker's murder as part of a period of enforced mourning traffickers impose in many favelas.⁵¹ In both cases, Josias used his privileged position to minimise conflict by occasionally taking actions not supported by traffickers but that he could approve because of his special relationship with Doca. In the long run these efforts helped ameliorate residents' unhappiness.

Relations between Santa Ana and outsiders

The continued operation of criminals in the favela does not just depend on good relations with residents and the collaboration of civic leaders. Intense criminal activity can only survive with the active support of the state. The police in Santa Ana, as in many other favelas, are on the take. Different groups of the police, however, pursue bribes in different ways. Residents note that police based at the top of the hill take regular payments from traffickers while police based outside the hill do not receive direct payments. These police occasionally come into the favela, arrest traffickers, and then release them in exchange for a ransom. One story provides some insights into this.

Late one afternoon a group of police dressed in street clothes arrived in the favela, ran up to the *boca* and captured a group of traffickers. Josias told a man at the Residents' Association to call the traffickers' lawyer. Residents reported that the lawyer would go to the station and negotiate the release of the traffickers for a fee.⁵² In this case the police ransomed two traffickers for R\$1,000.⁵³ On another occasion police released a more powerful trafficker

⁵⁰ Josias, 13 Aug. 1997.

⁵¹ This type of negotiation is also mentioned by Alvito, *As cores de Acari*, p. 124; Josias, 22 July 1997.

⁵² Josias, Geraldo, public health working from outside the community, and Eusébio, Santa Ana Residents' Association treasurer, 14 Aug. 1997; Josélimo, 15 Aug. 1997.

⁵³ Josias, 28 July 1997.

for R\$50,000.⁵⁴ The traffickers' lawyer helped mediate their release by building trust between police and traffickers in two ways. First, the lawyer can legally act as a go-between for the police and the powerful traffickers who paid the ransom. Second, the lawyer's basic accountability as a public figure served as recourse for both sides if the deal did not go well.

Traffickers also maintain relations, mediated through lawyers and the Residents' Association, with politicians who help obtain additional resources for the community and reinforce traffickers' legitimacy as local leaders. During the 1998 elections, two political candidates, one of whom came from a Neo-Pentecostal church, made contact with the Residents' Association through the trafficker's lawyer. The Residents' Association, along with the traffickers, negotiated the building of a large covered dance floor [*quadra*] high up in the hill in exchange for votes. After the politicians and the local leaders concluded the deal, supplies arrived. Residents' Association leaders put a banner up on the main street saying that Josias and the trafficker's lawyer supported the two candidates. Joselino, a long time resident noted, 'they [politicians] are all liars. N [a politician] agreed to pay for the materials for the *quadra* if the traffickers paid for the *mão de obra* [labour], R [another politician] came in with him and knew what was going on.' Eventually the traffickers finished the dance floor and began using it to hold parties and other public events including, when the next elections came around, sports classes supported by the same politicians. While other community groups could use the dance floor, Doca's girlfriend controlled access. One politician won election to the federal legislature and the traffickers received control of the largest public space in the favela.⁵⁵ Reflecting on this situation, Joselino noted that if someone is willing to work with criminals when they run for office there is no reason to believe that they won't work with bigger criminals when they are elected. He added sarcastically 'the guy who was elected will work with the Medellín cartel'.⁵⁶ The politician elected to the federal legislature would become deeply embroiled in the corruption scandals that shook Brazil in mid-2005.

This story shows the inner workings of the illegal network. Politicians cannot work openly with traffickers since such actions could lead to a scandal. Nevertheless, many politicians need the support of the traffickers in order to secure access to a favela's votes. Traffickers also want to work with politicians in order to reinforce their position as accepted local patrons and

⁵⁴ At the time the value of the *real* was very close to the dollar; Camilla, 14 Aug. 1997.

⁵⁵ Manoel, 11 Dec. 1997.

⁵⁶ Conversation with Josélinho on a variety of topics on short visit to favela, 23 Oct. 1998; this account was confirmed in a conversation with Manoel, the Residents' Association vice president, 18 Sept. 1998; as it turned out this politician was heavily involved in the scandals that rocked the Brazilian government in 2005.

to obtain resources to help in their efforts to deliver services to residents. Since traffickers and politicians cannot build these connections publicly, these links are made through the same legitimate civic leaders who have historically maintained connections between favelas and politicians. Traffickers simply act to guarantee access and, in turn, benefit most directly from the politicians contributions to the favela. In this case the politicians made contact with the community through the traffickers' lawyer. They then negotiated a deal with the Residents' Association leadership. Since the politicians knew the Association worked with the traffickers they knew that it could guarantee them monopoly access and would help turn out votes. The Association put up a poster to show their support for the politicians to inform residents who to vote for. In this case the network provided for essential mediation that helped give the politicians and the traffickers what they wanted without their ever publicly acknowledging that they worked together or allowing the politicians to develop an independent political base in the favela.

Santa Ana is very much a component of Rio's social and political system. Traffickers' connection to the Residents' Association leadership and their links into the state support their presence in the community. This process of networking makes long-term violent criminal activity sustainable in Santa Ana and other favelas. A look at Tubarão and Vigário will confirm this and will also show that particular dimensions of local network activity can substantially change criminal governance in a particular area.

Tubarão

Located in the heart of Rio's wealthy *Zona Sul*, Tubarão is a community of around 10,000 residents that shares a hill with the rival favela of Ceuzinho. Like Santa Ana, Tubarão suffered from high levels of violence with police and traffickers engaging in gun-fights at least three times a week during the time in the late 1990s when I worked there.⁵⁷ The favela is oriented along a main path that runs the length of the bottom of the hill where many businesses, the Residents' Association, and two crèches are located. While police posts stand at either end of the path, drug traffickers maintain an informal sales point in the middle, near the Residents' Association. About a third of the way into the favela, the path widens into a plaza where traffickers and the Association hold parties. Tubarão has been the site of state investment that has led to the construction of a large public school and day care

⁵⁷ Bernardo, president of Tubarão Residents' Association, and unknown resident of Ceuzinho, 6 Oct. 1998; Anderson, head of local government rights center and resident of Ceuzinho, 21 Oct. 1998; Sister Elena, foreign nun living in community, 25 Nov. 1998; Elizete, resident of Ceuzinho and part time drug dealer, 6 Jan. 1999.

centre, a citizenship rights centre, and numerous subsidised apartment buildings.⁵⁸

The centre of Tubarão politics is an illegal network managed by the Residents' Association and its leader Bernardo, who in the early 1980s helped the Comando Vermelho [an important drug gang] depose an unstable trafficker who had expelled many residents and community leaders.⁵⁹ While traffickers have changed many times in the intervening years, Bernardo, a large man with a temper, has managed to maintain good relations with all of them and in the 1990s became godfather of the son of the jailed trafficker who ran the gang in Tubarão. Asked how Bernardo maintained power despite frequent violent changes of criminal leadership and his standing alliances with traffickers who eventually went to jail or were killed, Jorge, a leader from a nearby favela, responded, 'Bernardo has a lot of *jogo* [short for *jogo de cintura* or political skill] and changes between one [trafficker] and the other.'⁶⁰ Other groups in the community include a crèche run by a 'new age' spiritual group, a state run health clinic, a Catholic Church centre, numerous evangelical churches and a small samba school. In general, Bernardo maintains a tight rein on these groups and those not closely connected to him are very often isolated from favela political life. In one case, for example, Residents' Association leaders took potential donors to the new age crèche on a threatening tour of the favela to encourage them not to return.⁶¹ Bernardo also works to co-opt and marginalise potential internal challenges to his leadership. State health clinic organisers said they found it very difficult to deal with the Residents' Association and obtain the information they needed to carry out epidemiological analyses. As a result of his extensive political connections, Bernardo served as director of the state-run rights centre and, later, as director of a large UNICEF project that provides sports classes to approximately 1500 children. His actions have, however, inspired some fear and anger. One resident noted in refusing an interview:

I won't talk about the [Residents' Association] because it is sold out. Nothing in the community should be sold. The community shouldn't have an owner (*dono*) but now it does. Bernardo makes it pretty for himself. Talking about the community could get you in jail. It is very dangerous ... There is lots of stuff that you can't talk about and I will only talk about things if I can talk about all of it.⁶²

⁵⁸ Ludmila, teacher in school near community, 25 Aug. 1998; Regina, bar owner and resident, 23 Nov. 1998; Denise, long-time resident of Ceuzinho who runs elevators in nearby school, 25 Nov. 1998.

⁵⁹ Sacha, leader of Spiritish crèche, 19 Oct. 1998; Jorge, former leader of Ceuzinho AM, 17 Jan. 1999.

⁶⁰ Jorge, 17 Jan. 1999. ⁶¹ Marina, leader of spiritist crèche, 19 Oct. 1998.

⁶² Conversation with Zinha, older resident, and Cesar, resident and work in Residents' Association, 7 Oct. 1998.

At the centre of all of these comments, of course, is the essential activity of Bernardo who ‘makes it pretty’ and builds support for the traffickers.

Internal relations in Tubarão

Internally, the Residents’ Association helps build trafficker legitimacy and political capital by managing local conflict and helping traffickers provide services to residents. In one case, a man came to the Association frightened that a trafficker would try to kill him. Bernardo suggested that he ‘... have a chat [*papo*] with Animal [a trafficker’s nickname]. He will automatically pass it on to Alberto [the head trafficker] who should be able to take care of it’. Angry and afraid, the threatened man responded, ‘... if you [Bernardo] can’t take care of it I’ll kill the guy to set things right even if I have to leave the hill’. Bernardo responded ‘there is nothing I can do about it during today but ... you should have a chat with Animal’. In a conversation with a community leader from Ceuzinho the next day Bernardo noted:

Yesterday a guy came [to the AM] who had got himself in a fix with the *vagabundo* [bum, criminal] in Ceuzinho by getting himself involved with his [the *vagabundo*’s] girlfriend. The guy got punched in the eye and was told that night guys would come to kill him. I sorted the problem out and the next day he was wearing a Ruy Cesar shirt [a political candidate Bernardo was not supporting].⁶³

On another occasion, residents came to Bernardo to discuss the theft of some car radios by a former resident. Bernardo counselled them to move cautiously, saying he could not do anything ‘because if I call my *compadre* [the father of my godchild] they will kill the guy. The guy doesn’t have any money that he could use to reimburse you.’ Bernardo then said, ‘[I don’t] want the guy’s death on my hands’ and suggested that they contact a police officer named Guilherme to have the man arrested. In the end, the traffickers caught the thief but, instead of murdering him, only forced him to repay the cost of the stolen radios.⁶⁴ In both these cases, Bernardo mediated resident-trafficker contacts. By relaying knowledge and minimising conflict, Bernardo kept residents calm while also limiting the amount of violence that traffickers used against residents since that could create tensions in the favela as relatives and friends of those punished grow to resent the traffickers. Bernardo said that he and other leaders in the Residents’ Association had ‘to minimise the problems so as not to arouse the ire of my *compadre*’.⁶⁵

⁶³ Bernardo and unknown resident of Ceuzinho, 6 Oct. 1998.

⁶⁴ Alexandre, president of Ceuzinho AM, and Jorge, 9 Jan. 1999; Bernardo and unknown residents after radio robbery, 5 Oct. 1998.

⁶⁵ Observed conversation in the AM, 27 Sep. 1998.

As in Santa Ana, traffickers in Tubarão also throw parties and offer gifts to residents.⁶⁶ Traffickers host regular *baile funks* and maintain a group of DJs on their payroll to run these events.⁶⁷ For larger festivities they enlist the help of the Residents' Association in hiring performers, purchasing presents for attendees, and running the party. Bernardo frequently asked local businesses for funding to supplement traffickers' contributions.⁶⁸

Again, network connections prove fundamental to traffickers' activities. The Residents' Association serves as a legitimate intermediary between the traffickers and the businesses, government agencies, and NGOs who subsidise their efforts to provide services to residents. This enables traffickers to save money and throw a better party while also building their own position in the community through indirect contacts to legal merchants and state officials. The AM leadership also uses their skills to mediate complex and difficult relations with residents and insulate traffickers from situations that may require them to use violence. As a result, traffickers try to avoid conflicts that could alienate them from the population.

Relations between Tubarão and outsiders

As in Santa Ana, the Tubarão Residents' Association also manages relations with state actors. When roads in the community or street lights need repair, the Association makes contact with the responsible agents. When state programmes call for local management, Association leaders choose who will get jobs and oversee the projects.

During the 1998 elections Bernardo made deals to provide campaign workers for several candidates and negotiated direct monopoly access to the favela for one candidate. In discussions with his campaign manager, Bernardo asked the candidate to improve a stairway and an open plaza the traffickers used for parties. In addition, he said that the candidate would have to provide three clean cell phones for him, the imprisoned drug trafficker, and the trafficker's girlfriend.⁶⁹ Bernardo clearly wanted to indicate to the campaign manager that he had an association with the trafficker and that he could guarantee him access to the community. The politician accepted the requests and employed a number of residents closely associated with Bernardo and the traffickers to campaign for him. The traffickers however

⁶⁶ Bernardo, 6 Oct. 1998; Bernardo and Jussara, Residents' Association secretary, 7 Oct. 1998.

⁶⁷ Cristiano, former co-owner of local sound system with traffickers, 18 April 1999.

⁶⁸ Bernardo, 6 Oct. 1998; Bernardo and Jussara, Residents' Association secretary, 7 Oct. 1998.

⁶⁹ Bernardo and residents looking for work, 1998; Bernardo, Salomão and Jusara, 1998; Bernardo, Jusara, and representatives of political candidate, 1998.

brokered another deal with a separate group of politicians. A few days before the elections Bernardo told the group hired by the first politician to take down that politician's posters and put up the posters of the politicians the traffickers negotiated the new deal with. Angry, Bernardo said he took

a side-payment [*subsídio*] from them [the traffickers] so when they decide to support a candidate[!] have to also. This was our [the favela's] chance to be respected again. We had a candidate from the same party as the mayor and had he been elected people would have paid attention ... Now we were forced to support a candidate who they [the traffickers] had made a deal with without consulting me.⁷⁰

On election day Bernardo's anger grew when he realised that one local neo-Pentecostal congregation was backing a third candidate. In the end, none of the politicians won but their contributions helped the Residents' Association to improve the stairway and plaza and gave the traffickers access to an improved plaza to sustain their efforts to gain the support of residents.

Bernardo's connection with traffickers gave him leverage with the first politician even though the traffickers had no connection to the negotiations. The politician wanted to work with the Residents' Association because he thought the Association acted on behalf of the traffickers and could effectively guarantee his access. Nevertheless, this story also shows that the politician had little intention of directly seeking out the traffickers. The candidate worked through the Association because dealing with it did not entail the same types of risks as dealing with drug traffickers. In the end, the traffickers provided no such guarantee and made a deal with another candidate. The failure of the traffickers and the Association to promote one candidate created confusion in the favela and opened a space for the neo-Pentecostals to support a different candidate.

In Tubarão, the traffickers negotiate their relationships with the police directly but appeared to maintain different relationships with different shifts of police officers. Sitting near the top of the hill one day, Elizete, a part time drug dealer and mother, noted that:

[t]hey only left Osmar and Diodoro's [two police sergeants assigned to the community] shifts [*turmas*] in Tubarão because they stir things up [*pertubar*] a lot. All the rest changed. The [new] police came in from the *Baixada* [the poor suburbs around Rio] and don't know the hill yet ... they sit in the station and don't do very much. When it is time for them to go through the community they go in groups of eight ... They don't go in at night.⁷¹

This suggests that individual police details were free to make their own arrangements. The public and ongoing trafficking that occurred in the community depended on the acquiescence of many police shifts.

⁷⁰ Statements by Bernardo, 7 Oct. 1998.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

This situation changed, however, when a police officer involved with traffickers murdered five local residents, starting a riot in the wealthy neighbourhood below. The government, working with a Rio NGO, responded with an innovative community policing plan that succeeded in dramatically cutting violence for a period of two to three years.⁷² Bernardo had tried to head off the plan but the government by-passed him and set up the programme through the Ceuzinho Residents' Association. When the traffickers later threatened to murder the Ceuzinho Association's President, Bernardo convinced them to allow him to leave unharmed. Once the police programme began, the NGO organised a community leadership council to advise police. Bernardo took part in this group and unsuccessfully tried to end the programme. He failed because of broad support emanating from Ceuzinho leaders and arguments made by the police commander that if his police left, the government would send in a more violent unit.⁷³ Bernardo had more success in other efforts to undermine the programme by making sure that his allies led projects directed at adolescents who might join the drug gang. He was also appointed to the board of a UNICEF programme associated with the reform and ensured his allies received jobs there also. In the end, while Bernardo could not stop the police reform by working with state and civic officials he did slow its expansion and provide some cover for the traffickers while also providing jobs to his constituents. The police commander reported that he knew of Bernardo's connection to traffickers and would use him to communicate with traffickers at critical moments to avoid violence in the favela.⁷⁴

As in Santa Ana, the Residents' Association leader in Tubarão acts as a legitimate front for the traffickers in negotiating with police and NGO activists. Traffickers had neither the political skills to engage in these negotiations nor the legal position even to sit down and talk with police and activists. Without the Residents' Association they would have had no one to defend their interests or to place their allies in positions within the reform programme.

While these structures show clear similarities to Santa Ana, they also suggest some differences. Since Bernardo was not a blood relation of the head trafficker the connection between traffickers, the Residents' Association, and residents played out differently in Tubarão than it did in Santa Ana. The Association, for example, did not work as closely with the traffickers in planning the election campaign and the result was that none of the three candidates supported by factions in the community won election.

⁷² Cedric, Ceuzinho resident and NGO activist, 10 July 2001.

⁷³ Observations of Leadership Council Meeting in Tubarão, 7 July 2001.

⁷⁴ Meeting with Major Luis, July 21, 2003; for a fuller analysis of this reform effort see Arias, 'Faith in Our Neighbours', pp. 19–26.

Bernardo also had, perhaps, more stature in Tubarão than Josias did in Santa Ana. By the late 1990s he had been in office for over 15 years and had directly participated in helping the Comando Vermelho gain control of the community. As a result he commanded great respect among residents and traffickers. Bernardo, unlike Josias, would directly ask residents to do certain things, such as not go to the traffickers after they had been robbed. He would also conduct his own investigations and pronounce judgements that residents and traffickers generally respected. Unlike Josias, who maintained familiar and joking relationships with residents, Bernardo maintained more formal relations. Finally, residents and outsiders frequently called on Bernardo to engage in difficult interventions with traffickers, such as when he prevented the murder of Ceuzinho's president or when he helped smooth over potential conflicts between police and traffickers.

Vigário Geral

Vigário is a community of about 10,000 located on the outskirts of Rio that suffered extremely high levels of violence in the early 1990s as a result of a conflict with traffickers from the neighbouring community of Parada de Lucas. As in the other two favelas, traffickers played an important role in distributing largesse and controlling assault and theft. All of this changed in August 1993 when police murdered 21 residents of the favela in alleged retaliation for the murder of several police by traffickers the night before.⁷⁵ The next day angry residents moved against traffickers, taking their guns from their hands and throwing them on the ground.⁷⁶ Residents organised and brought in significant outside assistance to try to control violence.⁷⁷ Three years later, the government initiated a successful police occupation that cut bloodshed to almost zero.⁷⁸

Before the massacre

Prior to the murders, traffickers dominated Vigário in an alliance with a relatively independent Residents' Association. Seu Almeida, a former Association president, said:

During the time of Flavio Negão [the gang leader during the massacre] the traffickers [had] a lot of power ... and things were very violent. They used to collect

⁷⁵ Ventura, *Cidade partida*, pp. 66–68; James Holston and Teresa Caldeira, 'Democracy, Law, and Violence: Disjunctions of Brazilian Citizenship,' in Agüero and Stark (eds.), *Fault Lines of Democracy*, pp. 266–7; Patricia, former Vigário resident and mother of two killed in massacre, 19 Sept. 1997; Paula, Vigário resident and widow of former Residents' Association president, 24 Sept. 1997; Miguel, former community plumber and long time Vigário resident, 25 Nov. 1997.

⁷⁶ Charles, local activist and artist, 12 Nov. 1997.

⁷⁷ Charles, 12 Nov. 1997; Mateus, educator and outside activist, 7 Jan. 1998.

⁷⁸ Arias, 'Faith in our Neighbors,' pp. 12–19.

money by force. They would come to your house and put a gun in your face and force you to pay your [Residents' Association] dues. This was during the time of Seu Ireneu's directorate. Flavio Negão's brother ... was ... first secretary and paid all the bills.⁷⁹

Miguel, a former community plumber employed by the Association and paid by the traffickers, told a different story, noting:

The traffickers never officially controlled the Residents' Association though they gave advice. Seu Ireneu had always been an effective leader ... and had maintained good relations with the traffickers. Eventually, however, Flavio Negão decided to get rid of Seu Ireneu. He expelled him from the Association, went through all his documents, and took things. He [Ireneu] convinced them to let him organise the elections. This had to be done twice because the traffickers didn't like the results of the ... elections. [For the second elections] they agreed on two candidates, Seu Jonatas and Seu Almeida. It was agreed that Seu Jonatas would lose Seu Jonatas later left the community because members of his family had been killed. Seu Almeida had always believed himself to have the skills to be a good president. He had connection in politics and politicians knew him. The trafficker liked that.⁸⁰

Miguel said that he 'told [Almeida] he was crazy to be president' and despite their friendship 'would not be part of the directorate'. He concluded saying, 'During the early years of Seu Almeida's term Vigário was under the control of Flavio Negão ... [who] had about 40 people working for him.'⁸¹

Vigário, located on a swampy flatland, is bordered by a river on the south and east, walled railway tracks on the north, and Parade de Lucas on the west. Unlike other favelas it has wide very well laid out streets. To avoid arrest or murder under these circumstances, Vigário's traffickers needed the support of residents to help them hide in a setting that made retreat impossible. To build support, traffickers worked with local political leaders to deliver services. Criminals provided assistance to residents such as improving water quality, giving holiday presents to children, providing for home improvements, and giving financial assistance during times of need.⁸² Roger, the owner of a hardware store and a former Residents' Association president said, '[the traffickers] maintained the water, built homes, had parties and maintained security'. He reported that '[t]hey spent R\$ 2000–5000 per week' at his store. He went on to say that '[t]hey built the *quadra* in the back of the community to show movies and have concerts. They

⁷⁹ Statement made by Almeida, Vigário Residents' Association president, to Mateus and Daniel, teacher and community activist, 16 Jan. 1998.

⁸⁰ Miguel, 25 Nov. 1997.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Luis, former Residents' Association president, 9 Oct. 1997; Tânia, Vigário resident working to build workers cooperative, 9 Oct. 1997.

improved the community a lot during this period but also caused problems. They didn't allow crime in the community. Someone who stole was killed.'⁸³ Charles, a local artist, reported that traffickers provided similar services when he noted that Flavio Negão 'tried to help the community a lot' by building a soccer field, 'asphalted the streets,' and 'bought medicines' for residents. He went on to say 'Flavio Negão was supposed to have been very religious and a worker though he was very cruel with other people involved in trafficking.' Charles concluded by saying that Flavio Negão was 'just with the people'.⁸⁴ Wesley, an adolescent, recalled:

You could go out and come home at night whenever you wanted to. You could walk around in the streets ... whenever you wanted to. Traffickers helped residents with money, they had *Combis* [vans] to take residents to the hospital ... Drug traffickers only provided assistance when they wanted to, not necessarily when it was needed. Traffickers had to provide benefits to the community in order to maintain the support of the residents.⁸⁵

One older resident lamented that water service had been much better when the traffickers funded the system.⁸⁶ By providing services, traffickers maintained public support for their presence despite the violence that their activities visited on the favela.

During this time traffickers had contentious relations with the police. While there had always been some bribe taking, corruption intensified dramatically in the 1980s. Paula, a long-time resident and the widow of Seu Ireneu, stated, 'When the police became corrupt as a result of the trafficking Seu Ireneu fought to have the police removed from the community.'⁸⁷ Prior to the massacre, the traffickers paid the police a regular bribe so that they could deal drugs openly in the favela. Residents said police would stand on the bridge leading to the favela and would watch drug deals but do nothing.⁸⁸ Vigário was located in the jurisdiction of the 9th Military Police Battalion, a unit known to be one of the most corrupt and violent in the city. At the time of the massacre evidence suggests that a large corruption network operated within this unit which both carried out extra-judicial executions and extorted money from criminals. In one version of the massacre story, the traffickers'

⁸³ Luis, former Residents' Association president, 9 Oct. 1997; on crime control efforts by traffickers Cynthia, Oct. 2 1997; conversation between Dé, Vigário resident and community sewage worker, 8 Jan. 1998. ⁸⁴ Conversation with Charles, 15 Oct. 1997.

⁸⁵ Pedro and Wesley, community residents and Afro-Reggae activists, 7 Oct. 1997.

⁸⁶ Conversation between Marcos, resident about 80 years old who lives in impoverished part of community, and Almeida. Statement made by Marcos in conversation with Almeida, 24 Nov. 1997. Conversation with Miguel, 25 Nov. 1997.

⁸⁷ Conversation with Paula, 24 Sept. 1997.

⁸⁸ Patrícia, 19 Sept. 1997; Paula, 24 Sept. 1997; Miguel, 25 Nov. 1997.

decision to stop paying the police led directly to the killings of residents. Paula noted:

the traffickers had worked out with the police a system [to pay] them ... money to let them operate. In 1993 the traffickers decided to stop paying the police. They let three payments go by and on the fourth they ... attacked. They killed the police and went and hid in other favelas. The night the police came the traffickers were in other places so they killed the workers who were there.⁸⁹

After the killings, police and traffickers, the core of the illegal network, no longer trusted each other and could not work together. The now public nature of their relationship and ongoing media scrutiny undermined any efforts to rebuild the network.

After the massacre

In the wake of the massacre a number of groups became active in Vigário, including the Casa da Paz (CdP), a local NGO focused on controlling violence, the Grupo Cultural Afro-Reggae and Médicos Sem Fronteiras (Doctors Without Borders, MSF). Initially, poor relations between police and traffickers made conditions worse as police regularly intervened in Vigário, provoking almost daily gunfights.⁹⁰ Efforts by NGOs drew political attention to Vigário and forced the state to implement police reforms that helped to control violence.⁹¹ This enabled the Residents' Association to separate itself from the traffickers and to begin to work with other groups to provide services to residents.⁹² Nonetheless, the criminal network continued to have an impact.

Despite the dramatic decrease in violence, many residents complained that some conditions had worsened as the traffickers weakened. For instance, with the entrance of the MSF, medical care had improved dramatically, but residents said that without the traffickers they had little money to buy the pharmaceuticals the traffickers used to pay for. On other occasions, residents complained that without traffickers, theft had increased. This was especially apparent during a flood when residents from the poorest section of the favela refused to evacuate for fear of thieves. One resident said 'most people aren't going to leave because they are afraid of getting robbed. There didn't

⁸⁹ Paula, 24 Sept. 1997.

⁹⁰ Pedro and Wesley, 7 Oct. 1997; Almeida and unknown resident, 5 Dec. 1997; Daniel and Joana, long time Vigário resident and mother of Daniel, 7 Jan. 1998; Charles, 12 Nov. 1997; Mateus and Daniel, 7 Jan. 1998.

⁹¹ Charles, 12 Nov. 1997; Dé, 8 Jan. 1998; observed community leadership forum meeting, Jan. 7, 1998.

⁹² Marcos and Almeida, 24 Nov. 1997; Miguel, 25 Nov. 1997; Mateus, Daniel and Almeida, 7 Jan. 1998; Paula, 24 Sept. 1997.

use to be robbery in the community but things have gotten slack [*mole*] now. Inferninho [a poor neighbourhood near the river] is where most of the robbery is going on.' Cynthia, the Residents' Association secretary, said 'things have been a mess here since Flavio Negão was killed. [There is] []ots of mayhem [*bagunça*] ... People need more order'.⁹³

Events during the 1998 elections made the weakness of trafficker network apparent. With the Residents' Association seemingly uninterested in working with candidates Rúbia, the owner of a local restaurant, took it upon herself to broker a deal with a candidate for state assembly. He agreed to hire a few residents to campaign for him and to fund improvements to the *quadra* in Vigário that had originally been built by the traffickers. Unfortunately his campaign poster carried the name of the gubernatorial candidate from his party. The traffickers, however, supported the gubernatorial candidate from another party and asked Almira to take the posters down. She refused. At that point a more powerful trafficker arrived from another favela, had local traffickers kidnap Rúbia's boyfriend, and held him at gunpoint. Eventually, Rúbia compromised and agreed to remove the name of the gubernatorial candidate from the posters.⁹⁴

Without a connection to the Residents' Association, the local traffickers did not possess the political skills to go out and establish direct ties to a politician who would deliver services to the community. One could imagine that the Association, which had solid political connections, chose not to bring in a candidate specifically to avoid conflicts with traffickers. To make matters worse, without an ally in the Association, the traffickers lost control of the local election process. This created difficulties since the larger gang that the traffickers were affiliated with had chosen to support a specific gubernatorial candidate. Without having a direct hand in determining the terms of the agreement between the restaurant owner and the candidate, the traffickers had little control over what posters the candidate could put up.⁹⁵ Finally, without an alliance with the Association, the traffickers had no skilled political mediator to help them deal with the issue of the posters. As a result, the traffickers had to resort to violence to achieve an acceptable outcome. While they had the name of the candidate removed from the posters, the traffickers alienated several residents and, despite their limited monopoly of violence, did not even achieve their initial objective of removing all of the posters.

⁹³ Cynthia, former resident and AM Secretary, 2 Oct. 1997; Paula, 24 Sept. 1997.

⁹⁴ Rúbia, Vigário resident and local restaurant owner, with other residents working on political campaign, 5 Oct. 1998.

⁹⁵ In other favelas I visited during the election I noticed that the posters of conservative party candidates had been altered to remove the name of the gubernatorial candidate.

Even after the weakening of the Vigário network, drug traffickers played a role in NGO operations. One Casa da Paz leader pointed out that when they invited guests to the community they always informed the traffickers.⁹⁶ This not only kept traffickers aware of who was coming but also let them know the Casa da Paz's leadership was concerned that they knew who was in the community.

The eventual collapse of the Casa da Paz also illustrates the ongoing political role of traffickers. When Caio Ferraz, the original President of the Casa, left Brazil as a result of death threats from police, day-to-day leadership passed into the hands of an Executive Director, who maintained excellent community relations but who did not manage money well. Eventually he was replaced with a new Executive Director who did a good job managing the Casa's finances but did not maintain strong ties to residents. To make matters worse, the new Director had previously worked in favelas whose traffickers had poor relations with those in Vigário.⁹⁷ Eventually these factors brought together a coalition of residents and NGO workers partially backed by the traffickers that forced Ferraz and the Casa Director to resign.⁹⁸

Even in the difficult circumstances they faced, traffickers used links with other groups in the community to accomplish their goals. Traffickers could not have unilaterally threatened the CdP leadership since this would weaken their position and increase local resentment. Traffickers could only achieve their aims by linking to other social organisations who could make their voice publicly heard and who had the political skills to negotiate with residents and outsiders.

Analysing favela politics

To understand Rio politics today one must understand the ways that criminals, civic leaders and state officials build connections to each other. Networks help to bring together functionally differentiated actors who have diverse skills and experiences that can contribute to ongoing criminal activity. As Vigário demonstrates, when networks break down criminals do not possess the necessary skills to manage local political operations. Further, as is demonstrated by the involvement of lawyers and community residents, network connections help traffickers build trust for activities they engage in. As we saw with the very different relations that politicians and traffickers had with favela residents, networks enable groups to build up different types of linkages between actors. Finally, as the efforts on the part of Residents'

⁹⁶ Clarinha, CdP activist and massacre survivor, 30 Jan. 1998.

⁹⁷ Observed conversation among residents and NGO workers in street, 22 Jan. 1998.

⁹⁸ Observed meeting of commission seeking to replace CdP leadership, 30 Jan. 1998.

Association leaders in Tubarão and the church leaders in Santa Ana indicate, illegal networks can co-opt groups potentially opposed to them. This illustrates flexibility in network connections and also suggests that criminals can gain control of resources destined to help favela residents.

Interactions between favelas and politicians go beyond the direct give and take among patrons, clients and brokers envisioned in writing on clientelism. Criminals, as a result of their place in the polity, have difficulty interacting directly with politicians, outside business leaders and police. In all three favelas, civic leaders mediated trafficker–politician relationships. This evidence also indicates that traffickers use similar types of mediation to deal with state bureaucrats, business owners and occasionally police. Traffickers rely on this mediation because their status as criminals makes it impossible for them to interact with law-abiding citizens and officials and even makes it difficult to interact with corrupt officials who believe that they may be held to account. Further, traffickers lack the cultural capital and social skills necessary to negotiate agreements with state officials, other outsiders, and some residents. Lawyers and experienced community leaders have often honed these skills through years of experience and education. Without their support, traffickers would have difficulty maintaining relationships with non-criminal actors.

This mediation reveals some of the limitations of a neo-clientelist model. Traffickers themselves are not brokers in a hierarchical clientelist relationship between politicians and favela residents. Traffickers need to operate through more complex networks because unlike other elements of society, they cannot work directly with state actors. In all three cases actual negotiations with politicians and outsiders are carried out by civic leaders and other respected residents. As a result of their position, as Tubarão showed, Residents' Association leaders may not even communicate with traffickers about their negotiations and traffickers, presumably through other mediators, may make deals with other politicians. However, in Vigário, where the network had weakened, traffickers had much less ability to pursue their political goals.

With control of the means of violence in favelas, traffickers agree to ensure that no other politicians will come into a favela during an election. The difference between the Tubarão and Santa Ana negotiations makes this dynamic clear. In Santa Ana the Residents' Association evidently had a close relationship with the traffickers and the traffickers agreed to the deal with the politicians. Only the politicians who paid for the dance floor came to the community and received votes. In Tubarão the Residents' Association leader went out of his way to communicate to the politician that he was working with the traffickers even though the traffickers clearly had no involvement in the negotiations. The politician went along with the agreement in part

because he thought that the trafficker had guaranteed his access. In the end, of course, this was not the case. The traffickers made a deal with another politician and the Neo-Pentecostal group supported a third. This shows that when traffickers do not work closely with local leaders it is difficult for them to guarantee anyone monopoly access to the community. Only through collusion between traffickers and civic leaders can community groups make effective arrangements to guarantee politicians access to a favela. Again, Vigário provides a counter-point. Traffickers had an arrangement with a particular politician and a resident set up relations with a second politician. Without effective mediation through the Residents' Association, traffickers had to use threats of violence to uphold their agreement with the first politician.

Traffickers use networks to build legitimacy in the communities in which they operate. Other works have shown that traffickers make significant efforts to build support among the population they live and work with.⁹⁹ By working *through* respected local leaders traffickers benefit from their reputation and prestige in the community and, as was the case with the *feira juliana* in Santa Ana, use those contacts to promote events that will generate more good will towards them. In exchange, social leaders gain resources and some flexibility in dealing with the traffickers. In the case of Santa Ana, the Residents' Association president would undertake efforts that mildly interfered with some trafficker activities in order to defuse the residents' resentment of traffickers. In Tubarão, Bernardo interceded on a number of occasions to prevent traffickers from using violence to resolve differences with residents and local leaders. In Vigário, when traffickers had adequate connections, such as when the Casa da Paz collapsed, they manipulated politics in the favela without using violence. When they had inadequate contacts, such as when they tried to change the content of the election posters, they had to use threats to achieve their goal, and alienated residents. The restaurant owner who negotiated the agreement with the politician, a woman who had also brought in emergency relief supplies after a flood, left the favela within a year, causing it to lose an effective broker. By working through respected local leaders, traffickers use their position to minimise conflict with residents and provide services to increase resident support.

One could argue that since traffickers have a limited monopoly on violence, this obviates the role of social support and legitimacy within illegal networks. In the cases I have examined, ample evidence has demonstrated that when traffickers' use violence against leaders who oppose them they

⁹⁹ Malkin, 'Narcotrafficking,' pp. 101–3, 105–20; on traffickers, efforts to build legitimacy see Alvito, *As cores de carí*, pp. 149–64.

undermine local social ties.¹⁰⁰ Clearly traffickers can violently force out other favela leaders. The issue for effective traffickers, though, is that they often do not want to do this since killing a respected leader would hurt their political position. As I noted earlier, when an unstable trafficker pushed community leaders out of Tubarão in the 1980s Bernardo brought in a new set of traffickers. In Vigário, when trafficker activities led to the murder of twenty-one residents, their support declined dramatically and they had to accept the development of organisations that reduced violence and drug sales. In this context it is not surprising that despite his differences with the President of Ceuzinho's Residents' Association that Bernardo prevented the traffickers from murdering the Ceuzinho president after he helped establish the police occupation. Criminal leaders benefit by working through established social networks and by using respected community leaders to defuse tensions with residents. As Alvito puts it in a slightly different context, compromising legitimate community leaders hurts traffickers by cutting off their ties to the media, civil society, and much of the state.¹⁰¹ This research has shown that if traffickers force local leaders out, they break up the networks that help produce some of the good will that protects them from the police. By actively working with respected leaders, drug traffickers appropriate existing social networks, work within the local norms, and accomplish difficult political aims with less violence than might otherwise be necessary. This does not mean that traffickers will not use violence to attempt to replace civic leaders who create difficulties for them. Indeed, over the years, hundreds of local leaders have been killed by traffickers for a number of reasons. What this evidence does suggest, however, is that traffickers need positive relations with civic leaders and that using violence against civic leaders comes at a certain cost.

Traffickers use networks to build legitimacy because they sit on the frontier between state and society. On the one hand, they have a limited monopoly on the means of violence in favelas.¹⁰² On the other hand, they do not have at their disposal a large legitimacy-building apparatus and they face a state that, in part, builds its legitimacy by opposing their activities. As a result, traffickers must work through localised networks of trust and reciprocity to build the support necessary to prevent residents of favelas from allying themselves with other traffickers or the state. While traffickers are not just other members of a poor community helping out a comrade or a traditional patron the more deeply they work within and respect existing norms

¹⁰⁰ See also Leeds, 'Cocaine and Parallel Politics,' pp. 70–3; Mafra, 'Drogas e símbolos,' pp. 281–2.

¹⁰¹ Alvito, *As cores de Acará*, pp. 161–2; on uses of conjugal relations see p. 224.

¹⁰² On criminals and protection see Diego Gambetta, *The Sicilian Mafia* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 15–33.

and relationships the more likely it is that they will receive the residents' protection.

The last element of illegal networks is the police. Evidence from all three communities suggests the collusion of Rio de Janeiro's *Policia Militar* in drug trafficking at the favela level. However, corruption operated differently in the three communities. In Tubarão and Santa Ana extortion schemes were managed at a very low level and the relationship between traffickers and police depended on particular shifts of police. In Vigário, however, corruption seemed to be managed at a higher level within the battalion responsible for the area. All of this had different outcomes for the operation of the illegal network in the three favelas.¹⁰³

This analysis reveals that traffickers are well connected to state and social actors and that their political projects go beyond clientelism, linking them into legitimate, rule abiding state bureaucrats, NGOs, and religious organisations. They help traffickers make use of money made by legitimate businesses and build and reinforce their legitimacy in favelas.¹⁰⁴ This article has shown that connections to local leaders help traffickers deliver services to residents and minimise conflicts. Through these networks, traffickers manage difficult negotiations with police. The result is that, more than filling in space left by the government, illegal networks appropriate existing state and societal resources and power and use them to establish protected spaces in which traffickers can engage in illegal activities. More than parallel 'states' or 'polities' drug trafficking in Rio represents an expression of transformed state and social power at the local level.

The spectrum inside 'Brown' areas: favelas and democracy in Latin America

Three factors drive the forms of violence facing Rio. First, the particular structural conditions that exist in Rio, a major port and tourist centre, contributed to the emergence of the city's role in drug transshipment and retailing. This gave rise to particular types of criminal enterprises focused on moving drugs through the city's favelas. Second, the structure of the state in Brazil in the post-democratisation period contributed to the way these new criminal organisations were able to operate. A large, complex and divided institution, the Brazilian state did not provide significant amounts of training or aid to a police force steeped in repressive violence during the dictatorship. Moreover, politicians campaigning for office in a state that no longer had the resources for large scale developmental or social programmes had to find

¹⁰³ It should be noted that while only the *Policia Militar* (Rio's uniformed police) are discussed here, there is also ample corruption within the *Policia Civil* (Rio's investigative police). There were, however, few observations of their activities in these communities during field research.

¹⁰⁴ Also see Alvito, *As cores de Acari*, pp. 151–3.

effective ways to turn out the vote. Criminals took advantage of the possibilities of corruption and the historical political clientelism that linked the city's poor to the state to buy protection and gain the support of favelas' populations. Third, these criminal organisations became embedded in specific localised social arrangements. Residents' Associations dominated favelas politically from the 1960s onwards despite residents' significant unmet economic needs. Traffickers found ways to work with and control these organisations to operate in the city and to play on residents' needs to gain support.

The persistent violence facing Rio de Janeiro today does not reflect an absence or collapse of state power. Rather, violence in Rio stems from a particular articulation of state, social and criminal relations which actively deploy state power in the service of criminal interests. The documentation of the political life of favelas presented here shows that ongoing criminality depends on specific types of relationships between criminals and civic leaders, and the manner in which they were constructed out of local clientelist traditions, and have been transformed by the particular ways that the global drug trade has become inserted into the local economy in the context of the democratisation process.

Clearly, among the many challenges facing Rio de Janeiro and Brazil are such institutional issues as poor police training, official impunity, and corruption. The problems facing Rio, however, go well beyond this and reflect not just the limitations of state institutions but also the existence of criminal organisations which perpetuate violence through the specific forms of contacts which they maintain with state and social actors. What exists in Rio's favelas are not really 'brown' zones, where state power and democracy are somehow absent, but rather a specific type of political constellation in which state power is, deployed and transformed through contacts with civic and criminal actors to create persistent and ongoing conflicts that deprive the residents of these places of certain basic rights.

Throughout the Western Hemisphere in locales as diverse as Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Jamaica, Honduras and Mexico we see rising violence depriving the region's citizens of life and liberty. The specific forms of conflict and the politics that contribute to it vary from place to place. Colombia, a major cocaine producer locked in a forty-year civil war, experiences violence very differently from Mexico, a country in transition from one-party dominant rule involved in drug export and transshipment mostly across its northern border. Evidence from this article suggests, however, that we can develop a deeper understanding of the persistent social violence in different countries throughout Latin America by focusing on the types of criminal organisations which emerge and the ways that those groups interact with state and social actors.

To use O'Donnell's insightful cartographic metaphor, Latin America is not covered in a haze of 'brown' zones where the rule of law does not effectively operate, interspersed with discrete 'green' and 'blue' zones where the rights are (more or less) respected. Rather, spaces suffering from persistent social violence are contingent and reflect specific, differentiated political arrangements that are structured by the way types of criminal operations network with the state and civic actors therein. The problem is not state failure but, rather, the forms of engagement between state actors and criminals and the way these connections lead to the deployment of state power in such a way that it undermines the rule of law and establishes a separate, localised, order. Rather than 'brown' zones, then, if we look closely the map of Latin America, we could see a myriad of different coloured spaces representing varying forms of local political orders that can be described by the manner in which violent non-state actors, state officials, and civil society network together. The particular forms of violent localised authority are not generalised across the region but, rather, are embedded within the social, political and economic dynamics operating in discrete places. This paper has provided evidence of how this process works in Rio and suggests a model that scholars can use to examine other cases of conflict in the region.

Conclusion

In this article I have shown how criminals, civic leaders and state officials interact in Rio's favelas. The nature of their interactions suggests that we cannot understand the core political cleavages in Rio simply as confrontations between the state and criminals. Rather, criminals have emerged as political actors who must operate in the political system through other state and social actors. This analysis suggests that to understand politics in Rio we need to understand not just how state and society deal with each other but how cross-institutional networks interact that bring together state, criminals and other social actors. This would indicate the political conflict in Rio and the long term social violence the city suffers from can be best explained by understanding how competing illegal networks interact with each other and how shifting network alliances affect conflicts between institutions.

The illegal network model can be analysed and empirically tested in other political contexts. By examining the fluid nature and organisation of connections between criminals, civic actors and state officials we can come to a deeper understanding of social violence in other Latin American contexts. Numerous writers have already noted that these connections exist.¹⁰⁵ The

¹⁰⁵ Also see Paul E. Amar, 'Reform in Rio: Reconsidering the Myths of Crime and Violence,' NACLA Report on the Americas vol. 37, no. 1 (2002), pp. 39–40.

question that needs to be answered now is what those connections look like and how they work in particular countries.

The ability of traffickers to gain access to state resources and power to support their activities and their use of local ties to build legitimacy and gain protection suggest that this problem is not ephemeral. As I have discussed elsewhere, state repression and social programmes do little on their own to control the activity of criminal networks, and may actually strengthen them, since criminals can link into and gain control of social groups.¹⁰⁶ Ultimately a more in depth understanding of the political role of crime in Latin America and solutions to the social violence facing countries throughout the developing world can only be found through more intense micro-level research into the operations of criminal organisations and the impacts that they have on state institutions and social groups.

¹⁰⁶ Also see Clara Mafra, 'Drogas e símbolos.'