The role of Urban Upgrading in Latin America as warfare tool against the "Slums Wars"

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This paper explores the rhetorical similitudes in two fields not usually examined together: new practices of multi-level urban upgrading in Latin America and contra insurgence urban warfare theory and practices. This article argues that there is a trend in Latin America towards multi practice (urban upgrading) design as a tool for the state agencies to re-conquer spaces where the right of the state to control the means of repression, as defined by Max Webber, is in frontal contestation. This study suggests that government agencies and military organizations see urban informality as providing sophisticated advantage to asymmetrical contenders, such as Al Quaeda vs. the United States, Palestinians refugee camps vs. the Israeli army or FARC vs. Colombian Government. In these "fourth generation wars," between nonstate actors and governments, destroying the intrinsic advantages of the informal built structures becomes necessary to attain military supremacy. This military urban strategy provides a new perspective from which to explore some of the latest urban upgrading projects located in conflict zones in Latin America. I argue that from this perspective, urban upgrading projects are militaristic tools that give leverage to state forces in the asymmetrical war against the illegal armed groups based in the same informal urban environments where the upgrading occurs. Finally, I conclude that such uses of urban upgrading are not per se perverse, but that from a practical and theoretical perspective, professionals in the academy and practitioners in the field should be aware of the military mechanism operating within urban upgrading in the context of these "slums wars."

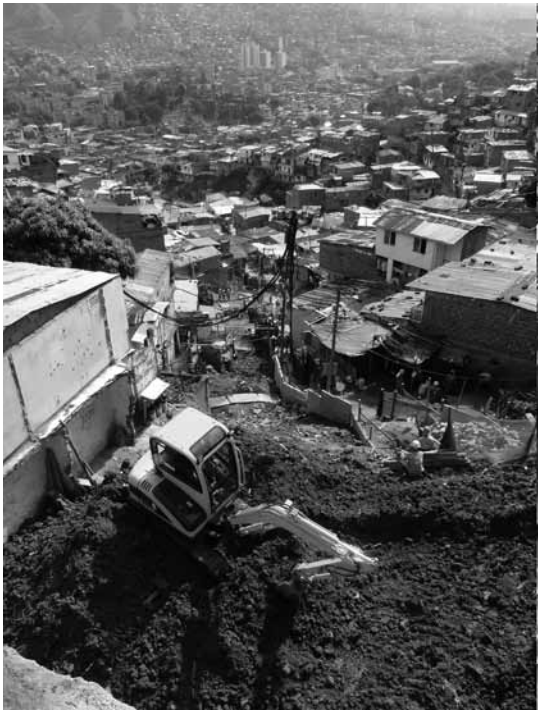
Introduction

Today in Latin America, a new set of urban upgrading practices is capturing the imagination of those interested in improving the living conditions of people who live in informal settlements all over the world. The projects that receive publicity in architectural magazines (Roth 2011; Jodidio 2010), exhibitions (Lepik and Museum of Modern Art 2010), policy recommendation publications (Rojas et al. 2010) to name a few, present a new phase of policies and projects engaging with the problematic of urban informality. Specifically, this new phase examines ways in which urban upgrading projects, for the first time, are taking marginalized com-

munities' rights into account. This phase and proliferation of publications and publicity also reflects a rebirth in the belief that physical urban practices are key to improving the living conditions in these communities.

Today, urban informality is the place where two separated problems are confluent in the international, national and local governments' agenda: the concentration of poverty (Pamuk and Cavallieri 1998) and insecurity (Wilding P. 2010). Traditionally, these problems are addressed by governments and academic circles via two different sets of policies and sets of discussions. On one hand, there are the policies of poverty alleviation in the informal urban environment (Roy and AlSayyad 2004) and on the other hand, the policies that deal with how to understand violence and insecurity (C. O. N. Moser and McIlwaine 2004). In theory, urban upgrading projects are intended to deal just with issues of poverty alleviation (Riley, Fiori, and Ramirez 2001). There is evidence, however, from the rhetoric of the political parties that implement such projects (Samper Escobar and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 2010) and from the publications of international agencies that support the projects (Rojas et al. 2010), that this urban upgrading also is seen as a tool to reduce levels of violence in such informal environments.

This article examines the role of urban upgrading in the context of the conflict in informal settlements in Latin America. This contextualization exposes the similitudes between urban upgrading practices and the urban contra insurgence techniques deployed by military strategy in urban settings. To make this argument, this article is divided into the following sections. (1) The under-development and urban conflict section brings together two literatures that spatially intersect in the informal settlements. This contextualizes the space of informality as the place where both urban upgrading happens and war is waged in the armed conflicts in Latin America in the XXI century. (2) The next section examines ways that transformation of the physical environment is used as a tool to change social behavior. This section concentrates on two ways that physical space connects with ideas of security. On the one hand, I analyze how the form (contemporary fragmentation and segregation of space) of the city provides, or is a reflection of, a perceived lack of security. On the other hand, I examine the use of non-conforming urban space as a subversive practice that challenges the power of the state. (3) The third section examines two cases in which informal settlements are a place where poverty and violence are concentrated in the city. This section explores how these three urban upgrading projects in Latin America are implemented in conjunction with local and national strategies of security. This reveals a connection, at times explicit and others tacit, between ways that municipalities and national governments modifications of urban space in informal settlements are also a strategy of security that promotes state control over illegal armed actors. (4) The final section finds connections between urban upgrading procedures applied in Latin America (especially in Rio de Janeiro and Medellin) and the rhetoric of contemporary urban warfare that feeds the "fourth generation wars." This makes explicit the ways that urban upgrading practices are seen as strategies to increase state supremacy in the "asymmetric wars" waged in these territories. (5) Finally, I place all of these findings in the context of theory and practice regarding upgrading.



This image shows the construction of the latest urban upgrading project in Medellin in Comuna 13, a group of neighborhoods with large concentration of illegal armed actors and consequent violence. Image by Jota Samper.

This article is the product of semi structured interviews in informal settlements in Medellin (2008-2011) and in Rio de Janeiro (2011) with community members affected by urban upgrading programs; planners, architects, bureaucrats and politicians who played key roles in these projects' visions, designs, and implementations; and legal and illegal armed actors operating in informal settlements. I weave together themes and dissonances emerging from these interviews in the context of urban upgrading documents and project evaluations. I place all this analysis together in a direct mapping of the ways that security conditions and urban projects inform and challenge each other.

Under-development and urban conflict

Today there is a growing literature trying to assess the successes or failures of the new urban upgrading practices (Kreimer, Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Municipal., and World Bank. 1993; Rio and Siembieda 2009; Handzic 2010; Rojas et al. 2010; Riley, Fiori, and Ramirez 2001; Conde 2004; Machado and Harvard University. 2003; Betancur 2007; Blanco and Kobayashi 2009). To examine urban upgrading projects, we must first understand these projects in terms of the way state and non-state powers actually operates within them. We must especially understand the strong interrelationship between informal urban settlements and political and economic violence in these contexts. It is important to understand that urban upgrading practices— in theory and sometimes in practice—intend to alleviate problems of urban poverty, but at the same time also play a fundamental role in how conflict behaves or is waged.

Today the global urban planning approach to dealing with poverty and its consequences on inhabitants' quality of life are understood more as a compilation of strategies than as a single-minded approach. This approach is reflected in different sectors of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Payne 2005). The MDGs, which has

become developed as a multi-practice approach, (United Nations Development Programme. 1992; Nations Unies. Centre pour les établissements humains. Conférence internationale 1996; Franz. Vanderschueren, Wegelin, and Wekwete 1996; and Kreimer, Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Municipal., and World Bank. 1993) broadly follows the same framework defined in policy guidelines (Riley, Fiori, and Ramirez 2001). The guidance offered is implemented in the neighborhood upgrading programs and emphasizes seven necessary dimensions: (1) poverty is a complex and multifaceted problem; (2) a multi-sector approach; (3) design as a vehicle of social and physical integration; (4) the project needs to have an impact at a city scale; (5) public and private partnerships; (6) engagement in these type of projects require some level of state reform and of the state and (7) pursuit of inclusion, participation and democratization. This represents the state recognition of its responsibility towards the inhabitants of the slum areas as a "Social Debt" (Samper 2010) or their "Right to the City" (Rio and Siembieda 2009). This is a rhetorical move away from the criminalization of slum dwellers found in the older practices. In general, this last multi-practice approach builds and incorporates elements of all previous explored approaches in the reduction of poverty (Handzic 2010; Soto and Instituto Libertad y Democracia 1989; Werlin 2000; Witherick 1970; Kaplan 1963; Fried 1966). These guidelines are the theoretical base that informs research and projects around the world. One key element, however, distinguishes the new Latin American urban upgrading approaches from those in other geographies: an emphasis on the quality of spatial strategies as key to making all other guidelines possible (Hernández 2010).

One key element missing from these seven dimensions, at least in the theory of urban upgrading practices, but apparently not in the practice itself, is the understanding that in some situations development (eradication of poverty) and conflict (violent) are related issues (F. Vanderschueren 1996). And solving one cannot be done without engaging with the other—what Paul Collier calls "Breaking the Conflict Trap" (Collier and World Bank. 2003). Literature that deals with urban conflict in Latin America covers a vast field that traditionally classifies violence in four categories: political, institutional, economic and social (Winton 2004). Most of the literature on violence does not focus on spatial terms (even when most of the cases are space bound). Caroline Moser and Mcllwaine (C. O. N. Moser and McIlwaine 2004) define the relationship between what she calls "perverse organizations" and their use of social capital in the (informal) neighborhoods where they operate, thus linking the conditions of the contexts where these organizations operate with their subsistence. Davis and Pereira surveyed geographies with high levels of conflict to find a relationship between the state's lack of legitimacy, power and reach and the (new typology post WWII) in-nation conflicts (D. E. Davis and Pereira 2002). This lack of legitimacy, power and control in the context of under - development are key elements in the formation of Informal markets and settlements. These ultimately are connected with the high levels of conflict of such places. The formation of private police as a solution to the increasing security problems "blurs the line between a state and non-state monopoly of the means of violence" (D. Davis 2009) and calls for the creations of new institutional arrangements that legitimize states outside of repressive forms. A particularly important group of literature in conflict

closes the circle to explore the relationship between informal space and conflict. Dennis Rogers (Rodgers 2009) offers an important understanding of contemporary urban conflict. He maps the evolution of Latin American civil wars as "a geographical transition from the 'peasant wars' (Wolf 1969) to 'urban wars' (Beall 2002)." He maps these wars as a continuation of old conflict in a "new spatial context" and further suggests the connection between the geographies of informality and conflict by giving these 21st century civil wars a new name: "slum wars." This article critically explores these slum wars.

Transformation of the physical environment as a tool to change social behavior

There is vast evidence that government modification of the urban environment is used as a tool to increase levels of security. Perhaps one of the most documented cases is that of Paris during Napoleon III's rule. "Haussmann's mandate was not only to create an impression of grandeur, but to secure the city for better control by government" (Jordan 1995). Boulevards in Paris serve to "clean" the city both "socially and in medical terms [from] those Neighborhoods that the authorities cannot adequately control" (Jordan 1995, 192).

What was done to 19th century Paris is now deployed by governments and international agencies in informal communities all over the world. Not surprisingly, Eduardo Rojas (Rojas et al. 2010) finds that this is a "trend" in Latin American neighborhood upgrading programs' motivations to use them as tools for "protecting vulnerable groups (such as young people at risk) and decreasing urban violence". Rojas's survey of upgrading projects highlights this new "objective" recurrent in these projects that go beyond their initial developmental goals. There he sees the use of urban upgrading implemented as a way to "improve living conditions in the targeted communities as a way of tackling the problem of violence at its root.".

This new focus of controlling violence explains, in part, the emphasis these projects place on the modification of the physical environment of the "slums" as way to change conditions (perceived and real) of security as in the case of Haussman. It is important to understand here two opposing theoretical theses. One thesis is exemplified by what Oscar Newman (Newman 1972; Newman 1995) called "defensive space" in his "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design," which understands the form and use of the public space as a condition that is related to the levels of real and perceived security (Moran and Dolphin 1986; Chang D. 2011; Kuo and Sullivan 2001). This aligns with Jane Jacobs's (Jacobs 1961) "eyes on the street" approach that advocates for the maintenance of traditional urban form against the modernization and sterilization of public space as the solution to create safer environments. This kind of thesis is supported by others in their critique of contemporary urban practices that reflect social fragmentation and fear (Ellin and Blakely 1997). This thesis needs to be compared in the context of the other ones where state organizations see non-conforming urbanization (in this case: favelas) as

subversive action, or what Eyal Weizman (2007) calls "the jihad of urbanization" and which justified the militarization of the urban environment (Pereira and Davis 2000; M. Davis, Miller, and Mayhew 2003). These two opposing theses—"space as a tool of control of security" and "non-conforming space as subversive"—represent the poles between which states use and employ urban upgrading tactics (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Medellin, Colombia in particular) to deal with the relationship between urban poverty and "perverse organizations."

Informal settlements: A place of concentration of poverty and violence three cases

Traditionally, governmental institutions address poverty and violence as two separate issues. However, there has been a recent explosion in media and research publications (Sanín and Jaramillo 2005, Gutierrez Sanin and Jaramillo 2004, Penglase 2005) that focus on informal settlements (as opposed to the rest of the formal city), as a context where large concentrations of violent actors live and wage violence, and where the largest concentrations of poverty exist. There is then a belief that both issues — the concentration of poverty and of violence — are somehow connected. Recently the connection between these two issues has created the hope (among international developmental agencies and local and national governments) that both problems can be addressed by the same tools. Or, that intervening in one will produce the necessary leverage to eradicate the other. This article concentrates on this intersection between the production of formal space in informal settlements and eradication of violence.

Two examples of urban upgrading practices being applied in conjunction with security strategies expose this new trend clearly. (1) Often praised by scholars and urban planners as a successful upgrading program in Medellin, the Urban Integrated Project (IUP) was deployed alongside the National Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) with the paramilitary groups in Medellin post 2003 (Samper, 2010).

Both policies were part of the same package implemented by the city Mayor's office in a search to diminish the extreme levels of violence measured by homicide rates in the city. (2) The Rio de Janeiro Urban upgrading practices implemented by national state and local government, the Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento (PAC) and the Morar Carioca Project, are intended to "urbanize" favelas. It prioritized informal areas abutting the four "security polygons" where the main events of the 2014 Olympics are scheduled to happen. Favelas upgraded in Rio de Janeiro are the ones where the new Pacifying Police Units (UPP) are implemented. These two municipalities (Medellin and Rio de Janeiro) share similar conditions of socio-economic conflict (drug traffic related) and levels of urban informality. Their municipal and national governments collaborate in worldwide and south-to-south knowledge transfers of both issues of security (drug war) and on methodologies of urban upgrading. These two examples[1] reveal what I see as a trend in Latin America towards multi practice (urban upgrading) design as tools for the state agencies to re-conquer spaces where the

right of the state to control the means of repression, as defined by Max Webber, is in frontal contestation.

In the case of Medellin, the urban transformation and the policies that supported the peace process, with the paramilitary forces as part of this peace process, converge in the urban upgrading projects that intersected in the same geographic space. At the same time that the state built transportation networks and public buildings, such as libraries, schools and public gardens and plazas, a hoard of 2,500+ demobilized paramilitary members returned to these same neighborhoods. They then participated not only in the educational projects and economic benefits of the programs part of the (PUI), they also were, in some cases, labor employed to be part of the crews that build the projects. The political apparatus created and used the (positive) publicity of its urban projects along with the reduced homicide rate as proof that these policies and projects had a direct causal relationship to the simultaneous reduction in violence (Samper 2010). This is the only case in which the state explicitly connects the urban upgrading practices with the usage of these practices as tools that increase security in areas usually dominated by illegal armed actors. After increases in levels of conflict and violence in the city post 2008, the mayor's office made this connection less implicit but maintained the same type of strategies up until to the beginning of 2012, and in some way all the projects were part of the implicit campaign. This is a sign that the city officials and some scholars and urban planners still support spatial connection between these two issues.

In Rio de Janeiro, the relationship of the urban upgrading projects with goals of security is a more tacit one, at least in terms of state public discourse. The state public officials do not openly assert that Morar Carioca, which will become the largest urban upgrading project in the world by 2020 and will "Upgrade 582 groups of slums, benefiting more than 320,000 households, based on estimates of the Secretaria Municipal de Habitação, will make the favelas safer. In practice, however, the reality is different. Morar Carioca' objective is to urbanize all favelas in Rio by the year 2020. Because the Olympics and the World Cup are coming to Rio in 2014 and 2016 respectively, a phasing strategy of Morar Carioca has been designed to ensure that favelas geographically located inside of the security polygon of the 4 major centers of Olympic activity have priority for urbanization. This makes evident that even if the relationship between the urban project and security is not explicit, like it is in the case of Medellín, there is still a link between the transformation of the physical structure of the favelas and their security. Furthermore, in November 2010, 3000 police and army operatives took over the favela the Complexo de Alemao. In December 2011, a similar operation was executed in the city's largest favela Rosinha. One key important consideration that these two events bring to light is that both are not only connected with Rio's recent efforts of pacification (pacification police) but that they are performed in areas where recent efforts in urban upgrading are happening. Complexo de Alemão and Rosinha are part of the previous national urban upgrading project called the Accelerated Growth Program (PAC) that substantially upgraded both areas with large and interconnected physical projects that included public facilities and improvements in the transportation network before such military operation happened.

The informal settlements (slums) wars

From these three cases, I have discerned two types of general conflicts. (1) One conflict is the traditional assumption that a "perverse organization" (its armies, not its intellectual heads) located in a geographical position of the city is are in constant confrontation with the state. This can be called an asymmetrical war. (2) The second kind of conflict is an internal one in which multiple "perverse" organizations fight each other for the control of territories, while maintaining some kind of contestation with state forces. We can call this a symmetrical war.

One revealing finding that emerges from comparing these two types of wars is that the incapacity of the state to claim sovereignty is the only constant. The actors whom the state is trying to destroy are actually constantly changing— old actors are replaced by new ones, a condition I have called the "continuum of violence" (Samper 2010). While the presence of these actors is pervasive throughout the entire cities, their strongholds are seeded within informal urban areas in both cases (Medellin and Rio de Janeiro). This is defined by the fluctuation of different armed groups and individuals who enter and leave the conflict, and are responsible for perpetuating the violence. Further complicating the situation, these actors often switch sides (groups) of the conflicts. In Medellin, drug lord assassins (sicarios) were replaced by left wing urban guerrillas (militias) and the latter were exterminated by right wing paramilitary urban groups (AUC) (Rozema 2008). These last ones transformed into the present urban organized gangs (BACRIM). All this fluctuation of illegal armed actors has happened over the span of less than 40 years. In Rio de Janeiro, illegal armed actors' changing groups in informal areas is also present (A. Zaluar and Conceição 2007). This fluctuation of a perverse group's presence in a neighborhood, as well as changing conflict group affiliation, reveals a gap between the ideological political roots of the conflict and the people who actually fight in the conflict (at least in the Latin American cases).

I propose viewing the cities of Medellín's and Rio de Janeiro's violent history as a continuum of violence. Sanin and Jaramillo (Sanín and Jaramillo 2005) conclude that with continuous intervention from the municipal and national government authorities to broker peace accords "with all their positive aspects, the peace accords have only reshuffled the security personnel that proliferate in the city." This implies that there is a reaction between the two types of wars (symmetrical and asymmetrical) and how one influences the other.

Ralph Rozema (Rozema 2008) supported this idea of "reshuffled" private security forces in the city. He writes that when the paramilitary group Bloque Cacique Nutibara (BCN)2 expelled the other paramilitary group Bloque Metro from Medellín, the BCN incorporated some of the Bloque Metro fighters into its own group. Other authors also discuss the reshuffling of security personnel as the only way of the individual fighters' (and their family's) economical (Cardona et al. 2005). They explained that from 1999 to 2002, "what marks this period is the political decision of the guerrilla (FARC & ELN) to urbanize the war and the transfer of the actions of the autodefensas [right wing paramilitaries] to the city. The guerrilla groups use the different militia groups, and the autodefensas used the neighborhood gangs." Angarita (Angarita 2002) confirms that "by 2000,

the paramilitary groups had absorbed or/and control of most of the larger armed illegal gangs and had important battles with different armed factions of the insurgency [guerrilla]."

Medellín has been the site of these factions' fighting with each other for control over territory since the 1990s. Francisco Gutiérrez and Ana María Jaramillo, made a "reconfiguration of the city's security map" by means of a 'continuum' that ranges from gangs and hit killers (sicarios) to left-wing militia to right-wing paramilitary." And I would add today that the state interaction with the paramilitary has permitted the proliferation of Combos (the new armed actor in Medellín, small drug trafficking and extortion gangs also known as BACRIM).

There is a lack of political, economic, and social structure in specific neighborhoods of Medellín and Rio de Janeiro; informal areas that come from a tradition of informal settlements that have not been reached by the infrastructure of the formal city government.3 It is this predominant spatial scale that permits the necessary isolation for the proliferation of a multiplicity of armed violent groups. In Rio, as in Medellin, this phenomenon of reshuffling illegal armed actors (drug lords and militias) has been occurring as far back as the 1970s, according to some authors (A. Zaluar and Conceição 2007) and going back for more than two decades according to others (Fernandes. 2010).

In Rio de Janeiro this process follows a similar path to the one explained in Medellin. Here, it is between the different factions of drug lords and their right wing counterpart the militias. The changing percentages of favelas controlled by drug lords versus militia are evidence of this reshuffling that reveals the control of perverse organizations is not hegemonic. This exposes how vulnerable this type of environment (informal settlements, favelas) is to appropriations by non-state repressive actors. Connections between illegal activities and poverty are a common theme in the literature (A. M. Zaluar 2004). What I want to emphasize is the physical environmental conditions of the favela as a place where violent acts happen. This connection between insecurity and informality is not only dialectical, as in "the imaginary of fear" that Felipe Botelho Corrêa (Corrêa 2009) explores. Rather, I argue that there should be some lurking variables that explain why these physical spaces are taken by a multiplicity of groups within and outside its borders. If the constant in this multiplicity of actors using violence to control these territories is the geographic location rather than the affiliation of the armed groups, then this should imply that the environment (social and spatial) is susceptible to be manipulated by externalities. This is in contradiction to the traditional popular belief (exploited in the media) that the conditions that produce these manifestations of violence are seeded inside the favela, the "favelado as criminal" (Perlman 2010). If this assertion is true, the important question is: Why are the favelas so susceptible to repressive manipulation by some actors (illegal) and so resilient to resist others (state)?

Informal Community as Battlefield

Urban Warfare theory provides venues to answer to this question. First, it is important to understand that the space of the favela-like environment is actu-

ally seen from all armed actors as a battlefield where a constant war is being waged. Consequently, urban warfare theory is actually applied to these environments, specifically from the point of view of the formal state armed forces. The "Operaciones Mariscal and Orión"4 in 2002 in Medellin, Colombia and the Alemão Operation in 2010 and Rosinha in 2011, are examples of full war operations that clearly explain this state use of military strategy to take over informal territories.

As explained before, there are other types of wars happening at the scale of the favela-like environment. In Medellin and Rio, the different factions of armed actors (drug lords, guerrillas, and right wing armed groups) fight for areas of control. Territories change factions constantly. Another kind of external actor appears. In the case of Medellin, Milicias populares (Urban left wing guerrillas) and the paramilitaries are military non state groups that fight the state at the national scale and apply to an urban environment their combat strategy they used in rural areas. In Rio de Janeiro, there is the external actor of the militias (state dissident groups, not to be confused with the left wing milicias populares of Medellin), who combat the drug lords using a combination of state-learned tactics and techniques used by their drug lord rivals. These groups are actually trained military and police personnel that use drug lord techniques of extortion (A. Zaluar and Conceição 2007).

These types of wars are referred to in military strategy as 'Fourth Generation Warfare.' In this case, the state loses its monopoly on war. Wars are no longer fought state to state, but instead state to non-state actors. William S. Lind explains that "[a]ll over the world, state militaries find themselves fighting nonstate opponents such as al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. Almost everywhere, the state is losing" (Lind 2004). But beyond those clear manifestations, this article concentrates on new typologies of war: the uses of the space of the urban environment as a tool to wage war. This is not to suggest that people have not long used spatial environments, urban or otherwise, as strategies of war. What is different here is that the actors who wage war are states against these new typologies of non-state actors within this fourth-generation war. I see this new typology in line with Stephen Graham's assertion that one of the pillars of the "new military urbanism" is "the deployment of political violence against and through everyday urban infrastructure by both states and non-state fighters" (Graham 2009).

Here I explore two different theoretical positions on urban warfare to understand the logic of urban conflict in the favela-like environment, both from the point of view of the state and the illegal armed groups. First is the position of Eyal Weizman (Weizman 2007) in his "Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation," which explores Israel's military position against the urbanization of the Gaza strip by Palestinians. In this case, I loosely attached the qualification of "informal settlement" to the cities and refugee camps which Palestinians inhabit. In Brazil if you live in a favela, you are considered by those who do not live in a favela as a criminal. In Israel-Palestine, just being Palestinian makes many Israelis consider you a terrorist. In the Israel–Palestinian conflict, this way of thinking is also political and military doctrine. As Weizman explores in his

critique of the state of Israel's war tactics in the hands of Ariel Sharon:

> *Sharon began to view the conflict with Palestinian guerrillas in the Gaza strip as an urban problem that must be addressed by the transformation of Palestinian cities and refugee camps, which he named the 'habitat of this terror'(Weizman 2006).*

Sharon's "habitat of terror" statement implies that the urban form is an active participant in the conflict. Thus, it is a rival that needs to be eliminated. The formalization of the destruction of the Palestinian city is what Weizman called the "matrix." The matrix is a circulatory grid of streets that cut in the similar way that Haussmann cut the historic fabric of the city of Paris, which permits the undisturbed flows of troops and tanks through the Palestinian cities. The state of Israel modified the imbricated urban form of Palestinian cities from physical informality to the rational geometric that provided the army of the state of Israel the military advantage.

To understand why the dissection of Palestinian cities is so important, it is necessary to put this idea in conversation with U.S. urban warfare strategies. Major Robert E. Everson (Everson and U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. School of Advanced Military Studies. 1995), in his Standing at the Gates of the City: Operational Level Actions and Urban Warfare Place, argues that urban warfare is a more complex endeavor than traditional warfare. He warns about deficiencies of technologically advanced armies, such as the United States troops' struggles to confront urban battlefields. He writes:

> *Tactical urban combat creates a battlefield in which most engagements are fought to the bitter end. Units making contact collide with the enemy in close quarters and opponents can easily become decisively engaged. One or both sides quickly loses its ability to maneuver. Operational planning for urban warfare has to consider that combat units have a high probability of being used only once before major reorganization or reconstitution must occur. The U.S. Army is not prepared to conduct offensive operational and tactical level operations in urban terrain during a conventional war. More importantly, the (US) army is not prepared to pay the price for this type of combat (Everson and U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. School of Advanced Military Studies. 1995).*

Urban environments provide symmetry to unbalanced technological opponents. Everson, for example, explains how a "low-technology, foot-mobile army can establish symmetry with a high-technology, mobile army by selecting a large city as the battleground." This, in a way, explains many of the unsuccessful policing and military operations in Medellin and in Rio de Janeiro. It also explains the predicament of states against their apparently non-symmetrical adversaries and helps explain the success of non-state armed actors in removing or absorbing other non-state armed actors in the battlefield of the favela-like environment.

But what does this have to do with urban upgrading? Robert R. Tomes provides in his "Relearning Counterinsurgency Warfare" a double perspective of this new typology of war. He proposes that added to the traditional tactical operations of the new war field (urban warfare), a secondary and mediated war should be fought. This concept is what he calls the "cognitive terrain":

> *[t]he counterinsurgent must possess the training, capability, and will to fight on cognitive terrain. Toward this end the (counterinsurgency) must develop and deploy psychological operations units, propaganda operations, and social service units that foster the impression that the government is addressing underlying socio-economic problems. Additionally, the insurgent must be exposed as preventing the government from solving these problems (Tomes 2004).*

To view this parallel another way, I created the below table.

Urban Warfare	Urban Upgrading
The "matrix" a Haussmann like grid that improves troops movement and reduces strategic advantages that the environment provides to insurgence troops.	A move away from traditional relocation practices, urban upgrading focuses on Infrastructure that provides improved mobility within the informal settlement and between it and the rest of the city by providing new paved roads and transportation systems like cable cars, electric stairs and new bus lines.
(Counterinsurgency) must develop and deploy psychological operations units, propaganda operations, and social service units that foster the impression that the government is addressing underlying socio-economic problems.	A key component of contemporary urban upgrading is the implementation of social projects and programs guided toward reducing poverty.
Fourth generation wars happen between states and non-state actors	Urban Upgrading projects are executed in areas where the non-state actors who are fighting the state wage war against the state.

Table 1 Urban Warfare VS. Urban Upgrading

There is another way to view this parallel among two scholars of military and war strategy. Weizman identifies a "matrix," the modification of the environment where the 'enemy' exists to provide military advantage to the "state." Tomes identifies a contra insurgent "cognitive war," in which social service units foster the impression that the government is addressing underlying socio-economic problems. Weizman's enemy "matrix" alongside Tomes's contra insurgent "cognitive war" is clearly evident in today's multi practice urban upgrading (Riley, Fiori, and Ramirez 2001), especially in terms of transportation networks and open space and a key emphasis on social services provided by the state, that had been absent in these neighborhoods for as long as the last 60 years (Samper Escobar and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2010).

Table 1, provides a comparative analysis between contra insurgence techniques in urban warfare and key areas of urban upgrading. Important to highlight here is the key use of infrastructure, such as roads and transportation systems to access such infrastructure, and the similitude between the idea of "cognitive war,"—the "impression that the government is solving underlying inequality issues"—and the social component necessary for the success of all urban upgrading projects both in Medellin and in Rio de Janeiro. When we do this, we have to come to the realization that not only are military operations being waged in these territories, but also that the urban upgrading goals fit those goals of the urban warfare strategies that are (intentionally or not) being applied in these contexts. What the governments in Medellin and Rio de Janeiro are accomplishing with their urban upgrading projects is two-fold. These governments are attacking the problem of poverty and inequality as much as they are providing larger leverage for state armies in the urban warfare battlefield (favelas). They do this by eliminating the physical and social conditions that give advantage to fighting armed groups.

Conclusion: Social control through design and architecture

Here I have provided an overview of the recent urban upgrading efforts in Latin America as social control tools to transform the physical spaces of the informal settlements in a way that provides advantages for the national security forces in their war against illegal armed actors using these territories as battlefields. This contestation is the ideal context for illegal armed groups to contest the state power to claim sovereignty over the informal settlements and use them, not only as fields to supply their ever growing armies, but also as battlefields that provide them with strategic advantages over their superior adversary: the state armed forces. For cities like Medellin and Rio de Janeiro, state armed forces have lacked unlimited economic supplies to maintain these asymmetrical wars in the sense that illegal groups fight the state (and its allies), a much larger and technologically advanced adversary. The key here is to understand the role of the recent and successful urban upgrading projects in both cities as a complex militaristic tool that learns from contra insurgency tactics and that are deployed by municipalities. The agencies that developed these projects, the Empresa de Desarrollo Urbano (EDU) in Medellin and the Municipal Housing Secretary's (SMH) in Rio de Janeiro, fulfill the role as "social service units" as Tomes (Tomes 2004) suggests. This, thus creates the allure that the "government is addressing underlying

socio-economic problems," while physically modifying these informal settlements to insert the Latin American "matrix" that permits the fluid deployment of the state's armies combined armed forces as we have seen in the two last events in Rio in 2010 and 2011. This helps clarify why pacification policies like the UPP efforts are accompanied by physical transformation practices (Favela Bairro, PAC and Morar Carioca). The physical context where the war is fought is modified, thus removing, at least in theory, the positional advantages that the illegal armed groups and their contra insurgency tactics can have on the armed branches of the state.

The use of urban upgrading as a militaristic tool is not a perverse militaristic practice per se. On one hand, if the purpose is to suppress a legitimate structure of community power by introducing new spatial forms that empower control of an external agent, then the use of urban upgrading would be a perverse practice. The key point here is to understand who controls the urban upgrading interventions in the informal communities and for what purpose. On the other hand, if the purpose is to free informal communities from being co-opted by illegal armed actors who use urban form's isolation and lack of socially secure spaces to exert coercive power, then this tool becomes an important practice that can enhance community resilience (Samper, forthcoming). This is especially the case in informal communities that do not have the legal or cultural means to hold these armed actors accountable for their coercive control. These tradeoffs are complex to evaluate, but today, the municipality of Medellin and the national government in Brazil are in power thanks to strong alliances with the popular sectors, and their subsistence in power depend in part on their accountability to those sectors -- some of them located in these informal areas. Using urban upgrading here to remove power from drug related organizations appears to be a positive use, but in such volatile geographies it is important to maintain a vigilant eye on the performance and potential excesses of state organizations developing these types of projects.

What this survey reveals is an inherent connection between the urbanization of informal settlements as a part of urban upgrading programs and its use as a military tool to establish state control over those areas. And that we, as civil society and professionals, should be vigilant of who, in the end, is benefiting from such projects. Finally, this survey seeks to make more visible the kind of tradeoffs that informal settlement residents are confronting so they can more accurately and meaningfully, in self-identified ways, measure their community's benefits or losses from such power transfers.

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where he completed his master's degree. His work seeks to understand if policies and practices that have both political and physical implications in the urban context are directly related to the reduction of violence. The main objective of this research project is to explore the real success or failure of these policies in a search to find successful strategies that can be implemented in other city/region/nation contexts around the world. He is an active member of the "Urban Resilience in Situations of Chronic Violence," research group at MIT which aims to provide a greater knowledge base for policy makers, urban planners and practitioners regarding how to assist in the dynamics of urban resilience in situations of urban violence and insecurity. Along with his work as a teacher of planning and architecture, he is co-founder and co-director of DukeEngage Medellin, Colombia since 2007. This is a civic engagement program which brings Duke University students to Medellin every summer to live and work for 8 weeks, working alongside architects, urban planners and historians on creating an alternative video and photographic archive and mapping with marginalized communities who tell stories, in their own words and images, how they built their neighborhoods in the City of Medellin. These stories are now circulating in film festivals, exhibitions, and schools throughout the Americas.

http://informalsettlements.blogspot.com/

http://mobility17.com/

Lead Photograph

This image shows the final product 2011 and 2012 of the latest urban upgrading project in Medellin in Comuna 13, a group of neighborhoods with large concentration of illegal armed actors and consequent violence. Image by Jota Samper.

Notes

[1] Ciudad Juarez and Caracas are other Latin American cities with similar conditions are implementing similar projects of security and upgrading.

[2] The Cacique Nutibara Bloc (in Spanish, Bloque Cacique Nutibara, or BCN) was a Colombian paramilitary bloc founded by Diego Murillo Bejarano, affiliated with the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) paramilitary umbrella group.

[3] It is interesting to note that in Medellin these barrios had been reached by basic infrastructure of water, energy and sewer systems, which is not the case in many other cities in Colombia and Latin America

[4] The Operación Orión was a military raid in the Comuna 13, in Medellin Colombia October 16 to the 20 of 2002. This joint military effort of the Fuerzas Militares de Colombia and Policía Nacional de Colombia with the support of the Fuerza Aérea de Colombia. The main objective was to regain control over the territory of the district that was controlled by three different guerrilla groups: the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) and the Comandos Armados del Pueblo (CAP).

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