Corrupt Places: The Illicit in the Governance and Development of Cities, Regions and Networks

Edited by Francesco Chiodelli (Gran Sasso Science Institute, Italy), Tim Hall (University of Winchester, UK) and Ray Hudson (University of Durham, UK)

Proposal to Routledge (October 2015)

Outline

The volume offers an innovative multidisciplinary collection exploring the roles of illicit actors of various kinds in processes of urban and regional governance and development, and the effects of illicit networks on the spaces and places in which they are grounded and to which they are connected. Recognising that definitions of the illicit vary over time, space, and cultures, there has long been strong evidence that a range of illicit actors, including, but not restricted to, those engaged in organised criminal activity, have been involved in the processes and institutions of urban and regional governance and development across a diverse, international terrain and often across international borders. There are several examples of this: the generation of economic revenues from activities such as narcotics production and trafficking, which can be significant regionally and nationally in the context of poverty and a lack of licit economic alternatives; societal governance through fear, the threat of violence and normative influence over regional cultural spheres and political governance through the development of symbiotic relations with the state at an urban or regional level, corruption and the capture of the state and criminal organisations infiltration of urban planning systems and (large scale) urban development projects, which have deeply influenced the economic and spatial trajectories of many cities in recent decades.

Typically these illicit actors are portrayed as predatory, although there is evidence that they can perform important governance and development functions in some circumstances. This raises the provocative question of those times, places and circumstances in which the illicit may be developmentally progressive. Further, the networks that articulate illicit markets may have important material impacts on the places and spaces within them and upon the political governance and regulatory functions of these regions. However, there has been only limited discussion to date of the tensions between networks, flows and circulations and the development of cities and regions and little that explicitly reflects upon these issues within the context of illicit economies. At the same time, only a limited discussion has focused on geographical peculiarities of these issues. This is a significant omission, since many illicit activities (in particular, corruption and organized crime activities) tend to have
specific spatial aspects that are yet to be fully articulated within academic literatures.

Discussions of the illicit have tended to be somewhat restricted in their disciplinary range, to date, and have been largely confined to the literatures of anthropology, criminology, policing and, to an extent, political science. Recent contributions by the editors have sought to open up these debates through interventions in the geographical and planning literatures (Chiodelli and Moroni, 2015; Hall, 2013; Hudson, 2014). However, these debates have impinged little on cognate literatures, not least those of urban and regional studies which remain almost entirely undisturbed by such issues. This volume aims to open up debates across a range of cognate disciplines. In doing so it will extend the range of debates empirically but also question conceptually the, to-date dominant, discussions of governance and development that have been rooted largely or entirely in the realm of licit actors.

The book investigates these issues with reference of a variety of different geographical contexts, including, but not limited to, places traditionally considered to be associated with extensive illicit markets such as some regions in the so-called Global South. However, the volume will consider the ways in which these questions deeply affect the daily lives of several cities and regions in some advanced countries. Hence, the volume aims at expanding geographically, theoretically and empirically discussions of the illicit. Its comparative perspective will demonstrate that the illicit is an underappreciated, structural aspect of current urban and regional governance and development across the globe.

Potential authors are invited to present their own work in response to the following main themes:

- Exploring the extent, nature, features and impacts of illicit urban and regional governance and development across international space;
- The nature and diversity of illicit urban and regional governance and development across international space;
- Networks, flows and circulations and their implications for urban and regional governance and development;
- Researching the illicit in urban and regional governance and development;
- The implications of the illicit for theorising uneven development;
- Implications for policy and practice.

---

For Prospective Authors

If you are interested in contributing to this volume please could you send the following to Tim Hall (tim.hall@winchester.ac.uk) by Monday 30th November 2015:

- Name, institutional details and contact email;
- Title of proposed chapter;
- Abstract (suggested length 500-700 words);
- Biographical paragraph.

Notifications of acceptance will be sent out by the editors by 20th December.

Timeline

- Deadline for submission of abstracts from potential authors: End November 2015
- Proposal submitted to Routledge: End December 2015
- Approval of proposal and commissioning of volume: March 2016
- Deadline for submission of chapters to editors: October 2016
- Editing and redrafting of chapters: October 2016 – January 2017
- Submission of manuscript to publishers: February 2017